



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Michael Brenner Papers,  
1886-1976, in the Archives of American Art.

Caroline Donadio

2018/12/21

Archives of American Art  
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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
Arrangement.....	3
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	3
Container Listing .....	4
Series 1: Michael Brenner papers, 1888-1976.....	4

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Michael Brenner papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.brenmich
<b>Date:</b>	1888-1976
<b>Extent:</b>	0.4 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Brenner, Michael, 1885-1969
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of the sculptor Michael Brenner measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1888 to 1976. The collection includes letters, scrapbooks, drawings, photographs and other materials documenting Michael Brenner's career, the activities of members of the Brenner family, and the colony of expatriate American artists flourishing in Paris in the early twentieth century.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The papers of Michael Brenner were donated by his widow in 1976.

### Available Formats

The collection is available on 35mm microfilm reel 4078 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of material described in the container inventory may not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed by Jean Fitzgerald in 1988. A finding aid was written by Caroline Donadio in 2018.

### Preferred Citation

Michael Brenner papers, 1888-1976. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center.

## Biographical / Historical

Michael Brenner (1885-1969) was a sculptor who emigrated from Lithuania to New York with his family in 1890. In 1900, Brenner moved to Paris, France, entering the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Academie Julian. He studied under his brother, Victor Brenner, and Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Brenner established a studio in Paris and was included in Gertrude Stein's circle of friends. He was associated with a small artist colony of Russian Jews which included Chaim Soutine, Michel Kikoine, Pinchus Kremegne, and Isaac Pailes. In 1914, with his American friend, Robert Coady, Brenner established the Washington Square Gallery in New York for which he acted as European agent.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of the sculptor Michael Brenner measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1888 to 1976. The collection includes letters, scrapbooks, drawings, photographs and other materials documenting Michael Brenner's career, the activities of members of the Brenner family and the colony of expatriate American artists flourishing in Paris in the early twentieth century.

Letters are written to family members and associates and include exchanges between Brenner's sister Miriam (Fanny) and her brothers Michael, Morris, Samuel, and Victor (Dave) Brenner concerning their health, family business, work, and other art-related activities. Several of Michael Brenner's letters mention his dissatisfaction with Robert Coady's handling of consignments, dealings with Mr. Kahnweiler, and exhibitions of colleagues Michel Kikoine and Pinchus Kremegne. Other correspondents include Alexandre Charpentier and (Louis) Oscar Roty.

Scrapbooks are comprised of material related to the life and career of Michael Brenner. The first scrapbook contains a photocopy of a letter written to Michael Brenner from Gertrude Stein where she describes her travels with Alice B. Toklas and mentions the bust Brenner made of her likeness. Other materials include a 1953 exhibition catalog for Chaim Soutine at Perls Galleries, letters written to Mrs. Michael Brenner concerning the sale of her husband's artwork, and photographs of Michael Brenner, Miriam Brenner, other family members, and works of art.

Photographs are of artwork and show Brenner family members, Victor Brenner and his studio, Michael Brenner with Chaim Soutine and pictures of Brenner's close friend, I. C. Rubin and Albert Einstein.

Art work is comprised of twenty-seven figure drawings.

Printed materials consists of clippings about Abraham Lincoln, reproductions of works of art, a bookplate for Marion Kean Lopez, and an essay entitled "Instead of an Introduction" by Sadakichi Hartmann praising the American landscape artist, Leon Dabo. Also found is an 1899 announcement for a "Seance Publique Annuelle," a photocopy of an article about Brenner by Cathy Turrill, a list of objects borrowed and photographed by Turrill in 1974, a photocopy of a photograph of Robert Coady, and the cover of an Avant-Garde catalog.

Other materials includes notes and a subject file on a life-long friend and physician, I. C. Rubin (1922-1975). There are letters from Rubin about his travels and photographs of Brenner and Rubin as young men, Brenner with his son, and Brenner with painter Isaac Pailes.

## Arrangement

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

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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:

Expatriate painters -- France -- Paris

Names:

Coady, Robert J., 1881-1921  
Washington Square Gallery

Occupations:

Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Michael Brenner papers, 1888-1976

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Box 1, Folder 1-2	Letters to Miscellaneous, undated
Box 1, Folder 3-5	Letters to Miriam Brenner from Victor (Dave) Brenner, undated
Box 1, Folder 6-19	Letters, 1898-1975
Box 1, Folder 20	Scrapbook I, 1922-1953, undated
Box 1, Folder 21	Scrapbook II, 1922-1953, undated
Box 1, Folder 22	Scrapbook III, 1971-1976, undated
Box 1, Folder 23	Photographs, undated
Box 1, Folder 24	Photographs, Albert Einstein, Chaim Soutine, and Michael Brenner, undated

Box 1, Folder 25	Photographs, Sculpture by Michael Brenner, 1947
Box 1, Folder 26-28	Artwork, 1947, undated
Box 1, Folder 29	Subject File for I.C. Robin, 1922-1975, undated
Box 1, Folder 30	Printed Material, 1899, undated
Box 1, Folder 31	Notes, 1974, undated

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