Guide to the Robert Greensfelder Collection of Film Ephemera M2478

Department of Special Collections and University Archives
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Guide to the Robert Greensfelder Collection of Film Ephemera

M2478

Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: Department of Special Collections and University Archives
Title: Robert Greensfelder collection of film ephemera
Source: Greensfelder, Robert, 1923-2018
Identifier/Call Number: M2478
Physical Description: 7 Linear Feet(11 boxes)
Date (inclusive): 1947-1973
Abstract: Collection of programs, catalogs and other material assembled by Robert “Bob” Greensfelder, who worked in independent film distribution in the 1950s and 60s.

Conditions Governing Access
Open for research. Note that material must be requested at least 36 hours in advance of intended use.

Immediate Source of Acquisition
This collection was given by Bob Greensfelder to Stanford University, Special Collections in 1977.

Biographical / Historical
Robert J. “Bob” Greensfelder (1923-2018) was born in Wilmington, Delaware, to Grace Gleason and Nelson Sutro Greensfelder, a mining engineer. His childhood was interrupted by his father’s sudden death from pneumonia, after which his mother moved to Spokane, Washington, where Bob graduated from Lewis and Clark High School. In 1941, he entered Reed College. At the end of his freshman year he enlisted in the Naval Reserve, and was called into active service at the end of his sophomore year. Assigned to the USS Highlands, he guided troop transport landing crafts onto the beaches during the battles of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. He was honorably discharged at the rank of lieutenant junior grade in 1946, at the age of 22.

Over the next five years, Bob completed another six semesters at Reed, studied in Mexico City under the GI Bill; drove coast to coast as a marketing agent for a cooperative venture of California craftspeople; and met and married Jean Greiner Martin, who had been an artist’s model for such painters as John Sloan and Salvador Dali. In 1951, the couple settled in Mill Valley in Marin County, and for the next 23 years Bob worked in myriad positions in the field of independent and experimental film, including playing a key role in founding the American Federation of Film Societies, promoting San Francisco’s nascent International Film Festival, distributing independent films through his company, Kinesis, Inc., and serving on the advisory committee of the Pacific Film Archive.

From 1962 to 1973, he was western manager for Contemporary Films, a widely respected film distribution company with an exceptional selection of cultural, foreign, art and documentary films. On a direct level, he personally funded and supported the making of “The End”, one of four films by visionary director Christopher MacLaine. In 1967, he was instrumental in helping French director Agnes Varda create her short film “Uncle Yanco”. And he donated his time to produce the film “Dreamwood” by Beat poet and filmmaker James Broughton.

Meanwhile, life at the Greensfelder household in Mill Valley was anything but conventional. Jean and Bob’s residence became a gathering point for a mélange of artists, writers, filmmakers and intellectuals, some of whom viewed the home of a settled family with five children as a haven from the tumultuous years of the 1960s. During his years in Marin, Bob served on the board of ACLU of Northern California, marched against the Vietnam War, was a founder of the Homestead Valley Improvement Club, and lent support to friends under attack by McCarthy era witch hunts.

For his 50th birthday in 1973, he trekked the mountains of Nepal. Less than a year later, he and Jean moved to the San Juan Ridge in rural Nevada County, establishing a homestead miles from paved roads or power lines on a large parcel of land close by Bob’s lifelong friend from Reed College, poet, essayist and activist Gary Snyder. Bob became a mentor to many of the homesteaders who arrived after him, always gracious in sharing his labor and knowledge. He helped found the San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association and the Yuba Watershed Institute (YWI); served on the Grand Jury; and worked for decades on committees riding herd on gold mining proposals. In 2016, unable to keep up with the demands of rural life, he moved to Atria in Grass Valley.

Bob is survived by his children Anne, Sara, Liese and Ben Greensfelder; Liese’s husband, Robert Erickson; Ben’s wife, Sandra Bao; grandchildren Ari and Seth Lane, Louis and Rainy Blue Cloud, Tor Erickson, and Zoë Kasten; and greatgrandchildren Chris, Sarah, Mya, Joaquin, Oisín, Aron and Raúl. He was predeceased by Jean in 2003, their son Peter in 2007, and grandchildren Karin and Lathan.

--adapted from his obituary in “The Union” January 14, 2019

Preferred Citation

Scope and Contents
This collection of exhibition programs, catalogs and other publications documents Robert Greensfelder's long involvement with independent and art film. Through 1957 he ran Kinesis, Inc., a distribution company started by Brant Sloan in 1951. The collection contains a Kinesis catalog, and many items are stamped with the company name and address. From 1962 to 1973, Greensfelder operated the west coast office of New-York based distributor Contemporary Films.

Greensfelder was also involved in assisting film-makers with their work, producing Christopher MacLaine's "The End," James Broughton's "Dreamwood" and Agnes Varda's "Uncle Yanco," a documentary on Jean Varda, to whom she was related. This collection primarily reflects his distribution activities, as well as his attendance at many festivals and screenings both internationally and in the San Francisco Bay Area. While the collection primarily contains printed material, much of it is annotated by Greensfelder with notes and dates, and there are also hand-drawn intertitles for two early short films by James Broughton ("Four in the Afternoon" and "Loony Tom").

Conditions Governing Use
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Subjects and Indexing Terms
Motion pictures -- United States -- History -- 20th century.
Greensfelder, Robert, 1923-2018

Series 1. Theater & festival programs, distributor catalogs, etc.

box 1, folder 1
"A"
Scope and Contents
American Documentary Films catalog ; American Federation of Art Guide to Art Films 1950 ; American Film Institute

box 1, folder 2
Art In Cinema (San Francisco Museum of Art) 1947-1954
box 1, folder 3
Audio Film Center catalogs [unfolded] 1958-1972
box 1, folder 4
La Biennale di Venezia 1958-1954
box 1, folder 5
British Film Institute
Scope and Contents
Annual reports 1952-1967 ; catalogs, programs, etc. See also National Film Theatre.

box 2, folder 1
British Film Institute newsletters
Scope and Contents
Member's Newsletter 1952-1955 ; Quarterly Gazette 1952-1965

box 2, folder 2
British Film Institute, Film Guide #19-56 (incomplete)
box 2, folder 3
British Information Services
box 2, folder 4
"C"
Scope and Contents
Compagnie de Diffusion Cinematographie (CODIC) ; Cine Universitario del Uruguay ; Cedar Alley Cinema (San Francisco) "The Great Blondino" handbill and press release ; Contemporary Films, Inc. "A Child's Christmas in Wales" one sheet

box 2, folder 5-6
Cinema Guild circa 1951-1969
Scope and Contents
First program as Berkeley Cinema Guild
Series 1. Theater & festival programs, distributor catalogs, etc.

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<td>Canyon Cinema [unfoldered] 1962-1971</td>
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<td>4, folder 1-2</td>
<td>Edinburgh Film Festival 1947-1950-1955</td>
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<td>Exprmnt 4 - Casino Knokke, Brussels 1968</td>
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<td>National Film Theatre, Critics Choice 1952-1956</td>
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<td>National Film Theatre, London Film Festival 1957-1968</td>
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<td>6, folder 4</td>
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<td>6, folder 5</td>
<td>New York Film Festival 1964-1969</td>
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<td>Surf Theatre (San Francisco) 1962-1970</td>
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<td>7, folder 3</td>
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<td>U.S. government film catalogs</td>
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Scope and Contents
- Catalogs #1-2; Canyon Cinema News 1962-1971
- Stanford Libraries also holds the Canyon Cinema records (https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt538nf1rj)

- Festival Internazionale del Film, Locarno 1961; Festival D'Annecy 1963; Federation of Film Societies "Festival" 1951; Film Classic Exchange

- Independent Film Importers & Distributors of America (IFIDA) 1966-1967; Institute of Inter-American Affairs; Institutional Cinema Service; Internationale Filmwoche, Mannheim 1961; International Film & Television Council 1961

- National Student Film Festival flier; New Cinema Club; Pacific Film Archive opening 1971

- Sydney Film Festival 1956; Telegraph Repertory Cinema (Berkeley) 1970; Trak Film Group/Mother Neptune's (Los Angeles) 1963; Theatre Owners of America Convention 1961

- U.S. Department of Agriculture; Department of Interior/Fish & Wildlife; Federal Civil Defense Administration; Department of Health, Education & Welfare

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Series 1. Theater & festival programs, distributor catalogs, etc.

Box 7, folder 5  
"W"  
Scope and Contents  
Woodstock Artists Association Art Film Festival 1951; XI Westdeutsche Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen Bericht 1965

Box 11, Folder 1  
Woods Eye Film Programs (Nevada City, California)

Series 2. Catalogs and guides by subject

box 8, folder 1  
Guide to Films ... on Asia (Asia Society) 1964, 1967
box 8, folder 2  
Educational Film Guides (H.W. Wilson) 1954-1957
box 8, folder 3  
Films About Films - National Council of Teachers of English (draft) 1951
box 8, folder 3  
Filmography of Films About Films & Filmmaking (Eastman Kodak) 1969
box 8, folder 4  
Labor Film Festival (Internationella arbetarfilmveckan) 1960
box 8, folder 4  
International Labour Film Institute catalog 1956
box 8, folder 5  
Films for Religious Education I & II 1967
box 8, folder 5  
National Catholic Office for Motion Pictures 1965
box 8, folder 6  
miscellaneous subjects

Series 3. Directors & films

box 9, folder 1  
The Work of Anthony Asquith  
Scope and Contents  
See also British Film Institute
box 9, folder 1  
Shell presents "The Back of Beyond"
box 9, folder 1  
James Broughton, "Flights of Fancy" brochure
box 9, folder 1  
James Broughton, "The Pleasure Garden" program
box 11, folder 2  
James Broughton, "Loony Tom" intertitles 1951  
Scope and Contents  
Four hand-drawn cards featuring credits. Film uses different background but matches text.
box 11, folder 2  
James Broughton, "Four in the Afternoon" intertitles 1951  
Scope and Contents  
Nine hand-drawn cards featuring credits and intertitles. Film uses different background but (mostly) matches text.
box 9, folder 1  
Maya Deren catalog circa 1948  
Scope and Contents  
Possibly a page from a larger catalog
box 9, folder 1  
Jean Epstein 1897-1953 (Group for Film Study/Cinemages) 1955
box 9, folder 1  
The Work of Alfred Hitchcock  
Scope and Contents  
Two programs. See also British Film Institute
box 9, folder 1  
Isou's "Venom & Eternity" (Society of Cinema Arts) circa 1951
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"O Pagador de Promessas" aka "The Given Word" aka "Keeper of Promises" circa 1962
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Miguel Littin, "El Chacal de Nahueltoro"
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<td>The Films of Jean Renoir (Los Angeles County Museum of Art) 1969</td>
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<td>&quot;Salt of the Earth&quot; press kit, etc. circa 1954</td>
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<td>The Films of Josef Von Sternberg (University of California, Santa Barbara)</td>
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Series 4. Miscellaneous

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<td>National Board of Review of Motion Pictures &quot;Principles For Judging...&quot; 1952</td>
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<td>box 9, folder 2</td>
<td>typed list of short films</td>
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<td>box 9, folder 2</td>
<td>folder of abstract photographs labeled &quot;Bookings&quot;</td>
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<td>Likely press/promotional stills. From Jordan Belson's &quot;Mambo&quot; and the Italian animated short &quot;Paladini&quot;</td>
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<td>box 9, volume 3</td>
<td>misc. catalogs [unfolded]</td>
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<td>Box 10</td>
<td>Joint Estimates of Current Motion Pictures [later called &quot;The Green Sheet&quot; ; unfolded] 1950-1966</td>
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