



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Barbara Swan letters to Rosalind and Edwin Miller, 1961-1991, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

Processing of this collection received support from
the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

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

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Barbara Swan letters to Rosalind and Edwin Miller
Date:	1961-1991
Identifier:	AAA.swanbarb
Creator:	Swan, Barbara, 1922-
Extent:	0.6 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Barbara Swan letters to Rosalind and Edwin Miller measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1961 to 1991. The letters document Swan's deep friendship with the Millers. Swan discusses many topics including her husband's career at Alpha Gallery, her own artwork and career, and personal issues.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated 1992 by Rosalind Miller.

Available Formats

The collection is available on 35mm microfilm reel 4882 at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

Processing Information

The letters were microfilmed on reel 4882 after receipt. The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2023 with support from the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

Preferred Citation

Barbara Swan letters to Rosalind and Edwin Miller, 1961-1991. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

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Biographical / Historical

Boston, Massachusetts painter, draftsman, and lithographer Barbara Swan (1922-2003) is associated with the Boston Expressionists and later focused on still-life paintings.

Rosalind Miller (1923-2002) was a professor of psychiatric social work at Columbia University. Edwin Miller (1929-) is a Walt Whitman scholar and biographer of Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne. The Millers are collectors of American textiles.

Scope and Contents

The Barbara Swan letters to Rosalind and Edwin Miller measure 0.6 linear feet and date from 1961 to 1991. The letters document Swan's deep friendship with the Millers. Swan discusses many topics including her husband's career at Alpha Gallery, her own artwork and career, and personal issues.

Arrangement

Due to the small size of this collection the papers are arranged as one series.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Women artists

Names:

Alpha Gallery (Boston, Mass.)
Miller, Edwin Haviland
Miller, Rosalind S., 1923-

Occupations:

Draftsmen (artists) -- Massachusetts -- Boston
Lithographers -- Massachusetts -- Boston
Painters -- Massachusetts -- Boston

Container Listing

Series 1: Letters to Rosalind and Edwin Miller, 1961-1991

0.6 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Swan, writing to her friends Rosalind and Edwin Miller, discusses her husband Alan Fink's positions as an art dealer and owner of the Alpha Gallery in Boston, mentioning artists Milton Avery, Gregory Gillespie, Don Gustin, Ellsworth Kelly, Boris Mirski, and Andy Stevovich.

Swan discusses her own painting career, her son Aaron's art career and daughter Joanna's career as assistant to Alan. Personal issues and friendships discussed include her health problems dealing with lupus; family vacations and activities with Swan's mother and aunt; Peter and Edith Milton, and Bernard and Ninion Chaet; her numerous trips to New York and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston for various art openings; and her friendship with poet Anne Sexton. She discusses illustrating Sexton's versions of Grimm's fairytales, portraits of various friends and commissions, exhibitions, painting style, and inspirations for her bottle and quarry reflection paintings.

Box 1, Folder 1	Letters, 1961-1969
Box 1, Folder 2	Letters, 1970-1973
Box 1, Folder 3	Letters, 1974-1976
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters, 1977-1979
Box 1, Folder 5	Letters, 1980-1982
Box 1, Folder 6	Letters, 1983-1986
Box 2, Folder 1	Letters, 1987-1989
Box 2, Folder 2	Letters, 1990-1991

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