



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Ed Colker Papers, 1944-2020, in the Archives of American Art

Catherine S. Gaines

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Ed Colker papers
Date:	1944-2020
Identifier:	AAA.colked
Creator:	Colker, Ed, 1927-
Extent:	3.4 Linear feet
Language:	The collection is in English.
Summary:	The papers of painter, printmaker, educator and administrator Ed Colker are dated 1944-2020 and measure 3.4 linear feet. Colker's painting, printmaking, and Haybarn Press, as well as his career as an art teacher and university administrator, are documented through biographical materials, correspondence, interviews, writings, subject files, printed material, and photographs. There is a 0.2 linear ft. addition to the collection donated in 2020 that includes lists of works of art, exhibition information, letters to Colker, talks and lectures by Colker, printed material and miscellany.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated by Ed Colker in 1991, 2013 and 2020.

Processing Information

This collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid prepared in 2015 by Catherine S. Gaines.

Restrictions

Use of original material requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate access copy requires advance notice.

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Biographical / Historical

Ed Colker (b. 1927) is a painter, printmaker, educator, and administrator who has worked in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York City. Colker founded the not-for-profit fine art publisher Haybarn Press. He is married to artist Elaine Galen and resides in Mt. Kisco, NY.

After high school, Colker was awarded a scholarship and began his art education at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Arts. He interrupted his studies to serve in the U.S. Army (1944-1946). He graduated in 1949, by which time the school had become the Philadelphia Museum School of Art; today it is the University of the Arts. He taught art in the Philadelphia area before moving to New York City in 1956. Later, Colker earned degrees from New York University (B.S. Ed, 1964; M.A., 1985).

Colker taught art and design courses at the University of Pennsylvania, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, Cornell University, Pratt Institute, and Philadelphia College of Art. By the 1980s, he had become an administrator as well as a professor. Throughout his academic career, Colker published and lectured widely, served as a visiting artist, acted as a consultant, and participated in professional organizations. He occasionally organized exhibitions and served on exhibition juries.

Since 1960, under the imprints Editions du Grenier, Haybarn Editions, and Haybarn Press, Colker has published limited edition books, portfolios, broadsides, individual pages, and folders of poetry. Most are accompanied by Colker's etchings and lithographs inspired by the texts. Haybarn Press, under the Ambor Edition imprint, also produced four portfolios with text and drawings by Elaine Galen, 1996-2008. From its inception, the work of Haybarn Press has been featured in many exhibitions of book arts. Colker also participated in group shows throughout the United States and enjoyed solo exhibitions of his paintings and prints. Haybarn Press productions and Colker's prints and paintings are in the permanent collections of Brown University, Cornell University, Harvard University, Library of Congress, Museum of Modern Art, New York Public Library, University of Arizona Museum of Art, and others.

Now retired from university administration and teaching, Colker continues to operate Haybarn Press and occasionally serves as an exhibition juror and visiting artist.

Scope and Contents

The papers of painter, printmaker, educator and administrator Ed Colker are dated 1944-2020 and measure 3.4 linear feet. Colker's painting, printmaking, and Haybarn Press, as well as his career as an art teacher and university administrator, are documented through biographical materials, correspondence, interviews, writings, subject files, printed material, and photographs. There is a 0.2 linear ft. addition to the collection donated in 2020 that includes lists of works of art, exhibition information, letters to Colker, talks and lectures by Colker, printed material and miscellany.

Biographical materials include official letters regarding Colker's performance in the Army, caricatures of him, diplomas, resume, awards, and certificates.

Correspondence, mainly professional in nature with a few scattered personal letters, concerns Colker's academic and artistic work, Haybarn Editions, exhibitions, projects, and various interests. Poet correspondents are J. Curtis Johnson, Kathleen Norris, Deborah Pease, and Jeanne Walker; translators include Melvin Konner and others.

Interviews with Ed Colker, conducted between 1982 and 2008 for various purposes, are preserved as 1 sound cassette and published transcripts. Also found are 1 sound cassette, 1 videocassette, and a published transcript of interviews Colker conducted with Will Barnet and Toshiko Takaezu in 1981 and 1994 respectively.

Among Colker's writings are the published versions of several articles and the manuscript of an unpublished one; two proposed books for students of design and typography; lectures delivered to students (3 videocassettes), miscellaneous writings, notes, and 1 videocassette of readings by artists from one of Colker's Haybarn Press poetry portfolios.

Subject files document many of Colker's professional interests, activities, projects, and relationships. Also of note are files about Haybarn Press.

The bulk of the printed material consists of exhibition catalogs, announcements, and school catalogs. Almost all is about or mentions Colker, or features reproductions of his work. Of note is the first and only issue of *Re-Art: A Reflection of Current Ideas on the Arts* (1954), published by Colker and Gene Feldman.

Photographs are of Colker and his family; Colker at events related to his artistic, academic, and publishing activities; artwork by Colker, and his work as reproduced in Haybarn Editions. Also found are an exterior view of the barn studio and one of printers working at Desjobert Press.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 8 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1946-circa 2011 (Box 1; 1 folder)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1954-2011 (Box 1; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 3: Interviews, 1981-2008 (Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 4: Writings, 1961-1990s (Box 1; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 5: Subject files, 1952-2013 (Boxes 2-3; 1.3 linear feet)
- Series 6: Printed Material, 1944-2011 (Box 3; 0.7 linear feet)
- Series 7: Photographs, circa 1960s-2010 (Box 4; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 8: Unprocessed Addition, circa 1963-2020 (Box 5; 0.2 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Study and teaching
Design
Educators -- United States
Painting, Modern -- 20th century -- United States
Printing
Printmakers -- United States
Transcripts

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Sound recordings
Video recordings

Names:

Atelier Desjobert
Barnet, Will, 1911-2012
Haybarn Press
Johnson, J. Curtis
Konner, Melvin
Norris, Kathleen, 1947-
Pease, Deborah

Takaezu, Toshiko
United States. Army
Walker, Jeanne Murray

Occupations:

Arts administrators -- United States
Painters -- United States

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1946-circa 2011

1 Folder (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series includes two letters of commendation from the 349th Infantry Headquarters, diplomas, a resume, and two printed caricatures of Colker by students. Also found are various awards and certificates including The Academy of American Poets membership certificate identifying Colker as a founding member. Several items are photocopies.

Box 1, Folder 1 Biographical Materials, 1946-circa 2011, undated

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1954-2011

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Arrangement: Correspondence is arranged by year.

Scope and Contents: Correspondence, mainly professional in nature with a few scattered personal letters, concerns Colker's academic and artistic work, Haybarn Editions, exhibitions, projects, and various interests. It includes arrangements for lectures, artist in residence appointments, jurying exhibitions, and consulting. Among the correspondents are universities, libraries, galleries, museums; poetry, printmaking, and book arts organizations, as well as groups relevant to his work as an artist, educator, and university administrator. Poet correspondents are J. Curtis Johnson, Kathleen Norris, Deborah Pease, and Jeanne Walker; translators include Melvin Konner and others.

Box 1, Folder 2-9 Correspondence, 1954-2011, undated

Box 1, Folder 10 Poets, 2003-2011, undated

Box 1, Folder 11 Translators, 2006-2011

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Series 3: Interviews, 1981-2008

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: The 1982 interview with Ed Colker was published in *The Load*, SUNY College at Purchase's student newspaper as part of a feature story about a three-day campus event, "A Celebration of the Book as Art." The interview Irving Sandler conducted with Ed Colker (1 sound cassette) took place in New York City during the summer of 1985 while Colker's exhibition was on view at Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY; in 1999, its transcript was published in conjunction with the exhibition *Ed Colker: Prints for Poetry and Prose* (1990 June 26 – August 3) at the University Art Gallery, State University of New York at Albany. Robert McCamant's interview of Colker was published as "Caxtonians Collect: Ed Colker" in the May 2008 issue of *Caxtonian*, the club's newsletter.

An interview Colker conducted with Will Barnet (1 sound cassette) was published as "Reflections on Fifty Years of Teaching: An Interview with Will Barnet," part of an article titled "Independent Art Schools: Traditions and Departures," *Art Journal* (Spring 1982). The Toshiko Takaezu interview (1 videocassette), which Colker conducted for Cooper Union students, took place at her studio/home in New Jersey.

Box 1 Interviews with Colker

Box 1, Folder 12	Interview with Ed Colker and Margot Lovejoy conducted by David Schwartz (transcript), 1982
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Box 1, Folder 13	Interview with Ed Colker conducted by Irving Sandler, 1985 1 sound cassette; transcript
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Box 1, Folder 14	Interview with Ed Colker conducted by Robert McCamant (transcript), 2008
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Box 1 Interviews conducted by Colker

Box 1, Folder 15	Interview with Will Barnet conducted by Ed Colker, 1981 1 sound cassette; transcript
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Box 1, Folder 16	Interview with Toshiko Takaezu conducted by Ed Colker, circa 1994 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
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Series 4: Writings, 1961-1990s

0.5 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Writings by Colker include: printed versions of articles and the manuscript of an unpublished article about printmaking in the U.S.; two proposed books for students of design and typography; 3 videocassettes of lectures delivered to students at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle, Pratt Institute, and University of the Arts, and other venues; miscellaneous writing; panel discussion notes; a videocassete of artists reading from one of Colker's poetry portfolios.

Box 1, Folder 17	Articles, 2007-2008, 1961-1985
Box 1, Folder 18	Book about Typography for Students of Design and Typography, circa 1970s Dismantled binder
Box 1, Folder 19-20	Book, "Design and Expression: An Introduction to Elements of Visual Communication" (dismantled binder), circa 1970s Dismantled binder
Box 1, Folder 21	Lectures, Texts, 1972-1977
Box 1, Folder 22	Lectures, Recordings, 1990s 3 Videocassettes (VHS)
Box 1, Folder 23	Miscellaneous, 1977-2007, undated
Box 1, Folder 24	Panel Discussion, Marist College, "The Art of Collaboration" Remarks, 2008
Box 1, Folder 25	Readings by Artists from Colker's Portfolio Four Poets/Poems presented at Cooper Union, circa 1993 1 Videocassettes (VHS)

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Series 5: Subject Files, 1952-2013

1.3 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3)

Scope and Contents: Subject files maintained by Colker document many of his professional interests, activities, projects, and relationships. Files are comprised of correspondence, printed material, writings, photographs and miscellaneous items in varying combinations. Of particular interest is the file concerning the Art Journal Editing Project. Colker was guest editor of an issue on "Education of the Artist." The file includes responses from Pat Adams, Lawrence Alloway, Eleanor Antinova, Grace Hartigan, Vera Klement, Philip Pearlstein, Peter Plagens and Martin Puryear, to the question: "What are you saying or introducing as major currents to students today that have changed from a few years ago and what events or dynamics have generated your reconsiderations? (If you are holding and reinforcing constants, please indicate that, too.)" Other subjects of interest include Haybarn Press; poets Michael A. Anina, Catherine Kasper, and Kathleen Norris; and Dave Brubeck, whose music inspired a Haybarn Edition. This series contains one audiovisual recording titled "National Endowment for the Arts/Getty Art Program Tape," the pilot for a proposed PBS television program on the arts for children and their parents for which Colker served as a consultant.

Arrangement: Subject files are alphabetized by title. Additional material relating to many of the individuals and organizations documented by subject files may be found with correspondence (Series 2) and among the printed material (Series 6).

Box 2, Folder 1-3	Anina, Michael A., circa 1977-2011
Box 2, Folder 4-5	Art Journal Editing Project, 1982
Box 2, Folder 6	Bates College Museum of Art, 1995-2000
Box 2, Folder 7	Benningham, Peter, 1999-2000
Box 2, Folder 8-9	Brubeck, Dave and Iola, 1963-2011, undated
Box 2, Folder 10	Center for Book Arts, 1977-2006
Box 2, Folder 11	Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts, Five Decades in Print: Ed Colker (1999 July 2-30), 1999
Box 2, Folder 12	Dane, William J., 2007-2010
Box 2, Folder 13	Douglas Kenyon Gallery, Chicago, Ed Colker Paintings and Prints (1975 March 14-April 18), 1975
Box 2, Folder 14	Feldman, Eugene, circa 1975-1978
Box 2, Folder 15	Geigy Pharmaceuticals Exhibitions, Ed Colker Co-curator, 1970-1971
Box 2, Folder 16	Haybarn Press – Bulletins to Subscribers and Collectors, 1989-2004
Box 2, Folder 17	Haybarn Press – Elephants by Night, 2005-2009

Box 2, Folder 18	Haybarn Press – Publication Announcements, 1973-2011
Box 2, Folder 19	Hejduk, John, 1995-2007
Box 2, Folder 20	Hunterdon Art Center, 1969-2007
Box 2, Folder 21	Illinois Arts Council, First Illinois Print Commission Program (copies 1973-1984), undated
Box 2, Folder 22	International Graphic Arts Society, undated
Box 2, Folder 23	Kasper, Catherine, 2001
Box 2, Folder 24	Kaye College Course, The Creative Process: Exploration of the Landscape, 1999
Box 2, Folder 25	Kray, Elizabeth, 1970-1987, undated
Box 2, Folder 26	Longwood Center for the Visual Arts Collaborative Workshop for Writers and Artists, 1993
Box 2, Folder 27	Murphy, Bill, 2001-2009, undated
Box 2, Folder 28	National Endowment for the Arts/Getty Art Program Tape 1, circa 1985 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
Box 2, Folder 29	Neuberger Museum, 1985-2011
Box 2, Folder 30	Neuberger Museum, Five Decades in Print: Ed Colker (1999 February 6-April 9), 1998-1999
Box 2, Folder 31	Norris, Kathleen, 1992-2008, undated
Box 2, Folder 32	The North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching, 1987
Box 3, Folder 1	Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1952-2005
Box 3, Folder 2	Poets House, 2000-2010
Box 3, Folder 3	The Print Club of New York, Inc., 2004-2011
Box 3, Folder 4	The Print Club (Philadelphia), 1952-2011, undated
Box 3, Folder 5	Richard Florsheim Art Fund, 1996-2002
Box 3, Folder 6	State University of New York College at Purchase, 1980-1984
Box 3, Folder 7	Sultzkever, Abraham, 2003-2013

Box 3, Folder 8 University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, 1972-1989, 2006

Box 3, Folder 9 Vanderbilt University Campus Visit, 2005-2006

Box 3, Folder 10 von Mochzisker, Bertha, 2001-2002

Box 3, Folder 11 Worcester Art Museum, 1992-2007

Box 3, Folder 12 Zigrosser, Carl, circa 1965-2005

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Series 6: Printed Material, 1944-2011

0.7 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Almost all printed material is about or mentions Colker, or includes reproductions of his work. Miscellaneous items include press releases, announcements of benefit auctions, notice of an international competition for which Colker was a juror. School catalogs are from years and institutions where Colker was a student, teacher, or administrator. Publications produced by Colker are a photocopy of the first and only issue of *Re-Art: A Reflection of Current Ideas on the Arts* (1954), published by Colker and Gene Feldman, and *Architectural Photographs by Richard Nickel*.

Box 3, Folder 13	Articles, circa 1943-2007
Box 3, Folder 14	Book, <i>The Candles of Your Eyes</i> by James Purdy, illustrated by Ed Colker, 1985
Box 3, Folder 15-21	Exhibition Catalogs, Announcements, Reviews, etc., circa 1950s-2011
Box 3, Folder 22	Exhibition Catalogs – Colker, Co-curator, 1970-1971
Box 3, Folder 23	Miscellaneous Items, 1976-2009
Box 3, Folder 24	Notices/Programs for Lectures, Talks, Events, circa 1969-2011
Box 3, Folder 25	Publications produced by Colker, circa 1954, 1973
Box 3, Folder 26	Reproductions, Artwork by Colker and Others, 1986-1991, 1960
Box 3, Folder 27	Reproductions, New Years Cards sent by Ed Colker and Elaine Galen, 2000-2010
Box 3, Folder 28-30	School Catalogs, 1944-2006

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Series 7: Photographs, circa 1960s-2010

0.2 Linear feet (Box 4)

Scope and Contents: Views of Colker and family prior to the 1960s are either color photocopies or prints of scanned images. There is a photograph of Colker in a life drawing class at the Philadelphia Museum School of Industrial Art and several views of him in Italy with the 349th Infantry, 88th Division during and soon after World War II, and in his studio. He appears alone and with students, colleagues, friends, and wife Elaine Galen. Many photographs record Colker at events related to his artistic, academic, and publishing activities. Other photographs are of artwork by Colker and his work as reproduced in Haybarn Editions. Exterior views of the barn studio and Desjobert Press are digital prints.

Box 4	People
Box 4, Folder 1	Family (1920s), circa 2000s
Box 4, Folder 2	Ed Colker (1944-2010), circa 1960s-2000s
Box 4, Folder 3	Ed Colker at Events, 1982-2010
Box 4	Artwork by Colker
Box 4, Folder 4	Drawing (executed 1945), circa 2000s
Box 4, Folder 5	Paintings and Wood Constructions, 1960s
Box 4, Folder 6	Paintings, 1970s-circa 1990s
Box 4, Folder 7	Prints, circa 1960s-circa 1970s
Box 4, Folder 8	Reproductions in Haybarn Editions, circa 1960s-circa 2000s
Box 4, Folder 9	Barn Studio and House, Hampton, NJ (1966-1970); Desjobert Press (1966), Alain, M. Borr, Roger printing Ed's Lithos, circa 2000s

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Series 8: Unprocessed Addition, circa 1963-2020

0.2 Linear feet

Language: English.

Box 5

Unprocessed Papers
Language: English.

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