Finding aid for the Jan van der Meulen photographs of Chartres Cathedral, Circa 1950-1990

Finding aid prepared by Jan Bender and Ann Harrison
Descriptive Summary

Title: Jan van der Meulen photographs of Chartres Cathedral

Date (inclusive): circa 1950-1990

Number: 90.P.6

Creator/Collector: Meulen, Jan van der

Physical Description: 36.0 linear feet (66 boxes)

Repository:
The Getty Research Institute
Special Collections
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles, California, 90049-1688
(310) 440-7390

Abstract: The archive consists of photographs and slides documenting Chartres Cathedral and related buildings of the 12th and 13th centuries taken by architect and art historian Jan van der Meulen and an assistant over the course of many campaigns, mostly between 1959 and 1983.

Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the catalog record for this collection. Click here for the access policy.

Language: Collection material is in English

Biographical/Historical Note

Jan van der Meulen (1929-2011) was a medieval art historian and a leading authority on Chartres Cathedral. Born in Cape Town, South Africa, van der Meulen initially trained as an architect before deciding to study art history, specifically architectural history. After earning a doctorate from Marburg in 1962, van der Meulen devoted himself to research, but he soon found the academic climate in Europe too confining and left for the United States where the interdisciplinary approach he favored found greater acceptance. Van der Meulen taught art history at Pennsylvania State University from 1968 to 1974. He next joined the faculty at Cleveland State University where he taught until his retirement in 1989. The author of numerous articles and several books, including *Chartres: Biographie der Kathedrale* (1984) and *Chartres, sources and literary interpretation: a critical bibliography* (1989), van der Meulen devoted his career to the study of Chartres. His methodological approach to the cathedral entailed exhaustive re-measurement and photographic documentation of the structure and its elaboration.

The key role of photography in van der Meulen's research methodology tied in directly with his background. From 1953 to 1955 van der Meulen had worked as a professional photographer for Het Lichtbeelden Instituut in Amsterdam. The Chartres Cathedral photographic archive is the product of van der Meulen's combining of his training as an architect, an art historian, and a photographer.

Access

Open for use by qualified researchers, with the exception of the original slides and negatives. For further information, consult the Guide to the Photo Archive and Database.

Publication Rights

Photographs and permission to publish must be obtained from copyright holder(s). For further information, contact Library Reproductions and Permissions.

Preferred Citation

Jan van der Meulen photographs of Chartres Cathedral, circa 1950-1990, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Accession no. 90.P.6

http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa90p6

Acquisition Information

Acquired in 1990.

Processing History

Jan Bender created the collection inventory in 2013 and Ann Harrison completed the finding aid.

Scope and Content of Collection

The archive consists of photographs and slides documenting Chartres Cathedral and related buildings of the 12th and 13th centuries taken by architect and art historian Jan van der Meulen and an assistant over the course of many campaigns,
mostly between 1959 and 1983.

Over 21,000 black-and-white catalogue prints and their negatives recording Chartres Cathedral form the bulk of the collection. These photographs provide systematic and detailed documentation of the architecture and sculptural decoration of the cathedral, especially the three sculptured portals, as well as comparative photographs of motifs from other French and German churches related to Chartres. A further 11,500 catalogue prints with negatives document rural churches in the Aisne and Oise regions, sources for the stylistic developments seen at Chartres.

Van der Meulen recorded the stained glass windows of Chartres, as well as the architecture and sculpture. Over 2300 35 mm. slides taken by van der Meulen document the entire clerestory and lower panels with the exception of the northern side aisle. Each panel of the clerestory was photographed twice with a 400 mm. lens from the opposite triforium, one darker exposure to reproduce the true color value and one additional, slightly overexposed slide to assure that all the inner details and fold-lines would be clearly visible.

In addition to the photographs taken by van der Meulen, the collection contains supplementary research material in the form of copy photographs. There are almost 500 nineteenth-century photographs of Chartres Cathedral (modern prints from original glass plate negatives) taken by photographers such as Eugène LeFèvre-Pontalis, Henri Le Secq, Photographie Giraudon, and Neurdein Frères. Further copy photographs, as well as drawings and photocopies, reproduce archival materials on Chartres housed in various repositories, including written documents, ground plans and other architectural drawings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

**Arrangement**

Jan van der Meulen's original organization of his photographs with groups of materials designated by Roman numerals has been generally maintained: I (pt.1). Chartres Cathedral; I (pt.2). Churches related to Chartres Cathedral; II. Chartres Cathedral portal details; III. Stained glass windows of Chartres Cathedral; IV. Rural churches of Aisne and Oise. The copy photographs of supplemental material follow van der Meulen's original work and retain his organization into "notebooks."

**Subjects - Names**

Meulen, Jan van der -- Photograph collections

**Subjects - Corporate Bodies**

Cathédrale de Chartres

**Subjects - Topics**

Architecture, Gothic--France
Church architecture--France--Aisne
Church architecture--France--Oise
Glass painting and staining--France--Chartres

**Genres and Forms of Material**

Black-and-white prints (photographs)
Negatives (photographic)

**Contributors**

Le Secq, Henri
LeFèvre-Pontalis, Eugène-Amédée, 1862-1923
Neurdein frères
Photographie Giraudon

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**Chartres Cathedral photographs**

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**Churches and monuments related to Chartres Cathedral**

- **France**
  - Box 29-30: Notre-Dame Cathedral, Paris
  - Box 31: Agonac to Compiègne
  - Box 32: Conflans-Sainte-Honorine to Mantes
  - Box 33: Marmoutier to Senlis
  - Box 34: Sens to Villeneuve-l'Archevéque
  - Box 35: Germany: Aachen to Trier
  - Box 35: Israel: Nazareth

**Chartres Cathedral portal details**

- Box 16-19: West facade
- Box 19-22: North transept
- Box 22-27: South transept

**Stained glass**

- Scope and Content Note
  - Images are arranged following the numbering set out in Delaporte, *Les vitraux de la cathédrale de Chartres* (1926).

**Cibachrome prints made as use copies by the Getty Research Institute**

- Box 1, Folder 1: Delaporte schematics
- Box 1, Folder 2: 1-3: West facade windows
- Box 1-2: 4-9: Nave windows, south
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- Box 2-3: 13-21: Choir windows, south
- Box 3-4: 22-33: Apse windows, southeast
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- Box 5-6: 35-46: Apse windows, northeast
- Box 6, Folder 4-6: 47-55: Choir windows, north
- Box 6, Folder 7: 57-58: North transept windows
- Box 7, Folder 1-5: 59-64: Nave windows, north
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- Box 9, Folder 4-5: 95: South transept clerestory windows, south
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- Box 14, Folder 5: 176: West rose window

**Original slides**

- Scope and Content Note
  - Access restricted for conservation reasons.

**Rural churches in the departments of Aisne and Oise**

- Box 36: Amblény to Brény
- Box 37: Breuil-le-Vert to Cambronne-les-Ribecourt
- Box 38: Cerny-les-Bucy to Cuise-la-Motte
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- Box 40: Longpoint to Mont-Devant-Sassey
- Box 41: Morienval to Presles-et-Thierny
- Box 42: Quesmy to Saint-Vaast-de-Longmont
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Chartres Cathedral photographs

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Notebook 201b

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Cathedral plan

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Profile detail blueprints

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Notebook 201c: Exterior views, Giraudon

Notebook 205a

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West portal views, Lefèvre-Pontalis

Box 45, Folder 10

General views, Le Secq

Notebook 206a

Box 45, Folder 11

Elevations and plans, Lassus

Box 45, Folder 12

West facade and portal views

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Northwest tower views

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Southwest tower views

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Choir screen views, Neurdein

Altar view

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Clock tower and Hotel Dieu gate views, Neurdein

Box 48, Folder 8

Negatives

Scope and Content Note

Access restricted for conservation reasons.