



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Peter Hopkins Papers, 1823-2001, bulk 1935-1994, in the Archives of American Art

Harriet E. Shapiro

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Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Peter Hopkins papers
Identifier:	AAA.hopkpete
Date:	1823-2001 (bulk 1935-1994)
Creator:	Hopkins, Peter, 1911-1999
Extent:	2.4 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Peter Hopkins papers measure 2.4 linear feet and date from 1823-2001, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1935-1994. Writings, letters and diaries make up most of the collection. Printed materials relate to exhibitions of Hopkins' artwork and theatrical performances of his wife, Gertrude Beach Hopkins. There also are writings by both Hopkins and his wife that appeared in the <i>Christian Science Monitor</i> . Of particular interest is a group of vintage family photographs and family papers dating from the 19th century, as well as diaries Hopkins kept while traveling and working in a mental hospital in inland China in the mid 1930s.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The papers were donated to the Archives of American Art in 2009 by the artist's neighbor, James McGuane.

Processing Information

The collection was processed by Harriet E. Shapiro in 2012.

Preferred Citation

Peter Hopkins papers, 1823-2001, bulk 1935-1994. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

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

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Biographical Note

Peter Hopkins (1911-1999) was an artist, educator and writer, who lived and worked in Greenwich Village in New York City.

Hopkins, the son of a theatrical producer, was educated at the prestigious Hotchkiss School. Despite limited formal education, he became a lecturer at the Art Students League of New York and an instructor at the New York Phoenix School of Design. Hopkins' paintings were exhibited in the 1950s-1960s. Hopkins wrote numerous unpublished manuscripts and was a columnist with the *Christian Science Monitor* in the 1970s. He was married to Gertrude Beach Hopkins (d.1997) an actress, who in later years was a poet.

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Scope and Content Note

The Peter Hopkins papers measure 2.4 linear feet and date from 1823-2001, with the bulk of materials dating from 1935-1994. Writings, letters and diaries make up most of the collection. Printed materials relate to exhibitions of Hopkins' artwork and theatrical performances of his wife, Gertrude Beach Hopkins. There also are writings by both Hopkins and his wife that appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor*. Of particular interest is a group of vintage family photographs and family papers dating from the 19th century, as well as diaries Hopkins kept while traveling and working in a mental hospital in inland China in the mid 1930s.

Manuscripts by Hopkins include his theories on perspective (the subject of his lectures at The Art Students League of New York) and the artistic methods of great masters. Hopkins also wrote about his theories concerning anthropological matters, world politics, over population, and the meaning of life. Much of Hopkins' correspondence concerns his efforts to explore career opportunities and find audiences for his ideas and writings.

The collection contains one intact scrapbook consisting of materials spanning Hopkins' art career, a substantial quantity of photographs and slides of Hopkins' paintings, some drawings and sketches, and a few sound and video recordings. In addition, there are writings by fathers of the couple, Charles R. Hopkins and Joseph Beach.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 11 series. Records are generally arranged by material type and chronologically thereafter.

- Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1823-1995 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1934-2001 (Box 1; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 3: Writings, 1908-1997 (Boxes 1-2; 0.7 linear feet)
- Series 4: Diaries, 1945-1998 (Box 2; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 5: Subject Files, 1966-1990 (Box 2; 3 folders)

- Series 6: Printed Material, 1945-1980 (Box 2; 2 folders)
 - Series 7: Scrapbook, 1949-1997 (Box 2; 0.2 linear feet)
 - Series 8: Artwork, 1943-circa 1980s (Box 2; 1 folder)
 - Series 9: Sketchbooks, 1963-1982 (Box 2; 2 folders)
 - Series 10: Photographic Materials, 1864-1990s (Box 3; 0.4 linear feet)
 - Series 11: Sound and Video Recordings, circa 1976-1977 (Box 3; 0.3 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:

Subjects:

Art -- Philosophy
Art -- Study and teaching
Authors -- New York (State) -- New York
Educators -- New York (State) -- New York
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Diaries
Drawings
Photographs
Scrapbooks
Sketches

Names:

Art Students League (New York, N.Y.) -- Faculty
Beach, Joseph
Hopkins, Charles

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1823-1995

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Hopkins' biographical materials include 2 address books, a New York State Certificate of Literacy, and various resumes and letters of recommendation. Among the family papers are a letter written in 1823 by Elihu Roberts to his cousin, Solomon, a page from "The Beach Family Journal" noting the the Beach Ancestry of Sir Winston Churchill, and materials relating to the lives of Hopkins' father, grandfather and father-in-law.

Box 1, Folder 1 Miscellaneous, 1945-1993

Box 1, Folder 2 Family Papers, 1823-1995

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1934-2001

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: The collection contains a large quantity of correspondence and letters. Family correspondence includes a couple of letters from the Norman Rockwell family, discussion of family grievances, and love letters from Gertrude to Peter. There is correspondence with author Tim Joyner concerning illustrations Hopkins submitted for Joyner's book about Magellan. Also, there are letters by Hopkins to notables such as Vice President Al Gore, physicist Steven Hawking, and United Nations Secretary General U Thant, in which Hopkins gives his thoughts on issues of the time.

Box 1, Folder 3	Family Correspondence, 1935-1997, undated
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence with Gil T., 1934-1945
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence with Tim Joyner, 1985-1993
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence Regarding the Sale of Art, 1953-1988, undated
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence Regarding Legal Matters, 1960-2001
Box 1, Folder 8-10	Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1938-1994
Box 1, Folder 11	Letters from Antoinette Mary Wilson, 1956-1974, undated
Box 1, Folder 12	Letters from Gertrude Beach Hopkins, 1953-1994
Box 1, Folder 13	Letters from Lynne Fontanne, 1958-1974
Box 1, Folder 14	Letters Regarding Job Applications, 1969-1984

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Series 3: Writings, 1908-1997

0.7 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Writings include Hopkins' *Christian Science Monitor* columns, manuscripts he drafted on subjects of contemporary interest, and essays concerning detailed analyses of perspective in drawing. There also are writings concerning China in the 1930s, which may be rare in content. Writings by family members also are part of this series.

By Peter Hopkins

Box 1, Folder 15	Miscellaneous, 1983, 1968, 1937, 1934, undated
Box 1, Folder 16	China, 1935-1937
Box 1, Folder 17	"Anthropological Double Take," 1953, 1968, 1981, undated
Box 1, Folder 18	"The United States and the World, an Overview," 1965, 1968
Box 1, Folder 19	Population and Geonomics, 1970
Box 1, Folder 20	Christian Science Monitor Articles, 1973-1979
Box 1, Folder 21	Draft Articles for Christian Science Monitor, 1976-1978, undated
Box 1, Folder 22	"Perspectives in the Universe," "What's in a Name," 1978-1980
Box 1, Folder 23	"Old Master Painting Techniques," circa 1978
Box 1, Folder 24	"Perspective by Calculator," 1980-1982
Box 1, Folder 25	"New Design for Living," 1982
Box 1, Folder 26	"Measured Perspective Drawing," 1984
Box 1, Folder 27	"Perspective Drawing," 1984
Box 2, Folder 1	"The Purpose of Life," 1986

By Others

Box 2, Folder 2	Gertrude Beach Hopkins, Poems, 1974-1994
Box 2, Folder 3	Gertrude Beach Hopkins, Miscellaneous, 1994-1997
Box 2, Folder 4	Charles Robert Hopkins, Journal, 1908-1914
Box 2, Folder 5	Joseph Beach, "Stranger in the Creek," before 1960

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Series 4: Diaries, 1945-1998

0.3 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Volume 1 contains sporadic entries dated 1987-1989 recorded in a weekly planner. Volumes 2-6 record daily domestic and local activities with some drafts of letters and newspaper clippings attached. Volume 7 shows greater focus on health concerns and records the passing of Hopkins' wife, Gertrude. Volume 8 records the quotidian concerns of an elderly man.

Box 2, Folder 6	Loose Pages, 1945
Box 2, Folder 7	Volume 1, 1987-1989
Box 2, Folder 8	Volume 2, 1992-1993
Box 2, Folder 9	Volume 3, 1993
Box 2, Folder 10	Volume 4, 1994
Box 2, Folder 11	Volume 5, 1995
Box 2, Folder 12	Volume 6, 1996
Box 2, Folder 13	Volume 7, 1997
Box 2, Folder 14	Volume 8, 1998

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Series 5: Subject Files, 1966-1990

3 Folders (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: The New York Phoenix School of Design teaching materials contain information about the school, course and curriculum summaries, business correspondence and a roll book. The Art Students League of New York lecture notes include drawings and perspective calculations, a list of paint colors, and printed materials by "C.C.B." detailing perspective with 1 point, 2 points and bird's eye analyses and plans. The Museum of the City of New York materials acknowledge Hopkins' gift of his painting *Riot in Union Square* and advise of its use in a 1990 exhibition.

Box 2, Folder 15	New York Phoenix School of Design Teaching, 1966-1977
Box 2, Folder 16	Art Students League of New York Lectures, 1980-1982
Box 2, Folder 17	Museum of the City of New York, "Riot in Union Square,", 1966-1990

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Series 6: Printed Materials, 1945-1980

2 Folders (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Printed material includes original and photocopied items relating to group exhibitions in which Hopkins participated, and one man shows at the Ward Eggleston Galleries in New York City. Also found are theater programs from plays in which Gertrude Beach Hopkins performed.

Box 2, Folder 18	Exhibitions, 1947-1980 Notes: includes photocopies
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Box 2, Folder 19	Gertrude Beach Hopkins Dramatic Performances, 1945, 1951, undated
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Series 7: Scrapbook, 1949-1997

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Hopkins' scrapbook contains mostly printed materials but also some letters and photographs, all of which document the highlights of his career as a painter and art educator.

Box 2, Folder 20 Scrapbook, 1949-1997

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Series 8: Artwork, 1943-circa 1980s

1 Folder (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Found here are loose drawings and sketches, some of which are photocopies. Most of the work is in pencil and does not appear very developed.

Box 2, Folder 21 Drawings and Sketches, 1943, 1956, circa 1960s-1980s
Notes: includes photocopies

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Series 9: Sketchbooks, 1963-1982

2 Folders (Box 2)

Scope and Contents Found are two volumes of sketches. The earlier book has more developed ink drawings.

Box 2, Folder 22 Sketchbooks, Volume 1, 1963, undated

Box 2, Folder 23 Sketchbooks, Volume 2, 1982, undated

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Series 10: Photographic Materials, 1864-1990s

0.4 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Included are photographs, negatives and slides of Hopkins' paintings. Of note are 19th century tintypes of family members and a cabinet card of January 7, 1864, showing ancestor Elihu Roberts. Late 19th century and early 20th century photographs, most without identifying notes, are in black and white or tinted. There also are professional theatrical photographs of Gertrude Beach Hopkins from the 1940s and miscellaneous snapshots of family and friends.

Box 2, Folder 24	Vintage Photographs of People, 1864, undated
Box 2, Folder 25	Photographs of People, 1885-1917
Box 2, Folder 26-27	Photographs of Family and Friends, 1886-1991, circa 1940s-1960s, undated
Box 2, Folder 28	Photographs of Gertrude Beach Hopkins, 1940s
Box 3, Folder 1	Artwork, Photographs and Negatives, 1940s-1990s
Box 3, Folder 2	Artwork, Slides, 1950s-1990s
Box 3, Folder 3	Artwork, Miscellaneous Photographs, after 1993, undated
Box 3, Folder 4	Artwork, Photographs, 1940s-1970s

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Series 11: Sound and Video Recordings, circa 1976-1977

0.3 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: This series contains an undated video recording of Hopkins' wife Gerturde, a sound recording of a 1976 "workshop" and 3 unidentified recordings.

Box 3, Folder 5	Video Recording of "Gertrude," undated 1 Videocassette Notes: VHS
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Box 3, Folder 6	Unidentified Sound Recordings, 1976-1977, undated 3 Sound cassettes
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Box 3, Folder 7	December, 1976 Workshop and Unidentified Sound Recordings, 1976, undated 4 Sound tape reels
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