



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

James S. Plaut papers

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

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	James S. Plaut papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.plaujame
<b>Date:</b>	[ca. 1929]-1980
<b>Creator:</b>	Plaut, James S. (James Sachs), 1912-1996
<b>Extent:</b>	1.4 Linear feet 2.2 Linear feet (Addition) 4 Volumes (Reels 581 and 5139: Scrapbooks)
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Scrapbooks on reel 581 lent for microfilming by Plaut, 1973; his estate, via the executor Edward M. Condit, Jr., lent those on reel 5139 in 1996. Plaut donated the unmicrofilmed material in 1985 and 1992, and additional papers were received as a bequest in 1996 via the executor of his estate.

### Location of Originals

Reel 581: Originals returned to James Plaut after microfilming.

### Location of Originals

Reel 5139: Originals in the possession of Plaut's children, Susan P. Reed and Thomas S. Plaut.

### Available Formats

35mm microfilm reel 581 & 5139 available at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

### Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center. Microfilmed materials must be consulted on microfilm. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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## Biographical / Historical

Art administrator and museum director; Boston, Mass. Plaut was born to a wealthy family in Cincinnati, Ohio, graduated from Harvard College, and received an M.A. from Harvard University. His uncle was Paul Sachs, a connoisseur and influential museology professor at Harvard and so on. Plaut held curatorial positions at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and became Director of Boston's Institute of Modern Art in 1939 (later the Institute of Contemporary Art or ICA) where he staged early exhibitions of contemporary design and European avant-garde paintings and sculpture until his resignation in 1956. Plaut was also involved in many international exhibitions and expositions, serving as Deputy U.S. Commissioner to the World's Fair

in Brussels, 1958, and was Secretary General of the World Crafts Council, 1967-1976 and a consultant on industrial design in Israel.

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## Scope and Contents

Correspondence, business files, academic papers, photographs, clippings, sketchbook, sketches, and miscellaneous notes.

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## Scope and Contents

REEL 581: Selected items from 2 family scrapbooks, 1933-1943 and 1946-1956; including clippings, photographs, correspondence, invitations and awards. Most material pertains to Plaut's work as director of the ICA and advisor to the government of Israel. Also included are correspondence from Georges Rouault, Carl Milles, and Oskar Kokoschka; and 6 drawings by Waldo Peirce.

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## Scope and Contents

REEL 5139: Two family scrapbooks, 1956-1959 and 1960-1980, containing clippings, invitations, photographs and miscellaneous material from Plaut's work World's Fairs at Brussels, 1958, New York, 1964 and Japan, 1970. Also found are family snapshots of the Plaut's travels, their children and grandchildren and include 7 earlier photographs of Plaut and his parents, ca. 1906-1932, and one photograph of Eleanor Roosevelt, 1959.

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## Scope and Contents

UNMICROFILMED: Travel sketchbook of Rome; term papers, honors thesis, and sketches for an architectural history course; files relating to Plaut's positions at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the ICA, the World Crafts Council, and other professional and personal concerns; correspondence, including letters from Eugene Berman, Carl Milles, Lincoln Kirstein, Paul Sachs and others; personal and work related photographs; lecture notes; slides from the World's Craft Fair Council, 1974; 2 untranscribed sound tape reels of an interview made by Plaut for Alfred Auerbach concerning the Brussels World's Fair 1958 and typed list of questions for the interview; and miscellaneous papers.

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## Scope and Contents

ADDITION: Resumes and obituaries; correspondence; the book, Waldo Peirce, by Margit Varga, 1941, with insertions of a caricature by Peirce, illustrated postcards, and a letter; photographs of Walter Gropius House, Lincoln, Mass. and 7 photographs of Plaut with Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, Konrad Adenauer, Indira Gandhi, Leonard Bernstein, and Dwight David Eisenhower; scrapbook and slides pertaining to Plaut's work for the World's Fair, Brussels, 1958; writings and publications; publications of the ICA and the WCC; the book, The Overcoat, by Nikoli Gogel, presented to Plaut upon retirement from the WCC; publications by others on art and design; and a file on James and Mary Plaut's personal art collection, ca. 1935-1990s.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Scrapbooks
- Sketchbooks
- Sound recordings

### Names:

- Adenauer, Konrad, 1876-1967
- Berman, Eugene, 1899-1972
- Bernstein, Leonard, 1918-1990
- Breuer, Marcel, 1902-
- Eisenhower, Dwight D. (Dwight David), 1890-1969
- Expo 67 (Montréal, Québec)
- Exposition universelle et internationale (1958 : Brussels, Belgium)
- Gandhi, Indira, 1917-1984
- Gropius, Walter, 1883-1969
- Institute of Contemporary Art (Boston, Mass.)
- Institute of Modern Art (Boston, Mass.)
- Kirstein, Lincoln, 1907-
- Kokoschka, Oskar, 1886-
- Milles, Carl, 1875-1955
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
- Peirce, Waldo, 1884-1970
- Ruckstull, F. W. (Fred Wellington), 1853-1942
- Sachs, Paul J. (Paul Joseph), 1878-1965
- World Crafts Council
- Wright, Frank Lloyd, 1867-1959

### Occupations:

- Arts administrators -- Massachusetts -- Boston
- Museum directors -- Massachusetts -- Boston

### Functions:

- Art museums -- Massachusetts -- Boston

### Places:

- Israel