



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

**A Finding Aid to the Josef Albers Papers,
1929-1970, in the Archives of American Art**

by Jean Fitzgerald

Funding for the digitization of this collection was
provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

2010 October 18

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Creator:	Albers, Josef
Title:	Josef Albers papers
Dates:	1929-1970
Quantity:	1.5 linear feet
Abstract:	The papers of painter, printmaker, and art teacher Josef Albers date from 1929 to 1970 and measure 1.5 linear feet. Found within the papers are biographical materials, writings, a recorded lecture, and photographs. The bulk of the collection consists of printed materials.
Language:	The papers are primarily in English and German, with some materials in Italian and French.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Josef Albers papers were donated by the artist in 1969 and 1970. A small collection of additional Albers papers and an audio recording of a lecture with an unknown provenance were integrated.

Related Material

Also found in the Archives is an oral history interview with Albers conducted by Sevim Fesci in 1968, and a collection of letters from Albers to J. B. Naumann that was loaned to the Archives by the Brooklyn Museum for microfilming and is available on microfilm reel 911.

Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2016 and is available on the Archives of American Art's website. Materials which have not been scanned include blank pages and duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages scanned.

Processing Information

Portions of the collection were microfilmed to reels N69-139 - N69-140, N70-48, and 2786. All accretions and two small small collections with an unknown provenance were merged and processed by Jean Fitzgerald in 2010. The collection was processed for digitization by Megan Bean and digitized in 2016. Funding for the digitization of the collection was provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Josef Albers papers, 1929-1970. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Ownership & Literary Rights

The Josef Albers 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 Note

Josef Albers (1888-1976) of Dessau, Germany, Black Mountain, North Carolina, and New Haven, Connecticut, was a painter, printmaker, and art teacher advocating a disciplined approach to composition, form, and color.

Josef Albers was born on March 19, 1888 in Bottrop, Westphalia, Germany, the only child of Lorenz Albers, a housepainter, and Magdalena (Schumacher) Albers. He attended the Präparanden-Schule in Langenhorst from 1902 to 1905 and then the teachers college in Büren, graduating in 1908. He became an instructor in several Westphalian primary schools.

Albers studied at the Royal Art School in Berlin, the Arts and Crafts School (Folkwang School) in Essen, and at the Art Academy in Munich under Franz Stuck before enrolling at the Bauhaus in Weimar in 1920. In 1923, he became an instructor and in 1925, when the school was transplanted to Dessau, he became a Bauhausmeister, teaching his fundamental design course. He remained in that position in Dessau and Berlin until 1933, when under pressure from National Socialism, the school was shut down. In that year, Albers emigrated to the United States, becoming a professor of painting at Black Mountain College in North Carolina.

In 1949, Albers moved to Yale University where he taught in the Department of Design and served as Chairman of the Art Department. Following his retirement in 1960, Albers continued to live in New Haven with his wife, textile artist Anni Albers.

Albers served as a guest teacher in Ulm, Germany, and in many colleges and art schools in the United States, Mexico, and South America. He was also an author of poems and books concerning art theory.

Josef Albers died on March 25, 1976 in New Haven, Connecticut.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of painter, printmaker, and art teacher Josef Albers date from 1929 to 1970 and measure 1.5 linear feet. Found within the papers are biographical materials, writings, a recorded lecture, and photographs. The bulk of the collection consists of printed materials.

Biographical material consists of a curriculum vitae, bibliographic lists, a transcript of a "Yale Reports" radio interview in which Albers discusses art as a part of general education, and a photocopy of a letter from Eugene W. Leake of the Maryland Institute discussing a work by Albers in the Baltimore Museum.

Writings and Lectures are primarily photocopies of poems and typescripts by Albers concerning his theories on art, as well as an sound tape reel recording of Albers delivering a lecture at Yale University. There are also photocopied typescripts about Albers written by others including a typescript "Josef Albers" by Hans Jean Arp.

Printed material primarily consists of clippings and exhibition announcements and catalogs, some of which are annotated by Albers. There are also two exhibition catalogs for Anni Albers, press releases, a copy of poetry publication *Origin 8*, 2 books by Albers, *Embossed Linear Compositions* and *Josef Albers: Poems and Drawings*, the book *American Abstract Artists, 1936-1966*, and miscellaneous brochures.

Photographs consist of two copies of the same image of Josef Albers pin registering one of his prints with Tamarind artisan Ken Tyler.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 4 series.

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1957-1970 (3 folders; Box 1)
Series 2: Writings and Lecture, 1936-1967 (5 folders; Box 1)
Series 3: Printed Material, 1929-1969 (1.3 linear feet; Boxes 1-3)
Series 4: Photographs, circa 1968 (1 folder; Box 2)

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Archives of American Art under the following terms:

Subjects:

Art--Philosophy
Art--Study and teaching
Art teachers
Painters
Printmakers

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Photographs
Poems
Sound recordings
Transcripts

Names:

Albers, Anni
Arp, Jean, 1887-1966
Baltimore Museum of Art.
Leake, Eugene, 1911-
Maryland Institute, College of Art.
Tyler, Kenneth E.

Series Descriptions/Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1957-1970

3 folders; Box 1

Biographical material consists of a curriculum vitae, bibliographic lists, a transcript of a radio interview, and a photocopy of a letter from Eugene W. Leake of the Maryland Institute.

Biographical materials are arranged by material type.

The series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Curriculum Vitae and Bibliography, 1966-1970
1	2	Interview Transcript, 1957
1	3	Letter from Eugene W. Leake, 1967

Series 2: Writings and Lecture, 1936-1967

5 folders; Box 1

Writings consist of photocopies of writings by Josef Albers and about Albers by others. There is also a recording on 1 sound tape reel of Albers delivering a lecture at Yale University.

Writings are arranged chronologically.

The series has been scanned in its entirety and the sound recording has been digitized for research access.

Box	Folder	
1	4	Writings by Josef Albers, circa 1936-1966
1	5	Albers Delivering a Lecture at Yale University, circa 1962 <i>1 sound tape reel; Duration 1 hour, 17 minutes</i>
1	6	Photocopy of Typescript, "Josef Albers" by Hans Jean Arp, circa 1962
1	7	Typescript, "Joseph Albers' Homage to the Square" by Juan Acha, 1964
1	8	Typescript, "Reflexions sur les Graphismes de Josef Albers" by Robert Le Ricolais, 1967

Series 3: Printed Material, 1929-1969

1.3 linear feet; Boxes 1-3

Printed material consists of clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs for Josef Albers, exhibition catalogs for Anni Albers, press releases, publications and books by and about Albers, and miscellaneous brochures.

Printed materials are arranged by material type and chronologically.

The series has been partially scanned. Duplicates, blank versoes, and blank pages have not been scanned. In some cases, printed materials have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages scanned.

Box	Folder
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1	9	Clippings, circa 1940-1955
1	10	Clippings, 1934-1935
1	11	Clippings, 1940-1946
1	12	Clippings, 1956 Oversized material housed in Box 3
1	13	Clippings, 1958 Oversized material housed in Box 3
1	14	Clippings, 1958 Oversized material housed in Box 3
1	15	Clippings, 1959 Oversized material housed in Box 3
1	16	Clippings, circa 1960 Oversized material housed in Box 3
1	17	Clippings, 1960
1	18	Clippings, 1962
1	19	Clippings, 1963
1	20	Clippings, 1964
1	21	Clippings, 1965 Oversized material housed in Box 3
1	22	Clippings, 1965 Oversized material housed in Box 3
1	23	Clippings, 1966
1	24	Clippings, 1967
1	25	Clippings, 1968 Oversized material housed in Box 3
1	26	Clippings, 1968 Oversized material housed in Box 3
1	27	Clippings, 1969
1	28	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1929-circa 1953
1	29	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1957
1	30	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1958-1959
1	31	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1960
1	32	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1961
1	33	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1962
1	34	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1962
1	35	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1963
1	36	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1963
1	37	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1963
1	38	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1964
1	39	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1964

1	40	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1964
1	41	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1964
1	42	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1965
1	43	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1965
1	44	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1966
1	45	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1966
1	46	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1967
1	47	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1967
1	48	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1968
1	49	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1968
1	50	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1968
1	51	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1968

Box	Folder	
2	1	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1969
2	2	Exhibition Catalogs for Anni Albers, 1959-1962
2	3	Press Releases, 1964-1969
2	4	Poetry Publication <i>Origin 8</i> , 1968
2	5	Book, <i>Josef Albers: Poems and Drawings</i> by Josef Albers, 1958
2	6	Book, <i>Graphic Tectonic</i> by Josef Albers, 1968
2	7	Book, <i>Embossed Linear Constructions</i> by Josef Albers, 1969
2	8	Book, <i>American Abstract Artists, 1936-1966</i> edited by the American Abstract Artists, 1966
2	9	Brochures for Art Work by Josef Albers, circa 1969
2	10	Miscellaneous Brochures, circa 1959

Box	Folder	
3	1	Oversized Clippings scanned with Box 1, Folders 12-16, 21-22, and 25-26, 1956-1968
3	2	Oversized Book scanned with Box 2, Folder 6, 1968

Series 4: Photographs, circa 1968

1 folder; Box 2

Photographs are of Josef Albers pin registering one of his prints with Tamarind artisan Ken Tyler.

The series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box	Folder	
2	11	Photographs of Albers and Ken Tyler, circa 1968