



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the John Button Letters to Gerald L.  
Fabian, 1950-1982, in the Archives of American Art

Rayna Andrews

Funding for the processing of this collection was provided by Gerald and Bente Buck.

2018/09/05

Archives of American Art  
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Victor Building, Suite 2200  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	John Button letters to Gerald L. Fabian
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.fabigera
<b>Date:</b>	1950-1982
<b>Extent:</b>	0.6 linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Fabian, Gerald Langston
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Summary:</b>	The John Button letters to Gerald L. Fabian measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1950 to 1982. The collection consists primarily of correspondence from painter John Button to Gerald Fabian. Also included are letters from Fabian to Button, as well as printed material.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The John Button letters to Gerald L. Fabian were donated to the Archives of American Art by Gerald L. Fabian in 1990.

### Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art are the John Button papers, 1964-2004.

### Processing Information

The collection received a preliminary level of arrangement in 1991 by Jean Fitzgerald. It was minimally processed and a finding aid prepared by Rayna Andrews in 2018 with funding from Gerald and Bente Buck.

### Preferred Citation

John Button letters to Gerald L. Fabian, 1950-1982. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

## Biographical / Historical

John Button (1929-1982) was an American artist well known for his paintings of city-scapes and associated with New York School artists like Fairfield Porter, Jane Freilicher, and Alex Katz. Born in San Francisco, California, Button attended the University of California, Berkeley and the California School of Fine Arts. In the early 1950s he moved to New York. He taught at the School of Visual Arts from 1965 until 1982. Button's work was included in numerous solo and group exhibitions and is held in collections at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the San Francisco Museum of Art, the Oakland Museum, the Utah Museum of Fine Arts, and many others.

Gerald Langston Fabian (1924-2012) was a poet, actor, educator, and activist. He grew up in Montana, served in the Pacific with the Navy during World War II, and lived most of his life in San Francisco, California. He was a friend of painter, John Button.

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## Scope and Contents

The John Button letters to Gerald L. Fabian measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1950 to 1982. The collection consists primarily of correspondence from painter John Button to Gerald Fabian. Also included are letters from Fabian to Button, as well as printed material.

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## Arrangement

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

- Series 1: John Button letters to Gerald L. Fabian, 1950-1982, (Boxes 1-2; 0.6 linear feet)
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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Cultures:

Art -- Collectors and collecting -- California -- San Francisco  
Painters -- California

Names:

Button, John, 1929-1982

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: John Button Letters to Gerald L. Fabian, 1950-1982

*0.6 linear feet (2 Boxes)*

Letters included in this collection discuss Button's activities, friends, opinions of other artists, and work. Some letters are fragmentary. Included within the correspondence are scattered photographs, sketches, poems, and printed material. The printed material that appears at the end of the collection consists primarily of clippings, some with annotations, and may have once been enclosed in the letters.

Box 1, Folder 1-2	Letter Fragments, undated
Box 1, Folder 3-8	Letters, undated
Box 1, Folder 9-29	Letters, 1950-1977
Box 2, Folder 1-13	Letters, 1978-1982
Box 2, Folder 14	Printed Material, 1959-1962, undated

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