



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

John Altoon art work and papers

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	John Altoon art work and papers
Identifier:	AAA.altojohn
Date:	circa 1940-1969
Extent:	2.3 Linear feet
Creator:	Altoon, John, 1925-
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated 1998 by Roberta L. Thompson, John Altoon's widow and in 2017 by printmaker Kenneth E. Tyler who collaborated on projects with John Altoon.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center.

Biographical / Historical

John Altoon (1925-1969) was a painter in Los Angeles, Calif. Altoon (born Altoonian), was a major figure in the Los Angeles art scene from the 1950s until his death from a heart attack in 1969. He began painting in the abstract-expressionist style, but by the mid-1960s his works turned to the figure, characterized by skillful draftsmanship and sexual imagery.

Scope and Contents

Over 300 pencil and pencil and ink drawings, circa 1950s-1960s, mostly contained in sketchbooks and tablets, as well as numerous loose sketches and several mixed-media works on board. Also found are Altoon's letters and a ship's log dating from his years of WWII Navy service in the Pacific.

Scope and Contents

An addition of 0.6 linear feet donated 2017 included approximately 100 sketches by John Altoon, 1956-1966 and undated, created in printmaker Kenneth Tyler's Los Angeles workshop.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Prints -- Technique -- Study and teaching
World War, 1939-1945 -- Naval operations, American
World War, 1939-1945 -- Pacific Ocean

Types of Materials:

Drawings
Sketchbooks

Names:

Tyler, Kenneth E.

Occupations:

Painters -- California -- Los Angeles