



## **CLARA THOMAS ARCHIVES**

**Inventory of the  
Avrom Isaacs fonds**

**Inventory #F0134**

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**Fonds/Collection Number:** F0134

**Title:** Avrom Isaacs fonds

**Dates:** 1939-2006

**Extent:** 12.28 m of textual records  
ca. 470 photographs  
5 audio cassettes  
17 audio reels  
6 video cassettes  
2 film reels  
14 microfilm reels : positive and negative  
ca. 400 prints : posters  
1 architectural drawing  
ca. 6700 slides

**Biographical Sketch/  
Administrative History:** Avrom Isaacs, Toronto art dealer, was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1926 and moved to Toronto with his family in 1941. He graduated with an Honours B.A. in Political Science and Economics from the University of Toronto in 1950. While at university, he opened a picture-framing store with a friend and became the sole proprietor of the Greenwich Art Shop by 1950. Isaacs came into contact with many of Toronto's emerging artists while working at his store and began displaying their art on his shop's walls. This led to the opening of the Greenwich Art Gallery in 1955. The space was renamed The Isaacs Gallery in 1959 and moved to Yonge Street in 1961. Isaacs opened the InnuIt Gallery in Toronto in 1970, the first commercial gallery in the world devoted solely to Inuit art. In August 1991, Isaacs consolidated his two galleries to form the Isaacs/InnuIt Gallery, which closed in 2001 at the time of his retirement from the business. Over the course of his career, Isaacs represented numerous Canadian artists including Dennis Burton, Michael Snow, Graham Coughtry, Gordon Rayner, Jack Chambers, Joyce Wieland, Mark Prent, John Meredith, William Kurelek, Robert Markle and Gathie Falk. He also sponsored poetry readings, underground film screenings, and mixed media concerts at his gallery. Isaacs served on the executive of the Professional Art Dealers Association of Canada (PADAC), is a former director of the Toronto Arts Awards Foundation, and an Honorary Fellow of the Ontario College of Art. He has served on various arts advisory boards at the municipal, provincial and federal levels and was a member of the board of the Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre from 1979 to 1982, serving as its Chairman from 1981 to 1982. In 1992, Isaacs was made a member of the Order of Canada, was awarded an honorary doctorate by York University, and received the RCAIC (Royal Canadian Architectural Institute of Canada) silver medal. In 2005, 'Isaacs seen : 50 years on the art front, a gallery scrapbook' compiled by Donnalu Wigmore, was published in support of 'Isaacs seen', four interconnected exhibitions held in Toronto that year to illustrate his career.

**Scope and Content:** Fonds consists of the business records of The Isaacs Gallery (TIG), the InnuIt Gallery and the Isaacs/InnuIt Gallery which include personal and professional correspondence, exhibition catalogues, mailings, financial records, and artist files consisting of correspondence, biographical sketches, press clippings, and other material relating to artists represented by Isaacs such as Dennis Burton, Graham Coughtry, William Kurelek, Michael Snow and Joyce Wieland, Robert Markle, Greg Curnoe, Gordon Rayner and John Ivor Smith, among others. It also includes artist portfolio files consisting of press clippings and catalogues of their works, a comprehensive slide collection documenting an overview of his gallery exhibits, and promotional files relating to his galleries. The fonds includes Isaacs' poster collection as well as notes written by Isaacs, collected correspondence and reminiscences, drafts, mock-ups and other material related to the writing and creation of the artist's scrapbook 'Isaacs seen.'

**Restrictions on Access:** Access is open.

**Access and Use:** Reproductions are provided for private research and study only. Researchers are

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**Finding Aid:** File lists available.

**URL of Finding Aid:** <http://archivesfa.library.yorku.ca/fonds/ON00370-f0000134.htm>

**Accruals:** The fonds comprises the following accessions: 1996-036, 1997-034, 1998-014, 1999-020, 2000-006, 2006-012, 2008-015. No further accruals are expected.

**Related Records:** See Joyce Wieland fonds (F0445) for related material.

**Immediate source of acquisition:** Donated by Av Isaacs in 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2006 and 2008.

**Provenance Access Points:** Isaacs, Avrom, 1926-

Date of creation: 2002/04/04

Date of last revision: 2009/03/30