

Theodore Milton Wassmer papers, 1930-2006

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Wassmer, Theodore Milton, 1910-
Title	Theodore Milton Wassmer papers
Dates	1930-2006 (inclusive) 1930 2006
Quantity	11 linear feet
Collection Number	Ms0655
Summary	The Theodore Milton Wassmer papers consist of various materials that illustrate the personal and professional life of Wassmer as a successful artist, as well as many other artists whose work he collected.
Repository	University of Utah Libraries, Special Collections. Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library University of Utah 295 South 1500 East Salt Lake City, UT 84112-0860 Telephone: 801-581-8863 SPCreference@lists.utah.edu
Access Restrictions	Twenty-four hour advanced notice encouraged. Materials must be used on-site. Access to parts of this collection may be restricted under provisions of state or federal law.
Languages	English

Historical Note

Theodore Milton Wassmer was born on 23 February 1910 to Hester Hall and Theodore James Wassmer in Salt Lake City, Utah. He was the first of eight children to be born to the family.

Wassmer's interest in painting did not begin until 1927 at age 17, when he was given his first set of oil paints. Up to that time, he had never been exposed to oil painting or artists. By selling his artwork, he saved enough money to go to the Chicago World's Fair of 1934, where he was greatly impressed by displays of Old Masters and Impressionists. For the next five years, Wassmer worked days in a hardware store, while studying landscape and mural painting at night, and on weekends with mural painter Florence E. Ware. He also worked as a model and background painter for Ms. Ware, who painted the University of Utah's Kingsbury Hall murals under a WPA project grant, which was headed in Utah at the time by his future wife Judy Farnsworth Lund. In 1939 Wassmer rented the top floor apartment of a brownstone house on the corner of 2nd Avenue and "E" Street, referring to it as his penthouse studio. During the very productive 2 1/2 years he stayed there, he held one-man art shows, and received many prominent visitors in the art and music world.

A talent scout from Paramount Studios approached him in 1941. A screen test was arranged in Hollywood, which resulted in the offer of a contract. Unfortunately, Wassmer never had to make the decision between art and films, as it was made for him by the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. In January 1942 Wassmer enlisted in the Air Force, and spent three years at Sheppard Field in Wichita

Falls, Texas. In his off duty hours, he painted large murals in the recreation building. Due to a freak accident in July 1944, Wassmer's right arm, which was his painting arm, was paralyzed. He was sent to Bushnell General Hospital in Brigham City for treatment. He began painting with his left arm, and created a large mural for the hospital wall. He was discharged from the Air Force in October 1945 as a sergeant, but only had 10% use of his right arm.

Wassmer married Judy Farnsworth Lund in December 1945 in New York City. They left for Cape Cod where they spent the summer painting. The two studied painting at the Art Student's League in New York City and Woodstock. After focusing on learning portrait painting, he opened a studio in the Carnegie Hall tower in New York City. He spent two years painting portraits, but decided it wasn't for him. He turned his study to Cezanne, impressionistic and post impressionistic painting, observing and copying from originals. To further their art education, Wassmer and Lund made two trips to Europe to study the museums of Spain and Italy. The couple purchased an old stone house in the rural setting of Bearsville, New York, in 1952. They made painting studios out of two garages. Here they continued to live for the next 30 years, where she worked on portraits, and he worked on exhibiting across the country. Many of his paintings are centered on dance and theater. He was never able to paint large canvasses again due to his injuries. The stone house was sold in 1985, and the couple returned to Salt Lake City. From their personal art collection of American and European painters, they donated over 700 works to the Springville Museum of Art in Springville, Utah, to Snow College in Ephraim, Utah, and to the Brigham City Museum. These collected paintings are known as the Lund-Wassmer Collections. In 1990, the Springville Museum of Art held a 60 year retrospective show (1930-1990) of 100 of Wassmer's works from around the country. There are in existence over 2000 paintings by Ted Wassmer that are in private collections, or in museums at colleges or schools around the United States and Europe.

Content Description

The Theodore Milton Wassmer papers is made up of various materials that illustrate the personal and professional life of Wassmer as a successful artist, as well as many other artists whose work he collected.

The collection is comprised of nineteen boxes. Boxes 1-3 contain general material on Wassmer's paintings, but also have biographical information. Specifically, box 1 has background on Wassmer's first studio, his penthouse studio in the Avenues area of Salt Lake City, as well as biographical information on the artists Florence Ware and Judy Lund, Wassmer's wife. Box 2 has information on Wassmer's brief Hollywood career and successful military career. Boxes 4-7 contain correspondence of Ted Wassmer and Judy Lund, with various friends and associates, arranged alphabetically. Boxes 8-10 house information pertaining to the art collection of Wassmer and Lund. It is an alphabetical listing of their collection of various artist's works that are located in Utah at the Springville Museum of Art and Snow College. Box 11 holds information on the "Wassmer Retrospective" that occurred at the Springville Museum of Art in 1990, reviewing Wassmer's career as a painter. Also, a list of his exhibitions of not only his work, but of the various artists collected by Wassmer and Lund. Box 12 is a collection of catalogues from the Springville Museum of Art, and a Wassmer painting on the cover of Dialogue. The remaining boxes include general materials.

Use of the Collection

Restrictions on Use

It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain any necessary copyright clearances.

Permission to publish material from the Theodore Milton Wassmer papers must be obtained from the Special Collections Manuscript Curator.

Preferred Citation

Initial Citation: Theodore Milton Wassmer papers, Ms 655, Box []. Special Collections and Archives. University of Utah, J. Willard Marriott. Salt Lake City, Utah.

*Following Citations:*Ms 655.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Boxes 1-12 were donated by Theodore Wassmer in 1992.

Box 13, folders 1-7, was donated by Theodore Wassmer in December 2000.

Box 13, folder 8, was donated by Theodore Wassmer in 1997 and 1999.

Box 14 was donated by Theodore Wassmer in April 2003.

Boxes 15-18 were donated by Theodore Wassmer in August 2003.

Box 19 was donated by Theodore Wassmer in 2004.

Processing Note

Processed by Jane Brinkerhoff and Lisa DeMille from 1993-2004.

Box 19 processed by Betsey Welland in 2012.

Separated Materials

Photographs and audio-visual materials were transferred to the Multimedia Division of Special Collections (P0839 and A0602).

Related Materials

See also the [Utah Artists Project](#) for examples of Wassmer's artwork.

See also the [Julia Farnsworth Lund Wassmer papers](#) (Accn 1599) located in the Manuscripts Division of Special Collections.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Wassmer Biographical Materials and Paintings

Box1

Theodore Milton Wassmer papers, 1930-2006
<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv80560>

Container(s)	Description
Box	
1	
Folder	
1	Biography
2	Astrological Chart
3-5	Penthouse Studio
6-7	Hollywood and Military Service
8	List of Paintings
9-12	Paintings

Wassmer Paintings

Box2

Also includes some Florence Ware and Judy Farnsworth Lund paintings.

Wassmer Paintings

Box3

Lund/Wassmer Correspondence, A-E

Box4

Also includes mailing lists.

Lund/Wassmer Correspondence, F-M

Box5

Lund/Wassmer Correspondence, Mc-S

Box6

Lund/Wassmer Correspondence, T-Z

Box7

Lund/Wassmer Art Collection

Box8

Container(s)	Description
Box	
8	
Folder	
1-6	Springville Museum of Art, Artist Surnames, A-R

Lund/Wassmer Art Collection

Box9

Container(s)	Description
Box	
9	
Folder	
1-3	Springville Museum of Art, Artist Surnames, S-Z
4-6	Snow College, Artist Surnames, A-K

Lund/Wassmer Art Collection

Box10

Container(s)	Description
Box	
10	
Folder	
1-4	Snow College, Artist Surnames, L-Z

Wassmer Retrospective and Exhibitions

Box11

Container(s)	Description
Box	
11	
Folder	
1-5	Wassmer Retrospective
6	Wassmer Exhibitions
7-8	Lund/Wassmer Exhibitions

Catalogs and Miscellaneous

Box12

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
12		
Folder		
1-2	Exhibition Catalogs	
3	Dialogue One of Wassmer's paintings graces the cover of this volume.	1992
4	Miscellaneous	

Wassmer Materials, 1940-2000

Box13

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		

Container(s)	Description	Dates
13		
Folder		
1	Letters	1995-2000
2	Biographical Information	
Volume		
1	Theodore Milton Wassmer, " Color, the Catalyst!"	
Folder		
3	Alice Morrey Bailey, " Art Angels"	
4	Parley Williams Mansion	1997
5	News Articles	1940-2000
6	Pamphlets, Programs, and Exhibition Catalogs	1980s-1990s
7	Miscellaneous	
8	General Materials	1955-1997

Scrapbook and Register, 2002

Box14

Correspondence, 1939-1999

Box15

Correspondence, 2000-2003

Box16

Correspondence, 2003

Box17

General Materials, 1979-2003

Box18

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
18		
Folder		
1	Personal Materials	
2	Biographies	
3	Art Abstracts and Essays	2002
4	Invitations	2000-2002
5	Photograph and Artwork Reproductions	
6	News Articles	1979-2003
7	Miscellaneous	

General Materials, 1995-2006

Box19

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box		
19		
Folder		
1	Correspondence	1999-2006
2	" Someone Up There Didn't Want Me Overseas," World War II, 1942-1945 This folder contains a personal account of Wassmer's experience in World War II.	
3	Artwork	
4	Biographical Timeline	2006

Container(s)	Description	Dates
5	Declaration and Resolution in Honor of Theodore Milton Wassmer	2005
6	Exhibit Announcements	
7	Obituary Materials	2006
8	News Clippings	1995-2006

Names and Subjects

Subject Terms :

Dwellings--Utah--Salt Lake City
Painters--New York (State)--New York
Painters--Utah--Salt Lake City
Painting--Exhibitions

Personal Names :

Lund, Judy Farnsworth, 1911-1996--Archives
Wassmer, Theodore Milton, 1919- --Archives

Form or Genre Terms :

Correspondence
Exhibition catalogs
Lists

Finding aid created by Jane Brinkerhoff
1993



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