



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Janet de Coux letters to Mary and Martha Bates Swiss, 1944-1990, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

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

2023/09/05

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Janet de Coux letters to Mary and Martha Bates Swiss
<b>Date:</b>	1944-1990
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.swismary
<b>Creator:</b>	Swiss, Mary Bates, 1925-1998
<b>Extent:</b>	0.4 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The letters from sculptor Janet de Coux to Mary Bates Swiss and Martha Bates Swiss measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1944 to 1990. Primarily letters, the collection describes the close relationship between Janet de Coux and her studio assistant and friend Mary Bates Swiss and Swiss's daughter, Martha Bates Swiss. Also found are scattered handmade greeting cards by de Coux, poetry, two photographs, and a clipping.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Donated 2016 by Martha Swiss, Mary Bates Swiss's daughter and Janet de Coux's goddaughter.

### Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art are an oral history interview with Janet de Coux conducted by George Gurney, May 5, 1978, and the Janet de Coux papers, 1895-2000.

### Processing Information

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

Janet de Coux letters to Mary Bates Swiss and Martha Bates Swiss, 1944-1990. 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**

Mary Bates Swiss (1925-1998) was sculptor Janet de Coux's studio assistant. Swiss and de Coux studied together at the Cranbrook Academy of Art.

Janet de Coux (1904-2000) was a sculptor and participated in the Federal Arts Project.

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## **Scope and Contents**

The letters from sculptor Janet de Coux to Mary Bates Swiss and Martha Bates Swiss measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1944 to 1990. Primarily letters, the collection describes the close relationship between Janet de Coux and her studio assistant and friend Mary Bates Swiss and Swiss's daughter, Martha Bates Swiss. Also found are scattered handmade greeting cards by de Coux, poetry, two photographs, and a clipping.

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## **Arrangement**

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

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## **Names and Subject Terms**

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

Names:

De Coux, Janet, 1904-1999  
Swiss, Martha Bates

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Janet de Coux letters to Mary and Martha Bates Swiss , 1944-1990

#### 0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Comprising the bulk of the series are 130 letters from sculptor Janet de Coux to her studio assistant Mary Bates Swiss and to Swiss's daughter Martha Bates Swiss. Also found are scattered letters to Martha's siblings and handmade greeting cards. de Coux writes about her works in progress, her emotional state of mind, her relationships, her philosophy of life, and her travels. Handwritten poems, sent to Mary Swiss from de Coux, are by others or are unsigned. Also included are two photographs of de Coux's sculpture of William Penn in progress in her studio in Gibsonia, Pennsylvania with her and Martha Swiss's poodle, Gigi. One clipping concerns de Coux's sculpture of William Penn.

Box 1, Folder 1	Letters, to Mary Bates Swiss, 1944-1957
Box 1, Folder 2	Letters, to Mary Bates Swiss, 1960-1969
Box 1, Folder 3	Letters, to Mary Bates Swiss, 1970-1981
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters, to Mary Bates Swiss, circa 1944-1980
Box 1, Folder 5	Letters, to Martha Bates Swiss and Others, 1965-1990
Box 1, Folder 6	Greeting Cards, circa 1970
Box 1, Folder 7	Photographs, 1964
Box 1, Folder 8	Poetry, circa 1944-1980
Box 1, Folder 9	Printed Material, Clipping, 1965

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