

DOMINION GALLERY

DR. MAX STERN
AND THE DOMINION GALLERY
A SELECTION FROM THE ARCHIVES

1438

DOMINION GALLERY
DEALERS IN PAINTING
AND HISTORY OF ART

1438

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THE DOMINION GALLERY ARCHIVES

DR. MAX STERN HAS LONG BEEN RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF CANADA'S MOST IMPORTANT ART DEALERS. BEGINNING IN 1942, THE YEAR HE JOINED THE DOMINION GALLERY OF FINE ART IN MONTREAL, STERN NOT ONLY DEVOTED HIMSELF TO THE INTRODUCTION OF INTERNATIONAL ART TO THE CANADIAN MARKET BUT ALSO CHAMPIONED THE CAREERS OF LIVING CANADIAN ARTISTS. MOREOVER, STERN ASSEMBLED AN IMPRESSIVE PRIVATE ART COLLECTION CONSISTING OF BOTH CANADIAN AND INTERNATIONAL WORKS. MOST OF THESE WORKS WERE EVENTUALLY DONATED TO CANADIAN MUSEUMS.

Max Stern in Germany, c. 1925.

The items presented in this exhibition are a small part of the Dominion Gallery Archives, a collection that includes the Gallery's business and historical records, as well as Stern's personal papers. Donated to the National Gallery of Canada by Stern's estate in 2000, the archives include a voluminous correspondence with artists and art institutions, as well as thousands of photographs of art works exhibited or sold at the Dominion Gallery. Particularly valuable are the stock books and records documenting the sale of art works spanning half a century. These documents provide an invaluable resource for provenance research in Canadian and international art.

FORMATIVE YEARS (1904-1940)

Max Stern was born in München-Gladbach, Germany in 1904. His father, Julius Stern, was a successful textile manufacturer whose passion for art collecting led him to establish the Galerie Stern in Düsseldorf in the late 1890s. From birth, the young Max was surrounded by the art works that filled his father's Düsseldorf gallery. When he came of age, Max was sent to study art history in Cologne, Berlin, Vienna and Paris. Upon earning his doctorate from the University of Bonn in 1928, he first joined the Galerie Stern as manager and then became its sole owner after his father's death in 1934. Throughout his life, Stern continued to rely on the experience gathered at the Galerie Stern and was known to frequently quote his father on matters of art.

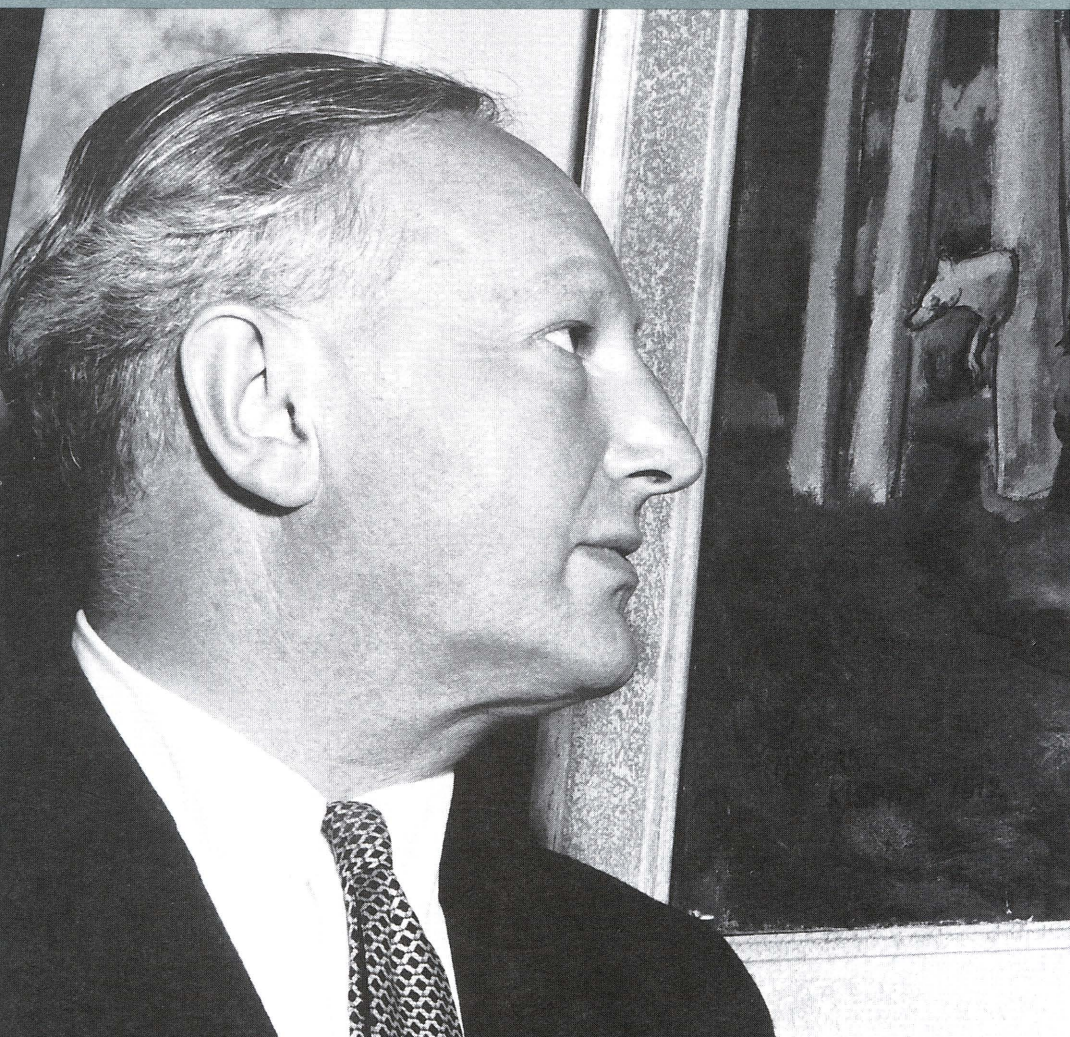
Stern's ambition was to operate galleries in the three cities of Düsseldorf, London and New York. Toward that end, with the help of his sister Hedi and the Dutch art historian Cornelius I.W. van de Wetering, he opened a gallery (West's Galleries) at 43 Duke Street, London in 1935. However, further plans were thwarted with the rise of Nazism in Germany, which, in 1937, forced Stern to auction a substantial part of the Galerie Stern collection, place other works in storage with the shipping agent Josef Roggendorf, and close the Düsseldorf gallery.

The works left with Roggendorf were confiscated by the National Socialist government before Stern could arrange to have them shipped outside the country. He subsequently spent several years tracking the 28 confiscated paintings, using an advertisement in the German art magazine *Die Weltkunst* to offer a reward for information regarding the stolen works. Two of the paintings, *Musical Party* by Dirk Hals and *Landscape with Figures* by Salomon van Ruysdael, were recovered with the help of the Canadian government not long after the war ended. Others were more difficult to find; the *Last Judgement* by a follower of Hieronymus Bosch, for example, was returned only in 1954. Several other works, including a still life by Jan Brueghel the Elder, were never found. Stern's attempts at restitution for the unrecovered paintings continued into the 1960s.

Stern left Germany in December 1937, joining his sister at West's Galleries in London. Plans to develop West's were interrupted a few years later with the outbreak of war and Stern's internment as a civilian alien in a refugee camp on the Isle of Man. After a short period interned in England, Stern opted to immigrate to Canada, where he spent almost two years in internment camps in Fredericton, New Brunswick and Farnham, Quebec.



Max Stern showing a painting by Jean-Paul Riopelle in the Dominion Gallery, c. 1965. Max and Iris Stern showing a drawing by Fougita, c. 1954. Max Stern viewing a painting by Emily Carr at the Parliament Buildings in Victoria, B.C., 1951.



THE FIRST DOMINION GALLERY (1941-1949)

Stern joined Montreal's Dominion Gallery of Fine Art as manager in 1942. The Gallery, located in the Keefer Building on St. Catherine Street West, had been established the previous year by Rose Millman. Stern entered into a partnership arrangement with Millman in 1944 and finally acquired the Gallery outright, with his wife Iris as partner, in January 1947, abbreviating its name to the Dominion Gallery shortly thereafter.

When Stern arrived in Montreal, most of the city's galleries were largely conservative in taste, dealing mostly in Dutch genre and nineteenth-century landscape painting. Contrary to this approach, Stern aimed "to conquer Canada via the living Canadian artist," and during his first years at the Dominion Gallery he introduced the policy of promoting young and often unknown Canadian artists. The approach was first evident in March 1943, when the Dominion Gallery gave Goodridge Roberts a solo show. Exhibits of works by other Canadian artists quickly followed, beginning with Jacques de Tonnancour, a group of 23 young artists known as *les Sagittaires*, Paul-Émile Borduas and Eric Goldberg. In organizing these early exhibits, Stern relied on the expertise of Maurice Gagnon, an art historian and teacher at the École du Meuble.

The year 1944 was a benchmark in Stern's promotion of Canadian art, with exhibitions of works by John Lyman; a group consisting of Jacques de Tonnancour, Allan Harrison, Sybil Kennedy and Jori Smith; four members of the Group of Seven; and the Contemporary Arts Society. The highlight of this remarkable season was an exhibit of Emily Carr's work. Stern had met Carr during a trip to Western Canada and convinced her to exhibit her paintings at the Dominion Gallery. The Carr exhibition, held in the fall of 1944, was the first showing of her work to achieve financial success during her lifetime, with 54 of the 60 works exhibited being sold. Upon her death in 1945, Stern organized a memorial exhibition of Carr's work, with similar success.

During the 1940s, Stern began providing the means for young Canadian artists to paint on a full-time basis by establishing a contract system, in which monthly payments were made to an artist in exchange for an agreed-upon number of works. This type of contract benefited both dealer and artist since, as Stern explained to Lawren S. Harris in 1945, "... the work of a great artist is best kept alive by concentrating his work with one dealer who carefully brings small numbers of his paintings at a time on the market, rather than by offering the paintings haphazardly in many places through different dealers. This has been done successfully in France, England, and the United States." Stern signed exclusive contracts with numerous artists over the years, including Goodridge Roberts, Stanley Cosgrove, Jean Dallaire and Paul Beaulieu. Not only did this practice allow for the concentration of an artist's work with one dealer, thereby controlling the number of paintings put on the market, it also allowed lifelong associations to be forged between Stern and the various artists under contract. A case in point is British Columbian artist E.J. Hughes, who was signed to an exclusive contract in 1951 while Stern was travelling in Western Canada in search of works for an upcoming exhibition. Until it closed in 2000, the Dominion Gallery remained the exclusive agent for Hughes's work.

While the early success of the Dominion Gallery was based primarily on the sale of works by living Canadian artists, Stern also maintained his interest in modern French art throughout the 1940s, arranging a Fernand Léger exhibition in 1943 and following this in

1944 with an exhibit of *Modern French and Other Important European Artists*, which included works by Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso, Wassily Kandinsky and Maurice de Vlaminck, among many others. Stern's interest in works by contemporary French artists, or artists based in France, picked up considerably during the 1950s and 1960s, when he began to regularly exhibit and sell works by artists such as Kees Van Dongen and Georges Mathieu.

The Dominion Gallery also continued to sell Old Master paintings, albeit at a slower pace. Several of these paintings had been retrieved by Stern from his London gallery after the war ended and, in 1947, they were included in an exhibition entitled *Old Masters, 16th, 17th and 18th Century*. Most of the 22 works in the exhibition had been collected by Julius Stern, including a painting by Jan Wellens de Cock (a forerunner of Pieter Brueghel the Elder) entitled *St. John at Patmos* (c. 1510), which Stern considered one of his most prized early works and which he eventually sold to a London collector. Other artists in the 1947 Old Masters exhibit included Hieronymus Janssens, Paulus Moreelse, Pieter de Molijn, Josse de Momper and David Teniers the Younger.

THE NEW DOMINION GALLERY (1950-2000)

In 1950, Stern moved the Dominion Gallery to a three-storey greystone on Sherbrooke Street West. With 14 exhibition rooms on three floors, the new premises provided considerably more space for displaying works than the former location and also included room for Stern's extensive library, which until this point had been kept in storage. The distribution of space remained the same for the entire life of the Dominion Gallery: the lower level was used for rotating exhibitions; the first floor was usually given to contemporary Canadian and international art; and the third level was used to display Old Masters and to house Stern's library. The top floor of the Gallery served as an apartment for Stern and his wife Iris. In keeping with the Dominion Gallery's long-standing policy of encouraging contemporary Canadian artists, the first exhibition at the new location featured paintings by Goodridge Roberts; this was followed over the next few years with major exhibitions of works by, among others, Frederick B. Taylor, Jeanne Rhéaume, Stanley Cosgrove, Marian Scott, Jean Dallaire, E.J. Hughes, John Lyman, Jori Smith and Jean-Paul Riopelle.

Although paintings were the mainstay of the Dominion Gallery throughout the 1940s and the early 1950s, when the duty on the import of sculpture was removed in 1956, Stern enlarged the scope of the Gallery's collection to include international sculpture. Stern made his first major foray into sculpture when he met and purchased works from Henry Moore during the latter part of 1956. Through Moore, Stern was then introduced to other important sculptors in Europe, notably the English sculptors Kenneth Armitage, Lynn Chadwick and Eduardo Paolozzi, the French sculptors Hans Arp and Ossip Zadkine, and the Italian sculptors Emilio Greco, Marino Marini and Giacomo Manzù. Over the next few years, the Dominion Gallery built an unparalleled inventory of international sculpture and held numerous important sculpture exhibitions, including a combined showing of works by Henry Moore and Peter Sager in 1962 and a major showing of works by 18 contemporary European sculptors in 1964. Canadian sculptors such as Sorel Etrog, Alan Jarvis, Sybil Kennedy and Hans Schlee also benefited from Stern's

new-found interest. All four were given solo exhibitions at the Dominion Gallery during the early 1960s.

Stern also encouraged an interest in Auguste Rodin, becoming the agent in Canada for the sale of Rodin sculptures from the Musée Rodin in Paris in the late 1950s. In 1967, on the fiftieth anniversary of Rodin's death and in co-operation with the Musée Rodin, the Dominion Gallery paid tribute to the artist with an exhibition of 74 of Rodin's sculptures. Stern's personal contribution to the event was the purchase and installation, in front of the Dominion Gallery, of Rodin's *Jean d'Aire* from the Burghers of Calais group.

A LEGACY IN ART

Through his achievements at the Dominion Gallery in the postwar period, Stern raised the level of art appreciation in Canada. His personal collection comprises another contribution. Continuing a practice begun in Germany, Stern privately purchased many works by artists who exhibited at the Dominion Gallery during his tenure. Stern had a strong desire to see important art works come to rest in Canadian institutions, and he assembled his private collection with the express purpose of eventually donating the works to public collections. Stern began donating to Canadian art institutions in the mid-1950s and, over the years, he gave generously to museums across Canada, including the Agnes Etherington Art Centre, the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, the Edmonton Art Gallery, the Glenbow Museum, the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, the Musée d'art de Joliette, the National Gallery of Canada and the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Stern was particularly generous to Montreal institutions, most notably the Musée des beaux-arts, the Musée d'art contemporain and Concordia University. Among the 166 works donated to these three Montreal organizations are important pieces by Paul-Émile Borduas, Emily Carr, Stanley Cosgrove, Jean Dallaire, Henry Moore, James Wilson Morrice, Goodridge Roberts and Kees Van Dongen. The two sculptures that stood outside the Dominion Gallery for many years, Henry Moore's *Upright Motive No. 5* (1955-56) and Auguste Rodin's *Le Bourgeois de Calais, Jean d'Aire* (1890), were donated to the Musée d'art contemporain in 1982. The exquisite *Madonna Surrounded by Five Angels*, painted toward the end of the fifteenth century by the Master of the Legend of St. Barbara, a follower of Rogier van der Weyden, was donated to the Musée des beaux-arts in 1986.

Stern remained true to his vocation until the end. He died in 1987 while on a buying trip in Paris. For his contributions to art in this country, Stern received numerous acknowledgments and awards, including the Order of Canada in 1984 and an honorary doctorate from Concordia University in 1985. Having become one of Canada's leading commercial galleries under Stern's direction, the Dominion Gallery continued to operate for more than a decade following his death, closing in December 2000.

Philip Dombowsky

Project Archivist, Dominion Gallery Archives

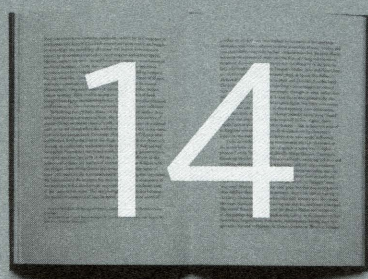
The National Gallery of Canada wishes to acknowledge the generosity shown by the executors of the estate of Dr. Max Stern in donating the Dominion Gallery Archives, as well as a contribution of funds toward the organization and housing of the collection. We also wish to acknowledge the generous support of the Friends of the National Gallery for matching the executors' contribution of funds toward this project.

CHECKLIST

1. Exterior of the Galerie Stern at 23 Koenigsallee, Düsseldorf, date unknown.
2. Portrait of Julius Stern by Eduard von Gebhardt (1838–1925), c. 1915. This work was painted in the Sterns' living quarters above the Galerie Stern. It was destroyed in 1940 when Stern's London flat was struck by a German bomb.
3. Galerie Stern advertisement, c. 1920.
4. Max Stern, c. 1906. Photograph: Atelier Samson & Co., München-Gladbach.
5. Gerda, Hedi and Max Stern, c. 1906. Photograph: W. Royen, München-Gladbach.
6. Max Stern reading in the garden of the Galerie Stern, date unknown.
7. Max Stern with sisters Hedi and Gerda, date unknown.
8. Max Stern with dog in the garden of the Galerie Stern, date unknown.
9. Hedi, Selma and Julius Stern in Baden-Baden, Germany, date unknown.
10. Selma Stern in the garden of the Galerie Stern, date unknown.
11. Friederich Coubillier's *Der Runenwerfer* in the garden of the Galerie Stern, date unknown.
12. Self-portrait of Max Stern, c. 1920.
13. Identification card, 1920.
14. Max Stern with family and friends, date unknown.
15. Max Stern in the resort town of Wolfgangsee in the Swiss Alps, c. 1923.
16. Max Stern with Ilse Sander and friends, date unknown.
17. Max Stern in Vienna, February 1925.
18. Max Stern in front of the Belvedere Palace in Vienna, 1925.
19. Max Stern with passengers travelling to or from the coastal town of Nordeney, c. 1925.
20. Max Stern, *Johann Peter Langer: Sein Leben und Sein Werk*. Bonn: Kurt Schroeder, 1930. Published version of Stern's Ph.D. dissertation, completed at the University of Bonn in 1928. In his dissertation, Stern successfully catalogued several unknown works by Langer, an academic painter active in Germany during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
21. Identification document issued by Reichs-Kulturkammer, 15 December 1933.
22. Max Stern with sister Hedi and friends in Arosa, Switzerland, 1932.
23. Registration certificate issued to Stern in London in 1938.
24. *Dutch and Flemish Portraits and Genre-Pictures of the 16th and 17th Centuries*. West's Galleries. [1940].
25. *Dutch and Flemish Masters of the 16th and 17th Centuries*. West's Galleries. [1940].
26. *Dutch and Flemish Landscape, Patinier – Ruisdael*. West's Galleries. [1939].
27. Reference letter dated 19 May 1942 from Tancred Borenius to C.B. Leggo, Refugee Camp, Sherbrooke, Quebec. Borenius, Dean of the Faculty of Art History at London University and editor of *Burlington Magazine*, was one of Stern's guarantors in England.
28. Letter dated 31 July 1942 from William Birks to Dr. Charles F. Martin. Birks was president of the Canadian Refugee Organization and acted as Stern's guarantor in Canada.
29. Entrance to the Dominion Gallery of Fine Art on St. Catherine Street West, c. 1945. Photograph: R. Hirsch.
30. Rose Millman at the Dominion Gallery of Fine Art, c. 1945. Photograph: R. Hirsch.
31. Letter dated 8 November 1943 from Stern to Dr. Tancred Borenius.
32. Stern showing a work by Emily Carr to a prospective client, Dominion Gallery of Fine Art, c. 1944.
33. *Exhibition of Modern French and Other Important European Artists*. Dominion Gallery. February 19–March 4, 1944.
34. *Groupe des Sept: Harris, Jackson, Lismer, Varley*. Dominion Gallery. 13 mai au 24 mai [1944].
35. *Paintings and Watercolours by Emily Carr*. Dominion Gallery. October 19–November 4 [1944]. This was the first exhibition of works by Emily Carr at the Dominion Gallery.
36. *The Eastern Group Exhibition: Eric Goldberg, Goodridge Roberts, Jori Smith and Philip Surrey*. Dominion Gallery. April 21–May 2 [1945].
37. "Artist Agreement between Mr. Goodridge Roberts and the Dominion Gallery," c. 1947.
38. *Goodridge Roberts, Exhibition of Paintings: Landscapes, Figures and Still Lifes*. Dominion Gallery. May 7–17 [1947].
39. *4th Exhibition of Paintings by Goodridge Roberts*. Dominion Gallery. October 21–November 5 [1949].

40. *Old Masters, 16th, 17th and 18th Century*. Dominion Gallery. March 21–April 5 [1947].
41. Stern and his wife Iris viewing advertisement identifying paintings confiscated by the Nazis, c. 1950. Stern married Iris (nee Westerberg) in 1946.
42. "A Search for Lost Paintings." English version of an advertisement published in the German art magazine *Die Weltkunst*, c. 1950.
43. Letter dated 3 May 1949 from Lester B. Pearson, Office of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, to Victor Doré, Canadian Ambassador to Belgium.
44. Salomon van Ruysdael's *Landscape with Figures*. This work, part of the collection of Julius Stern, was confiscated by the Nazis in 1938 and recovered by Canadian military authorities after the war.
45. Jan Brueghel the Elder's *Flower Piece*. This still life was among the works stolen by the Nazis and never recovered. Stern received compensation for the painting from the German government in the early 1960s.
46. Exterior of the Dominion Gallery on Sherbrooke Street West, date unknown.
47. Sculptures by Auguste Rodin and Henry Moore in front of the Dominion Gallery, c. 1970. Stern considered Rodin the greatest sculptor since Michelangelo and Henry Moore the greatest living sculptor.
48. Interior of the Dominion Gallery, date unknown.
49. Stern's desk at the Dominion Gallery, date unknown.
50. Letter dated 8 December 1950 from A.Y. Jackson to Stern.
51. Stern and his wife Iris looking at Llewellyn Petley-Jones's *Vase de Fleurs, Paris, 1948*. The work was included in the exhibition *Canadian Painters Abroad* held at the Dominion Gallery in 1954.
52. Stern showing a painting by Jean-Paul Riopelle in the Dominion Gallery, c. 1965.
53. Kees Van Dongen in his studio, c. 1956. Inscribed "in memorie [*sic*] of a visit to my studio, Van Dongen, August 10, 1956." Photograph: Cas Oorthuys, Paris.
54. Kees Van Dongen and Stern in the artist's studio in Paris, c. 1957.
55. Stern and his wife Iris with Dietz Edzard in a Paris café, c. 1957.
56. Henry Moore, c. 1973. Inscribed "For Max & Iris with warmest regards from Henry Moore, June 1973."
57. Jean Arp, date unknown. Inscribed "à Max & Iris Stern le souvenir mon mari Jean Arp amicalement Marguerite Arp." Photograph: André Villers.
58. Mario Negri, date unknown. Inscribed "Alla Signora Iris e il Dr. Max Stern con stima e simpatia. Mario Negri." Photograph: Gianni Cattaneo.
59. Stern in the Dominion Gallery, date unknown. Photograph: Jacques Dufresne.
60. Stern in the Dominion Gallery, 1985. Photograph: Yousef Karsh.
61. Letter dated 17 April 1963 from Douglass Burns Clarke, Vice-Principal, Sir George Williams University, to Stern.
62. Medallion awarded to Stern by Teddy Kolleck, Mayor of Jerusalem, November 1983.
63. Letter dated 2 November 1983 from Teddy Kolleck, Mayor of Jerusalem, to Stern.
64. Letter dated 26 November 1983 from Frances K. Smith, Curator Emeritus, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, to Stern.
65. Sculpture by Charles Daudelin given to Stern at a special event – Hommage à Max Stern – held in 1984 at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. The event paid tribute to Stern's generosity as a patron of the arts.
66. Letter dated 25 June 1984 from Roger de C. Nantel, Director, Chancellery of Canadian Orders and Decorations, to Stern.
67. Order of Canada, 1984.
68. Letter dated 10 March 1986 from Gilles Pigeon, Dean, Université de Sherbrooke, to Stern.
69. Medallion awarded to Stern for donating works to the University of Sherbrooke's Faculty of Medicine. Inscribed "Hommage de Reconnaissance à Max Stern, C.M. PH.D. Donateur Insigne Université de Sherbrooke Faculte de medicine 1961-1986."
70. Letter dated 20 February 1987 from Bernard Lamarre, Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, to Stern.

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