



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Joseph Kaplan Papers,  
1915-1977, in the Archives of American Art

Claire Norman

2013 August 20

Archives of American Art  
750 9th Street, NW  
Victor Building, Suite 2200  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Arrangement.....	3
Names and Subjects .....	3
Container Listing .....	5
Series 1: Biographical Material, 1919-1975.....	5
Series 2: Correspondence, 1929-circa 1975.....	6
Series 3: Personal Business Records, circa 1920-1977.....	9
Series 4: Printed Material, 1915-1975.....	10
Series 5: Artwork, circa 1940-circa 1960.....	11
Series 6: Photographic Material, 1917-circa 1975.....	12

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Joseph Kaplan papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.kapljose
<b>Date:</b>	1915-1977
<b>Extent:</b>	4.5 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Kaplan, Joseph, 1900-1980
<b>Language:</b>	English
	The records are in English.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of the painter, photographer, printmaker, and teacher Joseph Kaplan measure 4.5 linear feet and date from 1915-1977. The bulk of the collection consists of printed material, specifically exhibition catalogs. Also found are a large number of photographs taken of and by Kaplan. The papers also include biographical material, correspondence, personal business records, and artwork.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Joseph Kaplan papers were donated to the Archives of American Art by Marilyn Kearney in 1981.

### Separated Materials

307 nitrate negatives donated to the Archives of American Art with the Joseph Kaplan papers have been removed and are stored in off-site storage. Negatives were duplicated onto safety based film and only select prints were made.

### Processing Information

The collection was fully processed with a finding aid prepared by graduate intern Claire Norman in 2013.

### Preferred Citation

Joseph Kaplan papers, 1915-1977. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

## Conditions Governing Use

The Joseph Kaplan papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Joseph Kaplan (1900-1980) was a painter, printmaker, photographer, and teacher who worked primarily in New York and Provincetown. He was most active in the 1940s through the 1950s. Earlier in his career he worked on several WPA Federal Art Projects and Treasury Relief Art Projects.

Joseph Kaplan was born in Minsk, Russia and immigrated with his family to the United States in 1888 at the age of 12. He married Virginia Haber in 1927 and they had no children.

Kaplan studied at the Educational Alliance Art School and the Art Students League. He went to Provincetown in the mid-twenties as a student of Charles W. Hawthorne with whom he previously studied with at the National Academy of Design. Afterwards he revisited Provincetown intermittently and began to regard the Cape as his summer studio, working there each summer since 1948.

In 1948 he won the first of many gold medals from the Audubon Artists at the National Academy of Design for a marine painting. He was also the first recipient of the John J. Newman Memorial Medal, given by the National Society of Painters in Casein for his *Wellfleet, Low Tide*. The Shore Studios in Provincetown, the Harry Salpeter Gallery and then Krasner Gallery in New York City represented Kaplan's artwork.

Kaplan predominantly worked in watercolor and oil paint, depicting landscapes and seascapes, and becoming acclaimed as a Colorist and Romanticist. He occasionally painted figures and, as he gained recognition, he traveled extensively in search for subjects. In 1968 Kaplan received a grant from Chapelbrook Foundation to live and work for a year in Mexico.

Kaplan's work was included frequently in group exhibitions and he participated in more than 30 major shows in his lifetime. Throughout his career he was a member of many art organizations including Artists League of America, Audubon Artists, Provincetown Art Association, and Cape Cod Art Association. He was continually active in the art life in Provincetown serving as board members, trustees, and judges. He also occasionally taught at art schools including the American Artist School and John Reed Club, and taught a number of private pupils.

Joseph Kaplan died on February 28th, 1980 at the age of 79 in Brewster, Massachusetts.

---

## Scope and Contents

The papers of the painter, photographer, printmaker, and teacher Joseph Kaplan measure 4.5 linear feet and date from 1915-1977. The bulk of the collection consists of printed material, specifically exhibition catalogs. Also found are a large number of photographs taken of and by Kaplan. The papers also include biographical material, correspondence, personal business records, and artwork.

Biographical material contains a few of Kaplan's personal documents, a number of certificates and medals he received during his lifetime, a travel itinerary notebook, and a few hand-written notes.

Kaplan's correspondence is primarily from colleagues, art organizations, galleries, museums, and colleges and universities such as the Corcoran Gallery of Art, National Academy of Design, and Audubon Artists,

inc. Also found are letters from friends and colleagues such as Chaim Gross, Adolph Gottlieb, Raphael Soyer, Louis Lozowick, Milton Avery, and Sol Wilson, as well as a large number of letters to his wife Virginia written during his travels.

Personal business records concern Kaplan's art sales, loans, exhibition notifications, and his involvement in the WPA. His artwork is documented in price lists and inventory lists. Some of the material consists of routine transactions not necessarily related to Kaplan's work, including bank records, an address list, and income and expense reports.

Printed Material includes news clippings, exhibition catalogs, exhibition announcements, and invitations for Kaplan shows. There are a few published copies and page proofs of Kaplan's commercial artwork.

Artwork includes four Kaplan etchings, three of which are metal plates and one linoleum block. Also included are a few unidentified pen and pencil sketches.

Photographs depict Kaplan, mainly later in his life, and his family. Also found are four of Virginia Kaplan's photograph albums containing images of her and friends from early adulthood. Photographs of Kaplan's friends and colleagues include images of Aya and Eitaro Ishigaki, Chaim Gross, Raphael Soyer, William Gropper, and Joseph De Martini. Also included are photographs taken by Kaplan of New York City, his travels, and artist demonstrations. There are also a large number of photographs of Kaplan's artwork.

---

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 6 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1919-1975 (Box 1, 5, OV 7; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1929-circa 1975 (Box 1, OV 7; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 3: Personal Business Records, circa 1920-1977 (Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 4: Printed Material, 1915-1975 (Box 1, 2, 3, OV 7; 2.3 linear feet)
- Series 5: Artwork, circa 1940-circa 1960 (Box 3, 5; 2 folders)
- Series 6: Photographic Material, 1917-circa 1975 (Box 4, 6, OV 7; 1.3 linear feet)

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Painters -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown  
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York  
Photographers -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown  
Photographers -- New York (State)  
Printmakers -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown  
Printmakers -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Etchings  
Photographs  
Sketches

Names:

Audubon Artists (New York, N.Y.)

Avery, Milton, 1885-1965

Corcoran Gallery of Art

DeMartini, Joseph, 1896-1984

Gottlieb, Adolph, 1903-1974

Gropper, William, 1897-1977

Gross, Chaim, 1904-1991

Ishigaki, Aya

Ishigaki, Eitarō, 1893-1958

Kaplan, Virginia

Lozowick, Louis, 1892-1973

National Academy of Design (U.S.)

Soyer, Raphael, 1899-1987

United States. Public Works Administration

United States. Works Progress Administration

Wilson, Sol

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1919-1975

*0.3 Linear feet (Box 1, 5, OV 7)*

Included are various certificates and medals received by Kaplan over the course of his career. Also found are a few teaching files and miscellaneous documents including a notebook containing a travel itinerary.

Box 1, Folder 1	Miscellaneous Biographical Documents, 1926-1975
Box 1, Folder 2	Certificates, 1920-1967 Oversized material housed in OV 7.
Box 1, Folder 3	Teaching Files, 1935-1952
Box 5, Folder 1	Medals, 1919-1967
Box OV 7	Oversized Certificate, 1957 Oversized material from Box 1, Folder 2.

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 2: Correspondence, 1929-circa 1975

### *0.4 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 7)*

This series consists mainly of incoming letters. A smaller amount of replies and outgoing letters are included.

The majority of the family correspondence is from Kaplan to his wife Virginia while he was traveling in 1957 and 1960. Also found is a letter written upon Kaplan's death to Virginia. The remaining family letters are from Abraham Kaplan and Helen Tumin. A few of the letters from Abraham Kaplan are in Yiddish.

Correspondence from universities and colleges, galleries, museums, and other art organizations and institutions documents Kaplan's business affairs. Letters discuss exhibitions, loans and sales of artwork, and the Works Progress Administration.

Correspondence with friends and colleagues include Aya Ishigaki, Sol Wilson, Louis Lozowick, Adolph Gottlieb, Chaim Gross, and Raphael Soyer. These letters document news of friends and activities and political organizations of interest to Kaplan.

The majority of the christmas and greeting cards are undated but include cards from Milton Avery, Chaim Gross, Aya Ishigaki, and Sol and Dora Wilson. Many of the cards are illustrated.

This series is arranged into 4 subseries.

Correspondence with friends and colleagues has been arranged chronologically. Letters from individuals who had correspondence with Kaplan of three letters or less are found within the "Friends and Colleagues" folders. Correspondence with galleries, museums, and associations has been arranged alphabetically. Letters from individuals who had correspondence with Kaplan of three letters or less are found within the "Galleries, Museums, and Associations" folders.

- 2.1 Family Correspondence, 1957-1976
- 2.2 Correspondence with Friends and Colleagues, circa 1930-1975
- 2.3 Correspondence with Galleries, Museums, and Associations, 1932-1977
- 2.4 Christmas and Greeting Cards, 1952-1962

### 2.1: Family Correspondence, 1957-1976

Box 1, Folder 4	Abraham Kaplan, 1965, 1970, 1967
Box 1, Folder 5	Helen Tumin, 1975-1976
Box 1, Folder 6-8	Joseph Kaplan to Virginia Kaplan, 1957, circa 1975, 1960

### 2.2: Correspondence with Friends and Colleagues, 1940-1975

Box 1, Folder 9	Ishigaki, Aya, 1959, 1958, 1946 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 1, Folder 10	Lozowick, Louis, 1930-1946
Box 1, Folder 11	Wilson, Sol, 1936, 1934
Box 1, Folder 12-14	Friends and Colleagues, 1929-1975
Box 1, Folder 15	Friends and Colleagues, circa 1930-circa 1970



### 2.3: Correspondence with Galleries, Museums, and Associations, 1940- 1975

Box 1, Folder 16	American Federation of Arts, 1958, 1956
Box 1, Folder 17	Artists Equity Association , 1949-1961
Box 1, Folder 18	Artist for Victory, Inc. , 1944
Box 1, Folder 19	Audubon Artists, inc. , 1954-1966
Box 1, Folder 20	Berhardt Crystal Galleries, Inc. , 1962
Box 1, Folder 21	Butler Institute of American Art, 1959
Box 1, Folder 22	Cape Cod Art Association, 1965, 1960, 1964
Box 1, Folder 23	Carnegie Institute, 1941
Box 1, Folder 24	Chapelbrook Foundation, 1968, 1967
Box 1, Folder 25	College of Fine Arts and Applied Arts University of Illinois, 1949, 1952
Box 1, Folder 26	Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1962, 1961
Box 1, Folder 27	Connecticut Watercolor Society, Inc. , 1962
Box 1, Folder 28	Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1955, 1956
Box 1, Folder 29	Crotty, Frank, 1958
Box 1, Folder 30	Department of Information, The Federal Art Project, 1938, 1937
Box 1, Folder 31	Everson Museum of Art, 1977
Box 1, Folder 32	Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now, 1968
Box 1, Folder 33-34	Galleries, Museums, and Associations, 1932-1977
Box 1, Folder 35	Grand Central Art Galleries, 1956
Box 1, Folder 36	John Reed Club, 1932
Box 1, Folder 37	National Academy of Design, 1967
Box 1, Folder 38	Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1947, 1946
Box 1, Folder 39	Small, Warren, 1964
Box 1, Folder 40	United States Treasury Department, 1935-1937

Box 1, Folder 41      *Who's Who*, 1952-1962

## 2.4: Christmas and Greeting Cards, 1952-1963

Box 1, Folder 42      Christmas and Greeting Cards, 1952-1963  
Oversized material housed in OV 7.

Box OV 7              Oversized Illustrated Greeting from Lerner Family, undated  
Oversized material from Box 1, Folder 42.

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 3: Personal Business Records, circa 1920-1977

### *0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)*

Kaplan's art-related financial material includes WPA records, a list of artwork, price lists, loan and sale records, and exhibition notification cards. Some of the series consists of routine transactions not necessarily related to Kaplan's work including bank records, an address list, and income and expense reports.

Box 1, Folder 43	List of Works of Art, circa 1920-circa 1975
Box 1, Folder 44	Price Lists, 1962-1975
Box 1, Folder 45	Artwork Loans and Sale Records, 1955-1977
Box 1, Folder 46	Exhibition Notification Cards, 1949-1964
Box 1, Folder 47	Financial Records, 1957-1974
Box 1, Folder 48	Earning and Expense Reports, 1963-1971
Box 1, Folder 49	United States Works Progress Administration , 1935-1937
Box 1, Folder 50	Contract , 1964
Box 1, Folder 51	Address List, circa 1940

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 4: Printed Material , 1915-1975

### 2.3 Linear feet (Box 1, 2, 3, OV 7)

Printed Material includes exhibition catalogs for Kaplan exhibitions dating from 1924-1971. A large portion of this series also consists of newspaper clippings and a few magazine clippings documenting exclusively Kaplan's exhibitions. Also found are magazines and copies of his commercial artwork, exhibition announcements and publications.

Box 1, Folder 52-57	Exhibition Catalogs, 1924-1950
Box 2, Folder 1-17	Exhibition Catalogs , circa 1940-1976
Box 3, Folder 1-4	Exhibition Catalogs , 1924-circa 1975
Box 3, Folder 5	Exhibition Catalogs, Other Artists, 1921-1966
Box 3, Folder 6	Exhibition Announcements and Invitations, circa 1947 - 1975
Box 3, Folder 7-18	Clippings, 1936-1975
Box 3, Folder 19	Clipping Scrapbook , 1925-1952
Box 3, Folder 20	Clipping Scrapbook , 1952-1955
Box 3, Folder 21	Commerical Artwork by Kaplan, circa 1930-circa 1950
Box 3, Folder 22	American Artist School Program , 1936-1939 <a href="#">Image(s)</a>
Box 3, Folder 23	<i>The Left Journal</i> , 1931
Box 3, Folder 24-25	<i>Partisan Review Journal</i> , 1934-1935
Box 3, Folder 26	<i>Experimental Cinema Magazine</i> , 1931
Box 3, Folder 27	<i>The Miscellany Magazine</i> , 1931
Box 3, Folder 28	<i>U.S. Camera Magazine</i> , 1940
Box 3, Folder 29	Reprint from <i>New York Sun</i> and <i>New York Herald</i> , 1915-1922
Box 3, Folder 30	Program for James Joyce's <i>Ulysses</i> in Nighttown , 1958
Box 3, Folder 31	Manuel of <i>Classical Erotology</i> Typescript, undated
Box 3, Folder 32	Miscellaneous Printed Material , 1937, circa 1930-circa 1950
Box OV 7	Oversized Commerical Artwork by Kaplan, Page Proofs, circa 1930 Oversized material from Box 3, Folder 21.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 5: Artwork, circa 1940-circa 1960

*2 Folders (Box 3, 5)*

Artwork includes four etchings by Kaplan, three of which are metal plates and one a linoleum block. Also included are a few undated pencil and pen sketches on the back of exhibition material by an unidentified artist.

Box 3, Folder 33            Sketches, undated

Box 5, Folder 2            Etchings, undated

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*

## Series 6: Photographic Material , 1917-circa 1975

### 1.3 Linear feet (Box 4, 6, OV 7)

Found here are personal photographs, photographs taken by Kaplan, photographs of artwork, and miscellaneous photographs. Personal photographs depict mostly family and friends. Portraits of friends include Eitaro and Aya Ishigaki, Chaim Gross, Raphael Soyer, William Gropper, and Joseph De Martini. There is a large amount of unidentified and undated photographs of couples and groups, men, women, and children. Photographs taken by Kaplan include artists demonstrations in the 30s, New York City, family, friends, and travel slides of Haiti, Trinidad, Mexico, Captiva, and Sanibel.

This series is arranged in 3 subseries

- 6.1 Personal Photographs, 1921-circa 1975
- 6.2 Photographs taken by Kaplan, circa 1932-circa 1960
- 6.3 Photographic Material of Artwork, circa 1930-circa 1975

### 6.1: Personal Photographs, 1921-circa 1975

Box 4, Folder 1-5	Joseph Kaplan, 1921-circa 1975
Box 4, Folder 6-8	Virginia Kaplan, circa 1917-circa 1975
Box 4, Folder 9	Joseph and Virginia Kaplan, circa 1927-circa 1975
Box 4, Folder 10-16	Virginia Kaplan's Photograph Albums, 1917-circa 1927
Box 4, Folder 17	Joseph Kaplan's Mother, undated
Box 4, Folder 18-23	Family and Friends, circa 1940-circa 1960
Box 4, Folder 24	Unidentified Couples and Groups, circa 1940-circa 1960
Box 4, Folder 25	Unidentified Men , circa 1940-circa 1960
Box 4, Folder 26	Unidentified Women, circa 1940-circa 1960
Box 4, Folder 27	Unidentified Children , circa 1940-circa 1960

### 6.2: Photographs Taken by Kaplan, circa 1932-circa 1960

Box 4, Folder 28	Century of Progress, circa 1933-circa 1934
Box 4, Folder 29	Demonstrations, 1934
Box 4, Folder 30	East Broadway Park, undated
Box 4, Folder 31	Friends, 1940
Box 4, Folder 32	Groppen House, undated
Box 4, Folder 33	Liberty Group, circa 1950-circa 1960

Box 4, Folder 34	May Day, 1934-1935
Box 4, Folder 35	Radio City Theatre, undated
Box 4, Folder 36	Washington Square Park Exhibition , circa 1932-circa 1957
Box 4, Folder 37	Miscellaneous Photographs, undated
Box 4, Folder 38	Miscellaneous Negatives, undated
Box 6, Folder 1	Slides of Family, Friends, and Cats, circa 1940-circa 1960
Box 6, Folder 2	Slides of Travel, 1956-1957

### 6.3: Photographic Material of Artwork, circa 1930-circa 1975

Box 4, Folder 39	Photographs of Artwork, circa 1930-circa 1975
Box 4, Folder 40-41	Negatives of Artwork, circa 1930-circa 1975
Box 4, Folder 42	Glass Transparencies of Artwork , circa 1930-circa 1975
Box 4, Folder 43	Photographs of Commercial Artwork , circa 1930-circa 1975 Oversized material housed in OV 7.
Box 6, Folder 3	Slides of Artwork, circa 1930-circa 1975
Box OV 7	Oversized Photographs of Commerical Artwork, circa 1930 Oversized material from Box 4, Folder 43.

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*