



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

John Wilson papers

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	John Wilson papers
Date:	circa 1939-1993
Identifier:	AAA.wilsjohn
Creator:	Wilson, John, 1922-2015
Extent:	5 Microfilm reels 1 Cassette (Sound recording; analog)
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Lent for microfilming 1993 by John W. Wilson, except for the 1979 sound recording which he lent for copying.

Location of Originals

Originals returned to John Woodrow Wilson after microfilming.

Available Formats

35mm microfilm reels 4876-4880 available at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Restrictions

Microfilm portion must be consulted on microfilm. Use of untranscribed interview requires an appointment.

Biographical / Historical

John Woodrow Wilson (1922-2015) was an African American painter, sculptor, illustrator, printmaker, and educator in Boston, Massachusetts. Wilson studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston under Ture Bengtz and Karl Zerbe, graduating in 1945. He lived in Paris through the MFA fellowship and studied with modern artist Fernand Leger. He then attended Tufts University, graduating in 1947. Wilson received a John Hay Whitney fellowship and lived in Mexico for five years with his wife, Julie Kowtich. After his return from Mexico in 1956, Wilson made artwork for Chicago labor unions and taught in New York City before returning to teach at Boston University in 1964. During his career, Wilson won competitions to execute statues of Martin Luther King, Jr. for the city of Buffalo, New York and for the Capitol Rotunda in Washington, D.C.

Scope and Contents

This microfilm collection of the papers of African American painter, sculptor, illustrator, printmaker, and educator John Woodrow Wilson contains biographical material such as autobiographical notes, school records, personal documents, and a bibliography; personal and business correspondence, undated and 1938-1993; files on the New York City Board of Education, 1959-1965, regarding his teaching; and project files, including Wilson's submission for the competition for a Frederick Douglass statue, *Eternal Presence*, *Father and Child Reading*, and Wilson's monuments and bust of Martin Luther King, Jr. Correspondents represented include the Albany Institute of History and Art, Atlanta University, Carnegie Institute, *Ebony*, David Porter of the G Place Gallery, the Institute of Modern Art, Alain Locke, Gloria May, the Museum of Modern Art, Frederick G. Rice, and Hale Woodruff.

Also included in the collection are files on exhibitions; notebooks, 1958-1960; lesson plans, 1959, 1963; notes, writings, and lectures, circa 1945-1993; transcripts of interviews of Wilson and related correspondence, 1978-1987; legal material, 1978; financial records 1944-1991, including a notebook of sales and expenses 1945-1950; photographs, 1940-1990, of Wilson, his work, sculpture, and exhibition installations; a scrapbook, 1939-1967; artwork, including sketchbooks, 1970-1992, life studies completed as a student, 1939-1947, and miscellaneous art work, 1939-1992; and printed material, 1939-1993, including exhibition catalogs, illustrated books and book jackets, and ephemera. The collection also includes a copy of a sound recording of an interview of Wilson conducted by Alan Trachtenberg, circa 1979 (untranscribed).

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- African American artists
- Painting, Modern -- 20th century -- United States
- Sculpture, Modern -- 20th century -- United States

Types of Materials:

- Drawings
- Interviews
- Scrapbooks
- Sound recordings

Names:

- Trachtenberg, Alan

Occupations:

- Educators -- Massachusetts -- Boston
- Painters -- Massachusetts -- Boston
- Sculptors -- Massachusetts -- Boston