

# history|san José

silicon valley from a to z

1650 Senter Road  
San Jose, CA 95112-2599

## Collection Guide

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**Collection Title:** Frederick Spratt Collection

**Collection Number:** 2009-51

**Date Produced:** 02/02/2015

**Author(s):** Sheila Gurtu

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<http://www.oac.cdlib.org/institutions/History+San+Jose+Research+Library>

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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Title</b>	Frederick Spratt Collection
<b>Date</b>	1927 - 2008
<b>Date (bulk)</b>	1945 - 2001
<b>Collection number</b>	2009-51
<b>Creator</b>	Spratt, Frederick, 1927 – 2008
<b>Extent</b>	17 linear feet, 37 boxes
<b>Repository</b>	History San Jose Research Library San Jose, California 95112-2599 Tel: 408.521.5026 Fax: 408.287.2291 email: <a href="mailto:research@historysanjose.org">research@historysanjose.org</a>
<b>Abstract</b>	Papers of artist, San Jose State University professor, and gallery owner, Frederick Spratt. Collection includes personal correspondence, academic papers, grade books, gallery files, artist files, slides, articles, calendars, photos and family memorabilia.
<b>Physical location</b>	History San Jose Collection Center

<b>Languages</b>	The collection material is in English. A small portion of correspondence is in Japanese.
<b>Access</b>	The records are available to the public for research by appointment.
<b>Technical Access</b>	No special software or equipment is required.
<b>Publication Rights</b>	Property rights reside with History San Jose. For permissions to reproduce or to publish, please contact History San Jose Research Library.
<b>Preferred Citation</b>	Frederick Spratt Collection, 2009-51, History San Jose Research Library, San Jose, California 95112-2599
<b>Acquisition Information</b>	The collection was donated to History San Jose by the collector's son, Shahn R. Spratt in 2009.
<b>Processing History</b>	Processed by History San Jose volunteers.
<b>Accruals</b>	No additional items have been added to the collection.

## Biographical Note

Frederick Roy Spratt (1927 - 2008) was an artist, university professor, department chair, humanities dean and contemporary art gallerist known for his work in promoting the careers of many California artists, and as a champion of the developing fine arts community in San Jose.

Spratt was born in 1927 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to Horace Frederick Spratt and Violet Luverne Chapman. He received training in sign painting from his grandfather in his formative years. In 1945 Spratt served on active duty in the United States Navy as a Painter third class and received an honorable discharge in 1946. While attending Iowa Wesleyan College, Spratt married Patricia Ann Smith. Three children were born to the couple: Michael Frederick Spratt (1950), Kristine Louise Spratt (1952) and Shahn Robert Spratt (1953). Spratt earned a BA from Iowa Wesleyan (1951) and a MA in Studio Art from the State University of Iowa in 1956. From 1951 - 1953 he worked as an art instructor in the Fort Madison Junior and Senior High Schools, Fort Madison, Iowa. In 1956, Spratt accepted a faculty position teaching art at San Jose State College (later San Jose State University, SJSU). In 1961, Spratt taught and mentored Robert Graham (1938 – 2008), who later became a prominent modern figurative sculptor. Graham was the designer of the controversial 1994 "Plumed Serpent," Quetzalcoatl sculpture, commissioned by the city for placement in downtown San Jose.

Collaboration and innovation were themes which came to dominate Spratt's career as a professor, an artist and as an art gallery owner. Fascinated by the emergence of technology, in the 1960s Spratt proposed the development of an artists' communication network among university schools of art as a new working environment for artistic collaboration. His academic activities and responsibilities led Spratt's attention away from his own studio work during much of this period. However, due to his vision to build the department, and spearhead new projects and proposals, Spratt created many new initiatives during his tenure, establishing an alumni group, and the grant-funded 1985 and 1986 CADRE (Computers in Art, Design, Research and Education) Institute's Silicon Valley Festival of Electronic Art, among many contributions. Spratt was an influential instructor, collaborator, critic and mentor to many students, faculty, and contemporary artists, as evidenced by the many letters exchanged between Spratt and

colleagues, friends and former students. Notable correspondents include UK kinetic light sculptor Dante Leonelli (b. 1931) and New York painter William Pellicone (1915 - 2004).

In 1963 Spratt completed a painting sabbatical, in St. Ives, Cornwall. Spratt and wife Patricia divorced a few years later, in 1968. In 1969, Spratt married Sharon Erb, whom he was divorced from in July of 1971. The following year, Spratt relocated to Inglewood, California to be closer to the Southern California art scene. There Spratt obtained studio space in a commercial building and developed an emerging colorist painting style that came to be termed "color theory" - a style of contemporary painting exploring the high finish acrylic lacquer applied to large aluminum panels. During this time Spratt continued to teach at San Jose State University three days per week, commuting from his studio in Inglewood, CA. Another sabbatical, a studio exchange with New York artist Stephen Rosenthal (b. 1935), culminated in his successful 1979 show at the Clocktower Gallery, of New York's Institute for Art and Urban Resources. Other notable solo exhibitions included the 2004 *Trooping the Colors* exhibition at the Triton Museum of Art in Santa Clara, CA, and the 2008 retrospective show, *Fred Spratt: Color and Space* at the San Jose Museum of Art.

During his 32 year tenure as faculty, Spratt was held in high regard among both students and colleagues who credited his leadership with building the School of Art and Design into a nationally known program. He was nominated and elected by peers to two terms as Art Department Chair (1968 - 1971, 1980 - 1986). In 1986, Spratt was named Dean of the School of Humanities and Arts at SJSU. Spratt served with many civic organizations, forging ties with local officials, the media, and museum leaders that would aid in his establishment of the art gallery business. He was an advisory board member of the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Arts and the San Jose Art League. He served as a director of the Arts Council of Santa Clara County. He sat on the board of Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana (MACLA). After retiring as a Dean in 1989, Spratt began a brief post as a contract director for the SJSU School of Humanities' Institute of Arts and Letters - the public relations, marketing and fundraising arm of the School of Humanities and Arts. This same year, Spratt began a consulting relationship with Dennis B. K. Fong of d. p. Fong Galleries at 383 South 1st Street. From 1990 - 1992 Spratt was partner / director of d. p. Fong and Spratt Galleries.

In 1993, the partnership with Dennis Fong was dissolved and, together with his third wife, Keiko Mochizuki, a former textile artist and dress designer, he launched the Frederick Spratt Gallery of Contemporary Art, located at the couple's renovated live-work studio space on 920 South First Street. Spratt's gallery was a labor of love. The gallery cultivated and represented a "stable" of more than two dozen known and emerging artists, including Geoffrey Bowman, Bonnie Cook, Raymond Gingham, Doug Glovaski, Barbara Gunther, Katherine Levin-Lau, Paddy Moran, Long Nguyen, Mary Porter, Lynn Powers, Barbara Rogers, Phe Ruiz, Farrar Wilson, Jerome Witkin, and Douglas Vogel among many others. Spratt was also able to bring the work of nationally known artists such as Robert Graham, Ed Moses, Milton Resnick, and William Pellicone to San Jose.

Personal and business correspondences reveal the joy and pain of the Spratts' work to establish a market for fine arts in the shadow of San Francisco's more developed marketplace amid fluctuations in the economy. At one point, the Spratts cross-sold vitamin supplements and cosmetics to gallery clients, friends and family -- a direct-selling business they hoped would help supplement the gallery's bottom line. The gallery's prominence began to rise, as Spratt leveraged his ties to the arts community, local newspapers, and his expansive network of personal, social and academic relationships, to create a synergy around fine arts in the South First area of San Jose. In 1995, Spratt leased space in the Fairmont Plaza and expanded gallery showings to San Francisco. In 1997 Spratt was diagnosed with cancer of the tongue, causing him to endure six months of chemotherapy and slow gallery operations.

The years that followed his battle with cancer were extremely productive with Spratt continuing to mount group and solo exhibitions, traveling to New York to arrange gallery shows, and also traveling internationally with family and friends. After the death of his wife Keiko Mochizuki in 2003, Spratt continued to paint and show art, but the gallery closed in 2006.

## References

Goodwin-Guerrero, E. (2008, March 22). *Recalling the Momentous Sixties and Seventies*, Retrieved from <http://artshiftsanjose.com/?p=440>

Rodriguez, J. (2008, December 28). *Sculptor Robert Graham dies at age 70*, Retrieved from [http://www.mercurynews.com/ci\\_11325138](http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_11325138)

## Scope and Content Summary

Personal, business and academic papers of San Jose gallery owner, artist and university professor, Frederick Spratt. Collection includes diplomas, family memorabilia, photos, grade books, letters, calendars, academic papers, memos, contracts, photos, negatives, slides, articles and awards, spanning Spratt's early years as a faculty at San Jose State College to gallery business files through 2001.

The collection has been arranged into five series:

*Series 1: Gallery Artist Files*  
1993 - 2001, Box 1 -10

Folders arranged alphabetically by artist's last name. Contain price sheets, contracts, correspondence, gallery press releases, exhibit catalogs, artist slides, hand written notes.

*Series 2: Gallery Group Exhibitions*  
1993 - 2002, Box 11 – 13

Folders organized by show: containing group exhibition announcements, press clippings, catalogs, price sheets, contracts and correspondence. Arranged chronologically by group exhibit date.

*Series 3: Photographs*  
1970 – 1998, Box 14

Personal and gallery photos and negatives. Most of the photos are undated.

*Series 4: Personal Calendars and Grade Books*  
1952 – 1992, Box 14 – 20

Personal calendars from the years 1952 – 1992. Grade books from university teaching years 1956 – 1976.

*Series 5: Personal Correspondence and Papers*  
1940 - 2008, Box 21 - 37

Personal correspondence from 1960 – 2001, arranged in folders by month and year. Artist files

about Frederick Spratt, containing slides, gallery announcements, press clippings, articles, catalogs, gallery receipts, contracts and awards. Academic files, diplomas and family memorabilia.

## Indexing Terms

### *Subjects*

Artists--California--Correspondence.  
Artists--California--San Francisco Bay Area--History.  
Frederick Spratt Gallery (San Jose, Calif.)  
San José State University. Art Department  
San José State University. School of Art and Design.  
Cadre  
Laboratory for  
New Media  
San Jose State University--History

### *Names*

Alexander, Peter  
Allie, Barbara  
Amarosa, Elisa  
Armlinger, John  
Auvil, Kenneth  
Ayhens, Olive  
Barirani, Sadeg  
Below, Peter  
Benton, Fletcher  
Bowman, Geoffrey  
Buehler, Ken  
Buffalo, Rose  
Buhler, Ken  
Caracciolo, Roberto  
Cook, Bonnie  
Crum, David  
Dall'Aglio, Remi  
Dunlevie, Kathryn  
Fisher, Steffen  
Ginghofer, Raymond  
Glovlaski, Douglas  
Goodwin-Guerrero, Erin  
Graham, Robert  
Greene, Stephen  
Gunther, Barbara  
Hanson, Hardy  
Hardy, Don Ed  
Hayes, Georgia  
Herms, George  
Hoffman, Eric  
Holland, Tom  
Kane, Mickey  
Kaneg, Howard  
Krieter, Terry  
Levin-Lau, Katherine  
Lewis, Peter Wayne  
Martin, Fred Thomas

Medaille, Barbara  
Mezynski, Neila  
Miller, Alan  
Moran, Paddy  
Moses, Ed  
Mosset, Oliver  
Nguyen, Long  
Null, Ian  
Passlof, Pat  
Pellicone, William  
Peterson, Bonnie  
Poole, Frances  
Poons, Larry  
Porter, Mary  
Powers, Lynn  
Qing Chen, Dan  
Reiss, Roland  
Resnick, Milton  
Rinkosusky, Margaret  
Roberts, Michael  
Rockburne, Dorthea  
Rogers Peretto, Glen  
Ruben, Richards  
Ruiz, Phe  
Schimke, Susan  
Schy, Gay  
Scroth, Peter  
Spratt, Frederick R.  
Stutz-Mentzel, Hannah  
Sullivan, Karen  
Sultan, Altoon  
Sun Cho, Kyung  
Taasevigen, Everett  
Tchakalian, Sam  
Thompson, Donald Roy  
Todd, Michael  
Vetter, Jim  
Vogel, Douglas  
Welch, Audrey  
Wilson, Farrar  
Wilson, Jane  
Wilson, Richard  
Witkin, Jerome

**Genres and Forms of Materials**

administrative records  
calendars  
correspondence  
ephemera  
photographs  
slides

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