

**George M. Cohen (1919-1999) Papers, 1948-1999**

**Series 11/3/3/4**

**Boxes 1-7**

**Biography**

George M. Cohen, painter and art professor, was born in Chicago, Illinois on August 4, 1919. He studied at the Art Institute of Chicago, where he was awarded the Isaacs Scholarship in 1938-39 and the Coolbaugh Scholarship in 1939-1940. He also served as the President of the Art Students League in 1940. His academic career was interrupted between 1941 and 1946 while he served in the U.S. Army with the 63<sup>rd</sup> Reconnaissance Troop in the European Theatre of Operations. After completing his B.F.A. at the Chicago Art Institute in 1946, Cohen briefly attended Drake University, where he studied Liberal Arts. At the University of Chicago, he completed residence work toward an M.A. and a Ph.D. in the History of Art from 1946-48.

In 1948 Cohen joined the Northwestern University faculty as an instructor of art. He was promoted to assistant professor of art in 1952 and to associate professor in 1958. He became a full professor in 1963, a position he held until his retirement in 1984, when he became professor emeritus. As guest professor or guest artist, Cohen also taught at the Contemporary Art Workshop in Chicago in 1951, the Institute of Related Art in Wilmette in 1951, the Evanston Art Center from 1951-52, the Institute of Design, Illinois Institute of Technology from 1956-57, and the Minneapolis Museum of Art, 1963.

At Northwestern University, Cohen was a President's Fellow and Distinguished Faculty Lecturer. His numerous awards included the Copley Award, the National Foundation of the Arts Award, a Ford Arts Council Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship and the State of Illinois 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Award.

Cohen worked in oils and mixed media. A Northwestern University "Faculty Profile" describes Cohen as "a surrealist" who "combines the metaphysical with the sensuous to express new realities of space, time, and the human figure." Cohen was a founding member of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. In the mid-fifties, he was also a part of a "new Chicago School" which included artists Leon Golub, June Leaf and Cosmo Campoli. They organized annual "Momentum Exhibitions" that caught the notice of New York critics. (See clippings from *Art News*, October, 1955; *Arts*, January, 1955.)

Cohen wrote many articles and reviews for various publications. He had many one-person shows and participated in numerous invitational exhibitions. His work can be found in permanent collections, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Art, the Carnegie Mellon Museum in Pittsburgh, the Minneapolis Museum of American Arts and the Hirschhorn Collection in Washington, D.C.

Cohen was married to the painter Constance Teander Cohen, who died in 1995. They often showed their work together in exhibits. He had a son, Paul Cohen and two daughters, Frances Tietov and Susan Evans. Cohen died on April 18, 1999.

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**Description of the Series, Boxes 1-2**

The George M. Cohen papers fill two boxes and span the period 1951-1999. The papers fall into six categories: biographical materials, exhibit announcements and catalogs, correspondence, research files, education files, and papers.

The biographical materials are arranged chronologically and include curricula vitae, clippings, news releases, and obituaries. Clippings include articles relating both to Cohen's academic life at Northwestern University and to his career as an artist.

Announcements of Cohen's exhibits, and exhibit catalogs, are arranged chronologically. One folder is devoted to the catalogs of and clippings from *The New Vein: The Human Figure*, 1963-1968. This exhibition was assembled by Constance Perkins, Professor of Art at Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA. It included thirty works from ten artists, including Cohen. The exhibit traveled to Europe and Latin America. The works dealt with images of the human figure.

Both the incoming and outgoing correspondence is arranged chronologically by date. It pertains mainly to salary issues.

The research files fill four folders and consist of undated notes on paper and on index cards. A fifth folder includes undated notes titled "Illusion and Matter".

The education files consist of three undated notebooks containing notes from courses Cohen took. One is titled "Renaissance." Another is titled "Oriental Art." The third notebook is not titled.

The final section includes papers about or by Cohen. A mimeographed, undated manuscript by Ruth Gustafson, perhaps intended for publication in a Swedish journal, is titled "George Cohen: An American Artist." Aside from one published piece from the *College Art Journal*, papers written by Cohen bear neither titles nor dates.

**Provenance:** The George M. Cohen Papers were donated to the University Archives by Frances Tietov on February 23, 2000, as Accession No. 00-57. Material from the University Archives' Biographical Files was incorporated into this series.

**Separations:** Two photographs of Cohen were removed and added to the University Archives' Photographic Files. An inch of duplicate materials was discarded.

**Restrictions:** none

**Processor:** Kerry Quealy, March 2000

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**Description of the Additions, Boxes 3-7**

This addition to the George M. Cohen Papers spans the years 1948 to 1999 and is organized into the following categories: biographical materials, exhibit announcements and catalogs, correspondence, education files, papers, and material relating specifically to Cohen's wife, the artist Constance Cohen. Correspondence makes up the bulk of the addition.

The **biographical materials** are arranged chronologically, and include curricula vitae, clippings, grants and awards. The clippings relate to both Cohen's academic life at Northwestern University, and to his professional life as a painter. The **exhibit announcements and catalogs** span the years 1948 to 1999 and document Cohen's professional career.

The correspondence files date from the early 1940s through the late 1990s. **General correspondence** is arranged chronologically by decade. **Subject correspondence** is organized alphabetically, with the contents of each folder arranged chronologically. The many **greeting cards** that the Cohens received are foldered separately from other correspondence, and are arranged alphabetically by the name of the sender. Subject folders include professional and personal correspondence, including numerous letters of recommendation. Of particular interest are letters and cards Cohen sent to Jack and Irene Oppenheim while in Rome during the first half of the 1960s.

Note: For more correspondence between Cohen and his circle of faculty friends, see the Walter B. Scott Papers (Series 20/29) and the Harrison Hayford Papers (Series 11/3/11/34).

**Education files** fill three folders and include undated class notes from Cohen's school days, as well as teaching notes.

**Papers and Writings** include Cohen's dissertation on eighteenth century French drawing for the University of Chicago, lectures, and personal writing, much of it undated.

**Constance Cohen's** papers include biographical materials, clippings, exhibit announcements and catalogs, and correspondence, including a number of letters written to the Oppenheims.

**Provenance:** These additions to the George M. Cohen Papers were donated to the University Archives by Frances Tietov as Accession Numbers 00-204, 00-244, and 00-264 on June 30, August 16, and October 2, 2000, respectively; by Paul Cohen as Accession Number 01-102 on July 13, 2001; and by Frances Tietov as Accession Number 02-140 on October 1, 2002.

**Restrictions:** Recommendation letters in Box 5, Folder 2 are restricted and cannot be viewed without the permission of the University Archivist.

**Separations:** Materials relating to Richard Ellmann and Walter Scott were transferred to the Richard Ellmann Papers (Series 11/3/11/26) and the Walter B. Scott Papers (Series 20/29). Photographs were separated and transferred to the Archives' General Photographic collection and five inches of duplicate and extraneous papers were discarded.

**Processor:** Chinedu Iloabachie, summer 2001. Revised Fall 2003 by Dan Schwerin.

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**Container List**

<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
		<b>Biographical Materials</b>	
1	1	Personal Data	1958-1968
	2	Clippings	1955-1964
	3	Clippings	1965-1994
	4	Northwestern News Releases	1953-1974
	5	Other New Releases	1963-1968
	6	Obituaries	1999
		<b>Exhibit Announcements and Catalogs</b>	
	7	Appearance Announcements	1951-1968
	8	Exhibit Announcements	1955-1962
	9	Exhibit Announcements	1963-1967
	10	Exhibit Announcements	1968-1991
	11	Exhibit Announcements	n.d.
	12	Exhibit Catalogs	1960-1969
	13	<i>The New Vein: The Human Figure</i> Catalogs	1963-1968
		<b>Correspondence</b>	
	14	General Correspondence	1957-1970
	15	Northwestern Correspondence	1974-1978
		<b>Research Files</b>	
2	1	Notes	n.d.
	2	Notes	n.d.
	3	Notes	n.d.
	4	Notes	n.d.
	5	Notes-“Illusion and Matter”	n.d.
		<b>Education Files</b>	
	6	Three Notebooks	n.d.
		<b>Papers</b>	
	7	“George Cohen: An American Artist” by Ruth Gustafson	n.d.
	8	Published/Unpublished Papers	1956, n.d.

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<b>Biographical Materials</b>			
3	1	Personal Data	1965-1987
	2	Awards and Grants	1952-1976
	3	Clippings	1951-1994
	4	Northwestern Library News Letter	1960-1965
<b>Exhibit Announcements and Catalogs</b>			
	5	Appearance Announcements and Invitations	1948-1992
	6	Exhibit Announcements (George Cohen)	1958-1998
	7	Exhibit Catalogs (George Cohen)	1950-1985
	8	Address Books	n.d.
<b>Correspondence</b>			
4	1	General Correspondence	1940s
	2	General Correspondence	1950s
	3	General Correspondence	1960s
	4	General Correspondence	1970s
	5	General Correspondence	1980s
	6	General Correspondence	1990s
	7	General Correspondence	n.d.
<b>Subject Correspondence</b>			
	8	Alan Gallery	1957-1959
	9	Backstrom, Lars	1962-1963
	10	Boothby, William and Ruth	1982-1994
	11	Guggenheim Fellowship Correspondence	1973-1974
	12	Michael Findlay Gallery	1974-1976
	13	Museum of Modern Art	1956-1962
	14	Northwestern University	1949-1984
	15	Oppenheim, Jack and Irene, from Rome	1961-1964
5	1	Professional Correspondence	1956-1990
	2	Recommendations RESTRICTED	1962-1992
	3	Richard Feigen Gallery	1959-1974
	4	Seaberg, Ronnog and Steve	1964-1998
	5	Walter Scott	1962-1975
	6	Zabriskie Gallery	1957

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<b><u>Box</u></b>	<b><u>Folder</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
		<b>Greeting Cards</b>	
5	7	Cards A-F	1959-1999
	8	Cards G-R	1950-1999
6	1	Cards S-W	1954-1998
		<b>Education Files</b>	
	2	Class notes	n.d.
	3	Lecture Notes: B 70	1972-1981
	4	Lecture Notes: B2, C2, C5	n.d.
		<b>Papers and Writings</b>	
	5	Dissertation	1946-1948
	6	Lectures	n.d.
	7	Personal writing	n.d.
		<b>Constance Cohen</b>	
7	1	Biographical Materials	n.d.
	2	Clippings	1957-1999
	3	Correspondence, personal (Oppenheims)	1965-1966
	4	Correspondence, professional	1960-1995
	5	Exhibit Announcements (Constance Cohen)	1956-1995
	6	Exhibit Catalogs (Constance Cohen)	1963-1995