



# Smithsonian

## *Archives of American Art*

### A Finding Aid to the Jules Olitski Notes to Joan Olitski, 1981-2004, in the Archives of American Art

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Archives of American Art  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Jules Olitski notes to Joan Olitski
<b>Date:</b>	1981-2004
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.olitjoan
<b>Creator:</b>	Olitski, Joan C., 1937- Olitski, Jules, 1922-2007
<b>Extent:</b>	0.02 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	The collection is in English.
<b>Summary:</b>	The notes of painter and sculptor Jules Olitski to Joan Olitski measure 0.02 linear feet and date from 1981-2004. The collection comprises of ten humorous love notes, some illustrated, written by Jules Olitski to his wife, Joan. Olitski wrote the notes to his wife (also known as Kristina) in the morning when he left his studio after working through the night.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The notes were donated in 2014 by Olitski's wife, Joan Olitski, also known as Kristina.

### Related Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds the Jules Olitski papers.

### Available Formats

The collection was digitized in its entirety in 2015 and is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

### Processing Information

The collection was fully processed and a finding aid prepared by Judy Ng in 2015.

### Preferred Citation

Jules Olitski notes to Joan Olitski, 1981-2004. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Painter and sculptor Jules Olitski (1922-2007) lived and worked from New York City; Meredith, New Hampshire; and Islamorada, Florida and was known for his color field abstractions and painted metal sculptures. Born Jevl Demikovsky in Snovsk, Russia (now Shchors, Ukraine), Olitski's father was politically executed months after his birth, and his mother and grandmother moved with him to the United States in 1923. Showing an early propensity for art, Olitski trained at both New York's National Academy of Design and the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design and furthered his art studies in Paris. After returning to New York, Olitski received a master's in art education from NYU in 1954 and subsequently taught at C.W. Post College (1956-1963) and Bennington College (1963-1967).

His first solo show of abstract impastos at the Alexander Iolas Gallery in 1958 caught the attention of art critic Clement Greenberg, who continued to champion him throughout his career. In the 1960s, Olitski came to prominence with color field paintings that used stain and spray methods to emphasize the broad, flat plane of the canvas. By the 1970s, he began producing and painting large scale abstract aluminum sculptures and returned to painting in the more textured style he had used in the 1950s.

Olitski, along with Roy Lichtenstein, Helen Frankenthaler, and Ellsworth Kelly, was selected to represent the United States at the 1966 Venice Biennale and was also the first living artist invited to exhibit a one-person show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1969. A prolific artist, he exhibited in over 150 solo shows and was elected to the National Academy of Design in 1994. Olitski continued painting and exhibiting new abstractions of monochrome landscapes late into his career and died of cancer in New York.

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## Scope and Contents

The notes of painter and sculptor Jules Olitski to Joan Olitski measure 0.02 linear feet and date from 1981-2004. The collection comprises of ten humorous love notes, some illustrated, written by Jules Olitski to his wife, Joan. Olitski wrote the notes to his wife (also known as Kristina) in the morning when he left his studio after working through the night.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 1 series.

- Series 1: Notes, 1981-2004 (0.1 linear feet; Box 1)

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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:

Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Illustrated letters

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Notes, 1981-2004

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

Arrangement: Materials are arranged in chronological order.

Scope and Contents: Ten humorous love notes written by Jules Olitski to his wife, Joan. Olitski wrote the notes to his wife (also known as Kristina) in the morning when he left his studio after working through the night. Included in these notes are a pen and ink sketch of a boy, a love poem, an a photo of a woman.

Available: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Folder 1, Folder 1      [Notes from Jules Olitski to Joan Olitski, 1981-2004](#)

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