

# Guide to the Josef Albers Papers

MS 32



compiled by Diane E. Kaplan and Susan Jenkins

September 1989

Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
(203) 432-7441

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<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Manuscripts and Archives  
Yale University Library  
P.O. Box 208240  
New Haven, CT 06520-8240  
(203) 432-1735  
(203) 432-7441  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/>

**CALL NUMBER:** MS 32

**CREATOR:** Albers, Josef, 1888-1976

**TITLE:** Josef Albers papers

**DATES:** 1899-1973

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 13 linear feet (30 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The papers consist of correspondence, subject files, printed material, and family memorabilia, which document the personal life and professional career of Josef Albers. The papers contain some material relating to the Bauhaus school but the bulk of the material dates from Albers's arrival in the United States. The largest part of the papers is composed of published material by or about Albers or which contain reproductions of his work.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0032>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Manuscripts and Archives reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/mssa.ms.0032>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please go to [http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr\\_copy\\_order.html](http://www.library.yale.edu/mssa/ifr_copy_order.html). The information you will need to submit an order includes: the collection call number, collection title, series or accession number, box number, and folder number or name.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box  
f.      folder

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Josef Albers, 1960, and transfer from the Art and Architecture Library, 1985 and 1989.

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## Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Interaction of Color (Box 26) must be used under the supervision of a reference archivist.

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## Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

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## Preferred Citation

Josef Albers Papers (MS 32). Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library.

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## Biographical / Historical

Josef Albers was born in Bottrop, Germany, on March 19, 1888. He studied art in schools in Berlin, Essen, and Munich before joining the Bauhaus school in 1920. From the completion of his studies in 1923 until the school was closed by the Nazis in 1933, Albers remained at the Bauhaus as a teacher. In 1933 Albers joined the faculty of Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where he remained until 1950 when he accepted an appointment as chairman of the Yale University Department of Design. He retired in 1958 and died on March 25, 1976.

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## Scope and Contents

The Josef Albers Papers consist of correspondence, subject files, printed material, and family memorabilia, which document the personal life and professional career of Josef Albers. The earliest material in the papers reflects Albers family history and his work at the Bauhaus in Germany. The bulk of the material, however, dates from Albers arrival in the United States to teach at Black Mountain College. The largest part of the papers is composed of books, magazines, clippings, and exhibition catalogues, which are either about Albers or which contain his writings or reproductions of his works.

Manuscripts and Archives received some of the papers from Josef Albers in 1960. Material which had been collected by the Art and Architecture Library was added to the papers in 1985. This material, in the form of bound folios of printed works by and about Albers, is arranged together with the materials received from Albers in five sections: Correspondence, Subject files, Exhibition catalogs and reproductions of Albers's work, Writings by Albers, and Memorabilia. Oversized material from these sections has been arranged at the end of the collection. Most of the material is in English but there are many items in German.

The correspondence in the papers, most of which is filed in the section Correspondence, is fragmentary and consists of only occasional exchanges with a number of personal friends. Only the correspondence with Hans and Sophie Arp, Willi Baumeister, Katherine S. Dreier, Lyonel Feininger, Walter Gropius, Wassily Kandinski, and Oskar Schlemmer is more extensive. Many of the letters in Correspondence concern arrangements for Albers's positions at Black Mountain College, Harvard University, and Yale University. A file of congratulatory letters on Albers's Yale appointment is included in the subject file "Yale University" and there is some correspondence relating to Albers's family history in folder 266. The subject file on the Bauhaus also includes correspondence and other documentation concerning Albers's affiliation with and departure from the school.

Subject files also include some material on the life and work of Albers's wife Anni Albers, printed material on Black Mountain College, and Albers's annual reports as head of the Department of Design to the

president of Yale University. The vast majority of this section, however, consists of writings about Albers. These files include books, magazines, and newspaper articles in which Albers's life and work are described. These materials are arranged chronologically by publication date.

The two sections Exhibitions catalogs and reproductions of Albers's work and Writings by Albers are very similar in content, both containing printed copies of Albers's works and writings. The section of writings includes articles, poems, and books by Albers. An exhibition catalog or volume honoring Albers, which incorporates statements or poems by Albers's along with reproductions of his work might also be seen as a writing. Since the container listing does not provide an item by item listing for each catalog and article, the reader is cautioned to search both sections to locate specific published items. Each section is arranged chronologically by date of publication. Lists, which were created as contents lists to the portfolios transferred from the Art and Architecture Library, (folder 264) may be helpful in determining the variety and titles of material filed in the two sections.

In addition, the writings section includes draft copies for lectures, speeches, and other writings by Albers. Several of these relate to Black Mountain College and include remarks at Black Mountain College luncheons in New York City and copy for the Black Mountain College catalogs. Printed copies of these catalogs are in the subject files. The exhibitions section includes photographs of some exhibits and announcements and other publicity for exhibits, even if there is no catalog for the exhibit in the file. The files of reproductions of Albers's work include printed copies of Albers's work used in a variety of ways. These include a geometry textbook using a painting as an illustration, a museum appointment calendar of works by several artists, publicity for the sale of Albers's work which includes facsimile reproductions, and the Alberses' Christmas cards (folder 166).

Memorabilia includes citations and awards which Albers received, personal photographs, and family papers. The personal papers document Albers's family in Germany and include copies of several official documents relating to births, deaths, and marriages.

## Collection Contents

### Correspondence

b. 1, f. 1	Arp, Hans Jean & Sophie Tauber-Arp A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.	1933-1957
b. 1, f. 2	Barr, Alfred H. Jr.	1929, 1933, 1937, 1950, 1953
b. 1, f. 3	Baumeister, Willi	1934-1948
b. 1, f. 4	Bennington College	1934, 1936
b. 1, f. 5	de Kooning, Willem A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.	1951
b. 1, f. 6	Dreier, Katherine S.	1936-1940
b. 1, f. 7	Dreier, Theodore	1933
b. 1, f. 8	Feild, Robert D.	1937-1938
b. 1, f. 9	Feininger, Lyonel A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.	1934-1955
b. 1, f. 10	Gropius, Walter and family A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.	1921-1958, undated
b. 1, f. 11	Harvard University. Graduate School of Design See also: <a href="#">box 1, folder 8</a>	1936-1942
b. 1, f. 12	Hayes, Roland	1945
b. 1, f. 12	Howe, George	1954
b. 1, f. 13	Jawlensky, Alexej von	1941, 1953
b. 1, f. 14	Johnson, Philip A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.	1933-1934
b. 1, f. 15	<a href="#">Kandinsky, Wassily and N</a>	1934-1940, 1951
b. 1, f. 16	Klee, Paul	1936-1940
b. 1, f. 16	Kline, Franz	1951

b. 1, f. 17	Lippold, Richard	1952, 1956
b. 2, f. 18	Marcks, Gerhard	1934, 1950, 1953
b. 2, f. 19	Mérida, Carlos	1924, undated
b. 2, f. 20	Moholy-Nagy, László	1937-1938
b. 2, f. 21	Mondrian, Piet	1941
b. 2, f. 21	Muche, George	1951
b. 2, f. 22	Ozenfant, Amédée	1941, 1950
b. 2, f. 22	Papadaki, Stamo	1938
b. 2, f. 23	Schlemmer, Oskar A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.	1934-1938
b. 2, f. 24	Schwitters, Kurt & Helma A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.	1935-1937
b. 2, f. 25	Schlemmer, Tut	1950-1959, undated
b. 2, f. 26	Wilder, Thornton	1934-1935
b. 2, f. 26	Winter, Fritz	1949
b. 2, f. 27	Yale University A copy of this material is available in digital form from Manuscripts and Archives. Contact Manuscripts and Archives at <a href="mailto:beinecke.library@yale.edu">beinecke.library@yale.edu</a> to request access to the digital copy.	1948-1959
b. 2, f. 28	Miscellaneous	1933-1969, undated
<u>Subject files</u>		
b. 3, f. 29	Albers, Anni See also: <a href="#">box 29</a>	1946-1963
b. 3, f. 30-33	<a href="#">Bauhaus</a>	1923-1939, 1953
b. 3, f. 34-37	<a href="#">Black Mountain College</a> See also: <a href="#">box 1, folder 7</a>	1935-1948, undated
Writings about Albers		
b. 3, f. 38	Alphabetized personal comments	1934-1958, undated
b. 3, f. 39-40	Books and magazines	1928-1936

Writings about Albers (continued)

b. 4, f. 41-48	Books and magazines	1937-1950
b. 5, f. 49-57	Books and magazines	1951-1956
b. 6, f. 58-61	Books and magazines	1956-1957
b. 7, f. 62-68	Books and magazines	1958-1960
b. 8, f. 69-75	Books and magazines	1960-1962
b. 9, f. 76-84	Books and magazines	1963-1967
b. 10, f. 85-91	Books and magazines	1968-1971, n. d.
b. 10, f. 92-95	Newspaper articles	1933-1948
b. 11, f. 96-103	<a href="#">Newspaper articles</a>	1949-1965, n. d.
b. 11, f. 104-105	Yale University	1948-1958
<u>Exhibition catalogs and reproductions of Albers's work</u>		
See also: Box 29		
b. 12, f. 106-113	Catalogues and pamphlets	1932-1953 April 12
b. 13, f. 114-120	Catalogues and pamphlets	1953 April 13-1957 June 15
b. 14, f. 121-127	Catalogues and pamphlets	1957 June 16-1959
b. 15, f. 128-132	Catalogues and pamphlets	1960
b. 16, f. 133-138	Catalogues and pamphlets	1961 January-1962 January 7
b. 17, f. 139-144	Catalogues and pamphlets	1962 January-1963 March
b. 18, f. 145-155	Catalogues and pamphlets	1963 April-1967
b. 19, f. 156-160	Catalogues and pamphlets	1968-1973, undated
b. 20, f. 161	Photographs of exhibitions	1934-1957
b. 20, f. 162-167	Reproductions of Albers's work	1934-1951
b. 21, f. 168-191	Reproductions of Albers's work	1952-1969, undated
<u>Writings by Albers</u>		
b. 22, f. 192-209	<a href="#">Articles and interviews by Albers</a>	1935-1946, 1952-1958



b. 23, f. 210-224	<a href="#">Articles and interviews by Albers</a>	1958-1961
b. 24, f. 225-236	<a href="#">Articles and interviews by Albers</a>	1961-1962
b. 25, f. 237-249	<a href="#">Articles and interviews by Albers</a> See also: <a href="#">box 29, folder 275</a>	1963-1969, undated
<u>Books</u>		
	<i>Homage to the Square</i> See: <a href="#">box 30</a>	
b. 26	<i>Interaction of Color</i> English <i>Interaction of Color</i> must be used under the supervision of Manuscripts and Archives staff.	1963
	Interviews with Albers See: Historical Sound Recordings	1965-1967
b. 27, f. 250-262	Lectures and speeches	1928-1946
b. 27, f. 263	Unidentified	undated
<u>Memorabilia</u>		
b. 28, f. 264	Bibliographic data	1928-1968, undated
b. 28, f. 265	Citations and awards See also: <a href="#">box 29, folder 271</a>	1932-1962, undated
b. 28, f. 266	Personal papers	1899-1949
b. 28, f. 267	Photographs, including passports	1930, 1935, 1961
b. 28, f. 268	Publicity	1944, 1959-1966, undated
b. 28, f. 269	Miscellanea	1953, 1961-1963, undated
<u>Oversized material</u>		
b. 29, f. 270	Anni Albers scrapbook	1943-1973
b. 29, f. 271	Citations and awards	1931-1959
b. 29, f. 272-273	Reproductions of Albers' work	1960, undated
b. 29, f. 274	<a href="#">Writings about Albers</a>	1962, 1964, 1969, undated
b. 29, f. 275	Writings by Albers	1968, undated
b. 29, f. 276	Miscellanea	1940

b. 30

*Homage to the Square*  
English

1962

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Art, Modern -- 20th Century  
Artists -- United States

### **Genres / Formats**

Exhibit catalogs

### **Occupations**

Painters

### **Names**

Albers, Anni, 1899-1994  
Albers, Josef, 1888-1976  
Arp, Jean, 1887-1966  
Baumeister, Willi, 1889-1955  
Dreier, Katherine S. (Katherine Sophie),  
1877-1952  
Feininger, Lyonel, 1871-1956  
Gropius, Walter, 1883-1969  
Kandinsky, Wassily, 1866-1944  
Schlemmer, Oskar, 1888-1943  
Taeuber-Arp, Sophie, 1889-1943

### **Corporate Bodies**

Bauhaus  
Black Mountain College (Black Mountain, N.C.)  
Harvard University. Graduate School of Design  
Yale University. School of Art and Architecture  
Yale University -- Faculty