

ALBANY INSTITUTE OF HISTORY & ART

A Guide to the Hajo Christoph Papers

Collection Summary

Collection Title: Hajo Christoph Papers

Call Number: MG-195

Creator: Hajo Christoph

Inclusive Dates: June 28, 1926 - May 27, 1977

Abstract: Materials relating to the activities of Hajo Christoph, specifically his time working for the Fort Orange Paper Company designing graphic designs, and time spent as a member of the Albany Artists Group.

Quantity: 2 linear feet

Administrative Information

Custodial History: Donated as a gift by Peter and Flo Christoph

Preferred Citation: Hajo Christoph Papers, MG 195, Gift of Flo and Peter Christoph, Albany Institute of History & Art Library, New York.

Acquisition Information:

Accession #: LIB 2009.2 & LIB 2020.60

Accession Date: April, 2009

Processing Information:

Processed by Brendan Peabody; completed on March 2, 2010. Updated with new materials by Bob Emery; completed June 2023.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access: None

Restrictions on Use: Permission to publish material must be obtained in writing prior to publication from the Chief Librarian & Archivist, Albany Institute of History & Art, 125 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12210.

Index Term

Persons

Bernhard, Lucian (04/15/1883-05/29/1972)
Brashear, Peter C. (1868-1943)
Corning, Erastus 2nd (1909-1983)
Justus, Donald C. (Mayor of Castleton on Hudson in 1970's)
Latham, William G. (1896 -1953)

Organizations

Fort Orange Paper Company- Castleton on the Hudson (N.Y.)
Embossing Company of Albany
Albany Artists Group

Subjects

Commerce-Advertising
Fine Arts-Commercial Art
Fine Arts- Advertising Art
Fine Arts-Visual Arts-Exhibitions
Immigration
Industry-Manufacturing Industries

Places

Berlin (Germany)
Castleton on Hudson (N.Y.)
New York (N.Y.)

Document Types

Awards
Photographs
Correspondences
License
Memoir
Newspaper Articles
Magazine Articles
Catalogs
Certificates
Programs

Titles

Biography of Hajo Christoph

Hajo is not his actual birth name, but rather it is used as a trademark for his graphic designs. Hajo Christoph's official name is "Hans-Joachim Richard Christoph" and he was born in Berlin Germany on August 4, 1903 at home, as was customary at the time. Throughout his childhood he lived with his father Gustav, his mother Erna, grandmother, Ida and sister, Ruth. In September of 1919 he began to attend the Riemann Schule, an art school in Berlin, where he took up the study of commercial art. It was at this time that he adopted the name "Hajo" due to the fact that there was another artist in Berlin by the name of Christoph, who signed all his work with his last name. After the Riemann School he continued his studies at Charlottenburg, where he obtained a job designing ads for a shoe store chain. Around 1922, he received a letter from his cousin inviting him to come to America, with passage by steamship provided at her expense. A few months before he left for America in 1924, he came upon an ad in one of Berlin's newspapers which read: "Lucian Bernhard (a famous German graphic designer) is looking for an assistant in his New York Studio. Qualified people, please apply". Due to American labor laws, he wasn't formally hired (while in Berlin, Germany) as an assistant artist until he arrived in New York City. In 1927 Lucian Bernhard decided to close his art studio in Time Square and Hajo then became a member of the Ferryman Art Studio. Around 1929 he left that studio and went to work for Robert Leonard, with whom Hajo had apprenticed with in Berlin.

Around September of 1931 he was hired by President Latham of the Fort Orange Paper Company, (as an artist in creative design) and subsequently moved to Castleton, NY where the Fort Orange factory was located. While there he worked on graphic designs for various companies including, but not limited to: Embossing Company of Albany, Borden's, T.R. French, Jack Frost Sugar, Vim Lax: Laxative Gum, Kenwood blankets, and Freihofer's. Besides working at Fort Orange Paper Company, he also did some free-lance work, and worked for almost every organization and church in the town of Castleton-on-the Hudson. In 1965, at the age of 62, and after 34 years with the company, he lost his job, after they decided to eliminate his department.

Hajo was one of the founding members of the Albany Artists Group, (a group of artists from the tri state area surrounding Albany), and at one time was the Vice President of this organization. They had annual exhibition shows, which took place at the Albany Institute of History and Art, along with Sunday paint sessions, in which they would do landscape painting. Hajo, along with a small group of members came up with idea of the Albany Tulip Festival. He specifically designed two copper crowns one for the Tulip King and one for the Tulip Queen. Although the crown for the Tulip King was only used twice due to the lack of men able participate because of World War II. On November 18, 1992, at the age of 89, he passed away.

Scope and Contents of the Papers

This collection consists of a series of correspondences from June 28, 1926 to May 27, 1977 between Hajo and various clients in which he created graphic designs, while either working freelance or for the Fort Orange Paper Company. There are photographs of some of his package designs along with designs for various products advertised on billboards. Also in this collection are programs he designed (such as the cover design for the Albany Tulip Festival), his memoir, and magazine and newspaper clippings discussing his activities with the Albany Artists Group.

This later addition to this collection (Box 3) contains some personal papers (such as Mr. Christoph's high school matriculation, naturalization certificate, and house deed), but mainly clippings from newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals (mostly American, a few German) that provide artistic or design examples that Mr. Christoph could use as ideas for his work as a commercial artist. These are collected in files arranged alphabetically by general subject.

Organization of the Papers

This collection is organized chronologically by subject matter.

Related Material

Research Materials for the Curatorial Collections, specifically timelines of the history of the Fort Orange Paper Company, along with photocopied documents such as several issues of The FOPACO News (Newsletter for Fort Orange Paper Company), newspaper articles, and a digital photograph of the original layout design of the Fort Orange Paper Company factory. There is also source information and a timeline for the history of the Embossing Company of Albany and the Albany Artists Group.

Separated Materials

2009.002- *Hajo Christoph Collection* in Curatorial Department, consisting of his early student art, original print designs, watercolors and drawings. This collection also includes product packaging designs, linoleum blocks for Christmas Cards, graphic designs for the Embossing Company of Albany and landscape watercolors done with the Albany Artists Group.

Other Finding Aids

None

Detailed Description of the Papers

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series Title Hajo Christoph Papers

Box #	Folder #	Item #. Title / Description
1	1	#1-4 Drafts of Autobiography
1	2	#5- Memoir of Hajo Christoph, constructed by daughter in law Flo Christoph
1	3	#6-42 Personal Correspondences from and to such people as Lucian Bernhard, Peter Brashear (President of Fort Orange Paper Company, Erastus Corning 2 nd (Mayor of Albany) and several manufacturing and printing companies
1	4	#43-67 Programs such as Albany Artists Group Buccaneers Ball, 12 th Annual Members Show for Albany Artists Group and Other Miscellaneous items such as a 1930-1931 City of New York Evening School Substitute License, and a Sketch of Designs for Embossing Company of Albany Toys on graph paper
1	5	#68-90 Programs and Miscellaneous (continued) such as Legislative Programs and Resolutions of the Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials, Albany Law School 1978 Commencement Program, and a Certificate of Appreciation from the Town of Castleton On Hudson for help with Sesquicentennial Celebration
1	6	#91-106 Photographs of Package Designs for Fort Orange Paper Company, for such companies as: "Drymor Towels" and Todd's Dog Universal Food Vitamins". There are also his personal paintings and Peter Christoph as a child. Transparencies of Hajo's designed Christmas cards.
1	7	#107 Draft of Lecture on Packaging Design
1	8	#108-120 Photographs of Outdoor Advertisement Graphic Designs for Different Company Billboards such as "Clifton Park Trailer Sales", Sears Warehouse and Mechanical Service, Sears Department Store, and
1	9	# 121 Draft of Lecture on Painting of Martin Luther (with photo of painting)
1	10	#122-147 Magazines, Newspaper Clippings and Bulletins Magazine Clippings of different packaging designs such as "Drymor Towels", and "Fudo Psyllium Seed Natural Laxative, Article on Col. Peter C. Brashear, advertisement for the game "Frisko" from the Embossing Company of Albany, and newspaper advertisement of the Embossing Company of Albany's Anex-A -Gram
1	11	#148 and 149 Embossing Company of Albany Toy Catalogs
1	12	Two trade magazines: Westvaco Inspirations for Printers (Hajo's signature inside cover), and Shears, June 1933. [Purchased both from Dennis Holzman who acquired them from Peter and Florence Christoph]
1	13	Trade magazine. Advertising Arts, March 1935. [Purchased from Dennis Holzman who acquired them from Peter and Florence Christoph]

2	12	#150- 156 Miscellaneous Oversized Items such as: “The All American Package Competition Certificate of Award for 1934 sponsored by ‘Modern Packaging’ for the Design by Hajo Christoph of the ‘Post Road Jelly Package’ “ Also there is a design of a wine card for the Dewitt Clinton Hotel in Albany, and the cover of the “Halfway House Menu”
3	A	Castleton Lutheran Church – Luther painting
3	B	Client accounts book (1966-74)
3	C	Dannenfeld letters (1931, 1972)
3	D	Furniture
3	E	Home ownership; blueprints
3	F	Letter, sketches (1919)
3	G	Marriage certificate; wife’s birth certificate
3	H	Naturalization, matriculation, mother’s estate
3	1	Africa
3	2	Artists’ technique
3	3	Boats – motorboats
3	4	Boats – sailboats
3	5	Boats – steamships
3	6	Boats – warships
3	7	Cartoons
3	8	Circus
3	9	Colors
3	10	Designs
3	11	Holidays
3	12	Household hints
3	13	India
3	14	Indochina
3	15	Jokes
3	16	Maps
3	17	Masques
3	18	Misc. exotics
3	19	Mongolia / Tibet / China
3	20	Oddities
3	21	Persia
3	22	Russia
3	23	Sculptures
3	24	Turks / Arabs
3	25	Women
3	26	Women – Hands & legs
3	27	Women – Heads
3	28	Women – Professions