



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Jake Berthot Papers, circa 1958-1994, bulk 1970-1992, in the Archives of American Art

Sabine Lipten

The processing of this collection received Federal support from the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund, administered by the National Collections Program and the Smithsonian Collections Advisory Committee.

2023 May 4

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	1
Scope and Contents	2
Arrangement	2
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	
Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1962-1994	4
Series 2: Writings, circa 1971-1994	8
Series 3: Personal Business, 1958-1989	9
Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1963-1994	10
Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1961-1992	12
Series 6: Artwork, circa 1970-1992	13

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Jake Berthot papers
Date:	circa 1958-1994 (bulk 1970-1992)
Identifier:	AAA.bertjake
Creator:	Berthot, Jake, 1939-2014
Extent:	3.9 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of Jake Berthot measure 3.9 linear feet and date from 1958-1994, with bulk dates from 1970-1992. The papers document Berthot's career as a painter and art professor through correspondence, writings, personal business files, printed material, photographic material and artwork.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated 1996 by Jake Berthot.

Preferred Citation

Jake Berthot papers, circa 1958-1994. 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.

Conditions Governing Use

The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning such rights and restrictions and it is the user's responsibility to determine whether rights or restrictions exist and to obtain any necessary permission to access, use, reproduce and publish the collections. Please refer to the [Smithsonian's Terms of Use](#) for additional information.

Biographical / Historical

Jake Berthot (1939-2014) was an abstract painter and art professor from New York. Born in Niagra Falls, NY, Berthot grew up in Clearfield, Pennsylvania before moving to New York City after high school and enrolling at Pratt Institute in 1960. In 1961 he began teaching classes at Pratt which marked the beginning of his career as an art

professor. Berthot subsequently taught classes at Cooper Union (1974–81), Yale University (1982-92), the University of Pennsylvania (1993) and the School of Visual Arts (1994 -2013).

Throughout his career as an artist Berthot's work frequently appeared in solo and group exhibitions in both commercial and public galleries. His painting were included in the Whitney Museum of American Art's Annual in 1969 and again in 1973; The Corcoran Biennial in 1975; the Venice Biennale, 1976; *New Painting – New York* at the Hayward Gallery in London in 1979; *American Art: 1950 to the Present* at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1979; *New Works on Paper* in 1981 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York; *An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1984, among other exhibitions. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1981 and a National Endowment for the Arts grant in 1983.

His work is held in multiple collections including those of The Museum of Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The National Gallery, The Phillips Collection, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum among many more.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Jake Berthot measure 3.9 linear feet and date from 1958-1994, with bulk dates from 1970-1992. The papers document Berthot's career as a painter and art professor through correspondence, writings, personal business files, printed material, photographic material and artwork. The correspondence series comprises a significant portion of the collection, documenting personal and professional-- including educational-- activities and relationships Berthot had. The writing series contains writings by Berthot and others. Writings by Berthot include 3 notebooks; essays on art and creative writing; gallery layout plan notes and miscellaneous notes including an annotated calendar page. Writings by others include typescript essays on Berthot and creative writing, namely poetry. Also found are personal business records which contain an exhibition price list, artwork shipping invoices and miscellaneous personal receipts including travel receipts and ticket stubs. The printed material series extensively documents Berthot's life and career as an artists through exhibition catalogs, flyers and announcements, news and magazine article clippings and personal ephemera such as basketball cards, travel attraction brochures and retail catalogs. Also found are a number of exhibition flyers and announcements sent to Berthot from other artists. Photographic material contains photographs of Berthot, his friends and family as well as photographs and slides of images of Berthot's and other artists' works of art. The Artwork series includes drawings, small paintings, and other works of art created by Berthot, as well as works created by other artists, including Sam Messer; former students; and Berthot's family.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as six series

- Correspondence, circa 1962-1994 (1.5 Linear feet: Box 1-2)
- Writings, circa 1971-1994 (0.2 Linear feet: Box 2)
- Personal Business, 1958-1989 (3 Folders: Box 2)
- Printed Material, circa 1963-1994 (1.6 Linear feet: Box 2-4, OV 6-7)
- Photographic Material, circa 1961-1992 (0.2 Linear feet Box 4-5)
- Artwork, circa 1970-1992 (0.2 Linear feet Box 5, OV 8)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art, Abstract -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Drawings

Names:

Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. Art School

Occupations:

Educators -- New York (State) -- New York

Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1962-1994

1.5 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents: The series is arranged as 2 subseries:

- 2.1: Personal Correspondence, 1968-1993
- 2.2: Professional Correspondence, 1962-1994

The series has been arranged in alphabetical order by date.

Subseries 2.1: Personal Correspondence, circa 1968-1993

Scope and Contents: Personal Correspondence address Berthot's personal relationships and illuminate artistic ideas and trends of Berthot and his colleagues. By far the largest amount of correspondence comes from Berthot's mother Sara, who wrote to him almost every week from 1970 to 1991. These letters offer a great amount of information regarding personal developments in Berthot's life. Other personal correspondents include his ex-wives and partners Ginny McKenzie, Edith Gould, and Suzanne Chamlin, as well as his son John. Berthot also communicated with other artists including Jim Huntington, Sam Messer, Peter Plagens, Harvey Quaytman, and Adya Yunkers as well as the art critic Dore Ashton. These letters discuss both personal artistic concerns of the artists as well as commentary on more broad art trends and the art world.

Box 1, Folder 1	A, circa 1971-1989
Box 1, Folder 2	Dore Ashton, circa 1972-1992
Box 1, Folder 3	B, 1972-1993
Box 1, Folder 4	John Berthot, circa 1971-1991
Box 1, Folder 5	Sara Berthot, 1970-1974
Box 1, Folder 6	Sara Berthot, 1975-1979
Box 1, Folder 7	Sara Berthot, 1980-1982
Box 1, Folder 8	Sara Berthot, 1983-1984
Box 1, Folder 9-10	Sara Berthot, 1985-1991
Box 1, Folder 11	C, 1982-1993
Box 1, Folder 12	Suzanne Chamlin, circa 1989-1992
Box 1, Folder 13	D, circa 1972-1992

Box 1, Folder 14	E, 1983-1991
Box 1, Folder 15	F, circa 1968-1989
Box 1, Folder 16	G, circa 1972-1992
Box 1, Folder 17	Edith Gould, circa 1987-1992
Box 1, Folder 18	H-J, circa 1972-1992
Box 1, Folder 19	Jim Hutington, circa 1974-1989
Box 1, Folder 20	K-L, circa 1975-1992
Box 1, Folder 21	M, 1970-1991
Box 1, Folder 22	Sam Messer, circa 1977-1992
Box 1, Folder 23	Ginny McKenzie, circa 1971-1992
Box 1, Folder 24	N, circa 1979-1992
Box 1, Folder 25	O, circa 1983-1992
Box 1, Folder 26	P-Q, 1972-1987
Box 1, Folder 27	Frances and Harvey Quaytman, circa 1970-1982
Box 1, Folder 28	R, circa 1973-1992
Box 1, Folder 29	S, 1973-1992
Box 1, Folder 30	T, 1976-1991
Box 1, Folder 31	U-V, circa 1982-1992
Box 1, Folder 32	W-Y, circa 1970-1992
Box 1, Folder 33	Miscellaneous, Last Name Unsigned, 1970-1979
Box 2, Folder 1	Miscellaneous, Last Name Unsigned, 1980-1989
Box 2, Folder 2	Miscellaneous, Last Name Unsigned, 1990-1992
Box 2, Folder 3	Miscellaneous, Last Name Unsigned, circa 1968-1993

Subseries 2.3: Professional Correspondence, circa 1962-1994

Scope and Contents: Professional correspondence are from museums, galleries, and other professional organizations. Correspondence regarding Berthot's Guggenheim Fellowship and NEA grant are included in this series. Subjects addressed in the letters include the use of Berthot's works in exhibitions, the purchase of his works, and related concerns. Also found in this subseries are correspondence related to Berthot's career as an art professor including letters from students with whom Berthot kept in touch or who asked for recommendations. Notable correspondence includes the David McKee Gallery, Nielsen Gallery, Yale and Cooper Union.

Box 2, Folder 4	A, circa 1971-1988
Box 2, Folder 5	B, 1972-1992
Box 2, Folder 6	C, circa 1974-1988
Box 2, Folder 7	D, 1977-1987
Box 2, Folder 8	F, circa 1965-1990
Box 2, Folder 9	G, circa 1962-1992
Box 2, Folder 10	H-J, circa 1974-1989
Box 2, Folder 11	L, 1979-1988
Box 2, Folder 12	M, 1972-1989
Box 2, Folder 13	David McKee Gallery, circa 1977-1992
Box 2, Folder 14	N-O, circa 1972-1989
Box 2, Folder 15	Nielson Gallery, circa 1974-1984
Box 2, Folder 16	P-R, circa 1964-1989
Box 2, Folder 17	S-V, circa 1972-1994
Box 2, Folder 18	W, circa 1971-1994
Box 2, Folder 19	Whitney Museum of Art, circa 1969-1978
Box 2, Folder 20	Y, 1979-1981
Box 2, Folder 21	Inquiries and Collectors, circa 1971-1992
Box 2, Folder 22	Publications, circa 1974-1988
Box 2, Folder 23-24	Colleges and Universities, circa 1971-1992

Box 2, Folder 25-26	Students, circa 1970-1991
Box 2, Folder 27	Miscellaneous, Last Name Unsigned, circa 1989-1992

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Writings, circa 1971-1994

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: The writing series contains writings by Berthot and others. Writings by Berthot include 3 notebooks; essays on art and creative writing; gallery layout plan notes and miscellaneous notes including an annotated calendar page. Writings by others include typescript essays on Berthot and creative writing, namely poetry.

Box 1, Folder 28	Resumes, circa 1973-1981
Box 2, Folder 29	Notebooks, circa 1976
Box 2, Folder 30	Cooper Union Course Roll Notebooks, circa 1975-1979
Box 2, Folder 31	Cooper Union Class Lists, 1975-1979
Box 2, Folder 32	Creative Writing by Berthot, circa 1971-1972
Box 2, Folder 33	Gallery Plan Notes, circa 1977
Box 2, Folder 34	Essay Typescripts on Berthot by Others, circa 1977-1989
Box 2, Folder 35	Tony Scherman, Jake Berthot: Paintings and Drawings (June-July 1994), Signed Exhibition Guestbook, Photocopies, 1994
Box 2, Folder 36	Creative Writing by Others, circa 1988
Box 2, Folder 37	Miscellaneous Notes and Writings, circa 1981

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Personal Business, 1958-1989

3 Folders (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Personal business consists of an exhibition price list, artwork shipping invoices and miscellaneous personal receipts including travel receipts and ticket stubs.

Box 2, Folder 38	Young American Artists Exhibition Price List, circa 1960s
------------------	---

Box 2, Folder 39	Artwork Shipping Invoices, circa 1972-1988
------------------	--

Box 2, Folder 40	Personal Receipts, 1958, 1972-1989
------------------	------------------------------------

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1963-1994

1.6 Linear feet (Box 2-4, OV 6-7)

Scope and Contents: Printed material documents Berthot's life and career as an artist through exhibition catalogs, flyers and announcements, news and magazine article clippings and personal ephemera such as basketball cards, travel attraction brochures and retail catalogs. Also found are a number of exhibition flyers and announcements sent to Berthot from other artists.

Box 2, Folder 41	Exhibition Catalogs, Berthot, 1969-1971
Box 2, Folder 42	Exhibition Catalogs, Berthot, 1972
Box 2, Folder 43	Exhibition Catalogs, Berthot, 1973-1975
Box 3, Folder 1	Exhibition Catalogs, Berthot, 1976-1979
Box 3, Folder 2-3	Exhibition Catalogs, Berthot, 1980-1983
Box 3, Folder 4	Exhibition Catalogs, Berthot, 1984-1986
Box 3, Folder 5	Exhibition Catalogs, Berthot, 1987-1992
Box 3, Folder 6	Exhibition Catalogs, Other Artists, circa 1969-1994
Box 3, Folder 7-8	Exhibition Announcements, Berthot, circa 1969-1994
Box 3, Folder 9	Exhibition Announcements and Flyers, Other Artists, 1964-1969
Box 3, Folder 10	Exhibition Announcements and Flyers, Other Artists, 1970-1974
Box 3, Folder 11	Exhibition Announcements and Flyers, Other Artists, 1975-1979
Box 3, Folder 12	Exhibition Announcements and Flyers, Other Artists, 1980-1984
Box 3, Folder 13	Exhibition Announcements and Flyers, Other Artists, 1985-1986
Box 3, Folder 14	Exhibition Announcements and Flyers, Other Artists, 1988-1989
Box 3, Folder 15	Exhibition Announcements and Flyers, Other Artists, 1990-1991
Box 3, Folder 16	Exhibition Announcements and Flyers, Other Artists, 1992-1994
Box 3, Folder 17	Exhibition Announcements and Flyers, Other Artists, circa 1964-1994
Oversize 6, Folder 1	Exhibition Posters, Berthot, 1984-1985
Oversize 7, Folder 1	Exhibition Posters, Other Artists, 1973-1991

Box 4, Folder 1-2	Clippings, Berthot, circa 1963-1994
Box 4, Folder 3	Clippings, Other Artists, circa 1972-1991
Box 4, Folder 4	Clippings, Reference Artwork, circa 1976
Box 4, Folder 5	Resumes, Other Artists, circa 1987
Box 4, Folder 6	Retail Catalogs and Brochures, circa 1976-1993
Box 4, Folder 7	Political Flyers, circa 1982-1994
Box 4, Folder 8	Travel, circa 1976
Box 4, Folder 9	Memorial Service Programs, 1988-1992
Box 4, Folder 10	New York Nicks Basketball Cards and Ticket Stub, circa 1973, 1977
Box 4, Folder 11	Blank Postcards, circa 1981-1991
Box 4, Folder 12	Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1977-1993

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1961-1992

0.2 Linear feet (Box 4-5)

Scope and Contents: Photographic materials include both personal snapshots and images of Berthot's and other artists' works of art. Many of the personal images were mailed to him from family and friends. Photographs of Berthot's works of art include the painting *Untitled (Yellow-Yellow)* and an untitled ink drawing from 1984. A few images of works of art in a gallery setting are also included. Images of other artists' works include color slides and photographs sent by students and colleagues.

Box 4, Folder 13-14	Photographs of Berthot, Family and Friends, circa 1961-1992
Box 4, Folder 15	Photographs and Slide of Artwork, circa 1985-1991
Box 5, Folder 1	Photographs of Artwork, Other Artists, circa 1971-1983
Box 5, Folder 2	Slides of Artwork, Other Artists, circa 1971-1983
Box 5, Folder 3	Negatives of Artwork, circa 1975-1976

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Artwork, circa 1970-1992

0.2 Linear feet (Box 5, OV 8)

Scope and Contents: The Artwork series includes drawings, small paintings, and other works of art created by Berthot, as well as works created by other artists, including Sam Messer; former students; and Berthot's family.

Box 5, Folder 4	Sketches, Berthot, circa 1978-1986
Box 5, Folder 5	Hand-Drawn Berthot Family Christmas Dinner Menu, 1974
Oversize 8, Folder 1	Gallery Layout Sketches, circa 1977
Box 5, Folder 6	Drawings by Others, circa 1972
Box 5, Folder 7	Paintings by Others, circa 1970-1992
Box 5, Folder 8	Childhood Artwork, circa 1970s

[Return to Table of Contents](#)