



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Robert Scull Papers, 1955-circa 1984, bulk dates 1965-1970, in the Archives of American Art

Rihoko Ueno

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection
was provided by the Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, The Walton
Family Foundation, and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

2016 November 18

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

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| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | Robert Scull papers |
| Date: | 1955-circa 1984 (bulk 1965-1970) |
| Identifier: | AAA.sculrobe |
| Creator: | Scull, Robert, 1917-1986 |
| Extent: | 2.2 Linear feet |
| Language: | Collection is in English. |
| Summary: | The Robert Scull papers measure 2.2 linear feet and date from 1950 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. There is a 0.2 linear foot unprocessed addition to this collection donated in 2020 that includes black and white photographs (and 1 color photograph), snapshots, negatives and negative strips of family, friends artwork and artists; correspondence; and loan forms for works of art. |

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. Additional papers were donated in 1993 and 2020 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, and the 2020 addition to the collection.

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

Robert Scull papers, 1955-circa 1984, bulk dates 1965-1970. 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

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.

Scope and Contents

The Robert Scull papers measure 2.2 linear feet and date from 1950 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. There is a 0.2 linear foot unprocessed addition to this collection donated in 2020 that includes black and white photographs (and 1 color photograph), snapshots, negatives and negative strips of family, friends artwork and artists; correspondence; and loan forms for works of art.

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.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series.

Missing Title:

- 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)
- Series 6: Unprocessed Addition, 1950-1984 (0.2 linear feet); Box 5)

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, Abstract
Minimal art
Pop art

Types of Materials:

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-

Occupations:

Art dealers
Collectors -- Connecticut
Collectors -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Appointment Books, 1955-1973

1.5 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3)

Scope and Contents: 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 paid 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.

Arrangement: 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.

Available Formats: 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 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Appointment Book, 1956 |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Appointment Book, 1958 |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Appointment Book, 1959 |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Loose Items from Appointment Book, 1959 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Appointment Book, 1961 |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Appointment Book, 1962 |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Appointment Book, 1963 |
| Box 1, Folder 9 | Appointment Book, 1964 |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | Appointment Book, 1965 |
| Box 2, Folder 1 | Appointment Book, 1966 |
| Box 2, Folder 2 | Appointment Book, 1967 |
| Box 2, Folder 3 | Loose Items from Appointment Book, 1967 |
| Box 2, Folder 4 | Appointment Book, 1969 |
| Box 2, Folder 5 | Loose Items from Appointment Book, 1969 |

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Box 2, Folder 6 | Appointment Book, 1970 |
| Box 2, Folder 7 | Loose Items from Appointment Book, 1970 |
| Box 3, Folder 1 | Appointment Book, 1973 |
| Box 3, Folder 2 | Loose Items from Appointment Book, 1973 Notes: 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)

Scope and Contents: 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.

Arrangement: 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.

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Box 3, Folder 3 | Correspondence, A-C, circa 1969-circa 1984 Notes: Includes letters from Jessie Benton-Evans and Bill Crozier |
| Box 3, Folder 4 | De Maria, Walter, 1965-1969 Notes: Includes drawings and sketches |
| Box 3, Folder 5 | Di Suvero, Mark, circa 1970-circa 1980 |
| Box 3, Folder 6 | Correspondence, G-H, 1983 |
| Box 3, Folder 7 | Heizer, Michael, circa 1968-circa 1971 |
| Box 3, Folder 8 | Correspondence, L, circa 1970-circa 1980 Notes: Includes a letter from Alfred Leslie |
| Box 3, Folder 9 | Stedelijk Museum, 1983 |
| Box 3, Folder 10 | Tweddle, John, 1973 |
| Box 3, Folder 11 | Yard, Sally, 1981 |
| Box 3, Folder 12 | Miscellaneous Correspondence, circa 1970-circa 1980 |

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Series 3: Financial and Legal Records, 1969-1980

0.1 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: 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.

Arrangement: 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.

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

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Box 3, Folder 13 | 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 |
| Box 3, Folder 16 | Loan Forms for John Tweddle Artwork, 1980 |

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Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1982

1 Folder (Box 3)

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

Available Formats: 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)

Scope and Contents: 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.

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

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

Box 3, Folder 18 [Scull, Robert, circa 1980](#)

Box 4, Folder 1 [Artists, 1966-circa 1975](#)

Notes: 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](#)

Box 4, Folder 3 [Kaprow, Allan and Gary Kuehn, circa 1968](#)

Box 4, Folder 4 [Oldenberg, Claes and Alfonso Ossorio and Larry Poons, circa 1968](#)

Box 4, Folder 5 [Rauschenberg, Robert and Harold Rosenberg, circa 1968](#)

Box 4, Folder 6 [Samaras, Lucas and George Segal, circa 1968](#)

Box 4, Folder 7 [Group Photographs of Artists and Others, circa 1968](#)

Box 4, Folder 8 [Unidentified Artists and Other People, circa 1968](#)

Box 4, Folder 9 [Snapshots of Breezy Hill Farm in Warren, Connecticut, 1982](#)

Notes: Includes images of Michael Heizer and artwork displayed inside house

Box 4, Folder 10 [Artwork by Various Artists, circa 1965-circa 1968](#)

Box 4, Folder 11 [Outdoor Sculptures by Various Artists, circa 1969](#)

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Series 6: Unprocessed Addition, 1950-1984

0.2 Linear feet

Box 5

Unprocessed Papers

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