Bernard “Tony” Rosenthal, (1914—)

Papers, 1940s-2000
4 linear ft.

Acquisition Number: 2000-07


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Citation: Bernard (Tony) Rosenthal Papers, Cranbrook Archives, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

Photographs: In Photograph Special File.

Audio/Video: An interview with Tony Rosenthal conducted by Trudie Grace in 1998 is stored separately in the Audio Cassette Tape Collection, Tapes 221 to 225. (See addendum to this finding aid for an index of the interview.) A helical scan V-30H video is stored in Box 6, and should be removed at a later time for appropriate storage.

Index: An alphabetical index can be located at the end of the finding aid.

Processing: Karen Turlay processed the collection and created a finding aid in April 2003.
Biographical Note

Bernard Joseph “Tony” Rosenthal was born 9 August 1914 in Highland Park, Illinois. He attended the University of Michigan from 1932 to 1936 where he studied psychology, worked for the Michigan Daily, and took the two art classes offered, drawing and sculpture. After graduation, he returned to Chicago and took a sculpture class from Alexander Archipenko. He worked for Archipenko and Saks Fifth Avenue, and taught sculpture classes in a garage that he used as a studio.

In 1939, Tony Rosenthal attended the Cranbrook Academy of Art to study sculpture with Carl Milles. There he met and became friends with Charles Eames, Florence Schust Knoll, Eero Saarinen, and others. During World War II, Rosenthal commanded a unit that created topographical models of terrain. After the war, he taught sculpture at the U.S. Army University in Biarritz, France. There he met and married Halina Kotlowicz. In 1946, the Rosenthals moved to California at the suggestion of Charles and Ray Eames. Rosenthal’s first solo exhibition was in 1947 in Monterey. Working on commission for several architectural firms, Rosenthal created a number of sculptures for buildings. He also worked for John Entenza, the publisher of Arts & Architecture, and taught sculpture at UCLA. While still living in California, Rosenthal became affiliated with the Catherine Viviano Gallery in New York City.


Tony Rosenthal has had twenty-five solo exhibitions and has participated in numerous group exhibitions. He has been a guest lecturer for several events, and also performed in a play by Pablo Picasso at the Guggenheim Museum. For more detailed information about Rosenthal’s career, see the book, Tony Rosenthal.

Scope and Content

This collection is divided into four series: BIOGRAPHICAL, ART PRODUCTION, TEACHING CAREER, and OVERSIZED MATERIALS. The BIOGRAPHICAL and ART PRODUCTION series are further divided into subseries. Folders in each series are arranged in alphabetical or chronological order, and each folder’s contents are arranged in chronological order.
The BIOGRAPHICAL series contains items related to Tony and Halina Rosenthal and their friends, as well as materials used in production of the book, Tony Rosenthal. Included in the BIOGRAPHICAL series are articles about Rosenthal, ephemera, newspaper and magazine clippings, and sketches. Of particular interest are two sketches by Florence Schust Knoll Bassett.

The ART PRODUCTION series consists primarily of printed materials, publications, and correspondence from the 1940s to 2000. This series is divided into the following subseries: Awards/Recognitions, Correspondence, Events, Exhibitions, Financial Records, Legal Records, Project Files, Notes, Printed Materials, and Publications.

The bulk of Tony Rosenthal’s correspondence dates from the 1950s to the 1990s and deals with the commission, completion, installation, and exhibition of his sculptures. Some of the correspondents of note include Roy Slade (president of the Cranbrook Academy of Art from 1977 to 1995), Helen Frankenthaler, Doris C. Freedman, and Florence Schust Knoll Bassett. Tony Rosenthal donated the letters he had received from Carl Milles to Cranbrook Archives prior to donating his collection. These letters are not included in this collection.

Most of the publications found in Boxes 2-5 are exhibition catalogs from the 1940s to the 1990s. They are divided into Solo Exhibitions and Group Exhibitions. In addition, the Publications subseries includes annual reports, award catalogs, gallery catalogs, and invitations. The printed materials are mainly clippings from newspapers and magazines regarding Rosenthal’s exhibitions and specific sculptures from the 1950s to the 1990s. This subseries also contains press releases and an article written by Tony Rosenthal. At the end of Box 6 is the folder containing the TEACHING CAREER series with information on the California School of Design.

The OVERSIZED MATERIALS series contains two scrapbooks, a folder of oversize photographs, and a large exhibition catalog. The scrapbooks contain mostly clippings from newspaper and magazines relating to Rosenthal’s sculptures. There were loose items in the scrapbooks including photographs, clippings, correspondence, and exhibition catalogs that were removed to the appropriate folders. The oversize photographs include pictures of “Cranbrook Cube” and “Alamo.” The exhibition catalog is from a 1970 exhibition that included Rosenthal’s “Cube in Seven Parts,” first shown in Detroit.

Related Collections

- Carl Milles, Papers, (G7; G95).
- See also CAA Photographs and Slide Collections, and Audio Cassette Tape Collection.
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--Yale Art Gallery, 1:24

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**Tape 1, Side A**

High school  
Commercial arts school  
Mother, an opera singer  
Father, in fur business, advised Tony to take psychology of advertising  
University of Michigan  
Michigan Daily  
Great Depression  
Father Charles Coughlin  
Anti-Semitism, at University of Michigan  
Drawing and sculpture classes  
Abard Fairbanks, instructor of sculpture at U of M  
Alexander Archipenko  
Sister, admiration for their father  
Jerry E. Rosenthal, brother, editor of Milwaukee *Sentinal*, from Kennedy to Carter administrations worked on nightly broadcast from the State Department, sailing with Tony on weekends  

Chicago  
Thanksgiving dinner 1936  
Garage, rented for studio, conducted classes  
Saks 5th Avenue  
William Pereira, architect  
1939 World’s Fair, “Nubian Slave”  
Granite, marble carving  
Terra cotta molds

**Tape 1, Side B**

Archipenko, work for, difficulty in understanding  
Carl Milles, fountain in gallery in Chicago, first meeting, influence on work  
American Express, damaged sculptures in shipping  
1939 World’s Fair  
Cranbrook, first day, beauty of grounds, atmosphere too idyllic  
Charles Eames  
Eero Saarinen  
Florence Schust Knoll Bassett  
Knoll Furniture  
Chicago, stone carving, “Artists for Victory” show, art institute  
Mexico, 1940  
World War II, drafted but 4-F because sick with dysentery.

[Rosenthal’s activities during the War not included in the oral history narrative]
**Tape 2, Side A**

California
Charles Eames
Eero Saarinen
Halina Rosenthal
John Entenza
Arts & Architecture Magazine
UCLA, Rosenthal taught sculpture for two years
Welton, Beckett & Co., architects
William Pereira, architect, IBM headquarters on Wilshire
Gateway Buildings
“Ballet Dancers”
Associated American Artists Galleries show, 1950
William “Billy” Goetz, Paramount Studios
General Petroleum Building, L.A.
Mildred Jaffee
Catherine Viviano Gallery
Sam Kootz
Casting, welding, methods of
Europe, trip

**Tape 2, Side B**

Studio fire, 1956
“The Family Group,” L.A.
Catherine Viviano Gallery exhibition, 1958
Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh exhibition, 1959
Sam Kootz
Picasso, Communist Party
Move from Malibu to New York City
Herbert Ferber
Mark Rothko
Adolph Gottlieb
Hans Knoll
Kootz Gallery, move from Catherine Viviano Gallery
Halina Rosenthal, rheumatoid arthritis
East Hampton

**Tape 3, Side A**

East Hampton, purchase of land and house, first summer
Sam Kootz, retirement
Frank Lloyd
Creativity, while working on several commissions at once
Gertrude Kasle Art Gallery, Detroit
M. Knoedler & Co. Gallery, New York
Xavier Fourcade, at Knoedler’s
Susan Morse Hilles, paid for construction of “Alamo”
“Rondo,” 58th Street
Henry Moore
“Megapole,” 1966 show at Kootz, as precursor to cubes

**Tape 3, Side B**

Cubes, after January 1966 show, progression of style
“Cranbrook Ingathering”
“Element ‘H’ x 5,” P.S. 1 (The Institute for Art and Urban Resources), Queens
“Steel Park”
Rauschenberg, admiration for
Rosenthal’s tendency toward sophisticated design
Frank Stella
Cynthia Dillon Rosenthal
Tony Smith, Rosenthal’s admiration for Smith’s Bryant Park show, sympathy for Tony Smith because of his background.
Donald Judd
Richard Serra
Rosenthal, perception as an ‘architectural sculptor,’ facility for imagining pieces within an architectural space
“Rondo,” critique of
“Cranbrook Ingathering,” critique of

**Tape 4, Side A**

M. Knoedler & Co. Gallery show, 1968
“5 in 1,” competition for construction, composition and construction, 10-inch square tubing
“Hammarskjold”
Ravinia Music Festival, Highland Park, Illinois
“J.S. Bach Fugue” and “J.S. Bach Variation”
Cubes, locations of: Astor Place, New York City
University of Michigan
Miami, for Martin Margulies
Connecticut College, New London
Guild Hall, East Hampton
Cranbrook Cube
Greenwich, private collector

Changes in the art/sculpture world ➔ fewer opportunities
Changes in Rosenthal’s cubes, from more active and intricate to less busy and more
Tony Smith
“Kepaakala,” Honolulu, Hawaii

**Tape 4, Side B**

“5 in 1,” scale of, referred to as “Mickey Mouse” and attributed to Claes Oldenburg, fabrication and installation
“Rondo”
“Odyssey,” shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art and then sent to Antwerp, Belgium
Locations of other editions of “Odyssey”: San Diego, Yale University, Miami collector (Miami “Odyssey” had first belonged to an East Hampton collector)
Xavier Fourcade
Oregon International Sculpture Symposium, 1974
John Chamberlain
Dimitri Hadzi
“Hammarskjold,” Fashion Institute of Technology, led to pieces such as “Steel Park” and “Cranbrook Ingathering”
Pieces not referred to by name: one bombed in Israel; another that was in front of the State Department in Washington D.C. and then moved to the National Press Club Building where it disappeared.

**Tape 5, Side A**

“Hammarskjold”
Grace Glueck
Rosenthal’s interest in design, architecture, thoughts on his work in the late 1990s
“5 in 1”
“Odyssey,” Philadelphia Metropolitan Hospital
“Seated Woman with Bird,” relationship between this 1950s piece and work in late 1990s
“Hammarskjold II,” Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York