

**Schools of The Metropolitan
Museum of Art Records, 1879-1895**
Finding aid prepared by Aleksandr Gelfand, Archives Intern

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Summary Information

Repository	The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives
Title	Schools of The Metropolitan Museum of Art Records, 1879-1895
Dates	1879-1895
Extent	1.5 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Metropolitan Museum of Art undertook its first educational venture during the winter of 1879-1880 when it established a school to provide vocational training in woodworking and metalworking. This first school was funded by a \$50,000 contribution from Gideon F.T. Reed. Over the next 15 years the school's name was changed numerous times, in part a reflection of changing ideas about education held by Metropolitan Museum Trustees. Among names used were Industrial Art Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Technical Art Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum Art Schools and The Metropolitan Museum of Art Schools. Throughout this period the Museum's school was supervised by a manager under the direction of a Committee on Art Schools, which in turn reported to the Metropolitan's Board of Trustees. The schools operated from several locations over the years, including 31 Union Square, 1st Avenue between 67th and 68th Streets, 214-216 East 34th Street, and the basement of the main Museum building on 5th Avenue and 82nd Street. The initial focus of the curriculum was technical education, but the program evolved to include training in the fine arts. The Trustees ceased operation of the school program in spring 1895. Records include account books with tuition information from students, minutes of the Committee on Art Schools, copy books of correspondence sent by the Schools, bills and payment information, and prospectuses of courses offered.</p>

Preferred Citation

[Title of item], [date of item], Box [number], Folder [number], Schools of The Metropolitan Museum of Art Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.

Historical Note

The Metropolitan Museum of Art undertook its first educational venture during the winter of 1879-1880 when it established a school to provide vocational training in woodworking and metalworking. This first school was funded by a \$50,000 contribution from Gideon F.T. Reed, former partner of Tiffany and Co., with organizational assistance from Edward Moore, a silversmith. Over the next 15 years the school's name was changed numerous times, in part a reflection of changing ideas about education held by Metropolitan Museum Trustees. Among names used were Industrial Art Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Technical Art Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum Art Schools and The Metropolitan Museum of Art Schools. The schools were supervised by a succession of managers under the direction of a Committee on Art Schools, which in turn reported to the Metropolitan's Board of Trustees. Managers included John Buckingham, John Ward Stimson, Arthur L. Tuckerman and Arthur Pennington.

The first location of the Schools was the third floor of 31 Union Square, on the northwest corner of Broadway and 16th Street. Free classes in woodwork and metalwork met twice weekly in the evening. In 1880, Richard T. Auchmuty, a proponent of trade schools, offered the Museum rent-free use of a building he had newly erected on 1st Avenue between 67th and 68th Streets. His only condition was that students be charged a nominal tuition of \$5 or \$8 per semester, depending on whether they took day or evening classes. Prior to this classes had been free. At the 1st Avenue location 143 students studied drawing and design, modeling and carving, carriage drafting, decoration in distemper and plumbing. The school soon relocated to the upper floors of the Glass Hall building, 214-216 East 34th Street, where it remained until 1887. At this location elementary classes were added and the number of teachers was increased. The following year the school moved once again to 797-799 3rd Avenue.

Despite significant contributions from Museum Trustees -- including a \$30,000 gift from Museum President Henry G. Marquand -- the school was financially challenged through much of its existence. In an 1889 cost-cutting move, the school relocated into the basement of the Museum building on 5th Avenue and 82nd Street. There the curriculum evolved to encompass the fine arts; course offerings included antique, life and still life painting, architecture, ornamental design, illustration and sculpture. In 1892 advance courses were instituted and prominent artist John La Farge was hired as instructor.

Two years later, because of increased expenses, all elementary courses were discontinued and the advanced painting class was cancelled soon after. Museum Trustees ceased operation of the school program in spring 1895. Early in the 20th century the Trustees recommitted the Museum to a pedagogic mission by establishing an Education Department focused on a collections-based fine arts instruction.

Scope and Contents

The collection contains administrative and promotional materials generated by the Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art spanning the period of 1880-1895. Among the items in the collection are account books with tuition information from students, minutes of the Committee on Art Schools, copy books of correspondence sent by the Schools, bills and payment information, and prospectuses of courses offered.

Arrangement

The Schools of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Records consist of a single series arranged in alphabetical order.

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

Consult archives staff regarding permission to quote or reproduce.

Custodial History

Transferred to Museum Archives, date unknown.

Processing Information

Items mounted on cardboard have been photocopied and, where possible, separated from their backing for preservation and ease of use.

Related Materials

Related Archival Materials

Art Schools Files, Office of the Secretary Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.

Indexing Terms

Subjects - People

- Hoe, Robert Jr.
- La Farge, John, 1835-1910
- Reed, Gideon F. T.
- Tuckerman, Arthur Lyman, 1861-1892
- Ware, William R.

Subjects - Topics

- Industrial arts--United States
- Museums -- Educational aspects -- United States

Schools of The Metropolitan Museum of Art Records

Collection Inventory

Schools of The Metropolitan Museum of Art Records

Box	Volume	
3	1	Account Book. 1885-1886
3	2	Account Book. 1886-1887
3	3	Account Book. 1887-1888
3	4	Account Book. 1888-1889
3	5	Account Book. 1891-1892
	Folder	
3	1	Account Book -- Loose Material. 1886-1887
3	2	Account Book -- Loose Material. 1883-1888
1	1	Announcement of Establishment. January 1880
1	2	Art Lectures and Other Miscellaneous. 1883-1889
3	3	Blank Mounted Checks. 1888
	Volume	
2	1	Checkbook. Undated
	Folder	
1	3	Correspondence -- Committee Minutes and Reports. 1881-1884
1	4	Correspondence -- Financial. 1880-1881
	Volume	
1	1	Correspondence -- Letter Book. 1880-1883
1	2	Correspondence -- Letter Book. 1888-1894
1	3	Minutes. 1880-1881
1	4	Minutes. 1881-1882
1	5	Minutes. 1883-1884
3	7	Minutes. 1888-1894
	Folder	
1	5	New York Daily Graphic Image. Circa 1879-1880
3	4	New York Daily Graphic Image (Oversize). Circa 1879-1880
1	6	Prospectus. 1880, 1881-1882
1	7	Prospectus. 1882-1883
1	8	Prospectus. 1883-1884
1	9	Prospectus. 1884-1885
1	10	Prospectus. 1886-1887
1	11	Prospectus. 1888-1889
2	1	Prospectus. 1891-1892
2	2	Prospectus. 1892-1893
3	5	School Plan. Undated

Schools of The Metropolitan Museum of Art Records

3	6	Subscription. April 1884
2	3	Vouchers -- 1885-1886 Season. June-October 1885
2	4	Vouchers -- 1885-1886 Season. November 1885
2	5	Vouchers -- 1885-1886 Season. December 1885
2	6	Vouchers -- 1885-1886 Season. January 1886
2	7	Vouchers -- 1885-1886 Season. February 1886
2	8	Vouchers -- 1885-1886 Season. March 1886
2	9	Vouchers -- 1885-1886 Season. April-May 1886
2	10	Vouchers -- 1886-1887 Season. August-October 1886
2	11	Vouchers -- 1886-1887 Season. November 1886
2	12	Vouchers -- 1886-1887 Season. December 1886
2	13	Vouchers -- 1886-1887 Season. January 1887
2	14	Vouchers -- 1886-1887 Season. February 1887
2	15	Vouchers -- 1886-1887 Season. March 1887
2	16	Vouchers -- 1886-1887 Season. April 1887
2	17	Vouchers -- 1886-1887 Season. May 1887
2	18	Vouchers -- 1887-1888 Season. June-September 1887
2	19	Vouchers -- 1887-1888 Season. October 1887
2	20	Vouchers -- 1887-1888 Season. November 1887
2	21	Vouchers -- 1887-1888 Season. December 1887
2	22	Vouchers -- 1887-1888 Season. January 1888
2	23	Vouchers -- 1887-1888 Season. February 1888
2	24	Vouchers -- 1887-1888 Season. March-April 1888
2	25	Vouchers -- 1887-1888 Season. May-June 1888
3	7	Vouchers -- 1887-1888 Season (Oversize). October 1887-March 1888
2	26	Vouchers -- 1888-1889 Season. September-October 1888
2	27	Vouchers -- 1888-1889 Season. November 1888
2	28	Vouchers -- 1888-1889 Season. December 1888
2	29	Vouchers -- 1888-1889 Season. January-February 1889
2	30	Vouchers -- 1888-1889 Season. March 1889
2	31	Vouchers -- 1888-1889 Season. April 1889
2	32	Vouchers -- 1888-1889 Season. May 1889
3	8	Vouchers -- 1888-1889 Season (Oversize). October 1888-May 1889
2	33	Vouchers -- Miscellaneous. December 1891