



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the William Kienbusch
Papers, 1915-2001, bulk 1936-1980,
in the Archives of American Art

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Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	William Kienbusch papers
Identifier:	AAA.kienwill
Date:	1915-2001 (bulk 1936-1980)
Extent:	5 Linear feet
Creator:	Kienbusch, William, 1914-1980
Language:	English
Summary:	The papers of landscape painter and art instructor William Kienbusch measure 5.0 linear feet and date from 1915 to 2001, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1936 to 1980. The collection documents Kienbusch's life as an artist in New York City and Cranberry Island, Maine. Files include biographical material; correspondence with family, friends, and colleagues; writings and notes; scattered printed material; photographs; and artwork, including 17 sketchbooks.

Administrative Information

Provenance

William Kienbusch lent materials for microfilming in 1970. Other papers were donated by his sisters, Millicent Kelly and Juliana Little, and his friend Stanley Clifford as co-executives of the Kienbusch estate from 1985-1991. Stanley Clifford donated additional materials in 2008 and 2010.

Separated Material

The Archives of American Art also holds microfilm of material lent for microfilming (reel N70-22) including a scrapbook of clippings, exhibition catalogs, photographs of Kienbusch, letters, writings, and two journals describing his travels in Europe and Asia. Lent materials were returned to the lender and are not described in the collection container inventory.

Related Material

Also found in the Archives of American Art is the Walter Maitland correspondence with and about William Kienbusch, 1969-1981; the William Kienbusch letters to Francis and Sydney Hamabe, 1958-1977; the Thomas Barrett and Leni Mancuso papers relating to William Kienbusch, 1950-1980; and an oral history interview with William Kienbusch conducted by Forrest Selvig, November 1-7, 1968.

Available Formats

Material lent for microfilming is available on 35mm microfilm reel N70-22 at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Erin Kinhart in 2011.

Preferred Citation

William Kienbusch papers, 1915-2001, bulk 1936-1980. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

Ownership and Literary Rights

The William Kienbusch 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 Note

William Kienbusch (1914-1980) was a painter and art instructor in New York, NY, and Cranberry Island, Maine.

Kienbusch was born in New York City and attended boarding school at Hotchkiss Preparatory school, where he was taught painting by Robert Osborn. During the summers of 1934 and 1935, while attending Princeton University, he studied watercolor with Eliot O'Hara at Goose Rocks Beach, Maine. After graduating from Princeton in 1936, he attended the Art Students League, studied with Henry Varnum Poor at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, and spent a year in Paris, studying at the Academie Colarossi. During this time he also had the opportunity to travel throughout Europe before the outbreak of World War II. He returned to New York City in the winter of 1938 and settled in Greenwich Village, at one point living above artist Stuart Davis.

Kienbusch spent the summers of 1940 and 1941 in Stonington, Maine. Here he found his true identity as an abstract expressionist landscape painter. During World War II he served in the Army, teaching camouflage design and making maps in Guam. When he returned to New York in 1946, he began painting in casein rather than oils or watercolor. In 1947 he joined Kraushaar Galleries, which would continue to be his dealer for the remainder of his career. From 1948 to 1969 he taught at the Brooklyn Museum of Art School and spent summers in Maine. Kienbusch lost much of his artwork and personal papers in a 1969 fire at his New York studio apartment. His work is included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art among many others. After several years of poor health, Kienbusch died in 1980.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of landscape painter and art instructor William Kienbusch measure 5.0 linear feet and date from 1915 to 2001, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1936 to 1980. The collection documents Kienbusch's life as an artist in New York City and Cranberry Island, Maine. Files include biographical material; correspondence with family, friends, and colleagues; writings and notes; scattered printed material; photographs; and artwork, including 17 sketchbooks.

Biographical materials include military records, identification and membership documents, guestbooks, and an album entitled "Book of Friendship" containing short notes written by friends for Kienbusch on the occasion of his 60th Birthday. Also of note is copy of the "In Memoriam" written for Kienbusch by Karl Schrag.

The bulk of the papers consist of family and general correspondence. Family correspondence includes letters from Kienbusch to his parents regarding school, summer camps, travel, and the army. General correspondence includes many letters he sent to his close friend, Stanley Clifford, as well as letters from friends and associates, such as Stuart Davis, Antonette Kraushaar, Walter Maitland, Henry Varnum Poor, Abraham Rattner, Karl Schrag, Reuben Tam, and others.

Writings and notes include scattered notes, lists, and draft writings, as well as three notebooks, including one on casein technique. Printed material includes several armed forces publications and maps from World War II, clippings, and press releases. Photographs are of William Kienbusch, including two snapshots of Kienbusch with friends Dorothy Andrews and Reuben Tam. Also found are numerous travel and nature photographs. Artwork includes drawings created by Kienbusch while on his military tour in Guam and seventeen sketchbooks containing drawings in pencil, ink, and pastel.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1915-1980 (Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1920-2001 (Box 1-3; 2.3 linear feet)
- Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1940s-1970s (Box 3; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1937-1980 (Box 3; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 5: Photographs, circa 1920-1980s (Box 3-5; 1.3 linear feet)
- Series 6: Artwork, circa 1930s-1970s (Box 5; 0.8 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art teachers -- New York (State) -- New York
Landscape painters -- New York (State) -- New York
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
Painting -- Technique
Painting, Abstract -- United States
Painting, American

World War, 1939-1945

Types of Materials:

Drafts (documents)
Drawings
Notebooks
Notes
Photographs
Sketchbooks
Visitors' books

Names:

Clifford, Stanley
Davis, Stuart, 1892-1964
Kraushaar, Antoinette M., 1902-1992
Maitland, Walter McClymonds, 1912-1989
Poor, Henry Varnum, 1887-1970
Rattner, Abraham
Schrag, Karl
Tam, Reuben

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1915-1980

(Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)

Biographical material consists of military records, a passport, membership cards, school documents, awards, and art supply receipts. Also found are three gallery guestbooks and an album entitled "Book of Friendship" containing short notes written by friends for Kienbusch on the occasion of his 60th Birthday. Among Kienbusch's military service records is a letter to the 3rd Air Force Camouflage Caravan requesting transfer to the Photo Interpretation School in 1944. Also of note is copy of the "In Memoriam" written for Kienbusch by Karl Schrag.

Box 1, Folder 1	American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, 1976
Box 1, Folder 2-4	Art Supply Receipts, 1941-1979 <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 1, Folder 5	Award Ribbon, circa 1930s
Box 1, Folder 6	"Book of Friendship," 1974
Box 1, Folder 7	Guestbooks, 1975, undated
Box 1, Folder 8	Hair Clippings from Childhood, 1915
Box 1, Folder 9	Membership Cards, circa 1936-1980
Box 1, Folder 10	Military Service Records, circa 1942-1945
Box 1, Folder 11	Paintbrush, undated
Box 1, Folder 12	Passport, 1965
Box 1, Folder 13	Receipts, 1941-1973
Box 1, Folder 14	School Documents, 1929-1937
Box 1, Folder 15	Statement on Studio Apartment Fire, 1969
Box 1, Folder 16	"William Kienbusch: A Talk In Memoriam," 1980

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1920-2001

(Box 1-3; 2.3 linear feet)

This series contains family correspondence and general correspondence. Family correspondence includes letters from Kienbusch to his parents and other family members regarding school, summer camps, travel, and the army. Also found are a few letters sent to Kienbusch from his parents. General correspondence includes numerous letters Kienbusch sent to his close friend, Stanley Clifford, as well as letters from friends and associates, such as Stuart Davis, Antionette Kraushaar, Walter Maitland, Henry Varnum Poor, Abraham Rattner, Karl Schrag, and Reuben Tam. Other miscellaneous letters are from Isabel Bishop, Charles Scribner's Sons, Cleve Gray, Philip Guston, Joseph Hirsch, Stefan Hirsch, Dorothy Miller, and Anton Refregier.

Also found are over forty letters written by Thomas Barrett to Stanley Clifford. Barrett was Kienbusch's student at the Brooklyn Museum Art School and occasionally mentions him in his letters to Clifford.

The series is arranged as 2 subseries:

- 2.1: Family Correspondence, 1920-1968
- 2.2: General Correspondence, 1936-2001

2.1: Family Correspondence, 1920-1968

Box 1, Folder 17-25	Family Correspondence, 1920-1933 (9 folders)
Box 1, Folder 26-33	Family Correspondence, circa 1933-1940 (8 folders)
Box 1, Folder 34-41	Family Correspondence, 1942-1944 (8 folders)
Box 1, Folder 42-45	Family Correspondence, 1945 (4 folders)
Box 2, Folder 1-10	Family Correspondence, 1946-1954 (10 folders)
Box 2, Folder 11-22	Family Correspondence, 1955-1968 (12 folders)

2.2: General Correspondence, 1936-2001

Box 2, Folder 23-24	Barrett, Thomas (letters to Stanley Clifford), 1950-1951, 1967 (2 folders)
Box 2, Folder 25	Beal, James, 1978
Box 2, Folder 26-39	Clifford, Stanley, 1951-1975

(14 folders)

Box 3, Folder 1-5	Clifford, Stanley, 1976-2001 <i>(5 folders)</i>
Box 3, Folder 6	Davis, Stuart, 1942-1943, 1974
Box 3, Folder 7	Heliker, Jack, 1968-1969, 1977
Box 3, Folder 8	Hoopes, Donelson, circa 1972-1978
Box 3, Folder 9	Kraushaar Galleries, 1964-1976
Box 3, Folder 10	Maitland, Walter and Ruth, 1970-1983
Box 3, Folder 11	Nesjar, Carl, circa 1968-1977
Box 3, Folder 12-15	Poor, Annie, 1936-1980 <i>(4 folders)</i>
Box 3, Folder 16-17	Poor, Henry Varnum, 1937-1961 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 3, Folder 18	Portland Museum of Art, 1973
Box 3, Folder 19	Rattner, Abraham, 1938-1946
Box 3, Folder 20	Schrag, Karl, 1968-1978
Box 3, Folder 21	Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, 1972-1975
Box 3, Folder 22	Tam, Reuben, 1947-1980
Box 3, Folder 23-26	Miscellaneous Letters, A-Z, 1936-1979 <i>(4 folders)</i>
Box 3, Folder 27	Unidentified Letters, circa 1937-1978

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Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1940s-1970s

(Box 3; 0.2 linear feet)

This series contains three of Kienbusch's notebooks from early 1940s, including one containing notes on casein wax technique. All notebooks include notes, drawings, and diagrams. Also found are various handwritten notes and lists on scraps of paper, notes and slide list for a lecture at the Portland Museum of Art, and notes and quilting diagrams from Kienbusch's interview of Doris Sanborn.

Box 3, Folder 28	Notebook, 1940
Box 3, Folder 29	Notebook, 1941-1942
Box 3, Folder 30	Notebook, "Notes on Cassein Wax Technique", 1942
Box 3, Folder 31	Notes for Slide Lecture, Portland Museum of Art, circa 1973
Box 3, Folder 32-34	Notes and Lists, circa 1940s-1970s <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 3, Folder 35	"Interview of Doris Sanborn", undated

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Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1937-1980

(Box 3; 0.2 linear feet)

This series contains scattered printed material including blank postcards, maps from World War II, press releases, news clippings regarding Kienbusch, and several armed forces publications. Catalogs and announcements are primarily for exhibitions of other artists.

Box 3, Folder 36-37	Armed Forces Publications, 1941-1945 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 3, Folder 38	Blank Postcards, circa 1970s
Box 3, Folder 39	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, circa 1949-1980
Box 3, Folder 40	Maps, circa 1944-1945, 1967
Box 3, Folder 41	News Clippings, circa 1950s-1977
Box 3, Folder 42	Newspapers, 1945
Box 3, Folder 43	Press Releases, 1971
Box 3, Folder 44	Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1937-1974

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Series 5: Photographs, circa 1920-1980s

(Box 3-5; 1.3 linear feet)

Photographs are of William Kienbusch, including photographs taken during his military service in Guam and two snapshots of Kienbusch with friends Dorothy Andrews and Reuben Tam. Also found are photographs his house on Cranberry Island, Maine, and numerous travel and nature photographs.

Box 3, Folder 45-46	Photographs of William Kienbusch, circa 1920-1975 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 3, Folder 47	Photographs of William Kienbusch in Guam, circa 1943
Box 3, Folder 48	Photographs of Kienbusch Grave Site, circa 1980s
Box 3, Folder 49-50	Photographs of House on Cranberry Island, Maine, 1977, 1980 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 3, Folder 51	Photographs of Trevett House, circa 1960s
Box 3, Folder 52	Photographs of Backyard, circa 1970s
Box 4, Folder 1	Photographs of Churches, circa 1970s
Box 4, Folder 2-22	Travel and Nature Photographs, circa 1970s <i>(21 folders)</i>
Box 5, Folder 1-3	Travel and Nature Photographs, circa 1970s <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 5, Folder 4-5	Negatives, circa 1970s <i>(2 folders)</i>

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Series 6: Artwork, circa 1930s-1970s

(Box 5; 0.8 linear feet)

Artwork includes loose drawings and pastels created by Kienbusch while on his military tour in Guam and seventeen sketchbooks containing drawings in pencil, ink, and pastel. Also found is a pencil drawing of Kienbusch by "Tina."

Box 5, Folder 6	Drawings, undated
Box 5, Folder 7	Drawing of William Kienbusch, circa 1930s
Box 5, Folder 8-11	Drawings of Guam, 1945 <i>(4 folders)</i>
Box 5, Folder 12	Sketchbook, circa 1940s
Box 5, Folder 13	Sketchbook, 1940
Box 5, Folder 14-15	Sketchbooks, 1941 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 5, Folder 16	Sketchbook, 1947
Box 5, Folder 17	Sketchbook, 1952
Box 5, Folder 18	Sketchbook, 1970
Box 5, Folder 19	Sketchbook, 1974-1975
Box 5, Folder 20-28	Sketchbooks, undated <i>(9 folders)</i>

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