



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Artist Tenants Association  
Records, 1959-1978, in the Archives of American Art

Judy Ng

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection  
was provided by Terra Foundation for American Art

February 08, 2012

Archives of American Art  
750 9th Street, NW  
Victor Building, Suite 2200  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Historical Note.....	2
Scope and Content Note.....	2
Arrangement.....	3
Names and Subjects .....	3
Container Listing .....	4
Series 1: Correspondence, 1967-1969.....	4
Series 2: Administrative Records, 1961-1969.....	5
Series 3: Financial Records, 1961-1969.....	6
Series 4: Printed Material, 1967-1978.....	8
Series 5: Scrapbook, 1959-1976.....	9

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Artist Tenants Association records
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.artitena
<b>Date:</b>	1959-1978
<b>Extent:</b>	1 linear foot
<b>Creator:</b>	Artist Tenants Association (New York, N.Y.)
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Summary:</b>	The records of the Artist Tenants Association measure 1.0 linear feet and date from 1959 to 1978. They document the Association's efforts to alter New York City building codes to permit artists to live in lofts, initiating the development of SoHo as an art center. Records include business correspondence, founding documents, memoranda and press releases, member lists, financial records, clippings, and a scrapbook of clippings pertaining to the organization.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The records were donated to the Archives of American Art by Ruth Fortel, the financial secretary of the Association, in 1978 and 1979.

### Related Material

Also found in the Archives of American Art are the SoHo Artists Association Records, 1968-1978.

### Alternative Forms Available

This collection was digitized in its entirety in 2012 and is available via the Archives of American Art's website. Blank pages and duplicates have not been scanned. In most cases, the cover, title page, and individual relevant pages have been scanned from published materials.

### Processing Information

The collection was fully processed, arranged, and described by Judy Ng and digitized in 2012 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

### Preferred Citation

Artist Tenants Association records, 1959-1978. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

## Ownership and Literary Rights

The Artist Tenants Association records are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

---

## Historical Note

The Artist Tenants Association was loosely formed in the early 1960s to petition the office of Robert Wagner, then mayor of New York, for permission to live in manufacturing districts not officially zoned for residence. The city eventually agreed to an Artist in Residence (A.I.R.) program, which led to a more formal movement to legalize artists' occupation of studio spaces in the neighborhood "South of Houston," shorted to SoHo.

On March 31, 1965, the Association acquired a formal certificate of unincorporation, although they had been operating in an unofficial capacity since the fall of 1961. In addition to negotiating with the city, the Artist Tenants Association served as a centralized information resource by disseminating information to artists, proposing boycotts and other actions early in the negotiation process, and raising funds to support artists and building projects. Between 1964 and 1968, the Association was central to the negotiation of the A.I.R. Agreement, which received approval in 1964 and officially passed as an amendment concerning Artists' Centers and Studios in March 1968.

Influential artists who supported the Association's first artist boycott in protest of the city's 1961 studio-loft evictions include Helen Frankenthaler, Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Ad Reinhardt, and Richard Stankiewicz.

---

## Scope and Content Note

The records of the Artist Tenants Association measure 1.0 linear feet and date from 1959 to 1978. They document the Association's efforts to alter New York City building codes to permit artists to live in lofts, initiating the development of SoHo as an art center. Records include business correspondence, founding documents, memoranda and press releases, member lists, financial records, clippings, and a scrapbook of clippings pertaining to the organization.

The correspondence in the collection includes a handful of letters from artists regarding the availability of lofts, letters from the New York City Housing and Development Administration, and information from other co-housing projects in the city. In addition, there is a report, "Arts Administrator Need and Potential in New York State," drafted by George Alan Smith for the New York State Council on the Arts.

Administrative records include a legal resolution of unincorporation, meeting announcements, press releases and memoranda, member lists, and phone messages. Financial records include checking and savings account books, canceled checks and check memos, bank statements, and receipts related to Association activities. The clippings in the collection relate to coverage of Association activities and topics relevant to their objectives.

The scrapbook of clippings chronicle housing needs of New York City artists, press coverage related to the Association, and supplementary articles tracing the development of the SoHo neighborhood as an integrated artists' live and work community.

---

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 5 series:

- Series 1: Correspondence, 1967-1969 (Box 1; 12 folders)
  - Series 2: Administrative Records, 1961-1969 (Box 1; 10 folders)
  - Series 3: Financial Records, 1961-1969 (Boxes 1-2; 0.2 linear feet)
  - Series 4: Printed Material, 1967-1978 (Box 2; 4 folders)
  - Series 5: Scrapbook, 1959-1976 (BV 1; 0.2 linear feet)
- 

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Societies, etc. -- New York (State) -- New York  
Artists -- Housing -- New York (State) -- New York  
Artists' studios -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Scrapbooks

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Correspondence, 1967-1969

12 folders (Box 1)

The correspondence in the collection includes a handful of letters from artists regarding the availability of lofts, letters from the New York City Housing and Development Administration, and information from other co-housing projects in the city. In addition, there is a report, "Arts Administrator Need and Potential in New York State," drafted by George Alan Smith for the New York State Council on the Arts.

Letters are alphabetically arranged by business name or last name of correspondent. The series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 1	Artist Tenants Association Members, 1967-1968 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	Business Executives Move for Vietnam Peace, 1968 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	City of New York, Housing and Development Association, 1968 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 4	Cooper Square Community Development Committee and Businessmen's Association, 1968- 1969 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 5	Encyclopedia of Associations, 1967 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 6	Henry Street Studio Apartments, 1968 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 7	New School for Social Research, 1968 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 8	New York City Attorney General's Office, 1968 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 9	New York State Council for the Arts, 1967-1969 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 10	Park Slope North Improvement Corporation, 1968 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 11	Timney, John J., 1967 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 12	Peace and Freedom Party, 1968 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 2: Administrative Records, 1961-1969

*10 folders (Box 1)*

These records include a legal resolution of unincorporation, meeting announcements, press releases and memoranda, member lists, and phone messages.

The material in each folder is arranged chronologically. The series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 13      General Resolution of Unincorporated Association, 1965  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 14      Meeting Announcements, 1966-1967  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 15      Member Address Book, circa 1964-1969  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 16      Member Dues Book, 1964  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 17      Member Lists, 1967  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 18      Press Releases and Memorandum, 1961-1968  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 19      Notes, General, 1961-1968  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 20      Notes, ATA Secretary (Ruth Fortel), 1965-1967  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 1, Folder 21-22      Phone Messages, 1967-1968  
*2 folders*  
[Image\(s\)](#)  
[Image\(s\)](#)

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 3: Financial Records, 1961-1969

*0.2 linear feet (Boxes 1-2)*

These records include checking and savings account books, canceled checks and check memos, bank statements, and receipts related to Association activities.

The material in each folder is arranged chronologically. The series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 23-24	Checking Account, Bank Statements, 1966-1965 <i>2 folders</i> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 25-27	Checking Account, Canceled Checks, 1961-1969 <i>3 folders</i> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 1	Checking Account, Deposit Slips, 1961-1967 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 2	Checking Account, Memorandum, 1961-1965 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 3	Checking Account, Monthly Charges, 1963-1969 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 4	Savings Account, Deposit Book, 1964-1966 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 5	Receipts and Statements, circa 1961-1967 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 6-8	Receipts and Statements, 1961-1963 <i>3 folders</i> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 9-10	Receipts and Statements, 1964 <i>2 folders</i> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 11-13	Receipts and Statements, 1965-1967 <i>3 folders</i> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a>



[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 2, Folder 14      Receipts and Statements, Petty Cash, 1966-1967

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 2, Folder 15      Receipts and Statements, NY Telephone, 1964-1969

[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 2, Folder 16      Receipts and Statements, Telephone Exchange, 1966-1968

[Image\(s\)](#)

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 4: Printed Material, 1967-1978

*4 folders (Box 2)*

Clippings in the collection relate to coverage of Association activities and topics relevant to their objectives.

The material is arranged chronologically. The series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 2, Folder 17      Clippings, 1967-1968  
[Image\(s\)](#)

Box 2, Folder 18-20      Clippings, 1975-1978  
*3 folders*  
[Image\(s\)](#)  
[Image\(s\)](#)  
[Image\(s\)](#)

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 5: Scrapbook, 1959-1976

*0.2 linear feet (BV 1)*

The scrapbook of clippings chronicle housing needs of New York City artists, press coverage related to the Association, and supplementary articles tracing the development of the SoHo neighborhood as an integrated artists' live and work community.

The series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 2, Folder 21	Scrapbook, 1959-1967 <a href="#">Image(s)</a> Oversized material housed in BV 1
Box 2, Folder 22-25	Scrapbook, Additional Clippings, 1966-1976 <i>4 folders</i> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a> <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 2, Folder 26	Scrapbook, Additional Material, 1961-1974 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box BV 1	Scrapbook, 1959-1967 Oversized material scanned with Box 2, F21

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*