



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Ruth G. Barnet Material Related to Chiura Obata, circa 1950-1968, in the Archives of American Art

Rihoko Ueno

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection was provided in part  
by The Walton Family Foundation and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

2022/09/27

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Ruth G. Barnet material related to Chiura Obata
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1950-1968
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.barnruth
<b>Creator:</b>	Barnet, Ruth G., 1918-2018
<b>Extent:</b>	0.5 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of artist and teacher Ruth G. Barnet with material related to Japanese American painter and educator Chiura Obata measure 0.5 linear feet and dates from circa 1950-1968. This small collection includes New Year's cards illustrated by Chiura Obata, Ruth Barnet's notes and watercolor studies executed under Obata's supervision during classes, <i>sumi</i> (Japanese ink) and watercolor paint sketches by Obata that he used for painting class demonstrations, and a small amount of printed material on Obata.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Ruth G. Barnet material related to Chiura Obata were donated to the Archives of American Art by Elna Hunter, Ruth Barnet's daughter, in 2022.

### Related Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds the Chiura Obata papers, 1891-2000.

### Available Formats

The collection was fully digitized in 2023 and is available on the Archives of American Art website.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed, prepared for digitization, and described in a finding aid by Rihoko Ueno in 2023 with funding provided by The Walton Family Foundation and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

### Preferred Citation

Ruth G. Barnet material related to Chiura Obata, circa 1950-1968. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Ruth G. Barnet (1918-2018) was an artist and teacher in Berkeley, California. Barnet studied with Japanese American landscape painter Chiura Obata (1885-1975) at University of California, Berkeley. Barnet is author of *Free Brush Designing* (1955), an instructional book influenced by her lessons learned from Obata.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of artist and teacher Ruth G. Barnet with material related to Japanese American painter and educator Chiura Obata measure 0.5 linear feet and dates from circa 1950-1968. This small collection includes New Year's cards illustrated by Chiura Obata, Ruth Barnet's notes and watercolor studies executed under Obata's supervision during classes, *sumi* (Japanese ink) and watercolor paint sketches by Obata that he used for painting class demonstrations, and a small amount of printed material on Obata.

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## Arrangement

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

- Series 1: Ruth G. Barnet material related to Chiura Obata, circa 1950-1968 (0.5 linear feet; Box 1, OV's 2-4)
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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:

Asian American artists  
Women artists

### Types of Materials:

Drawings

### Names:

Obata, Chiura

### Occupations:

Art teachers -- California -- Berkeley  
Landscape painters -- California

Painters -- California -- Berkeley

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Ruth G. Barnet material related to Chiura Obata, circa 1950-1968

0.5 Linear feet (Box 1, OVs 2-4)

**Scope and Contents:** This series includes New Year's cards illustrated by Chiura Obata, Ruth Barnet's notes from Chiura Obata's classes with small pasted-in samples of watercolor studies executed under Obata's supervision, *sumi* (Japanese ink) and watercolor sketches or studies by Obata used for painting class demonstrations, and a small amount of printed material on Obata, such as a booklet *Japanese Flower Arrangement* by Chiura Obata's wife Haruko that was also illustrated by Obata.

**Arrangement:** The material in this series has been arranged in alphabetical order.

**Available Formats:** This series has been fully digitized.

Box 1, Folder 1	<a href="#">Clipping and Travel Brochure on Chiura Obata, circa 1950-1957</a>
Box 1, Folder 2	<a href="#">Japanese Flower Arrangement by Haruko Obata, 1953</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	<a href="#">New Year's Greeting Cards Illustrated by Chiura Obata, 1956-1968</a>
Box 1, Folder 4	<a href="#">Ruth Barnet's Notes from Chiura Obata's Classes, circa 1950-circa 1955</a> Notes: Many pages include small pasted-in samples of watercolor studies created under Obata's supervision.
Oversize 2	<a href="#">Sumi (Japanese Ink) and Watercolor Studies by Chiura Obata for Class Demonstrations, circa 1952</a>
Oversize 3	<a href="#">Watercolor Studies by Chiura Obata (Undated), circa 1952</a> Notes: None of the studies are signed so it's difficult to be certain about the artist.
Oversize 4	<a href="#">Watercolor Studies Probably by Ruth Barnet (Undated), circa 1950-circa 1960</a> Notes: None of the studies are signed so it's hard to say for certain, but these are probably the work of Ruth Barnet rather than Chiura Obata. Some of the studies include notes.

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