



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Jerome Caja Papers, circa 1920-1995, in the Archives of American Art

Ricky Gomez

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.

2019/08/21

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Jerome Caja papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1920-1995
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.cajajero
<b>Creator:</b>	Caja, Jerome, 1958-1995
<b>Extent:</b>	7.9 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of painter Jerome Caja measure 7.9 linear feet and date from circa 1920 to 1995. The papers document his career as an artist in San Francisco through biographical material; correspondence with family, friends, art organizations, and galleries; poetry, prose, and other writings; exhibition announcements, newspaper and magazine clippings, and other printed materials, gallery and exhibition files; artwork, including sketchbooks and numerous small paintings, sketches and drawings, photographs; audiovisual materials including film reels, video and audio cassettes.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Jerome Caja papers were donated in two installments from 1994 to 1995. The first installment was donated by Jerome Caja in 1994, and the second installment was donated by Anna van der Meulen, executor of Caja's estate, in 1995.

### Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Jerome Caja conducted by Paul Karlstrom, August 23-September 29, 1995, and Letters from Jerome Caja to Anna van der Meulen, 1995.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Ricky Gomez in 2019.

### Preferred Citation

Jerome Caja papers, circa 1920-1995. 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

Jerome Caja (1958-1995) was a painter who worked primarily in San Francisco, CA. Caja was born in Ohio in 1958 and attended Cleveland State University. He moved to San Francisco in the 1980s and attended the San Francisco Art Institute from which he graduated in 1984. Caja pushed the boundaries of gender, performance, and art in the nightclub scene in San Francisco during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Caja died from complications related to HIV in 1995, during height of the AIDS-Art-Activism era in San Francisco.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of painter Jerome Caja measure 7.9 linear feet and date from circa 1920 to 1995. The papers document his career as an artist in San Francisco through biographical material; correspondence with family, friends, art organizations, and galleries; poetry, prose, and other writings; exhibition announcements, newspaper and magazine clippings, and other printed materials, gallery and exhibition files; artwork, including sketchbooks and numerous small paintings, sketches and drawings, photographs; audiovisual materials including film reels, video and audio cassettes.

Biographical Material includes a family history, a short autobiography, school documents from elementary through college, yearbooks, identifications and certificates. Correspondence includes letters numerous letters from parents, letters from some brothers, and letters from friends. Writings consist primarily of short plays and skits by Caja, prose and poetry, a journal, and writings by friends. Gallery and Exhibition Files consist of correspondence, inventory and price lists, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and contracts from museums and galleries where Caja did exhibitions or auctions. Personal Business Records consist of price lists, invoices, receipts for works he sold to individuals or institutions. Printed Materials consist of newspaper and magazine clippings detailing Caja's exhibition or his involvement in the gay scene of San Francisco. There are also books with inscriptions that were given to Caja by friends, and there are publication materials that belonged to Caja.

Artwork primarily consists of numerous small drawings and sketches in ink, chalk, and nail polish. Also included are sketchbooks of Caja's drawings and oversized paintings and sketches. Photographs primarily consist of personal photos of Caja and his family during his childhood, photos of his grand parents and great grandparents, and photos of nieces and nephews. There are also photos and slides of his ceramic work and some of his paintings and sketches. The majority of the photos are of Caja taking part in various events around San Francisco. Audio-Visual Materials consists of video cassettes, audio cassettes, and motion picture reels. Videos document Caja reading his book, Caja taking part in events in San Francisco, his artwork, and a movie that he was featured in. Audio cassettes consist primarily of music, but also of Caja reading stories. Film material consists of people working in an artist's workshop, a pool party, and a satirical narrative between children and their mother.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as nine series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1949-1994 (0.4 linear feet; Box 1)
  - Series 2: Correspondence, 1980-1995 (0.5 linear feet; Box 1)
  - Series 3: Writings, circa 1980-1995 (0.3 linear feet; Box 1-2)
  - Series 4: Gallery and Exhibition Files, 1982-1995 (0.4 linear feet; Box 2)
  - Series 5: Personal Business Records, 1990-1995 (0.2 linear feet; Box 2)
  - Series 6: Printed Material, 1960-1995 (1.3 linear feet; Box 2-3, Box 9)
  - Series 7: Artwork, circa 1980-1995 (1.7 linear feet: Box 4-5, Box 9, OV 10-12, Artifact)
  - Series 8: Photographs, circa 1920-1995 (1.8 linear feet; Box 5-6, Box 9, OV 11)
  - Series 9: Audio-Visual Material circa 1980-1995 (1.4 linear feet; Box 7-8, FC 16-23)
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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:

AIDS (Disease)  
Artists (LGBTQ)  
Gay artists

### Types of Materials:

Moving images  
Sketchbooks  
Sound recordings  
Video recordings

### Occupations:

Painters -- California -- San Francisco

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1920-1994

#### 0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical Material includes a family history, a short autobiography, school documents from elementary through college, yearbooks, identifications and certificates.

Box 1, Folder 1	Articles and Clippings, 1958-1995
Box 1, Folder 2	Autobiography, undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Elementary School and Junior High, 1965-1974
Box 1, Folder 4	High School, 1975-1976
Box 1, Folder 5	Cuyahoga Community College, 1978-1980
Box 1, Folder 6	Cleveland State University, 1981-1984
Box 1, Folder 7-8	San Francisco Art Institute, 1984-1986
Box 1, Folder 9	Identification and Medical Records, 1958-1994
Box 1, Folder 10	Family History, circa 1982
Box 1, Folder 11	Personal Items, undated Notes: Consists of a broken pair of glasses, a graduation tassel, and a comb.
Box 1, Folder 12-13	Resume, 1991-1994
Box 1, Folder 14-16	Yearbooks, 1949-1976
Box 1, Folder 17	Miscellaneous, undated

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1980-1995

### 0.5 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence includes letters numerous letters from parents, letters from some brothers, and letters from friends. Also found is a small amount of correspondence with art organizations and galleries.

Box 1, Folder 18	A, Miscellaneous, 1983-1995
Box 1, Folder 19	Mary Jo Bole, 1980-1987
Box 1, Folder 20	Barbara, 1981-1984
Box 1, Folder 21	B, Miscellaneous, 1988-1995
Box 1, Folder 22	C, Miscellaneous, 1982-1995
Box 1, Folder 23	Dagger, 1983-1987
Box 1, Folder 24	D, Miscellaneous, circa 1984
Box 1, Folder 25	Rink Foto, 1994-1995
Box 1, Folder 26	F, Miscellaneous, circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 27	Gordon, circa 1980-1995
Box 1, Folder 28	G, Miscellaneous, 1983-1995
Box 1, Folder 29	I, Miscellaneous, 1992-1993
Box 1, Folder 30	J, Miscellaneous, 1983-1994
Box 1, Folder 31	K, Miscellaneous, 1987-1995
Box 1, Folder 32	Lynne, 1988
Box 1, Folder 33	L, Miscellaneous, circa 1991
Box 1, Folder 34	Barbara Muratori, 1984-1990
Box 1, Folder 35	M, Miscellaneous, 1984-1995
Box 1, Folder 36	Parents, 1986-1995
Box 1, Folder 37	P, Miscellaneous, 1995

Box 1, Folder 38	R, Miscellaneous, 1994
Box 1, Folder 39	S Katz Ltd., 1994
Box 1, Folder 40	Bob Smith, 1993-1995
Box 1, Folder 41	S, Miscellaneous, 1988-1995
Box 1, Folder 42	T, Miscellaneous, 1995
Box 1, Folder 43	V, Miscellaneous, 1983-1985
Box 1, Folder 44	W, Miscellaneous, 1994
Box 1, Folder 45	Miscellaneous, 1985-1994

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## Series 3: Writings, circa 1980-1995

### 0.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Writings consist primarily of short plays and skits by Caja, prose and poetry, a journal, and writings by friends.

Box 1, Folder 46	Anna van der Meulen on Egon Schiele, undated
Box 2, Folder 1	Ceramics Class Notebook, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	Prose, undated
Box 2, Folder 3	Poetry, undated
Box 2, Folder 4	Prose and Poetry, undated
Box 2, Folder 5	Journal, 1980-1982
Box 2, Folder 6	Notebooks, undated
Box 2, Folder 7	Short Plays and Skits, undated
Box 2, Folder 8	"Trouble" Screeplay by Ken Woodard, 1992
Box 2, Folder 9	Miscellaneous, undated

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## Series 4: Gallery and Exhibition Files, 1982-1995

### 0.4 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Gallery and Exhibition Files consist of correspondence, inventory and price lists, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and contracts from museums and galleries where Caja participated in exhibitions or auctions.

Box 2, Folder 10	A Different Light, undated
Box 2, Folder 11-12	Art Lick Gallery, 1990-1991
Box 2, Folder 13	Benefits, 1990-1991
Box 2, Folder 14	Bienville Gallery, "Hystore Personae" (1991), 1991
Box 2, Folder 15	Cleveland Museum of Art, 1981-1985
Box 2, Folder 16	Force Nordstrom (1988), 1988-1989
Box 2, Folder 17	Kiki, "Toilet Water" (1994), 1994
Box 2, Folder 18	Kuban Galleries, 1982
Box 2, Folder 19	The Lab, Ten Year Anniversary Auction (1993), 1993-1994
Box 2, Folder 20	Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, 15th Annual Benefit Art Auction (1994), 1993-1994
Box 2, Folder 21	New Langton Arts, Artists' Auction (1994), 1994
Box 2, Folder 22	San Francisco art Institute, 1985-1990
Box 2, Folder 23-24	San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, "Face the Finish" (1991), 1991-1995
Box 2, Folder 25	Southern Exposure, "Twentieth Anniversary Alumni Exhibition" (1994), 1994
Box 2, Folder 26	University Art Gallery Sonoma State University, "Art From the Heart Valentine Auction" (1993), 1993
Box 2, Folder 27	University of California Berkley, "In a Different Light" (1995), 1994-1995
Box 2, Folder 28	Center for the Arts, "Out of the Cold" (1993), 1993
Box 2, Folder 29	Wight Gallery, "Bad Girls West" (1994), 1993-1994

Box 2, Folder 30

Miscellaneous, 1993-1995

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## Series 5: Personal Business Records, 1990-1995

### 0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Personal Business Records consist of end of life material, price lists, invoices, receipts for works he sold to individuals or institutions.

Box 2, Folder 31	End of Life Papers, undated
Box 2, Folder 32	Honorariums and Sales, 1991
Box 2, Folder 33	Kim Light Gallery, 1993-1994
Box 2, Folder 34	Norton Family Office, 1995
Box 2, Folder 35	San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, 1990
Box 2, Folder 36	Miscellaneous, undated

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## Series 6: Printed Material, 1960-1995

### 1.3 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3, 9)

Scope and Contents: Printed Materials consist of newspaper and magazine clippings detailing Caja's exhibition or his involvement in the gay scene of San Francisco. There are also books with inscriptions that were given to Caja by friends, and there are rare publication materials that belonged to Caja.

Box 2, Folder 37	Booklets, circa 1960
Box 2, Folder 38	Book Review, "Life Sentence", 1994
Box 2, Folder 39	Coloring Books, 1993
Box 2, Folder 40	Drag Queen Articles and Clippings, 1989-1994
Box 3, Folder 1	Drag Queen Articles and Clippings, 1988-1994
Box 3, Folder 2	<a href="#">Drag Queen Articles and Clippings, 1988-1994</a>
Box 3, Folder 3	Drag Queen Articles and Clippings, 1988-1994
Box 3, Folder 4	Drag Queen Articles and Clippings, 1988-1994
Box 3, Folder 5	Electric City, 1993-1995
Box 3, Folder 6-9	Exhibition Announcements, 1985-1994
Box 3, Folder 10	"Gatewood", 1993
Box 3, Folder 11	"In a Different Light", 1995
Box 3, Folder 12	"Life Sentence" Reviews, 1994
Box 3, Folder 13	Magazine Clippings, 1990-1994
Box 3, Folder 14	Newspaper Articles, 1991
Box 3, Folder 15	Notebook of Newspaper Clippings, undated
Box 3, Folder 16	Odyssey Magazine, 1990-1993
Box 3, Folder 17	Pornographie Catholique, 1982
Box 3, Folder 18	Rant and Rave, 1993-1994
Box 3, Folder 19	"Saints", 1995

Box 3, Folder 20	"Savage Garden", 1994
Box 3, Folder 21	"Some Weird Sin", undated
Box 3, Folder 22	Scrapbook, undated
Box 3, Folder 23	"Wen Interessiert Denn Schon Mein Elenor, circa 1983
Box 3, Folder 24-26	Collected Works, circa 1978-1995
Box 3, Folder 27-28	Miscellaneous, circa 1984-1995
Box 9, Folder 6	Magazines and Posters, 1990-1995

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## Series 7: Artwork, circa 1980-1995

### 1.7 Linear feet (Boxes 4-5, 9, OV 10-12)

Scope and Contents: Artwork primarily consists of numerous small drawings and sketches in ink, chalk, and nail polish. Also included are sketchbooks of Caja's drawings and oversized paintings and sketches.

Box 4, Folder 1-3	Sketchbooks, undated
Box 9, Folder 5	Sketchbook, undated
Box 4, Folder 4	Activity Book, 1982, June 16
Box 4, Folder 5	Color Samples, undated
Box 4, Folder 6	Sketch, "Birth of Venus in Cleveland", undated
Box 4, Folder 7	Blotters From Studio, undated
Box 4, Folder 8-9	Painting, undated
Item 13	Palette, undated
Oversize 10	Paintings, undated
Box 9, Folder 3	"The World's Greatest Sinner", undated
Box 9, Folder 4	Drawings and Sketches, undated
Box 4, Folder 10-39	Drawings and Sketches, undated Notes: The majority of the artwork consists of small pieces on delicate material such as cardboard and paper towels.
Box 5, Folder 1-4	Drawings and Sketches, undated
Oversize 11, Folder 1	<a href="#">Drawings, undated</a>
Oversize 12	Drawings, undated
Box 5, Folder 5	Photocopies of Artwork, undated

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## Series 8: Photographs, circa 1920-1995

### 1.8 Linear feet (Boxes 5-6, 9, OV 11)

Scope and Contents: Photographs primarily consist of personal photos of Caja and his family during his childhood, photos of his grand parents and geat grandparents, and photos of nieces and nephews. There are also photos and slides of his ceramic work and some of his paintings and sketches. The majority of the photos are of Caja taking part in various events around San Francisco.

Box 5, Folder 6-10	Albums, Drag, circa 1980-1995
Box 5, Folder 11	<a href="#">Albums, Drag, 1994</a>
Box 5, Folder 12-13	Albums, Drag, 1980-1995
Box 5, Folder 14	Tie Land, 1992
Box 5, Folder 15	Family Album, circa 1960-1983
Box 5, Folder 16	Loose Photos from Family Album, circa 1960-1983
Box 5, Folder 17	Album, Personal, undated
Box 5, Folder 18-19	Personal, circa 1920-1995
Box 6, Folder 1	Personal, circa 1920-1995
Box 6, Folder 2	<a href="#">Personal, circa 1920-1995</a>
Box 6, Folder 3-8	Personal, circa 1920-1995
Box 9, Folder 1	Personal, undated
Box 6, Folder 9	<a href="#">Oral History Interview, 1995</a>
Box 6, Folder 10	San Francisco Art Institute, circa 1980-1995
Box 6, Folder 11-12	Drag, circa 1980-1995
Box 9, Folder 2	Drag, 1980-1995
Box 6, Folder 13	Xerox Photographs, undated
Box 6, Folder 14-15	Artwork, circa 1980-1995
Oversize 11, Folder 2	<a href="#">Artwork, undated</a>
Box 6, Folder 16	Ceramics, circa 1986



Box 6, Folder 17	Proof Sheets, undated
Box 6, Folder 18	Negatives and Transparencies, Drag, undated
Box 6, Folder 19-20	Slides, Artwork, undated
Box 6, Slidebox 21-23	Slides, Artwork, undated 3 Slide boxes
Box 7, Slidebox 1-2	Slides, Artwork and Woods, undated 2 Slide boxes Notes: One whole box and majority of the the second box are a continuation of slides of Caja's artwork. The portion labeled "Woods" is a mix of artwork and of Caja himself.
Box 7, Slidebox 3	Slides, Slide Show Sonoma; Slides, Wasserstein, undated 1 Slide box Notes: The first group of slides is of a show in Sonoma that Caja took part in. The second group of slides are of artwork by Wasserstein that Caja was interested in acquiring at one time.

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## Series 9: Audio-Visual Material, circa 1980-1995

### 1.4 Linear feet (Boxes 7-8, FC 16-23)

**Scope and Contents:** Audio-Visual Materials consists of video cassettes, audio cassettes, and motion picture reels. Video cassettes consist of Caja reading his book, Caja taking part in events in San Francisco, his artwork, and a movie that he was featured in. Audio cassettes consist primarily of music from the Beatles, the Birds, but also of Caja reading stories. Film material consists of people working in an artist's workshop, a pool party, and a satirical narrative between children and their mother.

Box 7, Folder 4	"High Heel Wrestling" and "Jerome Caja Book", circa 1992 Notes: "High Heel Wrestling" is of events at a benenfit for Provention Point. "Jerome Caja Book" is an interview between Paul Reed and Jerome Caja for a proposed book Reed was going to write. Reed did not end up writing the book.
Box 7, Folder 5	"Miss Uranus '92" and "Vegas in Space", 1986, 1992 Notes: "Miss Uranus '92" shows Caja in drag taking part in the yearly event at Uranus Club in San Francisco. "Vegas in Space" is a science fiction motion picture film in which Caja has a minor role.
Box 7, Folder 6	"The Last Two Weeks in June" and "Untitled", undated Notes: The Untitled tape features a talk show event at one of the gay clubs of San Francisco. Caja, dressed in drag, is the final guest. He talks about some of his artwork and exhibitions, including "Toilet Water" at Kiki. He also mentions donating papers to Archives of American Art.
Box 7, Folder 7	"Jerome Caja Paintings, etc." and "Electric City Jerome Dub Master", undated
Box 8, Item 1-3	Beatles, undated 3 Sound cassettes Notes: Mix tapes featuring songs by the Beatles.
Box 8, Item 4	Birds, undated 1 Sound cassette
Box 8, Item 5	"Close Your Eyes", undated 1 Sound cassette
Box 8, Item 6	"1. Day of the Sun" and "2. Bigiuius today", undated 1 Sound cassette
Box 8, Item 7-8	"High God", undated 2 Sound cassettes
Box 8, Item 9-10	"Jerome Telling Stories", undated 2 Sound cassettes Notes: Jerome telling stories.

Notes on Tape 1, Side 1: "Billy Goats," "Frog Prince," "Han and Gret"  
Notes on Tape 1, Side 2: "Gold Locks," "3 Pigs" "Cinderla pt 2" Notes  
on Tape 2, Side 1: ""Little Joe Hood" "Frog Prince" "Snow White 3  
parts part 1" Notes on Tape 2, Side 2: "Snow White part 2" "Joe Ginder  
Beard Man" "Cindyralla part 1"

Box 8, Item 11	"Show Me Your Smile" "Beatle White Album", undated 1 Sound cassette Notes: Note on Side 1 says "Show Me Your Smile." Note on Side 2 says, "Beatle White Album"
Box 8, Item 12	"Styx Mix", undated 1 Sound cassette
Box 8, Item 13	"Teaser and the Firecat Cat Stevens", undated 1 Sound cassette Notes: Mix tape featuring songs from Cat Stevens "Teaser and the Firecat"
Box 8, Item 14	Untitled, undated 1 Sound cassette
Item FC 16	"Anita Colby Beauty Book Advertisement", circa 1980 1 Film reel (Super 8mm) Notes: The first portion is a pool party, and the second portion is about Anita Colby Beauty Book. The note on the film can says, "Jerome Trash."
Item FC17	<a href="#">Art Students Working, circa 1980s</a> 1 Film reel (Super 8mm) Notes: Reel features people working in an artist's workspace. Note on one side of film can says, "Jerome Caja" and note on the other side says, "Buck Rogers Sup 8 Fig B 79-075C."
Item FC18	"How to Prevent Parent Abuse", circa 1980s 1 Film reel (Super 8mm) <a href="#">Digital Content: How to Prevent Parent Abuse</a> Notes: Film is a satirical narrative of a show-down between children and their mother. Note on side one of film can says, "Jerome Caja I, How to do Film." Note on opposite side of can says, "How to Prevent Parent Abuse."  Notes related to this film are in Box 7, Folder 5.
Box 7, Folder 8	Notes Related to "How to Prevent Parent Abuse - Jerome Caja" Film Reel, undated
Item FC 19	Untitled reel 1, circa 1981 1 Film reel (Super 8mm)
Item FC 20	Untitled reel 2, circa 1981

1 Film reel (Super 8mm)

Item FC 21

Untitled reel 3, circa 1981

1 Film reel (Super 8mm)

Notes: Two film reels showing footage of people at a possible rehearsal. The people are out of focus in both reels. Notes on first can say, "C e" "Jerome Caja Com." Note on second can says, "D. Paul V."

Item FC 22

Untitled reel 4, circa 1981

1 Film reel (Super 8mm)

Item FC 23

Untitled reel 5, circa 1981

1 Film reel (Super 8mm)

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