Finding aid for the Georges Turpin journals and letters, 1914-1952

Finding aid prepared by Lesley Walker.
Descriptive Summary
Title: Georges Turpin journals and letters
Date (inclusive): 1914-1952
Number: 940116
Creator/Collector: Turpin, Georges, 1885-
Physical Description: 2.9 linear feet (7 boxes)
Repository:
The Getty Research Institute
Special Collections
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles, California, 90049-1688
(310) 440-7390
Abstract: French critic and poet. The collection consists of Turpin's journals from 1914 to 1952 as well as a set of ca. 240 letters received and critical studies and eulogies. Letters from some 50 correspondents, mostly artists, concern reviews, exhibitions, sales of paintings, and publications, and often contain musings on artistic theory and practice.
Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the catalog record for this collection. Click here for the access policy.
Language: Collection material is in French
Biographical/Historical Note
French critic and poet.
Access
Open for use by qualified researchers.
Publication Rights
Contact Library Rights and Reproductions.
Preferred Citation
Georges Turpin journals and letters, 1914-1952, Getty Research Institute, Research Library, Accession no. 940116.
http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa940116
Acquisition Information
The present collection assembles two separate collections. Approximately 190 letters from Georges Turpin were acquired in 1985 with an original accession number of 850812. The journals were not acquired until 1994. The journals themselves contained, interleaved, ca. 150 letters. Those letters have been integrated with the earlier acquisition and are now housed in Box 7 of the present collection.
Scope and Content of Collection
The collection consists of Georges Turpin's journals from 1914 to 1952 as well as a set of ca. 240 letters received and six essays comprised of critical studies and eulogies. Turpin begins the journal in 1914, using loose leaf paper; in 1934, he starts writing in bound diaries or agenda. Turpin's journals bring the artistic and literary world of early and mid century Paris back to life. On Mondays and then later on Sundays, Turpin received his artist friends at his home to discuss art and politics. He frequently visited the studios of various artists, offering detailed descriptions of the workplace and conversation. Finally, Turpin paid attention to the particulars of the art world by recording how much a painting brought at auction, how the winner of a prize was chosen or who were the members of a certain committee. The letters add even more context. From some 50 correspondents, mostly artists, they concern reviews, exhibitions, sales of paintings and publications. They often contain musings on artistic theory and practice.
In 1935, Turpin tells us why he wrote the journal: "Dans ce journal je me plairai à dire, cette année encore, ce qu'on ne dit pas, à noter ce qu'on ne note pas pour qu'il puisse servir à l'histoire artistique de ce temps. Je voudrais qu'on puisse le publier un jour en y intercalant jour par jour, semaine par semaine, les restes d'art que j'essaye dans revues et journaux. On aurait aussi une sorte de vue générale, de vue d'ensemble sur le mouvement artistique contemporain."
Arrangement note
The papers are organized in two series: Series I. Journals, 1914-1952; Series II. Letters
Subjects - Names
Turpin, Georges, 1885-
Subjects - Topics
Art critics--France
Art--Prices--France
Artists' studios--France--Paris
World War, 1939-1945--France--Paris

Subjects - Places
Paris (France)--History--1914-1918
Paris (France)--History--1940-1944
Paris (France)--Intellectual life--20th century

Genres and Forms of Material
Diaries--France--20th century

Contributors
Barbey, M. F.
Dongen, Kees van, 1877-1968
Duval-Gozlan, Léon
Giried, Pierre, 1876-1948
Kupka, František, 1871-1957
Lecomte, Georges, 1867-1958
Lévy-Dhurmer, Lucien, 1865-1953
Mauclair, Camille, 1872-1945
Montezin, Pierre Eugene, 1874-1946
Peské, Jean, 1870-1949
Renefer, Jean Constant Raymond, 1879-1957
Villon, Jacques, 1875-1963

Series I. Journals, 1914-1952

Physical Description: 6 boxes

Scope and Content Note
Turpin recorded his social milieu, the literary and artistic life of his friends and acquaintances and the particulars of the art market. The journal begins on loose-leaf pages in 1914. Turpin used bound volumes starting in 1934.

Box 1, Folder 1-5

1914-1925

Scope and Content Note
The journal begins with a dramatic description of the French mobilization during the summer of 1914. Beginning in 1916, Turpin starts discussing his literary ambitions, detailing his initial conversations with editors, painting verbal portraits of those he meets and indefatigably filling page after page with amusing anecdotes. He thus launched his career as a chronicler. In the early years, he seems to have had relatively close relationships with the following artists and literary personages: Marguerite Crissay, Roland Chavenon, Nicolas Beaudoin, Maurice Barbey, Elissé Cavaillon, Ivan Goli, Jean Peské, Gustave Kahn, Charles Jacquemot, Marcel Guimond and Yseru y Alié. He is employed at Le Matin and in 1925 becomes the "chef du service" for the arts and photography department. He also hosts a literary and artistic salon on Mondays, during which he receives his friends and encourages-and later records-conversations often concerning artistic theories and opinions.

Box 1, Folder 1

1914-1916

Box 1, Folder 2

1922

Box 1, Folder 3

1923
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 4</th>
<th>1924</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 5</td>
<td>1925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 6-10</td>
<td>1926-1935</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Scope and Content Note

He continues his lundis while his circle of friends and acquaintances expands. In 1929 when he publishes a book entitled *Stratégies artistiques*, he supplies posterity with a list of artist friends to whom he sends autographed copies: (besides those listed above) Mario Tozzi, Pau Planas, Marcel Falter, René Mallia, Jehau Berjeuneau, Bernard de Guinhald, Marcel Bash, Auguste Pierret, Jean de Botton, Eluero Celli, Lucie Caradek, Aimé Dellamagne, Robert Wilérick, Romain Jarrosz. Turpin is also an active member of the Syndicat de la Presse Artistique, Le Comité de la Presse Critique and the Société Amicale des Ecrivains & Artistes français and seems involved with the *Revue Littéraire* which changes name to *Revue littéraire et artistique*. In 1934 he moves to a new apartment and describes some of the paintings he owns: "Je rassemble donc la baignade de Kvapil, les nègres de Le Scouëzec, la marine de du Marboré, la Seine de Marcel Roche, mon dessin de Rossi, mes aquarelles d'André Lhote, d'Echegaray, d'Ascher, d'Antral, mes peintures de Valeusi, de Blanc-Gatté, de Kupka, auxquels j'ajoute mon portrait par Gallien et une eau-forte aussi de Naudin." Beginning in 1934, anti-parliamentarian activities attract his attention; he describes at some length demonstrations and riots that took place in Paris during this period. In 1935 he is awarded the Légion d'honneur.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 6</th>
<th>1926</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 7</td>
<td>1927</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 8</td>
<td>1928</td>
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<td>Box 1, Folder 9</td>
<td>(bound diary) 1934</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 10</td>
<td>(bound diary) 1935</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 1-4</td>
<td>1936-1938</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Scope and Content Note

His lundis continue. In 1937 the following people attended the first lundi of the year: Kvapil, Jacques Faneuse, Girard-Mond, Lotiron, Hélène Marre, Charles Barzel, Rathier-Heekeren, deux demoiselles Gérin, Gaston Chopard, Lemar, Dr. Charles Bardon, Madeleine Vaury, Pierro Fleury, Myr Dièse, the Sardins and the Pierrets. Turpin details his activities as well as the minor political battles of the various syndicats or unions in which he is a member: Comité de l'association de la Press artistique, le Comité de la Société des gens de lettre, Comité du Trait. Sometime in 1938, his lundis seem to change to dimanche. As an art critic, Turpin spends considerable time with his artist friends in their studios. He describes a particularly interesting visit that he made to Marc Chagall's studio on October 6 of 1938. During this time, he remains on intimate terms with the following artists and literary people: Marcel Roche, Jean Peské, Georges Capron, Kupka, Germain Delatouche and Albert Sardin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 1</th>
<th>(bound diary) 1936</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 2</td>
<td>(bound diary) 1937</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 3</td>
<td>(bound diary) 1938</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 4</td>
<td>Ephemera from the 1938 diary, 1938</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scope and Content Note

newspaper clippings, invitations to openings, ballots and vote tallies for various committees to which Turpin belonged.
Box 3, Folder 1-4  1939-1942
Scope and Content Note
The journals of these years are divided between an attempt to continue his literary and artistic activities and the War. At the time of the German invasion of France, he describes in dramatic detail his flight from Paris. Upon his return, he loses his job at Le Matin, forced to take early retirement on a paltry pension. Despite these hardships, he continues his work as an art critic: going to exhibits, writing catalogs, participating in the activities of the Comité de la Presse artistique and Trait and frequenting auctions particularly the one at the Hôtel Drouot. By 1942, there are fewer and fewer entries while at the same time it's clear that he is still working, thinking, observing. One entry is particularly disturbing: "L'étoile de Judée fleurit sur les corsages des jeunes juives comme un soleil. Leur jeunesse la fait rayonner. Mais sur le couplet des hommes elle est-là comme une marque d'infâmie voyante comme un Nº de forcat, une étiquette de bagne. C'est aujourd'hui, dimanche, que les juifs doivent porter cette marque distinctive de leur race." (6/7/1942). He continues to see: Sarradin, Kustler, Fegdal, Cheronnet, Herviau, Serruys, Mille, Guillomet, Herbo, Zwigg, Fautrier and Peské.

Box 3, Folder 1  1939 (bound diary)
Box 3, Folder 2  1940 (bound diary)
Box 3, Folder 3  1941 (bound diary)
Box 3, Folder 4  1942 (bound diary)

Box 4, Folder 1-6  1943-1946
Scope and Content Note
As the Liberation approaches Turpin’s journal entries increase. He recounts both the political events that transpire during this period as well as the intense artistic activity. At one point in 1944 he remarks: “La vie artistique à Paris est tellement intense que le critique n’a plus le temps de visiter toutes les expositions.” From an art historical perspective, the months immediately following the Liberation are of particular interest. Turpin describes the attempts to return to “normality” after the War. As a member of the jury for the Salon d’Automne, he relates the confusion felt by many in regard to what before the War had been “purely” esthetic concerns. Now, politics infuse every choice and decision as commissions d’épuration were formed to settle accounts. Throughout this difficult period, his Sunday gatherings seem to have continued. One Sunday in 1944, the following people attended: Fleury, Pétigny Mouteil, Jacquemot, Peltier, Gilbout-Privat, Grenelle, Juan, Sardon, Cavaillon, Carmus and Mascart.

Box 4, Folder 1  1943 (bound diary)
Box 4, Folder 2  1944 (bound diary)
Box 4, Folder 3  1945 (bound diary)
Box 4, Folder 4  Ephemera from the 1945 diary, 1945
Scope and Content Note
includes news paper clippings, exhibitions announcements as well as ballots for various committees and tallies.

Box 4, Folder 5  1946 (bound diary)
Box 4, Folder 6  Ephemera from the 1946 diary, 1946
Box 5, Folder 1-4  
1947-1949
Scope and Content Note
Age, death and the passing of an epoch inform many of the entries during these years. He describes one of his Sunday gatherings in 1949 as: "un rendez-vous de veuves et de vieilles filles appartenant au monde des Arts." Despite these feelings of sadness and loss, he remains faithful to his task as a chronicler. He goes to openings, auctions at the Hôtel Drouot and cocktails for his artist friends, all the while sketching little vignettes of the people who attend and the conversations overheard. Similarly, he remains in close contact, often visiting their studios, with certain artist friends such as Rouben, Maillot, Delatouche, Tourte, Cavaillon, Zadkine, Roche, d'Espagnet and Peltier. He completes two books during this period: Nakache and Panorama de la Peinture française de XX e Siècle. Nevertheless, it is clear to him that a very different world is emerging. For instance, as an indefatigable champion of the peintres bretons, he oversees the donations of two landscapes by Léon Duval-Gozlan to the Musées de Provinces that are, in the end, rejected and returned, provoking the following comment: "Les jeunes conservateurs sortant plus ou moins de l'Ecole du Louvre, bien stylés, ont plus de goût pour les abstractions comme des disciples de Picasso..."

Box 5, Folder 1  
(bound diary) 1947
Box 5, Folder 2  
(bound diary) 1948
Box 5, Folder 3  
(bound diary) 1949
Box 5, Folder 4  
Ephemera for the 1949 diary, 1949

Box 6, Folder 1-5  
1950-1952
Scope and Content Note
These last three years of his life are filled with sorrow caused by the death of his wife Gaby. For the first time, matters of a much more personal nature enter into the journals: description of Gaby's illness and eventual death, visits to the cemetery and feelings of loneliness. Nevertheless, he continues professional activities. These pages are filled with detailed descriptions of the meeting of the Salon d'Automne, Comité du Trait and the Syndicat de la Presse artistique. After visiting with Marie Laurencin, he reminisces about his first meetings with Apollinaire and his circle. Throughout his long career, Turpin actively promoted engraving and engravers. He recounts the nitty-gritty negotiations that occur at one meeting of the Commission de la Chalcographie at the Louvre in (6 Jun 1952). He attends the openings of his artist friends such as André Fougera, Nakache, Antral and Paul Signac.

Box 6, Folder 1  
(bound diary) 1950
Box 6, Folder 2  
Ephemera from the 1950 diary, 1950
Box 6, Folder 3  
1951
Box 6, Folder 4  
Ephemera from the 1951 diary, 1951
Box 6, Folder 5  
(bound diary) 1952

Series II. Letters, ca. 1930-1952
Physical Description: 240.0 letters
Scope and Content Note
Series consists of letters received from artists, critics, publishers, colleagues and friends. Dating mostly from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, they concern reviews, exhibitions, sale of paintings and publications. Several letters are in response to an "enquête" for his "Stratégie artistique." Included are critical studies and eulogies, by Turpin, in manuscript.

Letters arranged in alphabetical order

Box 7, Folder 1  
Alfana - Barbey
Box 7, Folder 2  
Belay - Du Marboré
Box 7, Folder 3  
Duval - Gozlan
Box 7, Folder 4  
Ericson - Gilandoni
Box 7, Folder 5  
Girieud - Girodie
Box 7, Folder 6  
Heraine - Kikoine
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 7, Folder 7</th>
<th>Kupka</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 8</td>
<td>Lecomtes - Panwels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 9</td>
<td>Peské</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 10</td>
<td>Pilon - Saureux</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 11</td>
<td>Sentenal - Yseru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 12</td>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 13</td>
<td>Manuscripts</td>
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</tbody>
</table>