



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Morton Traylor Papers,
1936-2003, in the Archives of American Art

Erin Kinhart

2014 March 26

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/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Arrangement.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	4
Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1944-1996.....	4
Series 2: Correspondence, 1943-2003.....	5
Series 3: Writings, circa 1944-1991.....	6
Series 4: Personal Business Records, circa 1950s-1984.....	7
Series 5: Printed Material, 1939-1998.....	8
Series 6: Photographic Material, 1936-1994.....	9
Series 7: Scrapbooks, 1939-1956.....	10

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Morton Traylor papers
Identifier:	AAA.traymort
Date:	1936-2003
Extent:	3.4 Linear feet
Creator:	Traylor, Morton P., 1918-1996
Language:	English

The collection is in English.

Summary: The papers of painter and teacher Morton Traylor measure 3.4 linear feet and date from 1936 to 2003. The papers document his career as an artist and administrator of the Virginia Art Institute through biographical material, correspondence, writings, personal business records, printed material, photographs, and scrapbooks. The bulk of the collection consists of photographs, slides, and albums of artwork by Traylor. Three scrapbooks document his education and early career through clippings, photographs, exhibition materials, and letters.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 2012 by Nathan Simon, Morton Traylor's friend.

Processing Information

The collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid prepared by Erin Kinhart in 2014. The Archives of American Art has implemented minimal processing tactics when possible in order to increase information about and access to more of our collections. Minimal processing included arrangement to the series, subseries and folder levels. Generally, items within folders were simply verified with the original folder titles, but not arranged further. All materials have been rehoused in archival folders and boxes for long-term stability, but staples and other fasteners have not all been removed.

Preferred Citation

Morton Traylor papers, 1936-2003. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

The Morton Traylor 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

Morton Traylor (1918-1996) was a painter and teacher in Los Angeles, California, and Charlottesville, Virginia. Traylor founded and taught at the Virginia Art Institute.

Morton Traylor was born in Petersburg, Virginia, and studied art at Los Angeles City College, Chouinard Art Institute, and Jepson Art Institute. He also attended the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in 1947. From 1942 to 1946 he served in the U.S. Navy as a Radio and Radar man, spending time in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In 1950 he worked as the personal assistant to artist Rico Lebrun, and during the 1950s worked in commercial art at several companies in California. After moving to Virginia with his wife in 1960, he taught at the Holden School of Fine and Applied Arts, and in 1966 opened the Virginia Art Institute in Charlottesville. The school closed in 1975. Traylor regularly exhibited his work throughout his career and won several awards. In 1985 Traylor and his wife moved to Days Creek, Oregon, where he continued to paint and exhibit his work until his death in 1996.

Scope and Contents

The papers of painter and teacher Morton Traylor measure 3.4 linear feet and date from 1936 to 2003. The papers document his career as an artist and administrator of the Virginia Art Institute through biographical material, correspondence, writings, personal business records, printed material, photographs, and scrapbooks. The bulk of the collection consists of photographs, slides, and albums of artwork by Traylor. Three scrapbooks document his education and early career through clippings, photographs, exhibition materials, and letters.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 7 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1944-1996 (5 folders; Box 1)
 - Series 2: Correspondence, 1943-2003 (7 folders; Box 1)
 - Series 3: Writings, circa 1944-1991 (0.3 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 4: Personal Business Records, circa 1950s-1984 (0.3 linear feet; Box 1)
 - Series 5: Printed Material, 1939-1998 (5 folders; Box 1)
 - Series 6: Photographic Material, 1936-1994 (1.6 linear feet; Boxes 2-3, 5-6)
 - Series 7: Scrapbooks, 1939-1956 (0.8 linear feet; Boxes 3-4, 6)
-

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Study and teaching
Art teachers -- California -- Los Angeles
Art teachers -- Virginia
Arts administrators -- California -- Los Angeles
Arts administrators -- Virginia
Painters -- California -- Los Angeles
Painters -- Virginia -- Charlottesville

Types of Materials:

Photographs
Scrapbooks

Names:

Virginia Art Institute

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1944-1996

5 Folders (Box 1)

Biographical material about Morton Traylor includes resumes, summaries, chronologies, and employment details. Also found are two resumes for his wife Maxine and various membership and identification cards for both. Military records include an honorary certificate signed by President Bill Clinton.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Data, 1950s-1992
Box 1, Folder 2	Biographical Information, Maxine H. Traylor, circa 1970s
Box 1, Folder 3	Membership and Identification Cards, 1948-1950s
Box 1, Folder 4	Military Records, circa 1944, 1996
Box 1, Folder 5	Unidentified Guest List, circa 1950s

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Correspondence, 1943-2003

7 Folders (Box 1)

Correspondence includes one file of letters from G. Randall Henniker, friend and executor of Traylor's artworks, and one file of letters from friend and fellow artist Hartwell Priest. Other correspondence found here is primarily professional in nature and concerns exhibitions, commissions, sales of artwork, and other projects. Researchers should note that letters can also be found among personal business records in Series 4 and within scrapbooks in Series 7.

Box 1, Folder 6	Randall Henniker, 1989-2003
Box 1, Folder 7	Hartwell Priest, 1969-1993
Box 1, Folder 8-12	General Correspondence, 1943-1993

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Writings, circa 1944-1991

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Writings include artist's statements and other writings by Traylor, primarily on the subjects of art, creativity, and technique. Some of his writings include multiple drafts, and some are identified as "Art Notes" or "Studio Notes." Also found are writings, mostly poems, by Maxine Traylor, and one notebook kept by an unidentified author, possibly Maxine.

Box 1, Folder 13	Artist Statements, circa 1955-1976
Box 1, Folder 14	Notebook, circa 1949-1951
Box 1, Folder 15-21	Writings and Notes by Morton Traylor, circa 1944-1991
Box 1, Folder 22	Writings by Maxine Traylor, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Personal Business Records, circa 1950s-1984

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Personal business records include price lists for Traylor's artwork, records of works donated to a charity auction, and purchase orders and other financial records for Traylor's sign-making business. The bulk of the records found here document Traylor's directorship of the Virginia Art Institute. Included are notes, correspondence, press clippings, enrollment forms, student records, instructor resumes, and a few financial and administrative records.

Box 1, Folder 23	Price Lists and Lists of Artwork, circa 1950s-1976
Box 1, Folder 24	WVPT Public Television Auction, 1977
Box 1, Folder 25-27	Records for Sign Business, circa 1975-1978
Box 1, Folder 28-34	Virginia Art Institute Records, 1966-1984

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Printed Material, 1939-1998

5 Folders (Box 1)

The small amount of printed material found here includes exhibition catalogs and checklists, *Pace* magazine cover layouts designed by Morton Traylor, and news clippings. A few miscellaneous items include travel brochures, press releases, and programs, not directly related to Traylor's career.

Box 1, Folder 35 Exhibition Catalogs and Checklists, circa 1955-1985

Box 1, Folder 36 *Pace* Magazine, 1939-1940

Box 1, Folder 37-38 News Clippings, circa 1950s-1998

Box 1, Folder 39 Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1950s-1996

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Photographic Material, 1936-1994

1.6 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3, 5-6)

Found here are personal photographs, primarily color snapshots, of Morton and Maxine Traylor. Photographs depict the couple at their home and studio and during travel. Also found are a set of photographs identified as "Photos by Erma." The bulk of the photographs in this series are color snapshots and slides of Traylor's artwork. Additionally there are photographs and slides of signs painted by Traylor. Three photograph albums include many photographs of artwork. One early album includes a few photographs of Traylor in his Los Angeles studio, painting in Rio during World War II, and at an exhibition.

Box 2, Folder 1-5	Personal Photographs, circa 1950s-1980s
Box 2, Folder 6	Photographs of Home and Studio, circa 1980s
Box 2, Folder 7	"Photos by Erma", circa 1940s
Box 2, Folder 8-9	Photographs of Artwork, Self-Portraits, circa 1950-1994
Box 2, Folder 10-18	Photographs of Artwork, circa 1950s-1990s
Box 2, Folder 19-21	Photographs of Signs, 1950s-1990s
Box 2, Folder 22-25	Slides of Artwork, circa 1970s-1980s
Box 3, Folder 1-2	Slides of Artwork, circa 1970s-1980s
Box 3, Folder 3	Slides of Signs, circa 1960s-1980s
Box 5, Folder 1	Photograph Album, 1939, circa 1970s-1980s
Box 5, Folder 2	Photograph Album, 1970s-1980s
Box 6, Folder 1	Photograph Album, 1936-1959
Box 6, Folder 2	Pages from Photograph Album, circa 1970s-1980s

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 7: Scrapbooks, 1939-1956

0.8 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4, 6)

Found here are four scrapbooks. One scrapbook documents the Traylor's honeymoon trip on the R.M.S. Queen Elizabeth to France. Other scrapbooks document Traylor's education and early career as an artist through photographs, letters, student records, award certificates, exhibition records, exhibition announcements and catalogs, news clippings, and published reproductions of his artwork.

Box 3, Folder 4-7	Honeymoon Scrapbook, 1947
Box 4, Folder 1	Scrapbook, 1948-1956
Box 6, Folder 3	Scrapbook, 1939-1946
Box 6, Folder 4	Scrapbook, 1940-1950

[Return to Table of Contents](#)