



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Howard Somers Conant Papers, 1944-1987, 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.

2019/11/25

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical	2
Scope and Contents	2
Arrangement	2
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	
Series 1: Correspondence, 1944-1987	3
Series 2: Writings, 1944-1985	4
Series 3: Printed Material, 1953-1987	7
Series 4: Interviews and Lectures, 1951-1968	8

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Howard Somers Conant papers
Date:	1944-1987
Identifier:	AAA.conahowa
Creator:	Conant, Howard
Extent:	3.2 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of art educator and painter Howard Somers Conant measure 3.2 linear feet and date from 1944 to 1987. The papers document Conant's career as an art educator through correspondence with friends and colleagues; draft manuscripts, lectures, and other writings; newsletters, copies of published books, and other printed materials; and seventy-four sound recordings of interviews, lectures, and panel discussions that Conant took part in during the 1960s.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Howard Somers Conant papers were donated to the Archives of American Art by Howard Somers Conant between 1978 and 1989.

Available Formats

Some of the sound recordings in this collection have been copied for research access and digital copies are available in the Archives of American Art offices.

Processing Information

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

Preferred Citation

Howard Somers Conant papers, 1944-1987. 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 audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Terms of Use

The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning such rights and

restrictions and it is the user's responsibility to determine whether rights or restrictions exist and to obtain any necessary permission to access, use, reproduce and publish the collections. Please refer to the [Smithsonian's Terms of Use](#) for additional information.

Biographical / Historical

Howard Somers Conant (1921-2011) was an art educator and a painter who served as Chair of the Art Department of New York University from 1955 to 1976. He also served as head of the Department of Art at the University of Arizona. He had a noteworthy career in art education diplomacy abroad, and received the prestigious 25th Anniversary Medal for Distinguished Service to Education in Art, bestowed upon him by Lady Bird Johnson. Conant also pioneered one of the first children's television programs, "Fun to Learn about Art," on WBEN Buffalo.

Scope and Contents

The papers of art educator and painter Howard Somers Conant measure 3.2 linear feet and date from 1944 to 1987. The papers document Conant's career as an art educator through correspondence with friends and colleagues; draft manuscripts, lectures, and other writings; newsletters, copies of published books, and other printed materials; and seventy-four sound recordings of interviews, lectures, and panel discussions that Conant took part in during the 1960s.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into four series

- Series 1: Correspondence, 1944-1987 (0.2 linear feet; Box1)
 - Series 2: Writings, 1944-1985 (0.5 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 3: Printed Material, 1953-1987 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 4: Interviews and Lectures, 1951-1968 (2.3 linear feet; Boxes 1-4)
-

Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:

Lectures
Panel discussions
Sound recordings

Names:

New York University

Occupations:

Art teachers -- New York (State) -- New York
Educators -- New York (State) -- New York
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence, 1944-1987

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence is primarily with friends and fellow art colleagues. There are letters from James Brooks, Helen Frankenthaler, Philip Guston, Duane Hanson, Thomas Hess, Thomas Hoving, Sidney Janis, Philip Johnson, Allan Kaprow, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, Sol LeWitt, Robert Motherwell, Ad Reinhardt, Larry Rivers, Mark Rothko, John Russell, Ben Shahn, Eve Sonneman, Theodoros Stamos, Edward M. M. Warburg, Adja Yunkers, and others, primarily relating to requests for employment or responses to Conant's letters asking artists to participate in classes or conferences. Also found are correspondence and typescripts of statements by twenty-eight artists which Conant collected for an unpublished study on the education of artists for New York University in 1959.

Box 1, Folder 1	Correspondence, 1944-1958
Box 1, Folder 2	Correspondence, 1959
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1960-1965
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence, 1966-1968
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence, 1970
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence, 1971-1972
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence, 1973-1987
Box 1, Folder 8	Correspondence, undated
Box 1, Folder 9	Responses to Survey on Artists Education, B-K, 1959
Box 1, Folder 10	Responses to Survey on Artists Education, L-Y, 1959

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Writings, 1944-1985

0.5 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Materials include autobiographical statements, draft manuscripts of articles, lectures, and panel discussion transcripts, by Conant or related to his work.

Writings by people other than Conant, including Victor D'Amico, Buckmaster Fuller, and Maxine Greene, are noted in the Container Listing.

Arrangement: Writings are arranged in rough chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 11	Autobiographical Statements, 1944-1985
Box 1, Folder 12	The Role of the Arts in Art Education, 1956 May 7
Box 1, Folder 13	Modern Art and Popular Understanding, 1956 December 17
Box 1, Folder 14	Artistic Principles and Ethical Practices in the Publication of Books, Magazines, and Newspapers, 1957 July 1
Box 1, Folder 15	The Role of Arts in Education, 1957 October 18
Box 1, Folder 16	"Realities" Article, 1958
Box 1, Folder 17	The Arts in Contemporary Life, 1958 January 13
Box 1, Folder 18	The Art Educator as Teacher-Artist-Scholar, 1958 February 14
Box 1, Folder 19	Evaluation, Stereotypes, and the Need for Creativity in Art Education, 1958 February 15
Box 1, Folder 20	The Art Teacher as Artist and Scholar, and His Role in Education, 1958 March 28
Box 1, Folder 21	Statement at the Research and Art Education Panel of NCOAE, The Museum of Modern Art, 1958 April 26
Box 1, Folder 22	Florida Art Teacher's Association Summary Talk Notes, 1958 October 25
Box 1, Folder 23	New York University Survey on Artists Education, 1959
Box 1, Folder 24	The Role of the Arts in Education, 1959 April 4
Box 1, Folder 25	The Arts in Contemporary Society, 1959 May 6
Box 1, Folder 26	Art Education vs. Sophisticated Barbarianism, 1960 April 22
Box 1, Folder 27	Art Education: Quality in Teaching, 1961

Box 1, Folder 28	The Role of Art in Secondary Education, 1961 March 4
Box 1, Folder 29	A Philosophy of Creative Art Education, 1961 March 23
Box 1, Folder 30	The Arts in Art Education, 1961 October 27
Box 1, Folder 31	"Can Art be Taught," by Victor D'Amico, 1962
Box 1, Folder 32	America's Cultural Responsibilities for the Arts, circa 1962
Box 1, Folder 33	Testimony on Senate Bills 741, 785, and 1250, 1962 August 31
Box 1, Folder 34	Can Art be Taught?, 1962 December 11-21
Box 1, Folder 35	America's Cultural Responsibilities for the Arts, 1963
Box 1, Folder 36	The Education and Certification of Teachers of Art, 1963 March 11
Box 1, Folder 37	An Artist-Educator Views Creativity and Aesthetics, An Address Delivered at the George Peabody College for Teachers, 1963 July 9
Box 1, Folder 38	Pursuit of Excellence, 1963 October 9
Box 1, Folder 39	Summary of 7-Session Seminar on Art Education Today, 1964
Box 1, Folder 40	Speech by Buckmaster Fuller at the U.S. National Science Foundation, Sponsored by New York University Seminar on Art Education, 1964 October
Box 1, Folder 41	On the Education of Artists, 1965 April 5
Box 1, Folder 42	A "Raison D'Etre" for Aesthetic Excellence in Advertising Design, 1965 April 14
Box 1, Folder 43	Final Report of the Pilot Phase of the Library of Education Fund Research Project, 1966 October 15
Box 1, Folder 44	The Cultural Explosion and the School Curriculum, 1967 April 3
Box 1, Folder 45	The Architectural Contribution to the Theatre, 1967 June 1
Box 1, Folder 46	Graduate Study in Art - A Prognosis, 1970 March 13
Box 1, Folder 47	Consultant's Report by Howard Conant, 1971
Box 1, Folder 48	"Popular Culture, The Arts, and Education" by Maxine Greene, 1971 November
Box 1, Folder 49	Season of Decline, 1972

Box 1, Folder 50	The Art Experience and the Work of Art, 1973 November 15
Box 1, Folder 51	Art and the Environment, circa 1974
Box 1, Folder 52	The Nature and Function of Leadership in the Arts, 1975 February 28
Box 1, Folder 53	Leadership in the Arts, 1975 May 6
Box 1, Folder 54	Judgmental Misconceptions in Art, circa 1976
Box 1, Folder 55	Some Thoughts Concerning the Responsibilities of Administrators in Art Education, 1976 June 30
Box 1, Folder 56	An Address to a Symposium of the California Art Education Association, 1976 October 9
Box 1, Folder 57	Signs of a Renaissance in Art Education, 1977 October 29
Box 1, Folder 58	Interview by James Stewart, 1985
Box 1, Folder 59	The Pursuit of Excellence, 1985 November 5
Box 1, Folder 60	By Buckmaster Fuller, 1946-1967
Box 1, Folder 61	Miscellaneous, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Printed Material, 1953-1987

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Material consists of copies of books written by Conant, published articles, and newsletters. Also included is a folder of photographs of Conant and of Conant with colleagues, including participants in a 1964 seminar at New York University.

Box 1, Folder 62	Art in Education, 1963
Box 1, Folder 63	The Humanism of Donatello, 1973
Box 1, Folder 64	Journals, 1961-1965
Box 1, Folder 65	Newsletters, 1953-1976
Box 1, Folder 66	"Seminar on Elementary and Secondary School Education in the Visual Arts", 1965
Box 1, Folder 67	Photographs, 1963-1987
Box 1, Folder 68	Miscellaneous, 1965-1977

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Interviews and Lectures, 1951-1968

2.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1-4)

Scope and Contents: Materials consist of sound recordings of interviews, lectures, and panel discussions that Conant participated in during the 1960s. Among the recordings is a collection from the "Contemporary Artist on Art" series for 1960, which also includes transcript files.

Arrangement: The collection of audio cassettes and reels were in no discernible order before processing, as reflected in the container listing.

Available Formats: Some of the sound recordings in this collection have been copied for research access and digital copies are available in the Archives of American Art offices.

Box 1, Folder 69, Item 1	Howard Conant Rehearsing Lectures About His Artwork, 1965 February 15 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 69, Item 2	Marshall McLuhan, Jacob Blumner, and Howard Somers Conant Discussion at Fordham University, 1967 October 25 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 69, Item 3	John Opper Seminar Discussion, 1968 April 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 70, Item 1-2	Interview with Irving Kaufman, 1967 October 27 2 Sound cassettes
Box 1, Folder 70, Item 3	Yayoi Kusama Interview, 1968 February 15 1 Sound cassette
Box 2, Folder 1	"Contemporary Artists on Art," Hale Woodruff and Hilaire Hiler Transcript, 1960 October 20
Box 2, Folder 2	"Contemporary Artists on Art," Ilya Bolotowsky and Louise Nevelson Transcript, 1960 October 27
Box 2, Folder 3	"Contemporary Artists on Art," Reuben Nakian and John Humphrey Transcript, 1960 November 10
Box 2, Folder 4	"Contemporary Artists on Art," Ruth Volmer and Robert Motherwell Transcript, 1960 December 1
Box 2, Folder 5	"Contemporary Artists on Art," Milton Resnick and Balcomb Greene Transcript, 1960 December 8
Box 2, Folder 6-8	"Contemporary Artists on Art," Interview Recordings, 1960 10 Sound tape reels Notes: Interviews with Hale Woodruff and Hilaire Hire; Ilya Bolotowsky and Louise Nevelson; Helen Frankenthaler and Balcomb Green; Reuben Nakian and John Humphrey; Esteban Vicente, John Opper,

	and George J. McNeil; Robert Motherwell and Ruth Volmer; Milton Resnick and Balcomb Greene.
Box 2, Folder 9-18	Institute for the Study of Art and Education Conference 1964, 1964 October 8-9 20 Sound tape reels
Box 3, Folder 1-2	Institute for the Study of art and Education Conference 1964, 1960 October 8-9 4 Sound tape reels
Box 3, Folder 3, Item 1	Institute for the Study of art and Education Conference 1967, 1967 November 17 1 Sound tape reel
Box 3, Folder 3, Item 2	Institute for the Study of art and Education Conference 1968, 1968 November 9 1 Sound tape reel
Box 3, Folder 4	Institute for the Study of art and Education Conference 1968, 1968 November 9 2 Sound tape reels
Box 3, Folder 5-6	Frederick John Kiesler Lecture, 1960 4 Sound tape reels
Box 3, Folder 7, Item 1	Adolph Gottlieb Lecture, 1965 August 20 1 Sound tape reel
Box 3, Folder 7, Item 2	Frederick John Kiesler Lecture, 1964 August 1 Sound tape reel
Box 3, Folder 8	Buckminster Fuller Address in Harrisburg, PA, 1966 June 2 Sound tape reels
Box 3, Folder 9	Stephen Greene, Robert Morris, and Jack Tworkov Panel Discussion, 1966 November 17 2 Sound tape reels
Box 3, Folder 10, Item 1	Interview with Ray Parker, John Opper, Tania, 1965 1 Sound tape reel
Box 3, Folder 10, Item 2	Sound Recording of Educational Television Program on Art Activities for Children, 1951 December 13-20 1 Sound tape reel
Box 3, Folder 11-14	Panel Discussion, "The Art Student and the Future of the Avant-Garde", 1966 November 29 7 Sound tape reels
Box 3, Folder 15-17	Panel Discussion, "Architectural Synthesis in Modern Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, and Urban Design", 1965 October 22

	5 Sound tape reels
Box 3, Folder 18	Howard Somers Conant Lecture, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1965 May 8 1 Sound tape reel
Box 4, Folder 1-2	Interview with Robert Motherwell, 1964 November 8 3 Sound tape reels
Box 4, Folder 3-4	James N. Wines Slide Lecture on Sculpture, circa 1960 3 Sound tape reels

[Return to Table of Contents](#)