



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Henry Botkin papers, circa 1927-1982, in the Archives of American Art

Allessandra Liberati

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.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Henry Botkin papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1927-1982
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.botkhenr
<b>Creator:</b>	Botkin, Henry, 1896-1983
<b>Extent:</b>	3 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of painter Henry Botkin measure 3 linear feet, date from circa 1927-1982, and illustrate his career through biographical material, correspondence, writings, personal business records, printed and photographic material, and artwork.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Papers were lent for microfilming from 1969 to 1982 by Henry Botkin, his son Glenn Botkin, and his assistant Rene Barilleaux.

### Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds microfilm of material lent for microfilming (reels D388, N69-67, N69-68, N69-91, N70-25, N70-68, 2895-2897, and 4314) including biographical material, letters, notes, writings, business records, artworks, scrapbook pages, printed material, and photographs, from 1969-1982. Loaned materials were returned to the lender and are not described in the collection container inventory.

### Related Materials

Henry Botkin papers also held at Syracuse University.

### Available Formats

Portions of the collection and material lent for microfilming are available on 35mm microfilm reels D388, N69-67, N69-68, N69-91, N70-25, N70-68, 2895-2897, and 4314 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

This collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared, by Alessandra Liberati in 2023.

### Preferred Citation

Henry Botkin papers, circa 1927-1982, 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. Researchers interested in accessing born-digital records or audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact References Services for more information.

## Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Henry Botkin (1896-1983) was a painter who worked primarily in New York. He was born in Boston, Massachusetts and trained at both the Massachusetts School of Art and the Art Students League before moving to New York City. While in New York, Botkin worked as an illustrator for *Harper's*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *Century* magazine. In the early 1920s he moved to Paris to begin exploring Impressionism as a painting style. Botkin is known for painting the theater, still lifes, and landscapes. He is also known for his paintings of Black people in the South Carolina low country which have faced criticism about their lack of social realism. Botkin returned to New York in 1930, married his wife Rhoda Lehman, and in 1934 became an art agent to his cousin art collector George Gershwin and others.

In the late 1930s, Botkin switched to the abstract painting style in oils, and took an active role in bringing the style to public attention. He became part of the Artist's Equity Association, The American Abstract Artists Group 256 in Provincetown, and the Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors where he served as president from 1957-1961.

In 1955, Botkin put together the first exhibition of American abstract art at the Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, Japan and organized the sale of five hundred and forty paintings at the Whitney Museum in New York in 1959. Botkin participated in various public events and programs and taught privately in New York, California, and Provincetown, Massachusetts. In the early 1950s Botkin began working with collages which became his main art form until his death. Botkin died in 1983 at the age of eighty-seven in New York City.

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## Scope and Contents

The Henry Botkin papers measure 3 linear feet and date from circa 1927-1982. Biographical materials include multiple interviews with Botkin, one of which is for the *Today Show*, membership cards for the Audubon Artists and Artists Equity Association, and Botkin's resume. Correspondence is with George Gershwin, Syracuse University, and others. Writings include autobiographical writings, lectures and speeches by Botkin, artwork reviews of Botkin's art, and miscellaneous writings by others. Personal business records consist of materials regarding various professional organizations, materials on Judy Cimaglia, materials on Botkin's daughter Toinette (Botkin) Laurent, and other business records. Printed material includes exhibition announcements and catalogs, press releases, and picture postcards. Photographic material consists of photographs of Botkin, his wife Rhoda Lehman, friends and family, and various exhibitions. Artwork includes pieces by Botkin and others.

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## Arrangement

This collection consists of seven series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1945-1972 (.1 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1928-1979 (.2 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 3: Writings, circa 1936-1977 (.3 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 4: Personal Business Records, circa 1927-1977 (.6 Linear feet: Boxes 1-2)
- Series 5: Printed Material, circa 1927-1982 (.8 Linear feet: Box 2)
- Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1928-1977 (.9 Linear feet: Boxes 3-5)
- Series 7: Artwork, circa 1965-1967 (.1 Linear feet: Box 5)

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:

- Drawings
- Interviews
- Scrapbooks
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Artists Equity Association
- Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors
- Gallery 256 (Provincetown, Mass.)

Occupations:

- Painters -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown
- Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1945-1972

#### .1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material includes multiple interviews with Henry Botkin, membership cards for the Audubon Artists and Artists Equity Association, Botkin's resume, and a booklet of telephone numbers.

Box 1, Folder 1	Resume, circa 1969
	Interviews
Box 1, Folder 2	"Henry Botkin", circa 1970 1 Sound tape reel (1/4" reel)
Box 1, Folder 3	"Meet the Artist", Interview by Colette Roberts, circa 1970 1 Sound cassette 1 Sound tape reel (1/4" reel)
Box 1, Folder 4	"Monologue", by Henry Botkin, 1970, Oct. 11 1 Sound tape reel (1/4" reel) 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 5	"Today Show", Interview with Henry Botkin, 1963, June 4 1 Sound cassette 1 Sound tape reel (1/4" reel)
Box 1, Folder 6	United States Treasury Department, Certificate for Service in the Seventh War Loan Project, circa 1945
Box 1, Folder 7	Who's Who in American Art, Biographical Information Form, circa 1972
Box 1, Folder 8	Organization Membership Cards, circa 1949-1957
Box 1, Folder 9	Booklet of Telephone Numbers, circa 1964

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## Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1928-1979

### .2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence is with George Gershwin, Syracuse University regarding Botkin's papers and exhibitions, and others.

Box 1, Folder 10	Correspondence (1920s), circa 1928
Box 1, Folder 11	Correspondence (1930s), circa 1930-1938
Box 1, Folder 12	Correspondence (1940s), circa 1941-1945
Box 1, Folder 13-14	Correspondence (1950s), circa 1950-1959
Box 1, Folder 15-17	Correspondence (1960s), circa 1961-1969
Box 1, Folder 18	Correspondence (1970s), circa 1970-1979
Box 1, Folder 19	Gershwin, George, circa 1931-1933
Box 1, Folder 20	Syracuse University, circa 1965-1970

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## Series 3: Writings, circa 1936-1977

### .3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Writings include autobiographical writings, lectures and speeches, and notebooks, as well as reviews of Botkin's artwork and miscellaneous writings by others.

#### By Botkin

Box 1, Folder 21	Thoughts on My Life and Career, circa 1973
Box 1, Folder 22	Autobiographical Writings, circa 1973
Box 1, Folder 23	Research Proposal, circa 1936-1937
Box 1, Folder 24	Lectures, circa 1969-1970
Box 1, Folder 25	Rough Drafts, circa 1965-1970
Box 1, Folder 26	Speeches, circa 1965-1970
Box 1, Folder 27-28	Notebooks, circa 1952-1955
Box 1, Folder 29	Miscellaneous Notes, circa 1952
Box 1, Folder 30	Miscellaneous Writings , circa 1969-1977

#### By Others

Box 1, Folder 31	List of Botkin's Acquaintances , circa 1965
Box 1, Folder 32	Reviews of Artwork, circa 1960-1969
Box 1, Folder 33	Miscellaneous Writings , circa 1969

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## Series 4: Personal Business Records, circa 1927-1977

### .6 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Personal business records include materials regarding various professional organizations, materials on Judy Cimaglia, materials on Botkin's daughter Toinette (Botkin) Laurent, a gallery floor plan, and miscellaneous business records.

Box 1, Folder 34	American Abstract Artists, circa 1949-1957
Box 1, Folder 35	American Institute of Graphic Artists, Lease Agreement, 1952, Jan 28
Box 1, Folder 36-42	Artists Equity Association, circa 1952
Box 2, Folder 1	Artists For Victory, circa 1944
Box 2, Folder 2	Art Students League of New York, circa 1951
Box 2, Folder 3	Associated American Artists, circa 1946
Box 2, Folder 4	Cimaglia, Judy, circa 1977
Box 2, Folder 5	Federation of Modern Painters and Sculptors, circa 1957-1968
Box 2, Folder 6	Laurent, Toinette, circa 1961-1968
Box 2, Folder 7	"Overseas Museum Project", Final Report, circa 1951
Box 2, Folder 8	Advertisement Purchase Receipts, circa 1927-1929
Box 2, Folder 9	Artwork Sales Records, circa 1947-1977
Box 2, Folder 10-11	Bills and Receipts for Art Supplies, circa 1937-1955
Box 2, Folder 12	Gallery Floor Plan, circa 1962
Box 2, Folder 13	Price Lists, circa 1963-1966
Box 2, Folder 14	Miscellaneous Business Records, circa 1955

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## Series 5: Printed Material, circa 1927-1982

### .8 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Printed material includes exhibition announcements and catalogs, materials regarding George Gershwin, press releases, and picture postcards from various locations.

Box 2, Folder 15-22	Exhibition Announcements, circa 1927-1982
Box 2, Folder 23-30	Exhibition Catalogs, circa 1927-1982
Box 2, Folder 31	Gershwin, George, circa 1931-1970
Box 2, Folder 32	Art Publications, circa 1951-1965
Box 2, Folder 33-37	News Clippings, circa 1929-1972
Box 2, Folder 38-40	News Clippings, Scrapbook, circa 1927-1939
	Picture Postcards
Box 2, Folder 41	Mexico, circa 1964-1971
Box 2, Folder 42	Provincetown, circa 1964-1971
Box 2, Folder 43	Works of Art, circa 1964-1971
Box 2, Folder 44	Miscellaneous Postcards, circa 1964-1971
Box 2, Folder 45	Press Releases, circa 1959-1967
Box 2, Folder 46	Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1946-1965

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## Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1928-1977

### .9 Linear feet (Boxes 3-5)

Scope and Contents: Photographic material includes photographs of Henry Botkin, Rhoda Lehman, George Gershwin, family and friends, artwork, and various museums and exhibitions.

Box 3, Folder 1-2	Botkin, Henry, circa 1932-1967
Box 3, Folder 3	Gershwin, George, circa 1945-1969
Box 3, Folder 4	Lehman, Rhoda, circa 1932-1945
Box 3, Folder 5-6	Family and Friends, circa 1937-1949
Box 3, Folder 7	Art Related Events, circa 1951
Box 3, Folder 8	Art Students League , circa 1960
Box 3, Folder 9-10	Botkin's Studio, circa 1928-1929
Box 3, Folder 11	Buildings, circa 1951
Box 3, Folder 12-15	Exhibitions, circa 1939-1966
Box 3, Folder 16	Gallery Events, circa 1952-1955
Box 3, Folder 17	Provincetown (1955), Exhibition , circa 1955
Box 3, Folder 18	Rehn Gallery (1977), Exhibition, circa 1977
Box 3, Folder 19	Riverside Museum, circa 1961
Box 3, Folder 20	Syracuse University (1971), Exhibition, circa 1971
Box 4, Folder 1	Photographs of Artwork, Donated to Artists Equity Sale at Whitney Museum, circa 1943-1944
Box 4, Folder 2-12	Photographs of Artwork, circa 1928-1968
Box 5, Folder 1-5	Photographs of Artwork, circa 1928-1968

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## Series 7: Artwork, circa 1965-1967

### *.1 Linear feet (Box 5)*

Scope and Contents: Artwork includes a sketch and collage by Botkin and drawings, paintings, and sketches by others.

Box 5, Folder 6	Artwork by Botkin, circa 1967
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Box 5, Folder 7	Artwork by Others, circa 1965
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