



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Joseph Konopka Papers, 1965-2003, in the Archives of American Art

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Joseph Konopka Papers
Date:	1965-2003
Identifier:	AAA.konojose
Creator:	Konopka, Joseph, 1932-
Extent:	1.1 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Joseph Konopka Papers measure 1.1 linear feet and date from 1965 to 2003. The papers document Konopka's career as a photo-realist and landscape painter through biographical material, correspondence, and artwork.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The papers were donated in 2003 by Joseph Konopka.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Carla De Luise in 2007.

Preferred Citation

Joseph Konopka Papers, 1965-2003. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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Biographical Note

Joseph Konopka (b. 1932) is a photo-realist and landscape painter who also works as a scenic artist for NBC-TV in New York City. He lives in Glen Ridge, New Jersey.

A native of Philadelphia, Konopka was raised in Jersey City, New Jersey. In 1954, he graduated from Cooper Union School of Art and the following year completed a set design course at Columbia University. He began working NBC-TV in 1952 as a paint boy, mixing paints and washing brushes for the scenic artists, a position he held for nine months. Konopka later joined the United Scenic Artists Local USA 829 and rose from apprentice (1953) to his current position as a scenic artist at NBC-TV. He has worked for many NBC-TV shows including "Late Night with David Letterman" (1982-1993) and "Late Night with Conan O'Brien" (1993-present).

Konopka often paints in ongoing series. His work process involves taking slides of his subjects from various angles and distances to determine a suitable composition or composite view. Subject matter for Konopka's series includes images of his wife Casimera (Casey) at the Jersey shore, in everyday poses, or putting on makeup; views from the top of the World Trade Center; and lighthouses. For the *Art People Cutout Series* (circa 1971-1979), Konopka painted portraits of prominent figures in the New Jersey art world such as museum directors (including Sam Miller, Newark Museum) and curators.

Konopka has been represented by Razor Gallery, New York City (circa 1971-1979), Capricorn Galleries, Bethesda, Maryland (circa 1980-1996), and Nathans Art Gallery, West Paterson, New Jersey (circa 1986-1997). From 1976-1985, he served as vice president of the Associated Artists of New Jersey.

Konopka lives in Glen Ridge, New Jersey.

Scope and Content Note

The Joseph Konopka Papers measure 1.1 linear feet and date from 1965 to 2003. The papers document Konopka's career as a photo-realist and landscape painter through biographical material, correspondence, and artwork.

Correspondence is with galleries and participants in his *Art People Cutout Series*. Among the artwork are sketchbooks (9 volumes) and a maquette of the *Art People Cutout Series*.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 3 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1965-2003 (Boxes 1, 3; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1971-1987 (Box 1; 3 folders)
- Series 3: Artwork, 1985-2002 (Boxes 1-3; 0.6 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Landscape painters -- New York (State) -- New York
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
Photo-realism

Types of Materials:

Drawings
Sketchbooks

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1965-2003

0.4 Linear feet (Boxes 1, 3)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material includes an artist's statement and curriculum vitae, a file on Konopka's work in museum collections, and a small amount of printed material documenting his exhibitions. A scrapbook of Konopka's early career (1965-1975) contains an award, clippings, a letter, exhibition announcements, and photographs. Also found is Konopka's 1990 work diary for the "Late Night with David Letterman" show.

Box 1, Folder 1 Artist Statement and Curriculum Vitae, 2003, 1972-1974, undated
Notes: oversized material housed in Box 3

Box 1, Folder 2 Paintings in Museum Collections, undated

Box 1, Folder 3 Scenic Artist's Work Diary for "Late Night with David Letterman" Show, 1990

Box 1, Folder 4 Exhibition Announcements, 1970-1996, undated

Box 1, Folder 5 Clippings and Magazine, 1976-1989, undated

Box 3 Curriculum Vitae, 2003
Notes: from Box 1, folder 1

Box 3 Scrapbook, 1965-1975
1 Volume

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1971-1987

3 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: The Spectrum and Razor Galleries, New York City, represented Konopka from 1971-1976; files contain correspondence, receipts and miscellaneous invoices, meeting agendas, minutes, and a membership list. Correspondence with participants in Konopka's *Art People Cutout Series*, many of them representatives of New Jersey arts institutions, also includes a participant list and photograph of the cutout paintings.

Arrangement: This series is organized chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 6	Spectrum Gallery, 1971-1973, undated
Box 1, Folder 7	Razor Gallery, 1974-1976, undated
Box 1, Folder 8	Art People Cutout Series, 1982-1989, undated

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Series 3: Artwork, 1985-2002

0.6 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3)

Scope and Contents: Artwork consists of nine sketchbooks, primarily of New Jersey landscapes in pencil, pen, and watercolor.

Also found are a maquette and two accordion books of Konopka's *Art People Cutout Series*, six mounted drawings of New England lighthouses, and nine palettes with accompanying photographs of the finished paintings.

Box 1, Folder 9	Sketchbooks Notes: oversized volumes housed in box 3
Box 1, Folder 10	1985-1988, undated 1 Volume
Box 1, Folder 11	1987-1993 1 Volume
Box 1, Folder 12	1988-1989, 1991-1993 1 Volume
Box 1, Folder 13	1988-1995 1 Volume
Box 2, Folder 1	1993 1 Volume
Box 2, Folder 2	1995-1998 1 Volume
Box 2, Folder 3	1998-1999 1 Volume
Box 2, Folder 4	Maquette for Art People Cutout Series, undated
	Oversized Sketchbooks
Box 3	1987-2002, undated 1 Volume
Box 3	1988-2002 1 Volume
Box 3	Accordion Books of Art People Cutout Series, undated 2 Items ((2 items, inscribed))
Box 3	Folio of Palettes, 2000-2002

9 Items

Box 3

Drawings of New England Lighthouses, 1996

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