



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Alberto Vargas Papers, 1914-1985, in the Archives of American Art

Sarah Mundy

The processing of this collection received Federal support from the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center.

2019/01/23

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
Biographical / Historical.....	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	3
Series 1: Alberto Vargas Papers, 1914-1985.....	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Alberto Vargas papers
Date:	1914-1985
Identifier:	AAA.vargalbe
Creator:	Vargas, Alberto, 1896-1982
Extent:	0.8 Linear feet
Language:	The collection is in English and Spanish. A journal is in German and French.
Summary:	The papers of Peruvian born illustrator Alberto Vargas measure 0.8 linear feet and date from 1914 to 1985. The collection is comprised of awards and certificates; beauty pageant judging records; correspondence; a diary from 1915; a notebook and poems; pencil drawings; clippings, magazines, music album covers, and artwork reproductions; and photographs of Vargas, his family, at work related events, and works of art.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Alberto Vargas papers were donated in 1986 by Astrid Conte, Vargas's niece.

Available Formats

The collection is available on 35mm microfilm reel 4059 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Sarah Mundy in 2019.

Preferred Citation

Alberto Vargas papers, 1914-1985. 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.

Biographical / Historical

Alberto Vargas (1896-1981) was an illustrator in Southern California. Vargas was born in Peru and studied in Switzerland. He moved to New York City in 1916, but did not reach prominence until he moved to Southern

California in 1936, where he was employed to draw portraits for the major Hollywood studios. He later worked for *Esquire* Magazine and from the 1950s to the 1970s was a featured illustrator for *Playboy*. Vargas became famous for his illustrations of pin-up girls and his use of watercolor and airbrush combined. In 1974, Vargas's wife, Ana Mae, died. Her death affected him deeply and Vargas began working infrequently. In 1978, he published an autobiography that revived interest in his work. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Vargas illustrated music album covers for the band The Cars and Bernadette Peters. Vargas died in 1982.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Peruvian born illustrator Alberto Vargas measure 0.8 linear feet and date from 1914 to 1985. The collection is comprised of awards and certificates; beauty pageant judging records; correspondence; a diary from 1915; a notebook and poems; pencil drawings; clippings, magazines, music album covers, and artwork reproductions; and photographs of Vargas, his family, at work related events, and works of art.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as one series.

- Series 1: Alberto Vargas papers, 1914-1982 (Boxes 1-2, OVs 3-4; 0.8 linear feet)
-

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Latino and Latin American artists

Types of Materials:

Diaries

Drawings

Occupations:

Illustrators -- California -- Los Angeles

Container Listing

Series 1: Alberto Vargas Papers, 1914-1985

0.8 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2, OVs 3-4)

Scope and Contents: The collection is comprised of awards and certificates; beauty pageant judging records; correspondence; a diary from 1915; a notebook and poems written by Vargas to his wife; pencil drawings; printed material, including clippings, magazines, music album covers, and artwork reproductions; and photographs of Vargas, his family, at work related events, and works of art.

Box 1, Folder 1	Awards and Certificates, circa 1956-1966
Box 1, Folder 2	Biographical, Beauty Pageant Judge, circa 1967
Oversize 3	Biographical, Beauty Pageant Judge, circa 1967
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1915-1949
Box 1, Folder 4	Correspondence, 1950-1981
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence, undated
Box 1, Folder 6	Diary, 1915
Box 1, Folder 7	Notebook, 1941-1957 Notes: Includes work logs, letter drafts, and dialogue between several people.
Box 1, Folder 8	Poems, undated
Box 1, Folder 9	Pencil Drawings, undated
Box 1, Folder 10-12	Printed Material, 1932-1982 Notes: Includes artwork reproductions and clippings.
Oversize 4	Printed Material, 1930-1981 Notes: Includes magazines, clippings, artwork reproductions, and two album covers for the performer Bernadette Peters.
Box 2, Folder 1-2	Photographs, Personal, 1914-1980
Box 2, Folder 3-4	Photographs, Work Related, 1920s-1985
Oversize 3	Photographs, Work Related, 1944
Box 2, Folder 5	Photographs, Works of Art, circa 1970

Oversize 3 Photographs, Works of Art, circa 1970

Oversize 3 Wall Description, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)