



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Alice Cahana Papers, 1971-1983, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

Processing of this collection received support from
the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	3
Series 1: Alice Cahana Papers, 1971-1983.....	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Alice Cahana papers
Date:	1971-1983
Identifier:	AAA.cahaalic
Creator:	Cahana, Alice Lok, 1929-
Extent:	0.2 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The scattered paintings of painter and collagist Alice Cahana measure 0.2 linear feet and date from 1971 to 1983. Found are biographical material, correspondence including a handmade card by Cahana, printed material, and writings.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Alice Cahana donated her papers to the Archives of American Art in 1982.

Available Formats

The collection is also available on 35mm microfilm reel 3435 at the Archives of American Art Offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

Processing Information

The Alice Cahana papers were microfilmed as part of the Archives of American Art's Texas project on reel 3435. The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2022 with support from the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

Preferred Citation

Alice Cahana papers, 1971-1983. 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

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Biographical / Historical

Alice Cahana (1929-2017) was a Hungarian-born painter and collagist active in Houston, Texas. Her works often comment on the Holocaust.

Born Alice Lok in Hungary, Cahana and her family were transported and incarcerated in multiple Nazi concentration camps including Auschwitz-Birkenau, Guben and Bergen-Belsen. Her father was given a fake passport by Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg and survived the war. At Auchwitz-Birkenau, Cahana and her sister created art as decoration to win a contest orchestrated by the Nazi guards. Cahana was liberated from Bergen-Belsen in 1945 and settled in Sweden to be reunited with her father. Later, she moved to Houston, Texas and studied at Rice University.

Cahana married Rabbi Moshe Cahana and had three children. She died in 2017.

Scope and Contents

The scattered papers of painter and collagist Alice Cahana measure 0.2 linear feet and date from 1971 to 1983. Found are biographical material, correspondence including a handmade card by Cahana, printed material, and writings including a recollection about her incarceration in Auchwitz-Birkenau during World War II.

Arrangement

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

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)
- Jewish artists
- Women artists
- Women painters

Occupations:

- Collagists -- Texas -- Houston
- Painters -- Texas -- Houston

Container Listing

Series 1: Alice Cahana Papers, 1971-1983

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical materials include a resume and a list of collections in which Cahana's works are included. Scattered correspondence is with the Jewish Community Center of Houston and Memorial Drive United Methodist Church, and also contains a handmade greeting card by Cahana. Printed material consists of clippings, 2 exhibition announcements, and a xerox copy announcing Cahana's tribute to Raoul Wallenberg "From Ashes to the Rainbow" Dedication Day, Houston, Texas, 1982. Writings include an artist statement and a recollection of Cahana's incarceration at Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland during the Holocaust.

Box 1, Folder 1 Biographical Material, circa 1977

Box 1, Folder 2 Correspondence, 1981-1983

Box 1, Folder 3 Printed Material, 1971-1982

Box 1, Folder 4 Writings, circa 1971

[Return to Table of Contents](#)