



Guide to Research at the MFAH Archives

Photography

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston collection includes more than 22,000 photographs dating from the mid-19th century to the present day. In addition, the museum's Archives houses a photograph collection of more than 219,000 images that document the exhibition, architectural and programming history of the institution. An additional 65,000 photographic images reside in manuscript collections. Many of these images are available in digital format and include people, events, buildings and installations. The Archives also has available for research the papers of photography collector Manfred Heiting, the records of the curatorial department, and the records of exhibitions and photography-related programming.

- MFAH Archives Photograph Collection

The Archives Photograph Collection contains more than 219,000 images, many of which are available in digital format. Photographic material may be reproduced in accordance with copyright laws. Contact the Archives at 713-639-7733 for more information.

- Curatorial Department, Photography record group

RG04:06

[CuratorialRecordsPhotography](#)

In 1976, Anne Wilkes Tucker was named consultant in charge of the newly created photography department. The records in this series reflect the development of the department from its founding, its collection development policy, and the collection itself.

- Robert Frank files

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[Robert Frank files](#)

Robert Frank is a Swiss-born American photographer and filmmaker whose influence is felt internationally. Through works such as *The Americans* and *Pull My Daisy*, Frank established himself as a key figure in modern photography and avant-garde independent film. This series consists of records documenting the museum's exhibition *Robert Frank: New York to Nova Scotia* (February 15 - April 27, 1986) and the MFAH documentary *Fire in the East: A Portrait of Robert Frank*. It includes video interviews with people such as Allen Ginsberg, Emile de Antonio, Jonas Mekas, and Rudy Wurlitzer as well as Robert Frank. Paper records include correspondence; drafts of essays and other manuscripts; film scripts; transcripts of interviews; reviews and articles from newspapers and magazines; invitation lists and invitations; grant applications and supporting documents; and press kit materials.

- Songs of My People exhibition archives

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[SongsofmyPeopleExhibitionarchives](#)

The "Songs of My People" Archive of New African Vision chronicles the international photography exhibition, publication, and video of the same name. This extensive archive, received from New African Visions Director, D. Michael Cheers, consists primarily of photographic material documenting the project that, in 1990, dispatched fifty photographers to chronicle the African American experience throughout the United States. Among the photographers were Pulitzer prize winners Ozier Muhammad, John H. White, Keith Williams and Matthew Lewis. All images from the publication and exhibitions are included, as well as extensive photography created in the course of the project. The Archive also includes exhibition files

consisting of clippings, press releases, and itineraries, as well as Director's records and video footage of interviews and events.

- Manfred Heiting papers

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[ManfredHeitingPapers](#)

Heiting, named one of America's top 100 art collectors by *Art & Antiques* magazine in 2003, worked for Polaroid (1965-1983) and American Express International Inc. (1984-1994), which afforded him access to the major photographers of the day. In 1983, he cofounded Fotografie Forum Frankfurt, which he ran until 1993. He was also cofounder of the Fotografie Museum Amsterdam/FOAM and served on the board of many nonprofits including the George Eastman House. He produced numerous exhibitions for Fotokina and authored, edited, published and was the subject of a variety of books and catalogues including *At the Still Point: Photographs from the Manfred Heiting Collection*.

The papers document the research of Manfred Heiting, renowned photography collector, over a period of thirty years. The Heiting collection includes photographs from every major photographer as well as a record of the development of the art of photography. The papers include information on Heiting's professional life as well as correspondence with artists and galleries.

- Eye on Third Ward

[Eye on Third Ward](#)

In one of the museum's most admired and successful education initiatives, photography students from Jack Yates High School document the cultural fabric of Houston's historic Third Ward community. Remarkable artistic talents emerge as these teenagers walk through the neighborhoods capturing candid images of day-to-day life. MFAH staff members select the best photographs for display in an annual exhibition. Started in 1995, *Eye on Third Ward* continues to inspire museum visitors along with the participants. Exhibition information is available through the online exhibition database and in files in the Archives.

- Search the online [exhibition](#) database for photography exhibitions using keywords or photographer names. Searching the exhibition database will yield information on exhibitions such as *The Great Wall of China: Photographs by Chen Changfen* (2007), *Americanos: Latino Life in the United States* (2002) and *Robert Frank: A Retrospective from the Collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston* (2001). Select exhibition finding aids are also available on line, including: *Tradition and the Unpredictable: The Allan Chasanoff Photographic Collection, 1991-1994* ([ChasanoffExhibition](#)), *Crimes and Splendors: The Desert Cantos of Richard Misrach* ([MisrachExhibition](#)), and *Brassai: The Eye of Paris, 1985-1999* ([BrassaiExhibition](#)). Other finding aids are available in print at the Archives. Extensive exhibition files exist for many exhibitions.