



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Hisako Hibi and
Matusaburo "George" Hibi papers, circa
1906-2022, in the Archives of American Art

Rihoko Ueno

2023/01/30

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Hisako Hibi and Matsusaburo "George" Hibi papers
Date:	circa 1906-2022
Identifier:	AAA.hibihisa
Creator:	Hibi, Hisako, 1907-1991 Hibi, Matsusaburo George, 1886-1947
Extent:	5.1 Linear feet
Language:	Multiple languages .
Summary:	The papers of Japanese American artists Hisako Hibi and Matsusaburo "George" Hibi measure 5.1 linear feet and date from circa 1906-2022. These papers are mainly focused on Hisako Hibi's life and career, with some content related to her husband Matsusaburo "George" Hibi. Included are biographical material consisting of immigration documents and interview transcripts; scrapbooks; printed material including catalogs and newspaper clippings; personal and professional correspondence; scattered records of works sold, loaned and donated; and a few sketches. Also found is Matsusaburo's handwritten account of founding the art school at Topaz incarceration camp along with other material related to the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. There is a 1.2 linear foot unprocessed addition to this collection donated in 2023 that includes sketchbooks by Hisako Hibi, a yearbook, letters to Hisako Hibi, printed material, and membership cards. Materials date from circa 1929-2000.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Hisako Hibi and Matsusaburo "George" Hibi papers were donated to the Archives of American Art in 2022 by Ibuki Hibi Lee, Hisako and Matsusaburo "George" Hibi's daughter. Additional material donated in 2023 by Amy Lee-Tai, Ibuki Lee's daughter.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Rihoko Ueno in 2023.

Preferred Citation

Hisako Hibi and Matsusaburo "George" Hibi papers, circa 1906-2022. 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.

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Biographical / Historical

Hisako Hibi née Shimizu (1907-1991) was a Japanese American artist in Hayward and San Francisco, California. She was married to artist Matsusaburo "George" Hibi (1886-1947). Both artists were active members of the San Francisco Bay Area arts community. The two met at the California School of Fine Arts (renamed the San Francisco Art Institute, which closed in 2022) and married in 1930. They had two children, Satoshi and Ibuki. Both Hisako and Matsusaburo "George" Hibi exhibited their paintings widely.

In 1942, the entire Hibi family was forcibly removed and incarcerated at the Tanforan Assembly Center in California and subsequently the Topaz Relocation Center in Utah where they remained until the end of World War II. After the war, the family moved to New York City, where Matsusaburo "George" Hibi passed away in 1947. Hisako Hibi worked as a seamstress at a garment factory and later studied painting at the Museum of Modern Art. In the early 1950s, Hisako Hibi and her daughter Ibuki returned to San Francisco. Hisako Hibi continued to exhibit frequently in group and solo shows. She passed away in 1991.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Japanese American artists Hisako Hibi and Matsusaburo "George" Hibi measure 5.1 linear feet and date from circa 1906-2022. These papers are mainly focused on Hisako Hibi's life and career, with some content related to her husband Matsusaburo "George" Hibi. Included are biographical material consisting of immigration documents and interview transcripts; scrapbooks; printed material including catalogs and newspaper clippings; personal and professional correspondence; scattered records of works sold, loaned and donated; and a few sketches. Also found is Matsusaburo's handwritten account of founding the art school at Topaz incarceration camp along with other material related to the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. A small addition to this collection consisting of letters (many handmade) to Hisako Hibi from friends and fellow artists was merged in with the rest of the correspondence.

There is a 1.2 linear foot unprocessed addition to this collection donated in 2023 that includes sketchbooks by Hisako Hibi, a yearbook, letters to Hisako Hibi, printed material, and membership cards. Materials date from circa 1929-2000.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1906-circa 2020 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1922-2022 (1.2 linear feet; Boxes 1, 5-6)

- Series 3: Exhibition Files, 1936-2005 (0.4 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 4: Scrapbooks, circa 1934-1985 (0.6 linear feet; Box 2)
 - Series 5: Printed Material, 1918-2019 (1.5 linear feet; Boxes 2-3, OV 4)
 - Series 6: Unprocessed Addition, circa 1929-2000 (1.2 linear feet; Boxes 7-8)
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Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Asian American artists
Japanese American artists
Japanese Americans -- Forced removal and internment -- 1942-1945
Women artists

Types of Materials:

Scrapbooks

Occupations:

Painters -- California -- San Francisco
Printmakers -- California -- San Francisco

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1906-circa 2020

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series includes Hisako and Matsusaburo "George" Hibi's marriage license, Matsusaburo Hibi's Japanese passport, short biographical profiles on both artists, transcripts of interviews with Hisako Hibi, assorted writings in English and Japanese, and condition reports on a few of Hisako Hibi's paintings. Also noteworthy are a few subject files related to the forced relocation and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Most of the material is related to the art schools established by Matsusaburo "George" Hibi and fellow Japanese American artist Chiura Obata while they were inside Tanforan and Topaz incarceration camps. The files include writings, documents, exhibition catalogs, correspondence, and a sketch by Matsusaburo Hibi.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Information and Profiles on Hisako Hibi, circa 1976-1991
Box 1, Folder 2	Biographical Information and Profiles on Matsusaburo "George" Hibi, circa 1945, circa 2020
Box 1, Folder 3	Condition Reports on Hisako Hibi's Paintings, 1998
Box 1, Folder 4	Drawing and Other Material on Ibuki Hibi Lee, circa 1935-1947
Box 1, Folder 5	Hisako Hibi's Autobiography Preface and Postscript, circa 1965
Box 1, Folder 6	Interview Transcript - Hisako Hibi Interviewed by Eric Saul for NJAHS, 1986
Box 1, Folder 7	Interview Transcript - Hisako Hibi Interviewed for KQED "Over Easy" Program, circa 1979
Box 1, Folder 8	Kimi Kodani Hill's Writing and Research on Hisako Hibi, 1986
Box 1, Folder 9	Marriage License, 1930
Box 1, Folder 10	Matsusaburo "George" Hibi's Drawings and Woodblock Print, circa 1930-circa 1940
Box 1, Folder 11	Matsusaburo "George" Hibi's Japanese Passport, 1906
Box 1, Folder 12	Notes and Writings by Matsusaburo "George" Hibi, circa 1930-circa 1946 Notes: Writings are in Japanese.
Box 1, Folder 13-15	Subject Files - Tanforan and Topaz Art School, circa 1942-circa 1945, 2016

Box 1, Folder 16

Subject Files - Tanforan and Topaz Camps, Forced Relocation and Incarceration of Japanese Americans, circa 1943-1980

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1922-2022

1.2 Linear feet (Boxes 1, 5-6)

Scope and Contents: This series includes personal and professional correspondence between the Hibis and friends, colleagues, museums, galleries, and other institutions. Especially noteworthy are the letters between Matsusaburo "George" Hibi and the artist Michael Chepourkoff during the Hibi family's time at the Topaz incarceration camp during World War II. There are quite a few handmade cards by various correspondents that are scattered throughout the series.

Box 5, Folder 1	Amoruso, Elaine, circa 1977-1991
Box 5, Folder 2	A-B, Alphabetical Correspondence, 1974-1991
Box 5, Folder 3	Blanc, Pauline, circa 1976-circa 1991
Box 5, Folder 4	Brown, Anne (Frank and Ed), 1980-1991
Box 1, Folder 17	Chepourkoff, Michael, 1945-1949, 2006
Box 1, Folder 18	Chepourkova, Anna, 2021-2022
Box 5, Folder 5	C-D, Alphabetical Correspondence, 1959-1991
Box 5, Folder 6	Darwin, Beatrice, 1980-1988
Box 1, Folder 19	East West Art Society, 1922
Box 5, Folder 7	F, Alphabetical Correspondence, circa 1982-circa 1985
Box 5, Folder 8	Grace, Ethel, circa 1978-1983
Box 5, Folder 9	Hicks, Frances, 1975-1985
Box 1, Folder 20	Hill, Kimi Kodani, circa 1990-1999 Notes: Correspondence regarding the Obata family.
Box 5, Folder 10	Holub, Florence and Leo, circa 1979-1988
Box 5, Folder 11	Humphrey, Ann (St. John), circa 1979-circa 1989
Box 5, Folder 12	H-K, Alphabetical Correspondence, 1978-1990
Box 1, Folder 21-23	Japanese American National Museum, circa 1991-2007
Box 5, Folder 13	Labaudt, Marcelle, circa 1977-circa 1981
Box 5, Folder 14-15	Lau, Alan, 1977-1991

Box 5, Folder 16	Lau, Alan (Undated), circa 1978-circa 1991
Box 6, Folder 1	Leavey, Michaela "Miki" Hsu, circa 1982-2004
Box 6, Folder 2	L-N, Alphabetical Correspondence, circa 1976-circa 1985
Box 1, Folder 24	May, Elsie E., 1942-1945
Box 1, Folder 25	National Japanese American Historical Society, 1986-1998
Box 6, Folder 3	Nishiyama, Joan and Katsumi, circa 1980-1984
Box 6, Folder 4	O'Hanlon, Ann and Dick, 1972-1983
Box 6, Folder 5	O-P, Alphabetical Correspondence, 1971-1988
Box 6, Folder 6	Piazzoni Wood, Mirielle, 1979-1989
Box 6, Folder 7	R-S, Alphabetical Correspondence, 1975-1991
Box 6, Folder 8	Salz, Helen, circa 1972-1977
Box 6, Folder 9	Severinghaus, Elinor and Wendy, circa 1982-1990
Box 6, Folder 10	Silberstein, Muriel, 1974-1983
Box 6, Folder 11	Steinberg, Stefanie, circa 1977-circa 1991
Box 6, Folder 12	Taira, Frank, 1974-1990
Box 6, Folder 13	Takeshita, Bette, 1986-1990
Box 6, Folder 14	T-Y, Alphabetical Correspondence, 1976-1988
Box 6, Folder 15	First Names Only, A-H, 1978-1991
Box 6, Folder 16	First Names Only, I-V, 1977-1991
Box 1, Folder 26-31	Chronological Correspondence, circa 1950-2001 Notes: Folder 26 includes one letter from Yasuo Kuniyoshi.

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Series 3: Exhibition Files, 1936-2005

0.5 Linear feet (Boxes 1)

Scope and Contents: Though there are a few files on Matsusaburo "George" Hibi's exhibitions, the bulk of this series consists of materials related to Hisako Hibi's group and solo exhibitions. The exhibition files contain a range of materials such as correspondence, printed material, price lists, catalogs, and guest books or pages from guest books.

Box 1, Folder 32	Matsusaburo "George" Hibi Exhibition, Hayward High School (1936), 1936
Box 1, Folder 33	Matsusaburo "George" Hibi Memorial Exhibition, Lucien Labaudt Art Gallery (1962), 1962
Box 1, Folder 34	A View from the Inside, Oakland Museum (1976), 1976
Box 1, Folder 35	Hisako Hibi Retrospective, Sight + Insight Gallery (1977), 1977
Box 1, Folder 36	Guest Book for Various Exhibitions, 1980-1986
Box 1, Folder 37	Four Japanese Americans of San Francisco Women Artists Exhibition (1987), 1986-1988
Box 1, Folder 38	Strength and Diversity: Japanese American Women, 1885-1990, Oakland Museum (1990), 1990
Box 1, Folder 39	The View from Within: Japanese American Art from the Internment Camps, 1942-1945, Traveling Exhibition (1992-1995), 1992-1995
Box 1, Folder 40	With New Eyes: Toward an Asian American Art History in the West, San Francisco State University (1995), 1995-1996
Box 1, Folder 41	A Half-Century of Hope and Suffering: Japanese and Japanese American Painters in the U.S., 1895-1945, Traveling Exhibition (1995-1996), 1995-1996
Box 1, Folder 42	A Process of Reflection: Paintings by Hisako Hibi, Japanese American National Museum (1999-2000), 1999-2000
Box 1, Folder 43	Peaceful Painter: Hisako Hibi, de Saisset Museum (2004-2005), 2004-2005
Box 1, Folder 44	Peaceful Painter: Hisako Hibi, de Saisset Museum (2004-2005) - Guestbook, 2004-2005

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Series 4: Scrapbooks, circa 1934-1985

0.5 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: The bulk of this series consists of scrapbooks compiled by Hisako Hibi about her artwork and exhibitions. The scrapbooks include correspondence, exhibitions announcements and catalogs, clippings, and photographs of Hisako Hibi, her artwork, and exhibition openings and events. There is also one scrapbook commemorating a trip that Hisako Hibi took around the world in 1963 and one scrapbook about Matsusaburo "George" Hibi's artwork and exhibitions.

Box 2, Folder 1	"Hisako Hibi, Prior to WWII 1942 Evacuation" Scrapbook, circa 1934-1943
Box 2, Folder 2	"Hisako Hibi, 1961-1970" Scrapbook, circa 1964-1970
Box 2, Folder 3	Hisako Hibi "May 1971-September 1972" Scrapbook, 1971-1972
Box 2, Folder 4	"Hisako Hibi, 1974-1975" Scrapbook, 1974-1975
Box 2, Folder 5	"Hisako Hibi, 1976-1978" Scrapbook, 1976-1978
Box 2, Folder 6	"Hisako Hibi, 1979" Scrapbook, 1979
Box 2, Folder 7	"Hisako Hibi, 1980-1981" Scrapbook, 1980-1981
Box 2, Folder 8	"Hisako Hibi, 1982" Scrapbook, 1982-1983
Box 2, Folder 9	"Hisako Hibi, 1983-1985" Scrapbook, 1983-1985
Box 2, Folder 10	Hisako Hibi "Record of Post-WWII Paintings" Scrapbook, circa 1970-circa 1983
Box 2, Folder 11	Hisako Hibi's 1963 World Trip Scrapbook, 1963
Box 2, Folder 12	"Matsusaburo Hibi's Records" Scrapbook, circa 1936-1950

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Series 5: Printed Material, 1918-2019

1.5 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3, OV 4)

Scope and Contents: This series includes a wide range of printed materials such as exhibition announcements and catalogs, magazines, periodicals, clippings, newsletters, program guides, and calendars. Most of the material is related to Hisako and Matsusaburo "George" Hibi's artwork and exhibitions. Some material is regarding other artists the Hibis knew well or were interested in, such as Chiura Obata. There are a few folders containing printed material, usually clippings, on specific subjects, notably the forced removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Box 2, Folder 13	Auction Catalogs, 1980-1981
Box 2, Folder 14-17	Clippings about Hisako Hibi, circa 1963-2003
Box 2, Folder 18-19	Clippings about Matsusaburo "George" Hibi, 1918-circa 1970
Box 2, Folder 20-24	Exhibition Catalogs, 1922-1969
Box 2, Folder 25-27	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, 1970-circa 1989
Box 3, Folder 1-4	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, 1990-2009
Box 3, Folder 5	Illustrated Calendars, 1991-1996
Oversize 4	Illustrated Calendar (Oversize), 1972
Box 3, Folder 6-8	Magazines, Journals, and Other Periodicals, 1903, 1985-2000
Box 3, Folder 9	Newsletters and Bulletins, 1980-1994
Box 3, Folder 10	San Francisco Annual Arts Festival Programs and Printed Material, 1971-1985
Box 3, Folder 11	San Francisco Galleries Guidebook, 1975
Box 3, Folder 12	San Francisco General Hospital Medical Center Collection, 1978
Box 3, Folder 13	What is Modern Painting?, 1956
Box 3, Folder 14	Other Artists - Clippings on Other Artists and Art, circa 1976-1999
Box 3, Folder 15-20	Other Artists - Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, circa 1930-circa 2000
Box 3, Folder 21-23	Other Artists - Printed Material on Chiura Obata, circa 1977-2019
Box 3, Folder 24	Other Artists - Printed Material on Helen Salz, 1967-1975

Box 3, Folder 25	Other Subjects - Printed Material on WWII Forced Removal and Incarceration of Japanese Americans, 1942-2012 Notes: Includes material on Tanforan and Topaz.
Box 3, Folder 26-27	Other Subjects - Clippings on Various Subjects Collected by Hisako Hibi, circa 1920-circa 1991
Box 3, Folder 28	Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1970-1987

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Series 6: Unprocessed Addition, circa 1929-2000

Box 7 Unprocessed Papers

Box 8 Unprocessed Papers

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