Roy Leeper and Gaylord Hall collection of Miné Okubo Papers, circa 1940-2001, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

Funding for the processing of this collection was provided by the Smithsonian Institution Asian Pacific American Initiatives Pool

2017 March 13
# Table of Contents

Collection Overview ........................................................................................................ 1  
Administrative Information .............................................................................................. 1  
Arrangement ..................................................................................................................... 3  
Biographical / Historical ................................................................................................. 2  
Scope and Contents ........................................................................................................... 2  
Names and Subjects .......................................................................................................... 3  
Container Listing ............................................................................................................. 4  
  Series 1: Biographical Material, 1942-1994 ............................................................. 4  
  Series 2: Correspondence, 1957-2001 .................................................................... 5  
  Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1940-1970 ..................................................... 8  
  Series 5: Printed Material, 1944-2000 .................................................................... 10  
  Series 6: Photographs, circa 1940-circa 1990s .................................................. 11  
  Series 7: Artwork, 1960s-1997 ......................................................................... 12
Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art
Title: Roy Leeper and Gaylord Hall collection of Miné Okubo papers
Date: circa 1940-2001
Identifier: AAA.okubmine
Creator: Okubo, Miné, 1912-2001
Extent: 1.4 Linear feet
Language: The collection is in English.
Summary: The Roy Leeper and Gaylord Hall collection of Miné Okubo papers measure 1.4 linear feet and date from circa 1940 to 2001. Roy Leeper and Gaylord Hall were long-time friends with and patrons of Okubo from the late 1950s until her death. The collection contains letters, writings, and sketches by Okubo. Among the printed materials is a copy of the 1944 special edition of *Fortune* magazine which was sympathetic to Japanese Americans interned during World War II and for which Okubo was hired to illustrate. Also found are scattered documents relating to Hall and Leeper.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information
Roy Leeper and Gaylord Hall donated the collection of Miné Okubo papers in 2001.

Related Materials
Riverside City College in Riverside, California also holds the Miné Okubo papers.

Processing Information
The Roy Leeper and Gaylord Hall collection of Miné Okubo papers were minimally arranged upon receipt. In 2017, Jayna Josefson fully processed and prepared a finding aid with funding provided by the Smithsonian Institution Asian Pacific American Initiatives Pool.

Preferred Citation

Restrictions
Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Terms of Use
The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning
Biographical / Historical

Miné Okubo (1912-2001) was a Japanese American painter, illustrator, and author. She is known for her book *Citizen 13600* in which she described her experience at the Topaz War Relocation Camp in Utah through prose and drawings.

Born in Riverside, California in 1912, Okubo began her arts education at Riverside Junior College and transferred to the University of California, Berkeley where she completed her BA and MA in Fine Arts (where she first met Roy Leeper). In 1938, she received an award to travel and study under Fernand Léger in Paris. When World War II began in Europe, she moved back to California and worked under the Federal Arts Project. She produced some solo murals and also assisted Diego Rivera on his Treasure Island mural *Pan American Unity*, (1940).

In April of 1942, Miné Okubo and one of her brothers were sent to the Tanforan Assembly Center under Executive Order 9066, which forcibly interned over 100,000 Japanese and Japanese-American citizens living on the West Coast of the United States. Six months later, they were sent to the Topaz War Relocation Camp in Topaz, Utah. There, Okubo taught art in the camp's school and often sketched camp life. She was art editor for the camp newsletter *Trek*, a supplement to the *Topaz Times*.

In 1944, *Fortune* magazine published a sympathetic special edition on the Japanese and Japanese American internment during World War II. The magazine hired Okubo to illustrate two of the articles. She was permitted to leave the camp and move to New York City, where she remained for the rest of her life, working as a painter and illustrator. She wrote and illustrated a book about her experiences in the Topaz confinement camp, *Citizen 13600*, which won the American Book Award in 1984. Miné Okubo died in 2001. Medical doctor Roy Leeper befriended Miné Okubo while they were both students at the University of California. Later, he and his partner dentist Gaylord Hall were reintroduced to Okubo and her artwork by a mutual friend. They began a life-long relationship with Okuba, both as friends and collectors.

Scope and Contents

The Roy Leeper and Gaylord Hall collection of Miné Okubo papers measure 1.4 linear feet and date from circa 1940 to 2001. Roy Leeper and Gaylord Hall were long-time friends with and patrons of Okubo from the late 1950s until her death. The collection contains letters, writings, and sketches by Okubo. Among the printed materials is a copy of the 1944 special edition of *Fortune* magazine which was sympathetic to Japanese Americans interned during World War II and for which Okubo was hired to illustrate. Also found are scattered documents relating to Hall and Leeper.

Biographical materials consist of Roy Leeper's medical licenses. The bulk of the collection is comprised of Miné Okubo's letters, many of which are illustrated, to Hall and Leeper discussing her health, career, their purchase of her artwork, and mutual friends. Other correspondents include Howard Hamilton and Doris and Harry Tono. Writings and notes by Okubo incllude a statement about the pricing of her artwork and a list of artwork. Leeper and Hall's personal business records concern the purchase and loan of Okubo's artwork for exhibitions.

Printed materials include a 1944 edition of *Fortune* magazine devoted to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The issue includes reproductions of Okubo's illustrations of life in the World War II internment camp in Topaz, Utah. Photographs include snapshots of Okubo at an exhibition with her art and of works of art. Sketches and drawings depict mostly cats and flowers.
Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 7 series.

Missing Title:
• Series 1: Biographical Material, 1942-1994 (1 folder; Box 1)
• Series 2: Correspondence, 1957-2001 (0.8 linear feet; Box 1)
• Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1940-circa 1970 (3 folders; Box 1)
• Series 4: Personal Business Records, 1957-1998 (0.1 linear feet; Box 1)
• Series 5: Printed Material, 1944-2000 (0.3 linear feet; Boxes 1-3)
• Series 6: Photographs, circa 1940-circa 1990s (3 folders; Box 1)
• Series 7: Artwork, 1960s-1997 (0.1 linear feet; Boxes 1-2)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

• Art patronage
• Asian American art
• Asian American artists
• Asian American authors
• Asian American illustrators
• Asian American painters
• Japanese American art
• Japanese American artists
• Japanese Americans -- Forced removal and internment -- 1942-1945
• Women artists
• Women authors
• Women illustrators
• Women painters

Types of Materials:

• Drawings
• Illustrated letters
• Photographs
• Sketches

Names:

• Central Utah Relocation Center
• Hall, Gaylord
• Hamilton, Howard
• Leeper, Roy
• Tono, Doris
• Tono, Harry

Occupations:

• Authors -- New York (State) -- New York
• Illustrators -- New York (State) -- New York
• Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1942-1994

1 Folder (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical materials include Dr. Roy Leeper's medical licenses from the states of Virginia and California.

Box 1, Folder 1 Medical Licenses, Roy Leeper, 1942-1994

Return to Table of Contents
Series 2: Correspondence, 1957-2001

0.8 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: The bulk of this series consists of letters from Miné Okubo to Gaylord Hall and Roy Leeper. Many of the letters begin by mentioning her mood or health and she often inquires about the health and activities of Hall and Leeper and their mutual friends, although they do not tend to be overly personal. Okubo references her artistic process, specific artworks purchased by or of interest to Hall and Leeper, and acknowledges receipt of payment for a work of art. Many of the letters are illustrated in pen or colored pencil.

There is also one letter from Leeper to Okubo; a letter to Howard Hamilton; and scattered letters between Doris and Harry Tono, Okubo, and Leeper and Hall.

Arrangement: Some letters greet both Roy Leeper and Gaylord Hall in the letter but are addressed to one on the envelope; those letters are organized based on the addressed envelope.

- Box 1, Folder 2  Miné Okubo to Gaylord Hall, 1965
- Box 1, Folder 3  Miné Okubo to Gaylord Hall, 1966
- Box 1, Folder 4  Miné Okubo to Gaylord Hall, 1968
- Box 1, Folder 5  Miné Okubo to Gaylord Hall, 1969
- Box 1, Folder 6  Miné Okubo to Gaylord Hall, 1971
- Box 1, Folder 7  Miné Okubo to Gaylord Hall, 1972
- Box 1, Folder 8  Miné Okubo to Gaylord Hall, 1973
- Box 1, Folder 9  Miné Okubo to Gaylord Hall, circa 1960-circa 1970
- Box 1, Folder 10  Miné Okubo to Howard Hamilton, 1991
- Box 1, Folder 11  Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1957
- Box 1, Folder 12  Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1958
- Box 1, Folder 13  Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1959
- Box 1, Folder 14  Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1960
- Box 1, Folder 15  Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1961
- Box 1, Folder 16  Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1962
- Box 1, Folder 17  Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1963
- Box 1, Folder 18  Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1967
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 19</th>
<th>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1969</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 20</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 21</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 22</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 23</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1973 Jan-Oct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 24</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1973 Nov-Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 25</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1974 Jan-Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 26</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1974 Jun-Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 27</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 28</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 29</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 30</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 31</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 32</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 33</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 34</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 35</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 36</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 37</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 38</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 39</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 40</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 41</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 42</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Roy Leeper, circa 1957-circa 1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Roy Leeper to Miné Okubo, 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Miné Okubo to Doris and Harry Tono, 1987-1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Doris and Harry Tono to Gaylord Hall and Roy Leeper, 1998-2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1940-1970

3 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Writings by Miné Okubo include a statement concerning the pricing for her artwork and a list of works of art. There is also one note, likely written by Roy Leeper.

- Box 1, Folder 53  Statement on Pricing, by Okubo, circa 1966
- Box 1, Folder 54  List of Works of Art, circa 1960-circa 1970
- Box 1, Folder 55  Note, likely by Leeper, circa 1940

Return to Table of Contents

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Personal business records mostly concern Roy Leeper's and Gaylord Hall's purchase and loan of artwork by Miné Okubo. There are price lists; receipts and statements for payments received by Okubo, many of which mention specific works of art; and records from loans of their Miné Okubo artwork to the San Francisco Museum of Art and the Oakland Museum of Art for exhibition. A certificate of authenticity is for a Japanese ivory figurine, although it is not clear who owned the piece.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Certificate of Authenticity, 1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Exhibition and Loan Records, Oakland Museum of Art, 1995-1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Exhibition and Loan Records, San Francisco Museum of Art, 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Price List, circa 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Receipts, 1966-1973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Statements, 1963-1985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Return to Table of Contents
Series 5: Printed Material, 1944-2000

0.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3)

Scope and Contents: Printed materials concern Okubo's career as an artist and writer, including her experiences in the World War II Japanese American confinement camp in Topaz, Utah. There is a brochure and program for award events, clippings, a publication in Japanese concerning Executive Order 9066, exhibition announcements, issues of periodicals; and a poster featuring Okubo as a courageous California woman. Also found is the 1944 issue of Fortune magazine featuring Okubo's illustrations for two articles, "Issei, Nisei, Kibei" and "The Citizen-Subject...Tightens His Belt and Wipes Off His Smile."

- Box 1, Folder 62: Award Publications, 1974-1984
- Box 1, Folder 63: Clippings, 1972-1998
- Box 1, Folder 64: Executive Order 9066, circa 1990s
- Box 1, Folder 65: Exhibition Announcements, 1980-2000
  Notes: Oversized material housed in Box 2, F1
- Box 1, Folder 66: Fortune Magazine, 1944
  Notes: Oversized material housed in Box 2, F3
- Box 1, Folder 68: Poster, circa 1990s
  Notes: Oversized material housed in OV3
- Box 2, Folder 1: Oversized Exhibition Announcement from Box 1, F65, 2000
- Box 2, Folder 3: Oversized Magazine from Box 1, F66, 1944
- Oversize 3: Oversized Poster from Box 1, F68, circa 1990s

Return to Table of Contents
Series 6: Photographs, circa 1940-circa 1990s

3 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Photographs are of Miné Okubo with her art at an exhibition; portraits of Roy Leeper or Gaylord Hall; and photographs of Okubo's works of art.

- Box 1, Folder 69: Miné Okubo, at an Exhibition, circa 1986
- Box 1, Folder 70: of Roy Leeper or Gaylord Hall, circa 1940
- Box 1, Folder 71: Works of Art, circa 1990s

Return to Table of Contents
Series 7: Artwork, 1960s-1997

0.1 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Found here are Okubo's painted sketches and drawings depicting cats and flowers, some of which may have been used for her holiday cards.

Box 1, Folder 72: Paintings and Drawings, by Okubo, circa 1960s-1980s

Box 1, Folder 73: Prints, by Okubo, 1977-1997
Notes: Oversized material housed in Box 2, F2

Box 2, Folder 2: Oversized Prints from Box 1, F73, circa 1980

Return to Table of Contents