



Smithsonian

Institution Archives

Committee Records, 1963-1971,
with related material from 1932

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Committee Records
Date:	1963-1971, with related material from 1932
Identifier:	Record Unit 633
Creator::	Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Committee to Save the Cooper Union Museum
Extent:	0.5 cu. ft. (1 document box)
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 633, Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Committee to Save the Cooper Union Museum, Committee Records

Historical Note

On June 25, 1963, the president and Board of Trustees of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art announced their plans to close the Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration. They temporarily closed the Museum in order to study the possibilities of dispersing the collections to other New York institutions. These actions aroused much comment in the press and among art patrons.

On July 9, 1963, the Committee to Save the Cooper Union Museum announced its formation to the Trustees of the Cooper Union. The Committee was chaired by Henry F. duPont, and eventually numbered 260 members. The Committee raised funds to form a charitable trust, and on September 17 it offered to assume responsibility for the Museum from the Cooper Union. However, in November the Trustees accepted an offer by the American Association of Museums (AAM) to form a committee of advisors to aid in the study of the Museum's future. Shortly thereafter, the Museum was reopened to the public.

On behalf of the Committee to Save the Cooper Union Museum, duPont asked the Smithsonian Institution to become responsible for the Museum. The AAM committee substantially endorsed duPont's proposal. On October 9, 1967, the Committee, the Trustees of the Cooper Union, and the Smithsonian jointly announced an agreement that the Museum and its library would be transferred to the Institution. The Committee to Save the Cooper Union Museum remained in existence to maintain the Cooper Union Museum Charitable Trust.

Descriptive Entry

These files were assembled by the management and staff of the Cooper Union Museum, and later the Cooper Hewitt Museum, to document their activities during discussions about the Museum's future and its transfer from the Cooper Union to the Smithsonian Institution from 1963 to 1970. The records contain correspondence and memoranda of Museum Directors Lisa Taylor, Richard P. Wunder, and Calvin S.

Hathaway; Administrator Christian Rohlfig; and Associate Curator of Exhibitions Edward Kallop reflecting their interaction with the Cooper Union administration, the Committee to Save the Cooper Union Museum, the Smithsonian Institution, and other museum professionals during the period. Also included are press releases, minutes of meetings, lists of Committee members, and information about funds raised by the Committee. In addition, the records contain copies of legal and technical documents regarding the transfer.

The Museum's relationship with the Smithsonian from 1932 to 1968, and with the Smithsonian's National Collection of Fine Arts from 1965 to 1971, is documented through files containing correspondence, memoranda, newsletters, press clippings, and invitations exchanged by administrators and curators of each institution regarding museum business.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art museums

Types of Materials:

Manuscripts

Names:

American Association of Museums
Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration
Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art
Cooper-Hewitt Museum
DuPont, Henry Francis, 1880-
Hathaway, Calvin S.
Kallop, Edward L.
National Collection of Fine Arts (U.S.)
Rohlfig, H. Christian
Taylor, Lisa, 1933-1991
Wunder, Richard P.

Container Listing

Box 1	
Box 1 of 1	Committee to Save the Museum, 1963-1970
Box 1 of 1	Museum: Committee to Save Cooper Union Museum, 1964-1966
Box 1 of 1	Smithsonian Institution Negotiations - Provisional Lease (General Counsel), 1966-1969
Box 1 of 1	Committee to Save the Cooper Union, 1963-1965 (file of Edward Kallop, Associate Curator of Exhibitions)
Box 1 of 1	Compendium of the Committee to Save the Cooper Union Museum, 1963
Box 1 of 1	Smithsonian Institution - National Collection of Fine Arts, 1965-1971
Box 1 of 1	Smithsonian Institution: Correspondence, 1932-1965
Box 1 of 1	Smithsonian Institution: Correspondence, 1966
Box 1 of 1	Smithsonian Institution: Correspondence, 1967
Box 1 of 1	Smithsonian Institution: Correspondence, 1968