

2012

Friedolin Edward Kessler Art Collection

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Friedolin Edward Kessler Art Collection



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Title: Friedolin Edward Kessler Art Collection

Identifier/Call Number: MSS.2012.09.28

Contributing Institution: SJSU Special Collections & Archives

Language of Material: English

Physical Description: 1.0 folio file drawers

Date (bulk): Bulk, 1935-1938

Date (inclusive): 1935-1977

Abstract: Artist, Friedolin Kessler (1913-1995) was born in St. Louis, Missouri and studied art at Washington University in St. Louis. Following art school he settled in California, initially working as an artist for the Civil Conservation Corps (CCC). With his wife Carol, he co-founded the San Jose Art League, and he taught art at San Jose State and at Stanford. The Friedolin Kessler Art Collection represents some of the art work he produced over his life-time. The collection consists of 35 10x8 linoleum block prints, 4 12-14, linoleum block prints, a California Mission Greeting Cards book consisting of 21 6x8 linoleum prints of all of the missions in the state, and four exhibit poster boards highlighting the work of the San Jose Art League through Mercury News Clippings dated between 1940-1977. The 10x8 prints document famous landmarks in Santa Clara County, including the famous light tower, Stanford Memorial Chapel, Santa Clara University, Alum Rock Part, Santa Clara Court House, and the California State Capitol Building in San Jose, San Jose Normal School, and the Winchester House. The 12x14 prints relate to the work of the CCC. The California Mission Greeting Cards book describes Kessler's bicycle journey across California to capture the missions through photography and sketches, which he used to produce the linoleum prints. His forte was linoleum block printing, but he also created mosaics, painted in oil and acrylic, and was talented wood artist. Kessler died in San Jose on Sept. 28, 1995.

Physical Location: Vault 1, Folio File, Drawer 4.03

Access

The collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

Friedolin Edward Kessler Art Collection, MSS-2012-09-28, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Danelle Moon. Finding aid created in the Archivist Toolkit.

Biographical History

Artist, Friedolin Kessler (1913-1995) was born in St. Louis, Missouri on July 12, 1913, the only son of Czech and German parents. At age 16 he entered art school at Washington University in St. Louis. After he graduated he joined the Missouri Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and in 1936 with his camp he was relocated to California. The camp settled in the New Almaden Quicksilver County Park. As the resident artist of the camp he was hired to document life in the CCC. His forte was linoleum cuts, but he also worked with oil and acrylic, as well as having talent in wood art and mosaics. In 1938 he took a bicycle trip visiting every California Mission in the state, which he sketched and photographed and later produced beautiful linoleum cuts of each mission. The resulting prints were exhibited around California and at the World's Fair in Treasure Island and the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco.

Kessler spent the majority of his life San Jose and became a well-known artist in the area. In 1938 with his wife Carol, he co-founded the San Jose Art League, and taught art at San Jose State and at Stanford. The combined artwork of the Kessler's spanned 70 years. The Kessler's were avid hikers and back-packed up Mt. Whitney with friends Allen and Cindy Perry. The Perry's helped care for Carol for many years as well as Friedolin, who died of cancer in 1995 at the age of 82. They had no children.

Related Material

Civilian Conservation Corps Collection, MSS-2010-07-29, San José State University Library Special Collections & Archives. http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt1t1nd9tb/entire_text/

Scope and Content of Collection

Friedolin Kessler Linoleum Art Collection consists of 35 10x8 linoleum block prints, 4 12x14, linoleum block prints, a California Mission Cards book consisting of 21 6x8 linoleum prints of all of the missions in the state, and four exhibit panels highlighting the work of the San Jose Art League through Mercury News Clippings dated between 1940-1977. The 10x8 prints document famous landmarks in Santa Clara County, including the famous light tower, Stanford Memorial Chapel, Santa Clara College, Alum Rock Part, Santa Clara Court House, and the California State Capitol Building in San Jose, San Jose Normal School, and the Winchester House. The 12x14 prints relate to the work of the Civil Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. The California Mission Greeting Cards book describes Kessler's bicycle journey across California to capture the missions through photography and sketches, which he used to produce the linoleum prints. Kessler came to California as an artist working for the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1935 and in 1938 he and his wife Carol co-founded the San Jose Art League. He also taught art at San Jose State and at Stanford University. His forte was linoleum block printing, but he also painted in oil and acrylic, and had a talent in mosaics and wood art. Kessler died in San Jose on Sept. 28, 1995.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged by format and ordered alphabetically into three series: Series I: Linoleum Block Prints, 1935-1938; Series II: California Missions Greeting Cards; Series III: San Jose Art League Exhibit Poster Boards.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Kessler, Friedolin Edward, 1913-1995

Art -- California -- San José

Linoleum block-printing, American

Series I: Linoleum Block Prints, 1935-1938

Physical Description: 1.0 Folio Drawers

Scope and Content of Series

This series consists of forty-seven linoleum block prints (thirty-five 10x8 four 12x14). The 10x8 prints document famous landmarks in Santa Clara County, including the famous light tower, Stanford Memorial Chapel, Santa Clara University, Alum Rock Part, Santa Clara Court House, and the California State Capitol Building in San Jose, San Jose Normal School, and the Winchester House. The 12x14 prints depict Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers, including that of a CCC boy, a fire-line, forest conservation and youth conservation workers. Kessler joined the CCC in Missouri and his unit was transferred to California, settling in the New Almaden Quicksilver County Park. He became the resident camp artist and the CCC images represent the forcefulness of New Deal art.

Arrangement

This series is arranged by title.

Folder 1, Early Automobile in San Jose 1938

Folder 2, Auzerais House 1938

Folder 3, Alum Rock Park 1938

Folder 4, California's First State Capitol, San Jose 1938

Folder 5, Electric Tower—San Jose 1938

Folder 6, Horse Car on the Alameda 1938

Folder 7, Lick Observatory 1938

Folder 8, Mission San Francisco de Asis, Delores 1938

Folder 9, Santa Clara College 1938

Folder 10, Santa Clara County Court House 1938

Folder 11, San Jose State Normal School 1938

Folder 12, Stanford Memorial Chapel 1938

Folder 13, YWCA—San Jose 1938

Folder 14, Winchester Mystery House 1938

Folder 15, "CCC Boy," 12x14 1935

Folder 16, "The Fireline" 12x14 1935

Folder 17, "Forest Conservation," 12x 14 1935

Folder 18, "Youth Conservation," 12x14 1935

Series II: California Missions Greeting Cards Book, 1938

Scope and Content of Series

This series consists of Kessler's bicycle journey across California in 1938 where he sketched and photographed every mission from Sonoma to San Diego. He spent a full year creating linoleum cuts of each mission. Each of the missions are represented in a hard-bound wood sample book entitled "The California Missions Greeting Cards Book," and the resulting prints were exhibited in California and at the World's Fair in Treasure Island, and the Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. The book consists of 22 pages and each linoleum cut includes the name of the mission.

Page 1, Mission Santa Clara de Asis 1938

Page 2, Mission San Carlos de Berrmeo Carmel 1938

Page 3, Mission San Jose 1938

Page 4, Mission San Miguel Arcangel 1938

Page 5, Mission San Juan Bautista

Page 6, Mission San Buenaventura 1938

Page 7, Mission Santa Barbara 1938

Page 8, Mission San Fernando Rey 1938

Page 9, Mission San Louis Rey 1938

Page 10, Mission La Purisima Concepcion 1938

Page 11, Mission Santa Cruz 1938

Page 12, Mission Santa Inez 1938

Page 13, Mission San Diego de Allcala 1938

Page 14, Mission San Juan Capistrano 1938

Page 15, Mission San Francisco de Asis, Delores 1938

Page 16, Mission Asistencia San Antonia de Pala

Page 17, Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa 1938

Page 18, Mission San Gabriel Arcangel 1938

Page 19, Mission San Antonio de Padua 1938

Page 20, Royal Presidio Chapel, Monterey 1938

Page 21, Mission Soledad 1938

Page 22, Mission San Francisco Solona 1938

Series III: San Jose Art League Exhibit Poster Boards, 1940-1977

Language of Material: English

Scope and Content of Series

This final series consists of four exhibit posters highlighting the work of the San Jose Art League through Mercury News clippings dated between the years 1940-1977.

Exhibit Poster Boards 1940-1977