St. Louis Artists’ Guild Collection
(S0070)

Collection Number: S0070

Collection Title: St. Louis Artists’ Guild Collection

Dates: 1907-1976

Creator: St. Louis Artists’ Guild

Abstract: The St. Louis Artists’ Guild is one of the oldest extant art organizations in the country and one of the few which maintains its own building and galleries. The Guild sponsors annual art exhibition competitions and provides education in many artistic varieties. The materials consist of minutes, catalogs, correspondence, "Book of Hours," indenture deed, and programs, including those of Little Theater of St. Louis.

Collection Size: 0.25 cubic foot
(10 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis. If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] St. Louis Artists’ Guild Collection (S0070); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the University of Missouri by Mrs. Fred Green on April 1, 1972 (Accession No. SA0108).

Historical Note:

The St. Louis Artists’ Guild was founded in 1886 by a group of art students attending Washington University School of Art, known as the St. Louis Sketch Club. The original group was made up entirely of men, but was committed to including women as well. They formed the St. Louis Artists’ Guild, a separate organization, committed to admitting women. The Guild was originally formed with the mission to encourage excellence in art, inspire artistic expression, develop art appreciation, and present the works of artists.

In 1905, the Guild became incorporated, and in 1907 an indenture deed was signed between Mr. & Mrs. Frederick William Lehmann and the Guild’s officers to buy and build their first permanent building at 812 North Union Street in St. Louis. The building housed galleries, a theatre, and also doubled as their meeting place. During the 1930’s many of Tennessee Williams’ early plays were performed on the St. Louis Artists’ Guild’s stage while he was a student at Washington University. The Guild remained at this location until 1973, when they sold the building on Union Street and purchased a three-story building at 277 East Lockwood in Webster Groves.

Sixteen years later, in 1989, the Guild signed a lease with the City of Clayton for the occupancy of the stone mansion at #2 Oak Knoll Park. For six years, the Guild raised funds until they enough money to renovate the old mansion, which began in 1995. The renovations included four floors with expanded gallery spaces, a public art library, studio space, offices, and a conference room. Twenty years later, the Guild made their last move to 12 North Jackson Avenue in Downtown Clayton, where they currently occupy what used to be the Famous Barr Department store.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into ten folders according to original order.

Scope and Content Note:

The St. Louis Artists’ Guild Collection contains bylaws, correspondence, brochures, histories, meeting minutes, newsletters, and pamphlets relating to the Guild’s governance and operations. Materials of note include Guild histories; programs involving the St. Louis Little Theatre, a group within the Guild; and St. Louis Community Playhouse, a separate theatre organization. The materials also include an indenture deed allowing the Guild to build their first headquarters. Additionally, the collection documents the history of art in St. Louis through brochures, pamphlets, and newsletters on art exhibitions, art education, and theatre productions. The materials in this collection date from 1907 to 1976 and are arranged according to original order.

Container List:

f. 1 Deed and bylaws, 1907-1975
f. 2 Book of hours, 1959-1972
f. 3 Correspondence, 1965-1969
f. 4 Exhibitions and brochures, 1930-1973
f. 5 Histories and brochures, 1930-1973
f. 6 Little Theater, St. Louis Community Playhouse, 1934-1946
f. 7 Publicity, 1920-1971
f. 8  Meeting minutes, 1964-1970
f. 9  Special Events, 1949-1976
f. 10  Newsletters and pamphlets, 1975-1976

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