Lillias Mitchell collection (1923-1987)

National Gallery of Ireland: Yeats Archive

IE/NGI/Y29
1. Identity statement area .......................................................... 3
2. Context area ........................................................................... 3
3. Content and structure area ...................................................... 4
4. Conditions of access and use ................................................. 4
5. Allied materials area ............................................................. 5
6. Description control area ....................................................... 5

1. Letters from Elizabeth Corbet Yeats to Mrs Mitchell. ............... 6
   1.1 Correspondence between Homan Potterton and Lillias Mitchell relating to deposit of Elizabeth Corbet Yeats letters. ......................................................... 7

2. Lillias Mitchell works completed under tuition of Elizabeth Corbet Yeats .... 7

3. Lillias Mitchell works completed under tuition of Lilian Davidson. ........... 8
   3.1 Associated items ................................................................... 10

4. Miscellaneous items from Lillias Mitchell collection. ............... 10
1. Identity statement area

Reference Code: IE/NGI/Y29

Title: Lillias Mitchell collection

Dates of Creation: 1923-1987

Level of Description: Fonds.

Extent and Medium: 2 folders & 4 items

2. Context area


Biographical note:
Lillias Mitchell was born in Dublin in 1915. While a teenager she studied painting and sculpture with Elizabeth Corbet Yeats, Lilian Davidson, and others. Mitchell was an exhibiting member of the Watercolour Society from 1940. In 1943 she moved to North Wales to teach clay modelling where in addition she was required to teach weaving under the direction of Ella McLeod. In 1946 Mitchell returned to Dublin and set up a school of weaving called the Golden Fleece with Morfudd Roberts. In 1949 Morfudd Roberts left Ireland to take up a teaching post in England, and Lillias, realising that she could not manage the school on her own, was encouraged to approach the Department of Education. There in 1950 she met the then Minister of Education who invited her to set up a weaving department in the National College of Art. Lillias then went to Sweden to extend her weaving knowledge by attending a summer school and to purchase looms. In 1951 she returned with the looms to set up the Weaving Department in two rooms in the National College of Art. As the Weaving Department expanded it was moved into two prefabricated huts in the garden of Dail Eireann and there Lillias taught weaving spinning and dyeing until she retired in 1979.

In 1975 Lillias Mitchell founded the Irish Guild of Weavers Spinners and Dyers and took a great interest in its development. When the Jesse Mitchell Trust closed in 1994, Lillias sponsored the Lillias Mitchell Prize in the Royal Dublin Society's National Craft Competition. After her retirement Lillias focused on painting. In 1979 she was elected to membership of the Royal Hibernian Academy and exhibited several times during the 1980s and 90s. Mitchell was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Hibernian Academy in 1995 and an Honorary Life Member of the Royal Dublin Society in 1993. Lillias Mitchell died 10 January 2000.1

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Archival history: Items created or retained by Mitchell during her lifetime and deposited with NGI library in 1985 and 1987, transferred to the Yeats Archive, 2000.

Immediate source of acquisition:

3. Content and structure area

Scope and content:
Includes four series of material. 1. Letters from Elizabeth Corbet Yeats to Mrs Mitchell: includes four manuscript letters from Yeats to Mitchell discussing arrangements for children’s art classes and participation of Lillias Mitchell, in Yeats’s Brush work classes. 2. Lillias Mitchell works completed under tuition of Elizabeth Corbet Yeats: includes a sketchbook of watercolour studies (donated by Lillias Mitchell) and three framed watercolour studies of flowers (donated by David Lee). 3. Lillias Mitchell works completed under tuition of Lilian Davidson: includes watercolour still life drawings, ink silhouettes of figures, and a graphite sketch of a coastal landscape. 4. Miscellaneous items from Lillias Mitchell collection: includes examination certificates awarded to Lillias Mitchell by the Royal Drawing Society, Cuala industries pricelists, and a circular for William Butler Yeats books published by Macmillan.

Appraisal, destruction, and scheduling information
All records have been retained.

Accruals
None expected.

System of arrangement: Material has been arranged in four chronological series, according to type/theme, for ease of access and use.

4. Conditions of access and use

Conditions governing access
Access by appointment and in accordance with NGI Library and Archive access policy.

Conditions governing reproduction
Material may only be reproduced, in accordance with NGI Library and Archives access policy, with permission of the archivist, and in accordance with relevant copyright legislation.

Language/scripts of material: English.
Physical characteristics and technical requirements:
Paper textual and artistic works on paper. No special requirements.

Finding aids: Y29 descriptive list.

5. Allied materials area

Publication note:
The following publications were used in the compilation of this finding aid:

The Irish Guild of Weavers, Spinners, and Dyers: History.

6. Description control area

Archivists Note: Catalogue compiled by Pauline Swords, May 2012.

Conventions:
1. Letters from Elizabeth Corbet Yeats to Mrs Mitchell.

Series
20 October 1923-?1980
2 files & 2 items
Includes four manuscript letters from Yeats to Mitchell discussing arrangements for children’s art classes and to participation of Mitchell’s daughter, Lillias Mitchell, in Yeats’s Brush work classes.

Y29/1/1  [20 October 1923]
1 item, 4pp

Letter from Elizabeth Corbet Yeats, Cuala industries, 82 Merrion square, Dublin to Mrs Mitchell.
Manuscript. Relates to Mitchell’s role in assembling a class of approximately ten children to be taught painting by Yeats at Mrs Macaulay’s. States fees of 2 guineas, per child, per 12 week term, based on a class of 10 pupils, and discusses materials and other related matters.

Y29/1/2  21 October 1923
1 item, 4pp

Letter from Elizabeth Corbet Yeats, Gurteen Dhas, Dundrum to Mrs. Mitchell.
Manuscript. Yeats writes to correct her statement of fees at 2 guineas, per child, per 12 week term to 1 guinea, per child, per term, based on a class of 12 pupils. Suggests a possible collaboration with a Miss Sweeney who runs [Temple] school in [Palmerstown], Dublin.

Y29/1/3  21 March 1928
2 items, 6pp

Letter with envelope from Elizabeth Corbet Yeats to Mrs Mitchell.
Manuscript. Yeats writes to relate details of a lamp shade painting project which she has set for her painting pupils, which include Lillias Mitchell. Yeats relates where the shade may be purchased, costs, and expected time investment. Yeats compliments Lillias Mitchell’s talent.
Letter from Elizabeth Corbet Yeats, 133 lower Baggot street, Dublin, to Mrs Mitchell. Manuscript. Yeats discusses her pleasure in teaching painting to Lillias Mitchell and makes recommendations for the development of Lillias’s painting skill. Also refers to the death of her aunt [Alice Pollexfen Jackson] and convey sympathy in relation to Mitchell’s recent loss. File also includes a holograph typescript copy of the letter.

1.1 Correspondence between Homan Potterton and Lillias Mitchell relating to deposit of Elizabeth Corbet Yeats letters.
Subseries
2 February 1985-13 January 1986
1 file

Correspondence between Homan Potterton and Lillias Mitchell relating to deposit of Elizabeth Corbet Yeats letters.

2. Lillias Mitchell works completed under tuition of Elizabeth Corbet Yeats
Series
1926-1927
4 items
Includes a sketchbook of watercolour studies (donated by Lillias Mitchell] and three framed watercolour studies if flowers (donated by David Lee).

Lillias Mitchell sketchbook completed under tuition of Elizabeth Corbet Yeats
Includes twenty three watercolour paintings of flowers, bowls, figures, and a house in a rural landscape. Includes occasional manuscript comments by Elizabeth Corbet Yeats.

*Outsize item.
Y29/2/2  [?1927]  
1 item  

*Snowdrops* by Lillias Mitchell.  
Watercolour on paper. 29 x 34 cm (framed).  
*Outsize item.

Y29/2/3  [?1927]  
1 item  

*Pernettia* by Lillias Mitchell.  
Watercolour on paper. 35 x 33 cm (framed).  
*Outsize item.

Y29/2/4  [?1927]  
1 item  

*Jonquils* by Lillias Mitchell.  
Watercolour on paper. 44 x 48 cm (framed).  
*Outsize item.

3. Lillias Mitchell works completed under tuition of Lilian Davidson.  

Series  
[c.1930]  
7 items  
Includes watercolour still life drawings, ink silhouettes of figures, and a graphite sketch of a coastal landscape, completed by Mitchell while studying under Davidson at the Belgrave school, Rathmines, Dublin.

Y29/3/1  [c.1930]  
1 item  

[Cut rhubarb in a garden basket] by Lillias Mitchell.  
Watercolour on paper. 24 x 31 cm.
**Y29/3/2**  
[c.1930]  
1 item  

Watercolour on paper. 30 x 25 cm. 

**Y29/3/3**  
[c.1930]  
1 item  

Watercolour and graphite on paper. 30 x 25 cm. Graphite studies of a bag and figures on reverse. 

**Y29/3/4**  
[c.1930]  
1 item  

Watercolour on paper. 30 x 25 cm. 

**Y29/3/5**  
[c.1930]  
1 item  

[Silhouette of boy and dog] by Lillias Mitchell.  
Ink on paper. 30 x 25 cm. 

**Y29/3/6**  
[c.1930]  
1 item  

Watercolour on paper. 30 x 25 cm. Graphite sketch of boats in a coastal landscape on reverse. 

**Y29/3/7**  
[c.1930]  
1 item  

[Silhouette of a girl swinging from a branch] by Lillias Mitchell.  
Ink on paper. 26 x 20 cm.
3.1 Associated items.

Subseries
[c.1930]-1987
2 items
Includes a Lilian Davidson greeting card and correspondence between Lillias Mitchell and Homan Potterton, National Gallery of Ireland, relating to deposit of the Davidson material.

Y29/3/1/1 [c.1930] 1 item
Lilian Davidson greeting card from to Lillias Mitchell.
Includes monochrome design with cow and calf.

Y29/3/1/2 25-28 July 1987 File, 2 items
Letter and reply between Lillias Mitchell and Homan Potterton, director, National Gallery of Ireland.
Relates to deposit of Lilian Davidson material.


Series
1927-[c.1935]
2 files & 1 item
Includes examination certificates awarded to Lillias Mitchell by the Royal Drawing Society, Cuala industries pricelists for embroideries, painted wood, books, and prints, and a circular for William Butler Yeats books published by Macmillan.

Y29/4/1 1927-1930 File, 3 items
Examination certificates awarded to Lillias Mitchell by the Royal Drawing Society, 18 Queen Anne’s gate, Westminster, London.

Y29/4/2 [c.1935] File, 5 items
Cuala industries pricelists.
Includes pricelists for embroideries, painted wood, books, and prints.
Y29/4/3  [c.1930]
1 item