



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Papers of Joseph
W. Groell, 1925-2007, bulk 1950-1991,
in the Archives of American Art

Catherine S. Gaines

July 19, 2011

Archives of American Art
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Joseph W. Groell papers
Identifier:	AAA.groejose
Date:	1925-2007 (bulk 1950-1991)
Extent:	2.2 Linear feet
Creator:	Groell, Joseph W., 1928-
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Joseph W. Groell papers, 1925-2007, bulk 1950-1991, measure 2.2 linear feet and primarily document his career as an art instructor. The papers include biographical material, letters, writings, subject files, printed material, artwork and photographs. Teaching files constitute the majority of the collection. Ten volumes of lecture notes, visual examples from sources including his own sketchbook, and student project instructions survive for courses Groell taught at Brooklyn College, 1970s-1990; and three volumes of notes and illustrations relate to figure drawing courses he taught at the New York Academy of Art, 1990-1991.

Administrative Information

Provenance

Joseph W. Groell donated his papers to the Archives of American Art in 2011.

Processing Information

The collection was processed by Catherine S. Gaines in 2011.

Preferred Citation

Joseph W. Groell papers, 1925-2007, bulk 1950-1991. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment. Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate access copy requires advance notice.

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Biographical Note

Joseph W. Groell (b. 1928) is known as a teacher of figure drawing and painting in the academic tradition. He has lived and worked in New York City since 1950.

A native of Pittsburgh, Groell earned a B.A. in Fine Arts from Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie-Mellon University) in 1950 and promptly moved to New York City. In 1952 he became one of the original members of Tanager Gallery, the earliest of the Tenth Street co-operative galleries.

Groell taught life drawing at Pratt Institute of Technology during the academic year 1960-1961. He then served on faculty of Brooklyn College art department until retiring in 1990. In the early 1990s Groell became affiliated with the New York Academy of Art, a graduate school of figurative art with a strong emphasis drawing, traditional methods and techniques.

Scope and Content Note

The Joseph W. Groell papers, 1925-2007, bulk 1950-2007, measure 2.2 linear feet, and primarily document his career as an art instructor. The papers include biographical material, letters, writings, subject files, printed material, artwork, and photographs. Teaching files constitute the majority of the collection. Ten volumes of lecture notes with visual examples from sources including his own sketchbook, and student project instructions survive for courses Groell taught at Brooklyn College, 1970s-1990; and three volumes of notes and illustrations relate to figure drawing courses he taught at the New York Academy of Art, 1990-1991.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 8 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1952-1996 (Box 1; 0.1 linear ft.)
- Series 2: Letters, 1925-1971 (Box 1; 1 folder)
- Series 3: Writings, 1951-1955 (Box 1; 0.1 linear ft.)
- Series 4: Teaching Files, 1970s-1991 (Boxes 1-2; 1.2 linear ft.)
- Series 5: Subject Files, 1952-2005 (Box 2; 0.4 linear ft.)
- Series 6: Printed Material, 1953-1983 (Box 2; 0.2 linear ft.)
- Series 7: Artwork, circa 1925-1953 (Box 3; 0.1 linear ft.)
- Series 8: Photographs, 1948-2007 (Box 3; 0.1 linear ft.)

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
Figure drawing
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York -- Faculty

Types of Materials:

Illustrations
Lecture notes
Notes
Photographs
Sketchbooks

Names:

Brooklyn College -- Faculty
New York Academy of Art

Occupations:

Art teachers

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1952-1996

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Theophil Groell (1932-2004), who sometimes used the name Theophil Repke, is represented by an audio recording of a talk delivered to the Union of Maine Visual Artists at the Ellsworth Public Library, Ellsworth, Maine. Like his brother, Joe, he studied painting at Carnegie Institute of Technology and then taught in New York City. After retirement, Theophil lived and painted in Maine.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical notes; Application for Museum of Modern Art annual artist's pass; Driver's licenses, undated, 1952-1956
Box 1, Folder 2	Retirement party, Brooklyn College, 1990 (<i>VHS videocassette</i>)
Box 1, Folder 3	Theophil Groell, Talk at Union of Maine Visual Artists, Ellsworth Public Library, Ellsworth, Maine, 1996 (<i>1 audiocassette</i>)

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Series 2: Letters, 1925-1971

1 Folder (Box 1)

Most letters date from the 1950s and convey news of family and friends. Among the friends were classmates from Carnegie Institute of Technology who wrote about art and congratulated Groell on his shows at Tanager Gallery. Of particular note are two postcards from The Club. The first, undated, invites Groell to join the group; the second announces "What is Your Subject?" a panel discussion featuring Joe Groell, Red Grooms, Alex Katz, and Fairfield Porter, moderated by Murray Israel, to be held on February 23, 1962. A letter from Groell to the Editor of *The New York Times* expresses opposition to the defense of Quemoy and voices concern that it could lead to war with Red China.

Additional letters are found among the subject files (Series 5).

Box 1, Folder 4 Letters, undated, 1925-1971

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Series 3: Writings, 1951-1955

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Journal entries contain sporadic musings on artistic problems and philosophical issues, with a few accounts of daily activities. Some are handwritten, others are typed; many contain revisions.

A small number of additional writings can be found among the subject files (Series 5) and Groell's sketchbook (Series 7).

Box 1, Folder 5	Journal Entries, 1951-1955
Box 1, Folder 6	Notes and Lists, undated, 1951-1955
Box 1, Folder 7	Poems, undated, 1951-1955

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Series 4: Teaching Files, 1970s-1991

1.2 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Thirteen volumes contain lecture notes, visual examples (original artwork and photocopies from sketchbooks and other sources), and student project instructions for Groell's courses at Brooklyn College and New York Academy of Art. These are supplemented by three videotapes of Brooklyn College M.F.A. shows at Westbeth Gallery that include interviews with some of his students. Another videotape, "The New York Academy of Art," is a short overview of the school's program with a brief section featuring Groell and students discussing figure drawing.

A subject file titled "Brooklyn College - Administrative Records and Correspondence" (Series 5) contains information about Groell's teaching career at that institution.

Box 1	Brooklyn College
Box 1, Folder 8	Volume 1: "Anatomy," 1970s (1 vol.) Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 9	Volume 2: "Figure," 1970s (1 vol.) Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 10	Volume 3: "Perspective," 1970s (1 vol.)
Box 1, Folder 11	Volume 4: Untitled, 1970s (removed from 3-ring binder) Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 12	Volume 4: Untitled, 1970s (removed from 3-ring binder) Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 13	Volume 5: Untitled, 1980s (removed from 3-ring binder) Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 14	Volume 5: Untitled, 1980s (removed from 3-ring binder) Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 15	Volume 5: Untitled, 1980s (removed from 3-ring binder) Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 16	Volume 6: "Human Proportions", 1980s

	<i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 17	Volume 6: "Human Proportions", 1980s <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 18	Volume 7: "Surface Geometry", 1980s <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 19	Volume 7: "Surface Geometry", 1980s Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 20	Volume 8: "Surface Geometry", 1980s <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 21	Volume 8: "Surface Geometry", 1980s <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 1	Volume 9: "Solid Geometry; Perspective", 1980s <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 2	Volume 9: "Solid Geometry; Perspective", 1980s <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 3	Volume 9: "Solid Geometry; Perspective", 1980s <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 4	Volume 10: "Parallel Projection; Perspective", 1980s <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 5	Volume 10: "Parallel Projection; Perspective", 1980s <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 6	Volume 10: "Parallel Projection; Perspective", 1980s <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 7	M.F.A. Shows at Westbeth Gallery, 1989-1990

(3 VHS videocassettes)

Box 2	New York Academy of Art
Box 2, Folder 8	Volume 11: "Composition", 1990-1991 <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 9	Volume 11: "Composition", 1990-1991 <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 10	Volume 12: "Figure Drawing,", 1991 <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 11	Volume 13: "Figure Composition,", 1991 <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i> Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 12	"The New York Academy of Art" produced by Stephanie de Montvalon, New York University Department of Journalism, 1990 <i>(1 VHS videocassette)</i>

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Series 5: Subject Files, 1952-2005

0.4 Linear feet (Box 2)

Subject files, created and maintained by Groell, contain varying combinations of correspondence, writings, printed material and photographs. The file titled "Stable Annuals - Marika Herskovic" concerns *New York School Abstract Expressionists: Artists by Choice; A Complete Documentation of the New York Painting and Sculpture Annuals; 1951-1957* (Marika Herskovic, editor, New York School Press, 2000) and includes photocopies of selected 1950s diary entries Groell shared with Herskovic for her for research.

Box 2, Folder 13	"Biological Evolution: Thought and Art," undated, 1987-1989
Box 2	Brooklyn College
Box 2, Folder 14	Administrative Records and Correspondence, 1967-1984
Box 2, Folder 15	"Lessons from the Past: An Exhibition of Art Projects by Undergraduate and Graduate Students in the Classes of Paul Gianfagna, Joseph Groell and Susan Koslow," 1982
Box 2, Folder 16-17	Exhibitions, Miscellaneous (2 folders), undated, 1959-1977
Box 2, Folder 18	Gianfagna, Paul, undated, 1985-2004
Box 2, Folder 19	Greene, Balcomb and Gertrude (Peter), undated, 1952-2004
Box 2, Folder 20	"Stable Annuals - Marika Herskovic," undated, 1999-2005
Box 2, Folder 21	Tanager Gallery, undated, 1950s; 1971-2002

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Series 6: Printed Material, 1953-1983

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

This series consist of articles, exhibition catalogs and announcements relating to Groell and other artists.

Additional printed material is found in many subject files (Series 5).

Box 2, Folder 22	Articles, About or Mentioning Groell, 1953-1957, undated
Box 2, Folder 23	Articles, Art-related, 1953-1955, undated
Box 2, Folder 24	Articles, Miscellaneous Subjects, 1955-1972, undated
Box 2, Folder 25	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, undated 1971-1983

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Series 7: Artwork, circa 1925-1953

0.1 Linear feet (Box 3)

Groell's sketchbook, "Summer - 1952 (Pgh.)," also includes a few pages of notes and miscellaneous writings, and two published reproductions of Minoan art. Photographs are of miscellaneous subjects: African-American women, a theater sign, and a building demolition site.

Albert Swinden (1901-1961), English by birth, came to the United States by way of Canada. By the mid-1920s he was living in New York City and studying at the Art Students League with Hans Hofmann. Swinden was among the group that founded American Abstract Artists in 1937. Much of Swinden's work was destroyed in 1940 when the studio he shared with Balcomb Greene caught fire.

Box 3	By Joseph Groell
Box 3, Folder 1	Drawings and Sketches, undated
Box 3, Folder 2	Sketchbook, "Summer - 1952 (Pgh.),", 1952 <i>(removed from 3-ring binder)</i>
Box 3, Folder 3	Photographs, undated
Box 3	By Others
Box 3, Folder 4	Drawings by Mary (or possibly Marj [Groell]?) and M. Sheridan, undated, 1950
Box 3, Folder 5	Sketchbook of Albert Swinden, circa 1925-1940

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Series 8: Photographs, 1948-2007

0.1 Linear feet (Box 3)

People include Groell, Sue Foster, Dave Keck; unidentified individuals probably are friends and students.

Additional photographs are included in some subject files (Series 5) and found with the artwork (Series 7) are photographs by Groell.

Box 3, Folder 6 Paintings by Joseph Groell, circa 1950s-1960s

Box 3, Folder 7 Drawing by Joseph Groell, circa 1950s-1960s

Box 3, Folder 8 People, 1989-2007, 1948, undated

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