

# Finding Aid for the Lee Seldes Research Materials on Mark Rothko, 1970-2000

## Summary Information

Repository	National Gallery of Art Archives Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20565 archives@nga.gov
Title	Lee Seldes Research Materials on Mark Rothko, 1970-2000
Identifier	SC.023
Creator	Seldes, Lee, 1929-2014
Date	circa 1970-2000
Extent	4 cubic feet (9 boxes)
Abstract	These files consist of the research materials and chapter files assembled and created by journalist Lee Seldes for her book titled <i>The Legacy of Mark Rothko</i> .

## Biographical Note

Lee Seldes (1929-2014) was a journalist who wrote for various publications such as *Newsweek*, *Barron's*, *The Village Voice*, and *Esquire*. She was the only journalist to attend the entire 1971 legal trial on Mark Rothko's art collection in which the artist's children, Kate and Christopher, filed a lawsuit against the executors of their father's estate and Marlborough Gallery for selling Rothko's artworks at deflated prices. Seldes' coverage of the trial led to an article published in *Esquire* (1974) and a subsequent book titled *The Legacy of Mark Rothko* (1978, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston). The book was revised in 1996 to provide updated information on the key players in the case and the fate of Rothko works formerly in the Mark Rothko Foundation's custody.

## Scope and Content

These papers document the research conducted by Lee Seldes for *The Legacy of Mark Rothko* (1978), a book pertaining to the lawsuit filed by Kate and Christopher Rothko against the executors of their father's estate. Seldes attended the trial daily and spent the subsequent two

years studying court records and interviewing many key players involved in the lawsuit. These materials contain an assemblage of the trial's official documents, correspondence between Seldes and key players in the trial, and Seldes' notes for the book.

## Arrangement

Materials are arranged in the following series:

- Series 1 Rothko Book Working Files
- Series 2 Rothko Research Files

## Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access	This collection is open for research by appointment under the conditions of the National Gallery of Art Archives Access Policy. For all inquiries or to schedule an appointment, please contact <a href="mailto:archives@nga.gov">archives@nga.gov</a> .
Preferred Citation	National Gallery of Art Archives. Lee Seldes Research Materials on Mark Rothko.
Rights Status	In copyright.
Language	English
Processing Information	Arranged and described by archives staff, 2010.
Acquisition	Gift of Lee Seldes, 2009.
Related Archival Materials	National Gallery of Art Archives. Mark Rothko Foundation Records, 1958-2003.

## Series Descriptions

### Series 1 Rothko Book Working Files [4.5 boxes]

This series contains papers pertaining to specific chapters in Lee Seldes' book, *The Legacy of Mark Rothko*. Folders are organized numerically by book chapter, with some folders containing multiple chapters and some chapters spanning multiple folders. The last folder is labeled "Epilogue First," a title which does not appear in the published work.

**Series 2 Rothko Research Files [4.5 boxes]**

This series consists of folders on general topics pertaining to the Rothko case, Lee Seldes' research, and the writing of *The Legacy of Mark Rothko*. Documents include background information on Mark Rothko, copies of court documents, interview notes, clippings (some with Seldes' handwritten notes), sales records, and other related materials. The folders are arranged alphabetically by subject.

# Lee Seldes Research Materials on Mark Rothko

## Series 1 Rothko Book Working Files

### Box 1

- 1-1 Chapter 1 - Three Days that Rocked the Art World

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- 1-2 Chapter 2 - 1903-45 The Struggle

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- 1-3 Chapter 3 - 1945-55 The Triumph

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- 1-4 Chapter 4 - 1955-63 Recognitions

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- 1-5 Chapter 5 - 1963-68 Dollar Signs and Question Marks

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- 1-6 Chapter 6 - April 1968-February 1969 The Price

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- 1-7 Chapter 7 - March-November 1969 The Last Year

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- 1-8 Chapters 7, 8, 9 - Doctors' Interviews

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- 1-9 Chapter 8 - November 1969-February 1970 The Final Pressure

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- 1-10 Chapter 9 - February 25, 1970 Death Notes and Interviews

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- 1-11 Chapter 10 - February-October 1970 Odds Out

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- 1-12 Chapter 11 - Spring 1970 The Spoils - Dealer's Choice

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- 1-13 Chapter 11 - May 21, 1970 Consignment Contract

### Box 2

- 2-1 Chapter 11 - Notes from McKee, etc.

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- 2-2 Chapter 11 - Karelsen - Affidavit, Brief

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- 2-3 Chapter 12 - January-June 1971 Fanfare and Suspicions

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## Lee Seldes Research Materials on Mark Rothko

- 2-4 Chapter 12 - Saidenberg - Appraisals and Checks

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- 2-5 Chapter 12 - Rubin [Williams] to BJR [Bernard J. Reis], [Rothko] Foundation, Harrow Affidavit, Shapiro Letter

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- 2-6 Chapter 13 - June 1971 The Unveiling

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- 2-7 Chapter 14 - Maneuvers, Maneuverings September 1971 Sent to Conjunction June 1972

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- 2-8 Chapter 14 - 1972 [Notes and Affidavits]

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- 2-9 Chapter 14 - 1972 - Hunter Arnason Affidavits and Statutes

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- 2-10 Chapter 14 - Stamos [Theodoros]

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- 2-11 Chapter 14 - Met - Marlborough

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- 2-12 Chapter 15 - Robert Goldwater

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- 2-13 Chapter 15 - 1972 [Foundation Minutes, Harrow Affidavit]

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- 2-14 Chapter 16 - 1973 Free-For-All

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- 2-15 Chapter 16 - Marlborough - McKee

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- 2-16 Chapter 16 - Wilder - Alitalia Lawsuits

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- 2-17 Chapter 16 - Construction Case, 1973

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- 2-18 Chapter 16 - EBT's

### Box 3

- 3-1 Chapters 17 and 18 - The Trial

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- 3-2 Chapter 18 - Lloyd, The Master Dealer

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- 3-3 Chapter 19 - The Defense

## Lee Seldes Research Materials on Mark Rothko

- 3-4 Chapter 19 - Rothko - Marlborough Sales of Prints

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- 3-5 Chapter 19 - Materials from Chapter 19 Keep Together Please

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- 3-6 Chapter 19 - Marlborough Sales

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- 3-7 Chapter 20 - 1975 Notes

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- 3-8 Chapter 21 - 12/18/1975 The Decision

### Box 4

- 4-1 Chapter 22 - Toronto, The Toronto Caper

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- 4-2 Chapter 22 - The Toronto Caper December 19-24, 1975

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- 4-3 Chapter 23 - A Double Whammy 1976

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- 4-4 Chapters 23 and 24 - Coroner, Who Killed MR

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- 4-5 Chapter 25 - Questions of Perspective - F. Lloyd Criminal Trial 1982 (Folder 1 of 2)

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- 4-6 Chapter 25 - Questions of Perspective - F. Lloyd Criminal Trial 1982 (Folder 2 of 2)

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- 4-7 Chapter 25 - Rothko - Reis Health 1977

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- 4-8 Chapter 25 - Rothko - Summer 1977

### Box 5

- 5-1 Chapter 25 - First Appeals Decision - Appellate

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- 5-2 Chapter 26 - Postscript, Echoes of Rothko

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- 5-3 Chapter 26 - Criminal Case, Lloyd in Criminal Court

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- 5-4 Epilogue First

## Lee Seldes Research Materials on Mark Rothko

### Series 2 Rothko Research Files

#### Box 5

- 5-5 Court documents, Rothko's will, and affidavits
- 5-6 Loose papers (1 of 2)
- 5-7 Loose papers (2 of 2)
- 5-8 Notebook - people, addresses, dates, and art prices
- 5-9 Affidavits regarding the Foundation - Harrow
- 5-10 Foundation 1976

#### Box 6

- 6-1 Interviews - M.R. important (Folder 1 of 2)
- 6-2 Interviews - M.R. important (Folder 2 of 2)
- 6-3 Lawsuit - Edwards vs. Seldes 1979
- 6-4 Lawsuit - Hughes and Moonies on Edwards vs. Seldes 1979
- 6-5 Legal articles and decisions
- 6-6 Letters 9/79
- 6-7 Lloyd - other deals, gay bar, Marlborough, Studio 54 records
- 6-8 Lloyd and pals - background
- 6-9 Odds and ends - art dealers auctions
- 6-10 Odds and ends - artist's estate problems

## Lee Seldes Research Materials on Mark Rothko

6-11 Outline Rothko notes - outline, copy, edit

### Box 7

7-1 P.S. 1976 - Fall 1976 info and briefs

7-2 Permissions - *Legacy of Mark Rothko* quote permissions - post-publication

7-3 Permissions regarding quotes and photos

7-4 Post-publication correspondence

7-5 Quotations - chapters

7-6 Reis - history of deceptions

7-7 Reviews and rebuttals

7-8 Reviews and rebuttals - J. Myers

7-9 Rothko - additional interviews (folder 1 of 2)

7-10 Rothko - additional interviews (folder 2 of 2)

### Box 8

8-1 Rothko - bios, critiques, obits

8-2 Rothko - court of appeals

8-3 Rothko - estate expenses

8-4 Rothko - Karelsen - 1977 Dickler deposition

8-5 Rothko 1974 - clippings and articles regarding trial

8-6 Rothko case - clips 1975-1976



## Lee Seldes Research Materials on Mark Rothko

### Box 9

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|-----|---|
| 9-1 | Rothko correspondence                                 |
| 9-2 | Rothko Foundation and Blinken                         |
| 9-3 | Rothko retrospective - Guggenheim traveling show 1978 |
| 9-4 | Sotheby's and Christie's case                         |
| 9-5 | Trial - notes regarding testimony - VI                |