

Collection #
M 1088

LORENA PHEMISTER MATERIALS CA. 1925-2005

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Series Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

Kate Scott
June 2014

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 manuscript box, 1 graphics box, 1 photograph folder, 1 color photograph folder, 2 OVB folders, 2 OVA folders

COLLECTION DATES: ca. 1925-2005

PROVENANCE: Elsie J. DesJean, Indianapolis

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS:

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2006.0478

NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lorena Phemister was born 26 February 1920 in Indianapolis. She attended Arsenal Technical High School, graduating with honors in 1938. She subsequently attended the art school of the John Herron Art Institute from 1938 to 1943, and was awarded several scholarships. After receiving her BFA from Herron, she spent two years at the University of Iowa, obtaining an MFA in 1945. Phemister then taught art at St. Francis College (1946–47) and Mishawaka High School (1948–50) before returning to teach at Arsenal Technical High School in 1951. She spent the remainder of her teaching career there, retiring in 1984.

Phemister was active as an artist from childhood through the 1950s, and participated in state and regional exhibitions such as the Hoosier Salon and the Indiana State Fair. Her paintings are modernist, reflecting the styles of Regionalist artists such as Thomas Hart Benton as well as that of Pablo Picasso's figurative works. After Phemister's father's death in 1956, she gave up painting outside of her teaching work. She kept most of her paintings until 2004, when her personal collection sold for over \$25,000 at auction, well above previous estimates. Phemister died 16 August 2005 in Indianapolis.

Sources:

Collection Materials, including *The Indianapolis Star* 22 November 2004 and *Antiques and the Arts Weekly* 10 December 2004.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of materials belonging to artist and educator Lorena Phemister. The first series is defined as Personal Materials, including penmanship, poetry, and autograph books from Phemister's childhood; school and employment documents; news clippings; a few pieces of correspondence; several photographs; postcards of Arsenal Technical High School; and biographical information compiled by her cousin Elsie J. DesJean.

Comprising the second series are printed materials such as course catalogs and exhibition pamphlets. Also part of the second series are editions of *The John Herron Art School Chronicle* spanning the years 1937–56 and a 1933 softcover volume by David Laurance Chambers titled *A Hoosier History Based on the Mural Paintings of Thomas Hart Benton*. Chambers' book details the symbolism of the murals Benton initially created for the Indiana Hall at the 1933 Chicago World's Fair; in 1940 the state donated the murals to Indiana University, where they were installed in IU Auditorium.

A number of Phemister's artworks comprise the third series. Most prominently represented are drawings and small paintings from her childhood.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Personal Materials

CONTENTS

Penmanship Practice Book, n.d.

Arsenal Technical High School Postcards, n.d.

Arsenal Technical High School, n.d.

Photograph of Life Drawing Class, n.d.

School and Employment Documents, 1928–53

Autograph Book, 1929

News Clippings, 1930s–2004

Poetry Scrapbook, ca. 1933–34

Correspondence, 1940–47

Lorena Phemister, ca. 2000

Biographical Documents, 2000s

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Graphics
Box 1, Folder 1

OVB Photographs
Folder 1

Photographs
Folder 1 of 1

Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

Graphics
Box 1, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 5

Color Photographs
Folder 1 of 1

Box 1, Folder 6

Series 2: Printed Materials

CONTENTS

A Hoosier History Based on the Mural Paintings of Thomas Hart Benton, David Laurance Chambers, 1933

John Herron Art Institute Course Catalogs, 1937–45

The John Herron Art School Chronicle, 1937–56

Exhibition Pamphlets, 1943–48

Exhibition Pamphlets, 1948–49

Exhibition Pamphlets, 1951–57

CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 7

Box 1, Folder 8

Box 1, Folder 9

Box 1, Folder 10

Box 1, Folder 11

Box 1, Folder 12

Series 3: Artworks

CONTENTS

Childhood Artworks, n.d. (1 of 2)

Childhood Artworks, n.d. (2 of 2)

Childhood Artworks, n.d.

“Hickory Dickory Dock” Illustration, ca. 1933–34

Design Portfolio, n.d.

Artworks, n.d.

CONTAINER

Graphics
Folder 3

Graphics
Folder 4

OVA Graphics
Folder 1

OVB Graphics
Folder 1

OVA Graphics
Folder 2

Graphics
Folder 5

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 1088).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.