



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

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Artist Tenants Association records
Date:	1959-1978
Identifier:	AAA.artitena
Creator:	Artist Tenants Association (New York, N.Y.)
Extent:	1 Linear foot
Language:	English .
Summary:	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

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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 (Box 2, BV 3; 0.2 linear feet)
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Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Artists -- Housing -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Scrapbooks

Functions:

Artists' studios -- New York (State)
Arts organizations -- New York (State)

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence, 1967-1969

12 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: 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.

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

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Series 2: Administrative Records, 1961-1969

10 Folders (Box 1)

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

Arrangement: 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
Box 1, Folder 14	Meeting Announcements, 1966-1967
Box 1, Folder 15	Member Address Book, circa 1964-1969
Box 1, Folder 16	Member Dues Book, 1964
Box 1, Folder 17	Member Lists, 1967
Box 1, Folder 18	Press Releases and Memorandum, 1961-1968
Box 1, Folder 19	Notes, General, 1961-1968
Box 1, Folder 20	Notes, ATA Secretary (Ruth Fortel), 1965-1967
Box 1, Folder 21	Phone Messages, 1967-1968
Box 1, Folder 22	Phone Messages, 1967-1968

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Series 3: Financial Records, 1961-1969

0.2 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

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

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

Box 1, Folder 24	Checking Account, Bank Statements, 1961-1965
Box 1, Folder 23	Checking Account, Bank Statements, 1966-1969
Box 1, Folder 25	Checking Account, Canceled Checks, 1961-1964
Box 1, Folder 26	Checking Account, Canceled Checks, 1965-1966
Box 1, Folder 27	Checking Account, Canceled Checks, 1967-1969
Box 2, Folder 1	Checking Account, Deposit Slips, 1961-1967
Box 2, Folder 2	Checking Account, Memorandum, 1961-1965
Box 2, Folder 3	Checking Account, Monthly Charges, 1963-1969
Box 2, Folder 4	Savings Account, Deposit Book, 1964-1966
Box 2, Folder 5	Receipts and Statements, circa 1961-1967
Box 2, Folder 6	Receipts and Statements, 1961
Box 2, Folder 7	Receipts and Statements, 1962
Box 2, Folder 8	Receipts and Statements, 1963
Box 2, Folder 9	Receipts and Statements, 1964
Box 2, Folder 10	Receipts and Statements, 1964
Box 2, Folder 11	Receipts and Statements, 1964-1965
Box 2, Folder 12	Receipts and Statements, 1966
Box 2, Folder 13	Receipts and Statements, 1967
Box 2, Folder 14	Receipts and Statements, Petty Cash, 1966-1967
Box 2, Folder 15	Receipts and Statements, NY Telephone, 1964-1969

Box 2, Folder 16

[Receipts and Statements, Telephone Exchange, 1966-1968](#)

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Series 4: Printed Material, 1967-1978

4 Folders (Box 2)

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

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

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

Box 2, Folder 18 [Clippings, 1975-1976](#)

Box 2, Folder 19 [Clippings, 1977](#)

Box 2, Folder 20 [Clippings, 1978](#)

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Series 5: Scrapbook, 1959-1976

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2, BV 3)

Scope and Contents: 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 series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 2, Folder 21	Scrapbook, 1959-1967 Notes: Oversized material housed in BV 3
Box 2, Folder 22	Scrapbook, Additional Clippings, 1966
Box 2, Folder 23	Scrapbook, Additional Clippings, 1966
Box 2, Folder 24	Scrapbook, Additional Clippings, 1967-1968
Box 2, Folder 25	Scrapbook, Additional Clippings, 1975-1976
Box 2, Folder 26	Scrapbook, Additional Material, 1961-1974
Box BV 3	Scrapbook, 1959-1967 Notes: Oversized material scanned with Box 2, F21

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