



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Schaeffer Galleries
records, circa 1921-1982, bulk 1935-1950,
in the Archives of American Art

Rihoko Ueno

Funding for the processing of this collection was
provided by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.

2013 February 27

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Schaeffer Galleries records
Identifier:	AAA.schagall
Date:	circa 1921-1982 (bulk 1935-1950)
Extent:	1.6 linear feet
Creator:	Schaeffer Galleries
Language:	Multiple languages The bulk of the collection is in English. Other languages include French, German and Italian. English; French; German; Italian
Summary:	The Schaeffer Galleries records measure 1.6 linear feet and date from circa 1921 to 1982, with the bulk of the material dating from 1935-1950 when the gallery was most active. Owned by Hanns S. and Kate Schaeffer, the gallery first operated in Berlin from 1925 to 1939 and later in New York City from 1936 to circa 2000. Correspondence, subject and exhibition files, purchase records, printed materials, and photographs document the gallery's operations. Primary correspondents include art collector Arthur C. Tate and the gallery's Pacific Coast Director LeRoy Backus.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Kate Schaeffer donated the Schaeffer Galleries records to the Archives of American Art in 1982.

Related Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds an oral history interview of Kate (Mrs. Hanns) Schaeffer conducted June 18, 1975 by Paul Cummings.

The Getty Research Library holds 100 linear feet of the historical records of Schaeffer Galleries dating from 1925-1985.

Processing Information

This collection was fully processed by Rihoko Ueno in February 2012 with funding provided by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.

Preferred Citation

Schaeffer Galleries records, circa 1921-1982, bulk 1935-1950. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

The Schaeffer Galleries records 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 / Historical

Owned by Hanns S. and Kate Schaeffer, Schaeffer Galleries specialized in Old Masters paintings and drawings, originally focusing on works by Flemish and Dutch masters. The gallery operated in Berlin, Germany from 1925 to 1939 and in New York City from 1936 to circa 2000.

Hanns Schaeffer opened an art gallery in Berlin in 1921. He then established branches in London and San Francisco, all named Schaeffer Galleries. The Schaeffers closed all three branches in 1939 following the opening of their New York City gallery space in 1936. The New York gallery was first located at 61 East 57th Street in Manhattan, but changed locations a few times. As of 2000, Schaeffer Galleries had stayed at its location at 983 Park Avenue for over fifty years. Schaeffer Galleries was most active from the late 1930s until the early 1950s. During this period, the gallery held numerous exhibitions and built its reputation by selling paintings and drawings by Old Masters, primarily Flemish and Dutch, to private collectors and museums.

The Schaeffers also donated works of art to museums throughout their lives. They were knowledgeable art dealers who advised museum directors and curators on selecting art work for their collections. For example, The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Leonardo da Vinci's "Bear Walking" and a Jean-Antoine Watteau were both acquired through the Schaeffer galleries. Other paintings and drawings that the Schaeffers sold through their gallery include Botticelli's "Madonna and Child with Singing Angels" at the Staatliche Museen in Berlin, Correggio's "Salvator Mundi" in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, Rubens's "Cleopatra" at the Detroit Institute of Arts, and many paintings by Dutch artists such as Frans Hals and Rembrandt.

The couple ran the gallery together for three decades until Hanns Schaeffer died in 1967. Kate Schaeffer then became the owner and president of Schaeffer Galleries and continued managing the business for almost 20 years with more emphasis on drawings. Kate Schaeffer died at the age of 102 on December 20, 2000 at her home in Manhattan. Schaeffer Galleries closed circa 2000, shortly thereafter.

James J. Rorimer, the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1955 to 1967, observed, "The Schaeffers are among the most serious, knowledgeable, and helpful art dealers who are enabling American museums to grow for the benefit of our public. They are friends who share unstintingly in helping curators, directors and trustees to choose with care the works of art which redound to the credit of their museums."

Scope and Contents

The Schaeffer Galleries records measure 1.6 linear feet and date from circa 1921 to 1982, with the bulk of the material dating from 1935-1950 when the gallery was most active. Owned by Hanns S. and Kate Schaeffer, the gallery first operated in Berlin from 1925 to 1939 and later in New York City from 1936 to circa 2000. Correspondence, subject and exhibition files, purchase records, printed materials, and photographs document the gallery's operations. Primary correspondents include art collector Arthur C. Tate and the gallery's Pacific Coast Director LeRoy Backus.

Correspondence is with art collector Arthur C. Tate from 1933-1963 and Schaeffer Galleries' Pacific Coast director LeRoy Backus from 1938-1948. Scattered Artist/Research files contain primarily printed materials on Pablo Picasso, Ogden Pleissner, and Hubert Robert. There is also a list of art from various countries.

Exhibition files document Schaeffer Galleries' exhibitions of European Art, particularly Flemish and Dutch Old Masters. There are also one person exhibition files and a file concerning works of arts loaned for an exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art in 1938. The height of Schaeffer Galleries' activities from the late 1930s to the early 1950s, when the gallery held the most shows, are documented in the LeRoy Backus correspondence and exhibition series.

The gallery worked with art collector Arthur C. Tate and the financial records documenting these transactions are the only sales records in the collection. The series contains receipts and invoices for sales of decorative and other arts to Arthur C. Tate, including sales arranged by Schaeffer Galleries with other dealers.

Printed Materials include a scrapbook of clippings, a guest book, exhibition catalogues and announcements, and bulletins.

Photographs depict paintings, mostly portraits and landscapes by 16th through 18th century Dutch and Flemish Masters, plus one photograph of the painter Ann Phillips.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged as 6 series.

- Series 1: Correspondence, 1933-1963 (0.4 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 2: Subject Files, circa 1935-circa 1980 (4 folders; Box 1, 3)
- Series 3: Exhibition Files, 1935-1953 (0.5 linear feet; Box 1, 3, OV 4)
- Series 4: Arthur C. Tate Purchase Records, 1932-1963 (4 folders; Box 1)
- Series 5: Printed Material, 1938-1957 (0.5 linear feet; Box 2-3)
- Series 6: Photographs, 1921-1982 (3 folders; Box 2-3)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art galleries, Commercial -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Photographs
Scrapbooks
Visitors' books

Names:

Backus, LeRoy
Picasso, Pablo, 1881-1973
Pleissner, Ogden M.
Robert, Hubert, 1733-1808
Schaeffer, Hanns S., 1892?-1967
Schaeffer, Kate Born, 1898?-2000
Tate, Arthur C.

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence, 1933-1963

0.4 linear feet (Box 1)

This series includes correspondence with collector Arthur C. Tate about his purchases of artwork and decorative arts either purchase directly from Schaeffer Galleries or arranged by Schaeffer Galleries with other dealers or galleries. The remaining correspondence is between Hanns Schaeffer and Pacific Coast director LeRoy Backus. Tate was a Connecticut based businessman and art collector who bought several drawings and paintings from Schaeffer Galleries. There are three folders of correspondence between Tate and various antique dealers and art galleries, including Schaeffer Galleries, about buying items for his personal collection. The bulk of the series consists of correspondence between LeRoy Backus and Hanns Schaeffer about their thoughts on the cost of potential acquisitions for the gallery. A few folders also contain lists of paintings and sales receipts that were attached to the correspondence.

Box 1, Folder 1	Letters to Arthur C. Tate, 1933-1938
Box 1, Folder 2	Letters to Arthur C. Tate, 1941-1946
Box 1, Folder 3	Letters to Arthur C. Tate, 1952-1963
Box 1, Folder 4	Backus, LeRoy, 1938
Box 1, Folder 5	Backus, LeRoy, 1939 January-March
Box 1, Folder 6	Backus, LeRoy, 1939 April-July
Box 1, Folder 7	Backus, LeRoy, 1939 August-December
Box 1, Folder 8	Backus, LeRoy, 1940 January-April
Box 1, Folder 9	Backus, LeRoy, 1940 May-December
Box 1, Folder 10	Backus, LeRoy, 1941
Box 1, Folder 11	Backus, LeRoy, 1942
Box 1, Folder 12	Backus, LeRoy, 1943
Box 1, Folder 13	Backus, LeRoy, 1944
Box 1, Folder 14	Backus, LeRoy, 1945
Box 1, Folder 15	Backus, LeRoy, 1946
Box 1, Folder 16	Backus, LeRoy, 1948

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Series 2: Subject Files, circa 1935-circa 1980

4 folders (Box 1, 3)

Scattered artists/research/subject files are on topics of interest to the Schaeffers. The files do not necessarily reflect work or artists the gallery represented. There are files for artists Pablo Picasso, Ogden Pleissner, and Hubert Robert. Files may contain biographies, articles, and miscellaneous notes. There is also a list of art from various countries.

Box 1, Folder 17	Picasso, Pablo, 1953 Oversized material housed in Box 3, Folder 1.
Box 1, Folder 18	Pleissner, Ogden Minton, circa 1953
Box 1, Folder 19	Robert, Hubert, circa 1952
Box 1, Folder 20	List of Artwork, circa 1935-circa 1980
Box 3, Folder 1	Oversized Exhibition Catalog, Pablo Picasso, 1953 Oversized material from Box 1, Folder 17.

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Series 3: Exhibition Files, 1935-1953

0.5 linear feet (Box 1, 3, OV 4)

Exhibition files contain documents such as letters, notes, printed material, guest books and photographs on Schaeffer Galleries' exhibitions of European Art. Exhibits include "Great Dutch Masters" and "Contemporary Spanish Paintings" as well as group exhibitions of self-portraits, landscapes and drawings by Old Masters. Schaeffer Galleries also held exhibits on specific artists such as Frans Hals and Piero di Cosimo. There is one folder for an exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art which displayed art by Old Masters loaned from Schaeffer Galleries.

Box 1, Folder 21	"The Great Dutch Masters: Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Hobbema, Pieter de Hooch, and Others," 1936 December 1-30, 1936
Box 1, Folder 22	"Early German Art," February 12-March 13, circa 1936
Box 1, Folder 23	"Rembrandt," 1937 April 1-15, 1937
Box 1	"Paintings by Frans Hals," 1937 November 9-23
Box 1, Folder 24	Correspondence, 1935-1937
Box 1, Folder 25	Correspondence, 1937
Box 1, Folder 26	Correspondence, 1937-1938
Box 1, Folder 27	Guest Book, 1937
Box 1, Folder 28	Guest Book, 1937
Box 1, Folder 29	List of Patrons, 1937
Box 1, Folder 30	Miscellaneous, 1937 Folder includes an inventory list for the exhibition, a poster and announcements. Oversized material is housed in Box 3, Folder 2.
Box 1, Folder 31	San Francisco Museum of Art, "Loan Exhibition of Old Masters: lent by the Schaeffer Galleries of New York," 1938 March 1-18, 1938-1952
Box 1, Folder 32	"American Landscapes by Constance Coleman Richardson," 1938 March 29-April 15, 1938
Box 1, Folder 33	"Piero di Cosimo," 1938 November 8-December 6, 1938
Box 1, Folder 34	"Dutch Painting: 17 Masterpieces of the 17th Century," 1939 February 3-March 15, 1939
Box 1, Folder 35	"Self-Portraits," 1940 April 2-30, 1939-1940
Box 1, Folder 36	"Master Drawings: 15th to the 19th Century," 1941 March 25-April 26, 1941
Box 1, Folder 37	"Gems of Baroque Painting," 1942 January 27-February 28, 1942

- Box 1, Folder 38 "Peter Paul Rubens," 1942 November 23-December 19, 1942
Oversized material housed in OV 4.
- Box 1, Folder 39 "Four Artists Underground: Gisele van der Gracht, Peter Goldschmidt, Simon van Keulen, Harry op het Veld," 1946 June 4-30, 1946
- Box 1, Folder 40 "Selected Drawings: 15th-19th Centuries" , circa 1951
- Box 1, Folder 41 "Contemporary Spanish Paintings," 1953 January 20-February 7, 1952-1953
- Box 3, Folder 2 Oversized Exhibition Poster, Frans Hals, 1937
Oversized material from Box 1, Folder 30.
- Box OV 4 Oversized Exhibition Catalog Draft, Peter Paul Rubens, 1942
Oversized material from Box 1, Folder 38.

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Series 4: Arthur C. Tate Purchase Records, 1932-1963

4 folders (Box 1)

This series consists of receipts and invoices for purchases made by Arthur C. Tate, either from Schaeffer Galleries or through Schaeffer Galleries for other dealers and galleries. There are a few receipts for art, but the bulk of the sales were for decorative arts.

Box 1, Folder 42	Arthur C. Tate Purchase Records, 1932-1939
Box 1, Folder 43	Arthur C. Tate Purchase Records, 1940-1947
Box 1, Folder 44	Arthur C. Tate Purchase Records, 1952-1959
Box 1, Folder 45	Arthur C. Tate Purchase Records, 1960-1963

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Series 5: Printed Material, 1938-1957

0.5 linear feet (Box 2-3)

Printed materials include a disbound scrapbook containing news clippings about artists and exhibitions, exhibition catalogs and invitations from other galleries, bulletins, and a guest book.

Box 2, Folder 1	Disbound Scrapbook, 1942-1955 Oversized material housed in Box 3, Folders 3-7.
Box 2, Folder 2	Guest Book, 1946-1954
Box 2, Folder 3	News Clippings, 1938
Box 2, Folder 4	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, circa 1951-1957, 1955
Box 2, Folder 5	Los Angeles Museum Bulletins, 1938
Box 3, Folder 3-7	Oversized Disbound Scrapbook, 1942-1955 Oversized material from Box 2, Folder 1.

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Series 6: Photographs, 1921-1982

3 folders (Box 2-3)

There are eighteen black & white photographs of assorted artwork, mostly portraits and landscapes by Dutch, Flemish and German painters from the 16th through 18th centuries. A few photographs have annotations typed in German. There is also one black & white photograph of the painter Ann Phillips.

Box 2, Folder 6	Portraits by Hans Brosamer, 1921-1929
Box 2, Folder 7	Hubert Robert Portrait by Jean-Honore Fragonard, circa 1925-1940
Box 2, Folder 8	17th Century Dutch Paintings, circa 1925-1942
Box 2, Folder 9	Flemish Baroque Paintings, circa 1942
Box 2, Folder 10	Landscapes and Still Lifes by Unidentified Artists, circa 1925-1940
Box 2, Folder 11	Photograph of Ann Phillips, circa 1940-1982 Oversized material housed in Box 3, Folder 8.
Box 3, Folder 8	Oversized Photograph of Ann Phillips, circa 1940-1982 Oversized material from Box 2, Folder 11.

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