



Garland Eliason-French (1942–1996) Collection

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Description is written in: English.

Visual AIDS Archive

526 W 26th St

#309

New York, NY 10001

archive@visualaids.org

URL: <https://visualaids.org/archive>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Visual AIDS Archive
Title:	Garland Eliason-French (1942–1996) Collection
ID:	
Date [inclusive]:	1959-1997
Physical Description:	8 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English

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Biographical / Historical

Garland Eliason-French was born on December 21, 1942 in Chicago, IL; her family moved to Peoria, IL in 1945. Eliason-French attended Sarah Lawrence College, NYC and later transferred to Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois with a Bachelor's degree in Fine Arts. Eliason-French continued her education at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, receiving a Masters in Fine Arts in 1968. She later moved to New York City and married Bill French, who worked at – and later owned - the University Place Bookshop on Broadway and 12th St. They had a son, William French, and lived in the historic Marshall Chess Club building, on West 10th St.

A feminist, she explored motherhood, mythology, and the natural world in her paintings, developing a personal vocabulary of symbols and icons that appear throughout her work. In her time at the Art Institute of Chicago, she also worked with bookmaking and printmaking. She was inspired by the works of Virginia Woolf and as well as art from the ancient world which she learned about during her time in graduate school.

Eliason-French struggled with schizophrenia and other mental health issues throughout her life. She made work through it all, including during her treatment, even if it was just drawings in her journals. She contracted HIV from a blood transfusion given after injuries suffered during a suicide attempt. Eliason-French passed away due to AIDS-related complications on April 23, 1996 at St. Vincent's Hospital.

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Scope and Contents

This collection consists of personal papers of Garland Eliason-French, including personal journals, correspondence, press clippings, original artworks, photographs, publications, and 35mm slide documentation of artwork. These materials span from the 1920s to the 1990s.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Visual AIDS Archive

526 W 26th St

#309

New York, NY 10001

archive@visualaids.org

URL: <https://visualaids.org/archive>

Processing Information

This finding aid was prepared by Jacs Rodriguez in 2026.

Custodial History

The materials in this collection originally belong to Garland Eliason-French. They were then donated to Visual AIDS in 2019 by Laura Eliason and in 2026 by Zachary Brown.

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Collection Inventory

Journals

Biographical / Historical

This collection of journals spans from 1974 to 1995 with almost daily updates throughout that time. These are Eliason-French's personal notebooks and contain information about herself and her family as well as her experience with schizophrenia and other mental health struggles and her HIV diagnosis.

Separated Materials:**Separated Materials**

Three journals were separated and deaccessioned due to conservation concerns related to mold. These journals are digitized and available upon request.

Separated journals dated October 31, 1982-December 21, 1982 February 26, 1983-April 24, 1983 June 23, 1983-September 6, 1983

Title/Description	Instances
July 16, 1974 – September 24, 1974	Box 1
September 26, 1974 – January 16, 1975	Box 1
January 17, 1975 – April 4, 1975	Box 1
April 5, 1975 – August 16, 1975	Box 1
August 17, 1975 – October 6, 1975	Box 1
October 6, 1975 – December 14, 1975	Box 1
December 14, 1975 – March 1, 1976	Box 1
March 1, 1976 – April 28, 1976	Box 1
April 28, 1976 – June 25, 1976	Box 1
June 25, 1976 – September 1, 1976	Box 1
September 1, 1976 – November 5, 1976	Box 1
November 5, 1976 – December 7, 1976	Box 1
December 8, 1976 – January 11, 1977	Box 1
January 11, 1977 – February 10, 1977	Box 1
February 10, 1977 – March 14, 1977	Box 1
March 15, 1977 – April 16, 1977	Box 1
April 16, 1977 – May 18, 1977	Box 1
May 20, 1977 – June 28, 1977	Box 1
June 28, 1977 – July 29, 1977	Box 1
July 30, 1977 – September 9, 1977	Box 1
September 9, 1977 – October 25, 1977	Box 1
October 26, 1977 – December 2, 1977	Box 1
December 2, 1977 – January 4, 1978	Box 1

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January 4, 1978 – February 6, 1978	Box 1
February 7, 1978 – March 10, 1978	Box 1
March 10, 1978 – April 15, 1978	Box 1
April 16, 1978 – May 23, 1978	Box 1
May 24, 1978 – July 3, 1978	Box 1
July 4, 1978 – August 8, 1978	Box 1
August 8, 1978 – September 5, 1978	Box 1
September 5, 1978 – October 23, 1978	Box 1
October 24, 1978 – November 30, 1978	Box 1
December 1, 1978 – February 8, 1979	Box 1
February 9, 1979 – April 19, 1979	Box 2
April 20, 1979 – July 14, 1979	Box 2
July 15, 1979 – September 25, 1979	Box 2
September 26, 1979 – December 3, 1979	Box 2
December 4, 1979 – March 15, 1980	Box 2
March 16, 1980 – August 24, 1980	Box 2
August 24, 1980 – February 5, 1981	Box 2
1981 Planner	Box 2
February 6, 1981 – May 21, 1981	Box 2
May 22, 1981 – July 21, 1981	Box 2
1982 Planner	Box 2
March 24, 1982 – August 18, 1982	Box 2
December 22, 1982 – February 24, 1983	Box 2
1983 Planner	Box 2
September 6, 1983 – October 17, 1983	Box 2
October 17, 1983 – November 17, 1983	Box 2
November 17, 1983 – November 27, 1983	Box 2
November 27, 1983 – December 12, 1983	Box 2
December 12, 1983 – December 27, 1983	Box 2
December 27, 1983 – January 31, 1984	Box 2
1984 Planner	Box 2
January 31, 1984 – March 5, 1984	Box 2

Garland Eliason-French (1942–1996) Collection

March 5, 1984 – May 26, 1984	Box 2
May 26, 1984 – May 29, 1984	Box 2
May 30, 1984 – November 8, 1984	Box 2
November 8, 1984 – March 15, 1985	Box 2
1985 Planner	Box 2
March 16, 1985 – May 18, 1985	Box 2
May 19, 1985 – September 2, 1985	Box 2
September 2, 1985 – October 16, 1985	Box 3
October 16, 1985 – November 20, 1985	Box 3
November 20, 1985 – April 14, 1986	Box 3
1986 Planner	Box 3
April 14, 1986 – October 23, 1986	Box 3
October 23, 1986 – March 10, 1987	Box 3
1987 Planner	Box 3
March 10, 1987 – April 26, 1987	Box 3
April 26, 1987 – May 30, 1987	Box 3
May 30, 1987 – September 22, 1987	Box 3
September 23, 1987 – March 11, 1988	Box 3
March 11, 1988 – July 26, 1988	Box 3
July 27, 1988 – December 20, 1988	Box 3
December 20, 1988 – June 20, 1989	Box 3
1989 Planner	Box 3
June 20, 1989 – January 16, 1990	Box 4
January 16, 1990 – June 27, 1990	Box 4
June 27, 1990 – December 6, 1990	Box 4
December 17, 1990 – May 16, 1991	Box 4
1991 Planner	Box 4
May 17, 1991 – October 16, 1991	Box 4
October 16, 1991 – April 1, 1992	Box 4
April 1, 1992 – June 4, 1992	Box 4
June 5, 1992 – July 19, 1992	Box 4
July 19, 1992 – (undated)	Box 4

September 2, 1992 – October 21, 1992	Box 4
October 25, 1992 – January 9, 1993	Box 4
January 9, 1993 – May 13, 1993	Box 4
May 14, 1993 – November 10, 1993	Box 4
January 2, 1995 – June 15, 1995	Box 4

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Correspondence

Biographical / Historical

This series includes personal correspondence between Eliason-French and others as well as correspondence addressed to her husband, Bill, and their son, Will. It spans from 1959 to 1997.

Much of the correspondence between Bill and the French family takes place while Bill is on a years-long international trip.

Any correspondence not addressed to Garland Eliason-French is notated in the folder title.

Title/Description	Instances	
From Bill to Garland (1 of 4), 1959-1984	Box 5	folder 1
From Bill to Garland (2 of 4), 1959-1984	Box 5	folder 2
From Bill to Garland (3 of 4), 1959-1984	Box 5	folder 3
From Bill to Garland (4 of 4), 1959-1984	Box 5	folder 4
Individual Correspondence - 1960s	Box 5	folder 5
From Bill to family, 1961-1963	Box 5	folder 6
To Bill, 1963-1972	Box 5	folder 7
From Garland to Bill (1 of 2), 1963-1985	Box 5	folder 8
From Garland to Bill (2 of 2), 1963-1985	Box 5	folder 9
From Karen to Bill, 1964	Box 5	folder 10
From Cleve Hedrick, 1964-1970	Box 5	folder 11
From Bettina Smith (Bill's sister), 1964-1994	Box 5	folder 12
Individual Correspondence - 1970s	Box 5	folder 13
From Garland's Parents (1 of 3), 1973-1992	Box 5	folder 14
From Garland's Parents (2 of 3), 1973-1992	Box 5	folder 15
From Garland's Parents (3 of 3), 1973-1992	Box 5	folder 16
From Bill's parents, 1973-1992	Box 5	folder 17

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From Emily Collins, 1974-1975	Box 5	folder 18
From Gill Hewitt, 1974-1975	Box 5	folder 19
From Ellen Turner, 1974-1978	Box 5	folder 20
From Margaretta Bowers, 1974-1983	Box 5	folder 21
From John Carlson, 1974-1984	Box 6	folder 1
From Annie Gottlieb, 1974-1985	Box 6	folder 2
To Will, 1974-1997	Box 6	folder 3
From Andrene Kauffman , 1975	Box 6	folder 4
From Virginia Smith, 1975-1977	Box 6	folder 5
From May Stevens, 1975-1977	Box 6	folder 6
From Vivian, 1975-1977	Box 6	folder 7
From Carol, 1975-1978	Box 6	folder 8
From Jeanne and Les Knorr, 1975-1979	Box 6	folder 9
About Garland's art, 1975-1981	Box 6	folder 10
From Aunt Margaret and Eleanor, 1975-1987	Box 6	folder 11
From Robert Sutton, 1975-1992	Box 6	folder 12
From (Aunt) Sidney Montgomery, 1975-1992	Box 6	folder 13
From Lois Lord, 1975-1994	Box 6	folder 14
From unknown senders, 1976-1984	Box 6	folder 15
From Charles Eliason and Cathy (Garland's brother), 1976-1995	Box 6	folder 16
From Mrs. Chester French Jr, 1977-1979	Box 6	folder 17
From Zelda Sellman, 1977-1981	Box 6	folder 18
From Nancee Hasselberg, 1978	Box 6	folder 19
From Pearl Schwartz, 1978	Box 6	folder 20
From Letitia, 1978	Box 6	folder 21
From Fromberg Family, 1979-1980	Box 6	folder 22
From (Aunt) Judy Abrams, 1979-1990	Box 6	folder 23
From Eleanor and Walter, 1980	Box 6	folder 24
Individual Correspondence - 1980s	Box 6	folder 25
From Bill Lind, 1981	Box 6	folder 26
From S. Mericle, 1981-1986	Box 6	folder 27
From K. Hill, 1983-1984		

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	Box 6	folder 28
From Marie Brown, 1983-1991	Box 6	folder 29
From University of Illinois College of Medicine, 1984-1985	Box 6	folder 30
From Robert Majeske, 1984-1992	Box 6	folder 31
From Walter Miller, 1985	Box 6	folder 32
From Alvey L. Jones, 1985-1988	Box 6	folder 33
From Joan and Tom Hunter, 1987-1993	Box 6	folder 34
From Bertha Wagner, 1988-1993	Box 6	folder 35
Individual Correspondence - 1990s	Box 6	folder 36
From Ginger Smith, 1990-1993	Box 6	folder 37
From Marilyn Richardson, 1993-1995	Box 6	folder 38
From Cyndy, 1995	Box 6	folder 39
Individual Correspondence - undated	Box 6	folder 40

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Personal Papers

Biographical / Historical

This series contains a variety of personal papers belonging to Eliason-French as well as Bill, Will, and the extended Eliason and French families. These materials span from the early 1920s to the late 1990s.

It contains personal materials and sensitive information regarding both Garland and Will's mental and physical health.

Title/Description	Instances	
Sketches and Artwork	Box 7	folder 1
Exhibition Materials	Box 7	folder 2
Show Reviews and Press	Box 7	folder 3
Artist's Portfolio	Box 7	folder 4
Artwork Documentation (Prints and negatives)	Box 7	folder 5
Artwork Documentation (35mm Slides)	Box 7	folder 6
Garland 1960 Yearbook	Box 7	folder 7
"Questionable Cartoons" by Tuli Kupferberg	Box 7	folder 8
Subscription Mailings	Box 7	folder 9
Exhibition Invitations	Box 7	folder 10
Gardening Scrapbook		

Garland Eliason-French (1942–1996) Collection

	Box 7	folder 11
Poetry	Box 7	folder 12
Unsent letters - Garland to Cleve	Box 7	folder 13
Notes	Box 7	folder 14
Blank postcards	Box 7	folder 15
Garland Medical/Personal materials	Box 7	folder 16
Garland memorial	Box 7	folder 17
Materials Related to University Bookshop and Bill	Box 7	folder 18
Newspaper Clippings	Box 7	folder 19
Eliason Family Genealogy	Box 7	folder 20
Family Photographs	Box 7	folder 21
Family Scrapbook	Box 7	folder 22
Scrapbook of Charles Eliason (Garland's father)	Box 7	folder 23
French Family Obituaries	Box 7	folder 24
Notebook with medical information	Box 7	folder 25
Garland Record Keeping About Will (Baby book)	Box 7	folder 26
Artwork by Will	Box 7	folder 27
Photos of Will	Box 7	folder 28
Photobooks of Will	Box 7	folder 29
Will School Records	Box 7	folder 30
Medical/Legal Paperwork (Will)	Box 7	folder 31
"Homage to Catalonia" by George Orwell (cover drawn by Garland)	Box 8	folder 1
Wedding Gift log	Box 8	folder 2
Diary of Frank French (Bill's father)	Box 8	folder 3

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Art School Materials

Biographical / Historical

This series contains materials from Eliason-French's time at the Art Institute of Chicago from 1966 to 1968. It includes some assignments as well as notebooks from various classes.

Title/Description	Instances	
Art School Papers – Nude in 20th Century	Box 8	folder 4

Garland Eliason-French (1942–1996) Collection

Art School Transcripts	Box 8	folder 5
Art School Papers	Box 8	folder 6
A Survey of Art History	Box 8	
Primitive Art	Box 8	
Primitive Art II	Box 8	
Contemporary Art History	Box 8	
Mexico	Box 8	
Ancient and Classic Art	Box 8	
Medieval Art	Box 8	

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