Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Rackstraw Downes Research Material Concerning Fairfield Porter, 1962-2000, bulk 1970-1979, in the Archives of American Art

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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art

Title: Rackstraw Downes research material concerning Fairfield Porter

Date: 1962-2000
(bulk 1970-1979)

Identifier: AAA.downrack

Creator: Downes, Rackstraw

Extent: 1 Linear foot

Language: English .

Summary: TThe Rackstraw Downes research material concerning Fairfield Porter measure 1.0 linear foot and date from 1962 to 2000, with the bulk of the material dating from 1970-1979. Downes used the material to compile, edit and write the introduction to *Fairfield Porter: Art In Its Own Terms - Selected Criticism 1935-1975* published in 1979. Research materials include articles about Porter, exhibition catalogs, photocopies of letters and some original correspondence, theses and manuscripts. Also included are project files for the publication of *Art In Its Own Terms.*

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated by Rackstraw Downes in 2012.

Processing Information

This collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid prepared in 2013 by Rachel Salzmann. The Archives of American Art has implemented minimal processing tactics when possible in order to increase information about and access to more of our collections.

Minimal processing included arrangement to the series and folder level. Generally, items within folders were simply verified with folder titles, but not arranged further. Folders within boxes were not numbered. The collection was rehoused in archival containers and folders, but not all staples and clips were removed.

Preferred Citation

The Rackstraw Downes research material concerning Fairfield Porter, 1962-2000, bulk 1970-1979. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

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Biographical / Historical

Rackstraw Downes (1939-), a landscape painter and author in New York City, edited and wrote the introduction to *Fairfield Porter: Art In It's Own Terms: Selected Criticism 1935-1975*. Born in Kent, England, Downes received a B.A. in English literature from Cambridge University in 1961 and earned an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Arts in 1961. Downes was personally acquainted with Porter.

Fairfield Porter (1907-1975), a painter, art critic and poet, resided in Southampton, New York. Porter was a strong advocate for figure painting. He wrote for *ArtNews* and *The Nation*, and eventually became art editor for *The Nation*.

Scope and Contents

The Rackstraw Downes research material concerning Fairfield Porter measure 1.0 linear foot and date from 1962 to 2000, with the bulk of the material dating from 1970-1979. Downes used the material to compile, edit and write the introduction to *Fairfield Porter: Art In Its Own Terms - Selected Criticism 1935-1975* published in 1979. Research materials include articles about Porter, exhibition catalogs, photocopies of letters and some original correspondence, theses and manuscripts. Also included are project files for the publication of *Art In Its Own Terms.*

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into two series:

- Series 1: Research Material, 1962-2000 (0.7 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 2: Files on *Fairfield Porter: Art In Its Own Terms, Selected Criticism 1935-1975*, 1973-1992 (0.3 linear feet; Box 1)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Porter, Fairfield

Occupations:

Art critics -- New York (State) -- Southampton

Container Listing

Series 1: Research Material, 1962-2000

0.7 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series contains many photocopies of Porter's writings published as early as 1935. Photocopies of letters from Fairfield Porter are to various recipients including: John MacWhinnie, Robert Dash, David Shapiro, Ron Padgett, Edith Schloss, Frank O'Hara, and Howard Griffin. Downes's correspondence with Fairfield and Anne Porter are the original letters, as are those from Porter to Poppy and Lucien Day.

After the publication was completed, Downes continued to add material. He subsequently compiled the bibliography included in the exhibition catalog, *Fairfield Porter: Realist Painter in an Age of Abstraction*, published in 1982 by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA.

Box 1, Folder 1	Printed Material - Essays by Fairfield Porter (1958-1961), circa 1970s
Box 1, Folder 2-4	Printed Material - Articles about Fairfield Porter, 1970-2000
Box 1, Folder 5-6	Printed Material - Essays and Reviews of Art by Fairfield Porter (1935-1974), circa 1970s
Box 1, Folder 7	Printed Material - Exhibition Catalogs, 1969-1995
Box 1, Folder 8	Printed Material - Reviews and Articles, 1969-1999
Box 1, Folder 9	Theses and Manuscripts by Anne Devaney, 1999
Box 1, Folder 10	Theses and Manuscripts by Ted Leigh, 1973-1977
Box 1, Folder 11-12	Theses and Manuscripts by John T. Spike, 1990
Box 1, Folder 13	Chronology and Partial Bibliography, 1970
Box 1, Folder 14	Bibliography for Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1982
Box 1, Folder 15	Excerpts from Fairfield Porter letters (1968-1975), circa 1970s
Box 1, Folder 16	Letters from Fairfield Porter to Howard Griffin (1977), circa 1970s
Box 1, Folder 17	Letters from Fairfield Porter (1961-1975), circa 1970s
Box 1, Folder 18	Letters from Fairfield Porter to Frank O'Hara (1955), 1977
Box 1, Folder 19	Letters from Anne Porter to Rackstraw Downes, 1976-1997
Box 1, Folder 20	Letters from Fairfield Porter to Rackstraw Downes, 1966-1975

Box 1, Folder 21	Letters from Fairfield Porter to Poppy and Lucien Day, 1962-1972
Box 1, Folder 22	Letters from Rackstraw Downes to Fairfield Porter, 1966-1975
Box 1, Folder 23	Research Notebook, circa 1970s

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Series 2: Files on *Fairfield Porter: Art In Its Own Terms, Selected Criticism 1935-1975*, 1973-1992

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series contains material related to the book's publication and includes permissions, correspondence, some financial records, and the manuscript.

Box 1, Folder 24	Introduction and Outline, 1973-1975
Box 1, Folder 25	Photographs for Publication, circa 1977
Box 1, Folder 26	Permissions- Original, 1978-1992
Box 1, Folder 27	Miscellaneous Fairfield Porter Writings (circa 1940-1973), circa 1977
Box 1, Folder 28	Financial Reports, Expenses and Reviews, 1978
Box 1, Folder 29	Correspondence with Taplinger Publishing, 1978
Box 1, Folder 30-33	Manuscript, 1978

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