A Finding Aid to the Ruth Armer Papers, 1911-1976, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

Processing of this collection received support from the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art
Title: Ruth Armer papers
Date: 1911-1976
Identifier: AAA.armeruth
Creator: Armer, Ruth, 1896-1977
Extent: 0.6 Linear feet
Language: English
Summary: The papers of painter Ruth Armer measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1911 to 1976. The collection includes scattered documentation of Armer's career through printed bookplates, biographical material, correspondence, personal business records, photographs, printed material, a scrapbook, and writings and notes.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
Ruth Armer donated her papers to the Archives of American Art in 1974. Additional material was donated by John and Robert Brantsen in 1986.

Related Materials
The Archives of American Art also holds an oral history interview with Ruth Armer conducted by Paul Karlstrom on 1974 August 14.

Available Formats
The collection is available on 35mm microfilm reels 2200 and 4046 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

Processing Information
The collection received a preliminary level of arrangement after donation and was partially microfilmed on reels 2200 and 4046. The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2022 with support from the Smithsonian American Women’s History Initiative.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.
Biographical / Historical

Ruth Armer (1896-1977) was a painter active in San Francisco, California. Armer studied at the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art (San Francisco Art Institute) and in New York City with Robert Henri, George Bellows, and John Sloan. During her career she worked as a commercial illustrator as well as a landscape and portrait artist. In the late-1930s she experimented with abstraction, a tendency reinforced by contact with the California School of Fine Arts abstract expressionist movement in the late-1940s.

Armer taught for years in the Bay area and was an active exhibiting artist until her death.

Scope and Contents

The papers of painter Ruth Armer measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1911 to 1976. The collection includes scattered documentation of Armer’s career through printed bookplates, biographical material, correspondence, personal business records, photographs, printed material, a scrapbook, and writings and notes.

Arrangement

Due to the small size of this collection the papers are arranged as one series.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
- Art -- Collectors and collecting
- Women artists
- Women educators
- Women painters

Occupations:
- Collectors -- California -- San Francisco
- Educators -- California -- San Francisco
- Painters -- California -- San Francisco
Container Listing

Series 1: Ruth Armer Papers, 1911-1976

0.6 Linear feet (Box 1, BV 2)

Scope and Contents:
Artwork consists of bookplates designed and signed by Ruth Armer for personal libraries. Biographical material includes resumes. Correspondence is with galleries and institutions, including Brownell-Lambertson Galleries, Inc. and the San Francisco Museum of Art. Also found are scattered sales records and lists.

Photographs depict Armer with her puppets and of two unidentified men. Photographs of works of art are of Armer's paintings, sculpture, and puppets. Also found are photos of exhibitions.

A scrapbook dates from 1911-1971 and contains clippings and other printed material pertaining to exhibitions and Armer's painting technique.

Writings include an artist statement, notes taken from an interview, and lists.

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