



Studio Group Archive

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the
Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives, Delaware Art Museum

Acquisition Information

Materials in Box 1 were collected by the Museum, given by the Studio Group, and given by Peter Obbard, 2015; materials in Box 2 were given by Mary Ann Habib, 2010

Extent

1 linear foot

Scope and Contents

The Studio Group Archive is comprised of primarily photocopied pages of a scrapbook dedicated to the Group and its individual members. Active members included: Anne Bennethum, Margaret Callahan, Mildred Edinger, Jeanette Slocumb Edwards, Margaret Eliason, Clara Finkelstein, Emma Ingersoll, Eugenia Eckford Rhoads, Sarah Street. Guest critics and other names mentioned include: Rowland Elzea, Dorothy Grafly, Constance Moore, Hobson Pittman, Henry Pitz, Bruce St. John, Helen Farr Sloan, Ellen duPont Wheelwright. Events documented include Wilmington Art Week and the Clothesline Fair. Box 2 contains a scrapbook produced by members of the Studio Group for Mary B. Larcher.

Access Restrictions

Unrestricted

Contact Information

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Studio Group Archive, Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives, Delaware Art Museum

History of the Studio Group

The Studio Group was founded in 1935 by three friends, Mildred Edinger, Marion Howard, and Eugenia Rhoads. The joy of working together along the Brandywine at Breck's Mill inspired in them the idea of finding a studio where they could work as a group and also benefit from the advice of a critic. Soon, eight other artist friends – Jeannette Slocomb Edwards, Margery Pyle, Ann Bennethum, Betty Boyd, Clara Finkelstein, Margart Callahan, Elizabeth Davis, and Irene Lenher – joined with them in the pursuit of furthering their love of painting and their skill in the arts. It was decided that the group would meet once a week from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., as it continues to do today.

The name "Studio Group" was suggested by Irene Lenher—"studio" because it was a working place and "group" because they worked as a group with a critic and teacher. The group's first studio was located at 1616 Rodney Street in a cluster of studios known as the Bancroft Studios, one of which belonged to Frank Schoonover, a former student of Howard Pyle. The group agreed to sublet one of the studios from Margaret Armstrong for ten dollars a month starting November of 1935, and the friends were on their way toward realizing their dream of sharing the experience of painting and learning. A few months later, however, their sublease was terminated. Jeannette Slocomb Edwards came to the group's rescue and offered them space over the Slocomb Machine Shop. When spring came, the group held a meeting and agreed to continue but to find a new home.

Gordon Young, a real estate agent who was also interested in the arts, helped them find their next studio on the third floor at Third and Market streets. Clara's husband, I.B. Finkelstein, was their landlord. The studio had no heat or electricity, but it did have running water and good light; their rent was \$15.00 a month. For two years the enthusiastic artists braved the lack of amenities in exchange for plenty of space. Expenses were prorated as dues, and this way of dealing with the financial well-being of the group had continued to this day. The eleven women discovered that, although their budget was not large, in order to cover costs they had to find new members. Helen Gangwere, Mary Webster, Buffie Baker, Ellen Davidson, Carol Ramsey Chandler, Sarah Street, Ruth Zimmerti, and Elizabeth Lytel joined them, making their number nineteen.

By June 1938, the climb up three flights of stairs with canvases, paint boxes, etc., had made everyone weary. By a stroke of luck, loyal friend Frank Schoonover told the group that Clifford Ashley, a former Pyle student, was vacating his studio at 1305 North Franklin Street. These studios once belonged to Howard Pyle and had been used for his art school. A committee was appointed to see Arthurs, who owned the entire complex of studios, and he was happy to rent to the group provided that they made good use of the studio and that they never let it become a school or take too much parking space. The members assured him that the group was and would remain an association of congenial spirits endeavoring to become more accomplished in the realm of art. The group moved in September 1938. Once again, there was a need to increase the membership, as Arthurs was asking \$45 a month rent. Those who joined in 1938 were Edna Blatz, Jeanne Sala, Dorothy Hayden, Laura Reynolds, Julia Thurman, Violet Duane, and Mary Staynen. Those who joined between 1939 and 1940 were Katherine Filson, Veronica Carrington Featheroff, Ann Starbuck, Fritzie Costler, Madge Wright, and Helen L. Taylor. The joy of this new and real studio was dampened by the beginning of World War II. During the War years membership dwindled as members resigned to help the war effort. Because of the loss of needed revenue through dues, the group held card parties and gave away paintings as

door prizes to obtain money for rent. Within a year, they had cleared three hundred dollars. Their excess money eventually became the nucleus of the building fund. They also donated money to one of Delaware's war efforts, "Bundles of Britain," an organization which sent money and clothes to Britain.

After the war the Studio Group continued to expand. In 1951, upon Stanley Arthurs' death, Mrs. Robert Wheelwright (who had joined the group in 1944) purchased the Howard Pyle studios to prevent them from being converted to apartment houses. In 1964, when Mrs. Wheelwright decided to sell the studios, the Studio Group purchased the buildings. The mortgage was burned in 1973. Pyle's studio was placed on the National Register of Historic Building and Places in 1978.

Source: *Artists in Wilmington, 1890-1940*. Wilmington, DE: Delaware Art Museum, 1980.

Description of the Collection

Box 1 – Material collected by the Museum and photocopies of scrapbook contents given by the Studio Group

Folder

1 Material collected by the Museum and given by Peter Obbard:

Exhibition catalog: "Studio Group April 24 to May 6 1946. Eugenia Eckford Rhoads [signed in black ink] invites you to the Anniversary Exhibition 1305 Franklin Street. Sunday the 28th 2 to 6"

The Studio Group Handbook, 1948-1949

Manuscript: "The Howard Pyle Studio and the Studio Group, Inc. 1883-1938." Top right hand corner of title page in blue ink "From Mrs. Larchar."

Manuscript: "The Studio Group, Inc."

Magazine article: Rhoads, Eugenia Eckford, "A Master Returns to His Studio: Howard Pyle exhibition in his old workshop begins new era of art education through efforts of Wilmington Studio Group." *Delaware Today* holiday issue 1964, pages 16-17, 22-23. Photographs in article reproduced from Howard Pyle Manuscript Collection, Delaware Art Museum. (2 copies of publication)

Manuscript: "Bright Reflections" by Eugenia Eckford Rhoads, E4155, Wednesday, October 4, 1961.

Newspaper article: Purcell, Gail, "Studio Group Acquires First Permanent Home" *Evening Journal*, Wilmington, DE, December 11, 1964, page 18. (2 original copies)

Bibliography for "Howard Pyle's and Samuel Bancroft's Wilmington: Wilmington, 1840-1915"

Manuscript: "Howard Pyle's Franklin Street Studios" and "Howard Pyle, the Teacher." The Studio Group, Inc., December 2008

Newspaper article: "Crossroads: Art show to benefit Howard Pyle Studio" *The News Journal*, Wilmington, DE, September 4, 2013

Folder

2 Photocopies of contents of Studio Group scrapbook:

Wilmington Art Market, June 3, 1938

Wilmington Art Market, June 3, 1938 – Clothesline fair

First Clothesline 1937 Jeanette Slocumb Edwards, Chairman of Hanging the pictures

Exhibition catalog: 22nd Annual Delaware Artists, Pupils of Howard Pyle, Members of the Society, November 4-23, 1935. Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts, Library Building, Wilmington, Delaware

Newspaper article: "City Studio Group Reelects Leader ... Mrs. Eugenia Rhoads was reelected president ..." unknown publication, no date; "3 Man-Show Starts Monday In Kennett Shop" featuring work of Jean Whitman, sculpture of Peggy Callahan and Maxine McGrew, no date

Exhibition catalog: Delaware Water Color Show Spring 1940 [26th Annual Delaware Exhibition: Watercolors, Drawings and Prints] The Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts, April 1-28. Delaware Art Center, Park Drive at Woodlawn Avenue, Wilmington, Delaware

Exhibition checklist: Fall Exhibition 1938

Exhibition checklist: Studio Group Fall Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Water Colors, December 1, 1937

Critics, 1935-1965 [MacLellan, Charles A.; Homsey, Sam; Vinson, Charles; McCoy, John; Wyeth, Andrew; Schoonover, Frank; Peets, Orville; Rohrer, Warren]

Newspaper articles: "Artists to Bring 'Wares' to City Outdoor Show: Clothesline Exhibit Aided By Studio Group Here; Statewide Demonstrations" *Herald-Tribune*, April 5, 1938; "Art Plan: City Studio Group Shapes Program For the Winter" unknown publication, September 1938

Correspondence: from B. Stafford Good to Mrs. [Eugenie Eckford] Rhoads, October 7, 1940

Correspondence: From Eugenia [Eckford Rhoads] to Anne, May 7, 1940. Key terms: Bennethum, Anne; Clothesline Fair; Good, Stafford; membership; Rehoboth Art League (July 23-August 7, 1940)

Newspaper articles: "Art Plan: City Studio Group Shapes Program For the Winter" unknown publication, September 1938; "Teas Announced With Art Exhibit Of Studio Group" unknown publication, Delaware, December 6, 1938

Exhibition catalog: The Studio Group, 1305 Franklin St., Wilmington, DE Presents an Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture by Clara Finkelstein, March 25 to April 8, 1939 ..." Catalog inscribed: "Dear Mrs. Finkelstein: I think it is swell exhibit. – really. Ralston Crawford"; Includes part of newspaper article: "Woman Artist ... Opens; She ... Mrs. Clara Finkelstein ... Brief Career"; Began ... To College; Has ..."

Brief biography of Clara Finkelstein

Newspaper article: "Tea Reception Tomorrow With Art Exhibition: Sarah Street Paintings to Be Shown by Studio Group" unknown publication, Delaware, November 9, 1940

Correspondence: From Paul L. Gill to Mrs. [Eugenia Eckford] Rhoads, February 19, 1937

Correspondence: From Paul L. Gill to Mrs. [Eugenia Eckford] Rhoads, February 27, 1937

Correspondence: From Paul Domville, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Mrs. [Eugenia Eckford] Rhoads, May 18, 1939

Newspaper article: Purcell, Gail, "Studio Group Acquires First Permanent Home" *Evening Journal*, Wilmington, DE, December 11, 1964, page 18

Newspaper article: "Pyle's Studio Is Purchased: Mrs. Wheelwright Acquires Property Later Used By Stanley M. Arthurs Here." *Journal-Every Evening*, January 13, 1951

Newspaper article: "'Clothesline Fair' Announced as Part of Early Arts Festival: Paintings of Delaware artists will be hung in the 'Clothesline Fair' to be held May 7 and 8 on the steps of the Public Building facing Rodney Square as a part of the annual 'Delaware Festival of the Arts'" unknown publication, no date

Memo: Tentative Calendar of Events of the Studio Group for 1941

List of Part Time Critics – Lecturers

Exhibition catalog: Spring Delaware Show: Water Colors, Drawings, Prints and Illustrations – Water Colors by Paul L. Gill. The Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts, April 3 – 30, 1939

Studio Group, 1935-1965 (Membership attained)

The Studio Group – History 1935-1965

Correspondence: From Anne Nields, Secretary, The British War Relief Society, Inc., Wilmington Branch to Mrs. [Anne] Bennethum, December 2, 1940

Newspaper article: "Tea Reception Tomorrow With Art Exhibition: Sarah Street Paintings to Be Shown by Studio Group" unknown publication, no date; "Aiding Red, White, and Blue Ball: Outstanding in the week's social events here will be the Red, White and Blue Ball to be held on Friday evening in the ballroom of the Hotel DuPont by the Art Academy Auxiliary. Proceeds will benefit the Wilmington Academy of Art and 10 percent of the proceeds will be given to the Wilmington Chapter of the British War Relief Society, Inc. ..." unknown publication, no date

Newspaper article: "Fall Exhibition Of Studio Group Opens With Tea: Many Guests Presented At Affair Arranged by Mrs. O. M. Hayden" *Journal-Every Evening*, Wilmington, Delaware, October 22, 1940; "600 Children a Month See First Gallery at Art Center" *Journal-Every Evening*, Wilmington, Delaware, October 22, 1940

Newspaper article: "Woman Artist Takes Prize In Art Show: Mrs. Davidson Started Her Studies in '37; Delaware Exhibit Opens on Monday" unknown publication, no date

Newspaper article: "Woman Artist's Solo Show Opens; She Started at 40: Mrs. Clara Finkelstein Exhibits Work Done During Brief Career; Began Studies When Her Son Went To College; Has Won Prizes, Scholarship" unknown publication, no date

Newspaper article: "'Clothesline Fair' Draws 250 Pieces of School Art" [1938]; "Art Plan: City Studio Group Shapes Program For the Winter: Paul Domville Will Be Critic and Lecturer In New Season" unknown publication, September 1938

Newspaper article: "Winner of the \$700 Lay Member Prize In The Salmagundi Club Exhibition. Harry Leith-Ross with his painting ..." *The New York ... Photogravure Picture Section*, November 3, 1938

Correspondence: From I. B. Finkelstein, Chairman, Delaware Festival of the Arts Committee to Mrs. [Eugenia Eckford] Rhoads, February 23, 1938

Correspondence: From the Studio Group to Mrs. Morris G. Whiteside, Academy of Art, Wilmington, Delaware, 1938

List: Members of the Studio Group, 1939-40

Correspondence: From Paul Domville, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Mrs. Eugenia Eckford Rhoads, January 23, 1939

Newspaper articles: "Studio Group Has Artists as Guests" Spring 1939; "Studio Artists Group to Have Art Week Show: Works to Be Viewed At Tea Announced For October 30" unknown publication, [1939]

Correspondence: From Eugenia Eckford Rhoads, [Chairman Clothesline Show] to Delaware Artists, March 20, 1940. Rules for exhibitors

Miscellaneous correspondence and lists

Newspaper article: Corty, Susanne P., "Heydays For Artists And Art Lovers" *The Sunday Star*, May 18, 1952, page 9

Newspaper article: "Exhibit By Delaware Artist Draws Throng" unknown publication, no date. [22 annual exhibition of the Delaware Artists, Pupils of Howard Pyle, and Members of the Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts]

The Studio Group – History, 1935-1965

Announcement: "Announcing the Studio Group Twentieth Anniversary Exhibition of Paintings, Watercolors, and Oils, Prints and Sculpture. The Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts, Delaware Art Center

[List of] Presidents [Studio Group], 1936-1966

Newspaper article: "Women Artists Celebrate Their 19th Year as Group: Critics Who Helped Them When They Started Their Work Are Honored Tomorrow and Oct. 14; Early Tribulations Recalled" unknown publication, ...ber 6, 1945

Newspaper article: "Tea Given By Studio Group To Mark 10th Anniversary" unknown publication, no date

Exhibition catalog: Elizabeth Upham Davis, Eleanor Sykes Bartlett. May 28-June 10, 1941

Exhibition catalog: The Studio Group Cordially Invites You To An Exhibition of Water Colors and Oils by Mary P. Webster. February 24-March 9, no date

Newspaper article: "Studio Group Tea Today at Three: Webster Art Exhibit Continues Thur., Fri." unknown publication, no date

Newspaper article: "Public Invited to View Eighty-five Selected Works" unknown publication, November 4, 1945. [32nd Annual Delaware Show, Delaware Art Center]

Newspaper article: Apgar, Dorothea T., "Garden Gallery Provides Art Center at Flower Mart" unknown publication, no date. [Wilmington Flower Market]

Folder

3 *The Studio Group: First Fifty Years*. Wilmington, DE: The Studio Group, Inc., 1988 (2 copies)

Box 2 – Scrapbook produced by members of the Studio Group for Mary B. Larcher (1908-2005) at the time of her retirement from the Group in 1990. Gift of Mary Ann Habib, 2010.

Folder

- 1 Miscellaneous material tipped into Larcher scrapbook, including correspondence, obituaries, and photographs
- 2 30 original works of art produced by members of the Studio Group (items were originally housed in the scrapbook but removed for long-term preservation)

Scrapbook (empty except for note to Larcher written on page 1 and watercolor mounted on page 2)