Finding aid prepared by Jeff Snapp
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ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California
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(c) 2013
Title: John Button nude male drawings
Identifier/Call Number: Coll2013.015
Contributing Institution: ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, USC Libraries, University of Southern California
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 1.5 linear feet. 1 flat archive box
Date (inclusive): 1966-1976
Abstract: The collection consists of drawings of nude men made by John Button in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Button’s nude drawings are documents of his connections with gay culture which included his presence in the initial stages of the Mattachine Society and the formation of ONE Incorporated.
creator: Button, John, 1929-1982
Scope and Contents
The collection consists of 45 drawings of nude men made by John Button from 1966-1976. The subjects are identified as studio models from the School of Visual Arts as well as personal acquaintances.
Conditions Governing Access
The collection is open to researchers. There are no access restrictions.
Acquisition
The date and method of acquisition are not documented.
Preferred Citation
Processing Information
Formerly housed in box A134. Collection processed by Jeff Snapp, 2013.
Related Archival Materials note
Additional biographical and exhibition information can be found in the "Button (John)" file in the ONE Subject File collection, Coll2012-001, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California.
Additional archival materials relating to John Button can be found at the New York Public Library, the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian, and the University of California, San Diego.
Biography
John Button was born in San Francisco in 1929. He attended the University of California, Berkeley, and later taught in Pennsylvania, Maine, Maryland and New York. Button and his partner Alvin Novak were involved in the early years of the Mattachine Society and contributed to the formation of ONE Incorporated. However, Button is best known as a Neo-Romantic Realist, "urban intimist," prize-winning painter. He is associated with the New York School of painters and poets, known for his treatment of light in paintings, with urban architectural elements contrasting with large areas of clouded skies. In addition to his works belonging to many museum collections, he also created a large political mural, since destroyed by fire, with Mario Dubsky for the Gay Activist Alliance Firehouse in Manhattan.
Lesser known for his drawings of male nudes, Button proposed a “frankly homosexual” show in 1972 as well as an exhibition titled The Male Nude at Hofstra University in 1973. Posthumous exhibitions include The Body as Landscape exhibition at ONE Archives circa 2002 and John Button/ Paintings and Drawings from the Estate at ClampArt in New York City, 2007-2008.
John Button died in New York City in 1982.
Sources:
John Button Drawings, Coll2013-015, ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, California
http://www.johnbuttonartist.com/ (accessed May 2013)
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Subjects and Indexing Terms
Artists
Drawings (visual works)
Gay artists--United States
Gays--Exhibitions
Homosexuality and art--United States

John Button nude male drawings 1967-1976

Box 1, Folder 1

Drawings, nude males 1966-1976
Scope and Contents note
Twenty-three 11" x 13 7/8" drawings which are numbered in a range between 1 and 262. One is titled Figure for Mile Rock, and several are signed J Button. Includes three smaller drawings: one 7 5/8" x 12", one 7" x 11 1/2" and one 10 1/2" x 8 1/2".

Box 1, Folder 2

Drawings, nude males 1973-1976
Scope and Contents note
Nineteen 14" x 17" drawings which are numbered in a range between 40 and 288.