
Rihoko Ueno

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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art
Title: Robert Scull papers
Identifier: AAA.sculrobe
Date: 1955-circa 1984
(bulk 1965-1970)
Extent: 2 Linear feet
Creator: Scull, Robert, 1917-1986
Language: English

Collection is in English.

Summary: The Robert Scull papers measure 2 linear feet and date from 1955 to circa 1984, with the bulk of the material dating from 1965 to 1970. Throughout the 1960s, Robert Scull was a wealthy and prominent art collector of Abstract, Pop, and Minimalist art whose collection included works by Michael Heizer, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol, among others. His papers include fourteen annotated appointment books, correspondence, financial and legal records, printed material, and photographs.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The 14 appointment books in the collection were donated in 1999 by Amy Newman, a writer, who received them from her friend, artist Chuck Close. Close received them from his brother-in-law, who found them in the trash, turned them over to Close, who, in turn, gave them to Newman.

The rest of the papers were donated in 1993 by Robert Scull's widow, Stephanie.

Related Materials

The Archives of American Art also has an oral history interview with Robert Scull conducted by Paul Cummings in 1972.

Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2016 and is available on the Archives of American Art's website. Materials which have not been scanned include blank pages, blank versos of photographs, and duplicates.
Processing Information

The appointment books and papers, which arrived separately from 2 different donors, were merged and the collection was arranged, described, and prepared for digitization by Rihoko Ueno in 2016 with funding provided by the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, Walton Family Foundation and Terra Foundation for American Art.

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.

Conditions Governing Use

The Robert Scull papers 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

Robert Scull (1917-1986) was a prominent New York City and Connecticut collector of contemporary American art primarily during the 1960s.

Robert Scull was born in Manhattan's Lower East Side. He dropped out of high school during the Depression and did various jobs while also taking art courses. He later became a freelance illustrator and industrial designer. When his wife Ethel's father died, the couple inherited a successful taxi business which Scull expanded into the Super Operating Corporation with a fleet of 130 cabs.

Throughout the 1960s, Robert and Ethel Scull were avid art collectors who acquired contemporary American art works through dealers Richard Bellamy and Leo Castelli. Robert Scull's patronage also helped fund art dealer Richard Bellamy's Green Gallery in New York City for five years. Initially the Sculls focused on collecting American Abstract Expressionists and owned works by Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, and others. In 1965, the couple held their first auction and part of the profits helped establish the Robert and Ethel Scull Foundation, dedicated to financially assisting upcoming artists. The foundation commissioned environmental works from Michael Heizer and Walter de Maria and gave the artists stipends and even bought them food and supplies.

Around the mid-1960s, the Sculls also began collecting Pop Art and acquired the works of Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, James Rosenquist, and Andy Warhol. In 1973, the couple sold 50 works from their personal collection of Pop Art through a Sotheby's auction that yielded $2.2 million - record-breaking for sales of contemporary American art. The Sculls were criticized of social-climbing and profiteering by various people in the media and art world, including the artist Robert Rauschenberg.

In 1975, Robert Scull divorced Ethel and in 1978 he founded the Robert C. Scull Foundation which again assisted younger artists and arts organizations with a focus on contemporary art. Scull remarried and sold his taxi business sometime in the early 1980s, and moved to Warren, Connecticut. He died in 1986.
In 2010, the exhibition *Robert and Ethel Scull: Portrait of a Collection* was held at Acquavella Galleries in Manhattan.

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**Scope and Contents**

The Robert Scull papers measure 2 linear feet and date from 1955 to circa 1984, with the bulk of the material dating from 1965 to 1970. Throughout the 1960s, Robert Scull was a wealthy and prominent art collector of Abstract, Pop, and Minimalist art whose collection included works by Michael Heizer, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, and Andy Warhol, among others. His papers include fourteen annotated appointment books, correspondence, financial and legal records, printed material, and photographs.

Fourteen appointment books include business dates, notes, and occasional sketches. Notes are on various subjects such as prices for paintings, appointments with art dealers, and visits with artists Mark di Suvero, Michael Heizer, Lucas Samaras, and others. There are sometimes items, i.e., business cards and receipts, interleaved between the pages of the books.

The bulk of the correspondence consists of letters to Robert Scull from various artists, such as Walter De Maria and Michael Heizer. There is limited correspondence with museums and galleries.

Financial and legal records mostly consist of invoices from art dealers to Robert Scull for his purchases of John Tweddle's artwork. Also included are art loan forms and charts tracking payments for various paintings and drawings. There are scattered legal papers on a settlement regarding payments for a group of paintings by Tweddle.

There is one exhibition catalog, *Street Painters: Feelism* (circa 1982), of printed material.

Photographs are of Robert Scull, friends, art dealers, artists, and art. Notable artists depicted include Alexander Calder, Gary Kuehn, Claes Oldenberg, Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol, and many others. There are also images of sculptures, paintings, and other artwork by various artists.

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**Arrangement**

The collection is arranged as 5 series.

- Series 1: Appointment Books, 1955-1973 (1.5 linear feet; Boxes 1-3)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1965-circa 1984 (0.2 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 3: Financial and Legal Records, 1969-1980 (0.1 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1982 (1 folder; Box 3)
- Series 5: Photographs, 1960-circa 1980 (0.2 linear feet; Boxes 3-4)

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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:
- Art -- Collectors and collecting -- Connecticut
- Art -- Collectors and collecting -- New York (State) -- New York
- Art dealers
Art, Abstract
Minimal art
Pop art

Types of Materials:
Photographs
Sketches

Names:
Calder, Alexander, 1898-1976 -- Photographs
De Maria, Walter, 1935-2013
Di Suvero, Mark, 1933-
Heizer, Michael, 1944-
Johns, Jasper, 1930-
Kuehn, Gary, 1939- -- Photographs
Oldenburg, Claes, 1929- -- Photographs
Rauschenberg, Robert, 1925-2008
Samaras, Lucas, 1936-
Tweddle, John
Warhol, Andy, 1928-
Container Listing


1.5 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3)

There are 14 appointment books ranging from 1955 to 1973 that include business dates, daily entries, notes, and occasional sketches. Notes are on various subjects such as prices Scull payed for paintings; appointments with art dealers such as Richard Bellamy, Leo Castelli, Andre Emmerich, and Henry Geldzahler; and visits with artists such as Walter De Maria, Mark di Suvero, Michael Heizer, James Rosenquist, and Lucas Samaras. There are also scattered items interleaved between the pages of the appointment books, usually in the form of business cards, receipts, loose notes, and other miscellany.

This series is arranged chronologically. Large amounts of loose material from appointment books are housed in separate folders immediately after the volume the items came from.

The bulk of this series has been scanned. Materials that have not been scanned include blank pages and duplicates of papers, such as photocopies of documents already in the same folder.

Box 1, Folder 1  Appointment Book, 1955
  Image(s): Appointment Book: 1955

Box 1, Folder 2  Appointment Book, 1956
  Image(s): Appointment Book: 1956

Box 1, Folder 3  Appointment Book, 1958
  Image(s): Appointment Book: 1958

Box 1, Folder 4  Appointment Book, 1959
  Image(s): Appointment Book: 1959

Box 1, Folder 5  Loose Items from Appointment Book, 1959
  Image(s): Loose Items from Appointment Book: 1959

Box 1, Folder 6  Appointment Book, 1961
  Image(s): Appointment Book: 1961

Box 1, Folder 7  Appointment Book, 1962
  Image(s): Appointment Book: 1962

Box 1, Folder 8  Appointment Book, 1963
  Image(s): Appointment Book: 1963

Box 1, Folder 9  Appointment Book, 1964
  Image(s): Appointment Book: 1964

Box 1, Folder 10 Appointment Book, 1965
Box 2, Folder 1  
Appointment Book, 1966
Image(s): Appointment Book: 1966

Box 2, Folder 2  
Appointment Book, 1967
Image(s): Appointment Book: 1967

Box 2, Folder 3  
Loose Items from Appointment Book, 1967
Image(s): Loose Items from Appointment Book: 1967

Box 2, Folder 4  
Appointment Book, 1969
Image(s): Appointment Book: 1969

Box 2, Folder 5  
Loose Items from Appointment Book, 1969
Image(s): Loose Items from Appointment Book: 1969

Box 2, Folder 6  
Appointment Book, 1970
Image(s): Appointment Book: 1970

Box 2, Folder 7  
Loose Items from Appointment Book, 1970
Image(s): Loose Items from Appointment Book: 1970

Box 3, Folder 1  
Appointment Book, 1973
Image(s): Appointment Book: 1973

Box 3, Folder 2  
Loose Items from Appointment Book, 1973
Image(s): Loose Items from Appointment Book: 1973
Old check stubs in this folder have not been scanned.

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1965-circa 1984

0.2 Linear feet (Box 3)

Most of the correspondence consists of personal and professional letters to Robert Scull from various artists such as Walter De Maria, Mark di Suvero, and Michael Heizer discussing the art world, travels, projects, and patronage. There are a few scattered letters from Scull as well. There is some correspondence with museums and galleries on the subject of art loans and exhibitions.

This series is arranged alphabetically. There is one folder of miscellaneous correspondence at the end which includes letters from individuals whose names were illegible and therefore could not be identified.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 3, Folder 3 Correspondence, A-C, circa 1969-circa 1984
Image(s): Correspondence, A-C: circa 1969-circa 1984
Includes letters from Jessie Benton-Evans and Bill Crozier

Box 3, Folder 4 De Maria, Walter, 1965-1969
Image(s): De Maria, Walter: 1965-1969
Includes drawings and sketches

Box 3, Folder 5 Di Suvero, Mark, circa 1970-circa 1980

Box 3, Folder 6 Correspondence, G-H, 1983
Image(s): Correspondence, G-H: 1983

Box 3, Folder 7 Heizer, Michael, circa 1968-circa 1971
Image(s): Heizer, Michael: circa 1968-circa 1971

Box 3, Folder 8 Correspondence, L, circa 1970-circa 1980
Image(s): Correspondence, L: circa 1970-circa 1980
Includes a letter from Alfred Leslie

Box 3, Folder 9 Stedelijk Museum, 1983
Image(s): Stedelijk Museum: 1983

Box 3, Folder 10 Tweddle, John, 1973
Image(s): Tweddle, John: 1973

Box 3, Folder 11 Yard, Sally, 1981
Image(s): Yard, Sally: 1981

Box 3, Folder 12 Miscellaneous Correspondence, circa 1970-circa 1980
Image(s): Miscellaneous Correspondence: circa 1970-circa 1980

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0.1 Linear feet (Box 3)

Financial and legal records mostly consist of bills and invoices from art dealers, usually Richard Bellamy, to Robert Scull for his purchases of John Tweddle’s artwork. In addition, there are loan forms for Tweddle’s art from museums and galleries, charts tracking payments for various paintings and drawings, and legal papers related to a settlement about payments for a group of 22 paintings by Tweddle.

The materials in this series are grouped alphabetically by document type - such as invoices, legal papers, and loan forms - then arranged chronologically within those groupings.

The bulk of this series has been scanned, with the exception of duplicates.

Box 3, Folder 13  Charts Tracking Payments for Artwork, 1969-1970

Image(s): Charts Tracking Payments for Artwork: 1969-1970

Box 3, Folder 14  Invoices for John Tweddle Artwork, 1970-1974


Box 3, Folder 15  Legal Settlement and Bills Related to 22 John Tweddle Paintings, 1974-1976

Image(s): Legal Settlement and Bills Related to 22 John Tweddle Paintings: 1974-1976

Box 3, Folder 16  Loan Forms for John Tweddle Artwork, 1980

Image(s): Loan Forms for John Tweddle Artwork: 1980

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Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1982

1 Folder (Box 3)

There is one exhibition catalog, *Street Painters: Feelism* (circa 1982), in this series.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 3, Folder 17  
*The Street Painters: Feelism* Catalog (1982), circa 1982


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Series 5: Photographs, 1966-circa 1980

0.2 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4)

Photographs are of Robert Scull, friends, art dealers, artists, and artwork. Notable artists depicted include Alexander Calder, Walter De Maria, Gary Kuehn, Claes Oldenberg, Robert Rauschenberg, Lucas Samaras, Andy Warhol, and many others. There are also photographs of art displayed at Robert Scull's home in Warren, Connecticut, as well as images of sculptures, paintings, and other artwork.

Photographs of Robert Scull are at the beginning of the series, followed by photographs of artists, then photographs of artwork.

The bulk of this series has been scanned. Duplicates of photographs have not been scanned.

Box 3, Folder 18 Scull, Robert, circa 1980
Image(s): Scull, Robert: circa 1980

Box 4, Folder 1 Artists, 1966-circa 1975
Image(s): Artists: 1966-circa 1975
Includes photographs of Alexander Calder, Walter De Maria (signed and annotated), Richard Smith, Andy Warhol, and unknown

Box 4 Artists and Other People at Robert Scull's East Hampton, NY Residence

Box 4, Folder 2 Bellamy, Richard and Bill Bollinger, circa 1968
Image(s): Bellamy, Richard and Bill Bollinger: circa 1968

Box 4, Folder 3 Kaprow, Allan and Gary Kuehn, circa 1968
Image(s): Kaprow, Allan and Gary Kuehn: circa 1968

Box 4, Folder 4 Oldenberg, Claes and Alfonso Ossorio and Larry Poons, circa 1968
Image(s): Oldenberg, Claes and Alfonso Ossorio and Larry Poons: circa 1968

Box 4, Folder 5 Rauschenberg, Robert and Harold Rosenberg, circa 1968
Image(s): Rauschenberg, Robert and Harold Rosenberg: circa 1968

Box 4, Folder 6 Samaras, Lucas and George Segal, circa 1968
Image(s): Samaras, Lucas and George Segal: circa 1968

Box 4, Folder 7 Group Photographs of Artists and Others, circa 1968
Image(s): Group Photographs of Artists and Others: circa 1968

Box 4, Folder 8 Unidentified Artists and Other People, circa 1968
Image(s): Unidentified Artists and Other People: circa 1968

Box 4, Folder 9 Snapshots of Breezy Hill Farm in Warren, Connecticut, 1982
Includes images of Michael Heizer and artwork displayed inside house

Box 4, Folder 10  Artwork by Various Artists, circa 1965-circa 1968
Image(s): Artwork by Various Artists: circa 1965-circa 1968

Box 4, Folder 11  Outdoor Sculptures by Various Artists, circa 1969
Image(s): Outdoor Sculptures by Various Artists: circa 1969

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