



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Section of Fine Arts selected administrative
records and correspondence

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Section of Fine Arts selected administrative records and correspondence
Identifier:	AAA.unstpbad
Date:	1934-1943
Extent:	19 microfilm reels
Creator:	United States. Public Buildings Administration. Section of Fine Arts
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Microfilmed 1966 from National Archives record group 121, records of the Public Buildings Service. Additional records of the Section are preserved at the National Archives. AAA has filmed and described separately, selected related records of the Treasury Relief Art Project (reels DC14-38) and the Public Works of Art Project (DC1-13 and DC112-115). Researchers may also wish to consult Edward Bruce's personal papers and those of Edward Rowan and Forbes Watson.

Acquisition Information

Series which were not filmed include: correspondence and reference file of Forbes Watson, 1935-1941; correspondence with artists, 1939-1942; correspondence of Alexander Abels, 1937; annual reports, 1935-42; miscellaneous reports, 1935-1939; bulletins of the Section, 1935-1941; announcements of competitions, 1935-1941; proposals to expend funds for murals and sculpture, 1935-1941;

Acquisition Information

case files concerning embellishments of federal buildings, 1934-1943; technical questionnaires; letters received and other records concerning completed murals and works of sculpture and their artists; biographical data file concerning artists, 1938; records concerning exhibitions, 1939-1942; records concerning the decoration of New York World's Fair buildings, 1937-1941;

Acquisition Information

records concerning the Marian Anderson mural project, 1939-1943; records concerning National Art Week, 1940-1941; records concerning national defense and war art projects, 1941-1942;

Acquisition Information

correspondence with and about artists in the civilian conservation corps camps, 1934-1937; file concerning the allocation of and receipt for works of art produced in civilian conservation corps camps, 1934-1937; location record of art works, 1933-1943; and card record by artist of completed works of art.

Location of Originals

Originals in the National Archives; record group 121, entries 122 and 124.

Available Formats

35mm microfilm reels DC38-DC43 & DC116-DC128 available for use at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Restrictions

Patrons must use microfilm copy.

Biographical / Historical

The Section of Fine Arts was initially established in 1934 under the Treasury Department as the Section of Painting and Sculpture, changing its name in 1938. In 1939, it was transferred (retaining its name) from the Treasury Dept. to the Public Buildings Administration of the newly created Federal Works Agency, until it was abolished in 1943. Its function was to decorate new federal buildings, but unlike the other New Deal art agencies, it was not a relief project and it awarded contracts through a juried system of competition. Edward Rowan was head of the Section from its beginning to late 1937 and during most of 1943. Edward Bruce was in charge during the intervening years. Forbes Watson served as editor of the Bulletin of the Section of Painting and Sculpture.

Scope and Contents

Selected textual records from the Public Buildings Administration Section of Fine Arts (1939-1943) and its two predecessor organizations in the Dept. of the Treasury, the Section of Painting and Sculpture (1934-1938) and Section of Fine Arts (1938-1939). The two series filmed include General Records of the Section (8 ft., reels DC38-43), containing correspondence, memoranda, reports, press releases, clippings, and photographs; and Correspondence of Edward Bruce (6 ft., reels DC116-128) concerning the various federal aid art programs. Each series has been described separately.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art and state -- United States
Federal aid to public welfare

Federal aid to the arts
New Deal, 1933-1939

Names:

Bruce, Edward, 1879-1943
Public Works of Art Project
Rowan, Edward Beatty, 1898-1946
Treasury Relief Art Project
United States. Dept. of the Treasury. Section of Fine Arts
United States. Dept. of the Treasury. Section of Painting and Sculpture
Watson, Forbes, 1880-1960

Container Listing

General records of the Section of Fine Arts, 1934-1943

8 Linear feet ((on 6 microfilm reels))

United States. Public Buildings Administration. Section of Fine Arts

Textual records of the Section of Fine Arts, and its predecessor organizations in the Dept. of the Treasury. Included are correspondence, memoranda, reports, processed administrative orders, press releases and clippings, and photographs, all concerning the administration and activities of the Section and various art programs of the Federal government. Also included is some correspondence (marked "Personal") of Edward Rowan with various other individuals and organizations concerned with the Section and its activities (reel DC43). A few scattered documents bear dates later than 1943.

General records of the Section: arranged alphabetically by subject or name of correspondent.

The materials microfilmed are 2 selected series from the National Archives record group 121 and have been microfilmed in their entirety.

35mm microfilm reels DC38-DC43 available for use at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Originals in the National Archives, Washington, D.C., Public Buildings Administration records (record group 121), entry 122 of Preliminary Inventory 110.

Names: Rowan, Edward Beatty, 1898-1946
 United States. Dept. of the Treasury. Section of Fine Arts
 United States. Dept. of the Treasury. Section of Painting and Sculpture

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Correspondence of Edward Bruce, 1934-1943

6 Linear feet ((on 13 microfilm reels))

United States. Public Buildings Administration. Section of Fine Arts

Bruce was director of the Public Works of Art Project until June 1934 when it became defunct. He was appointed director of the Treasury Dept. Section of Painting and Sculpture in October 1934, and served until his death, including its change of name to Section of Fine Arts in 1938, and its transfer to the Public Buildings Administration of the Federal Works Agency in July 1939, where it remained until it was shut down in June, 1943.

Correspondence with artists, architects, members of Congress and other individuals, government agencies, and various organizations; interoffice communications concerning the activities of the Section, art programs of the federal government, and related matters. Materials relate to the Public Works of Art Project and Treasury Relief Art Project as well as the Section, government art in time of war, and legislation.

The materials microfilmed are a selected series from the National Archives record group 121 and have been microfilmed in their entirety. AAA also has microfilmed records of the PWAP (reels DC1-13 and DC112-115), which include Bruce's files (reel DC8 in particular).

35mm microfilm reels DC116-DC128 available for use at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Originals in the National Archives, Washington, D.C., Public Buildings Administration records, record group 121, Preliminary Inventory entry 124.

Names: Bruce, Edward, 1879-1943
Treasury Relief Art Project
United States. Dept. of the Treasury. Section of Fine Arts
United States. Dept. of the Treasury. Section of Painting and Sculpture

Topic: Art and war

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