

UNISA LIBRARY MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTION

John Wickens' Scrapbook of Walter Battiss materials

C1912; 1947-1994



Compiled by

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Biography of Walter Battiss (1906-1982)

Walter Battiss was born on 6 January in Somerset East. The family later moved to Fauresmith in the Orange Free State where Battiss matriculated in 1923. The following year, he started working in the Magistrate of Rustenburg's Office. He held the first of many solo exhibitions in the Rustenburg Masonic Hall in 1927. Two years later he was transferred to the Supreme Court in Johannesburg. During this period he attended part-time classes at the Art School of the Witwatersrand Technical College. Between 1930 and 1932, Battiss studied full-time at the Johannesburg Teachers' Training College and the University of the Witwatersrand where obtained a teacher's diploma.

In 1936 Walter Battiss was appointed art master at the Pretoria Boys' High School and he started seriously studying rock art. In 1938 he travelled to Europe where he met Abbé Breuil, co-founder of the New Group. Battiss married Grace Anderson, a well-known art-educationalist, in 1940 and moved to Giotto's Hill, Menlo Park, Pretoria, where he stayed until his death in 1982.

Battiss was appointed as the first professor and Head of the Department of History of Art and Fine Arts at Unisa in November 1964. His links to the University go back as far as 1935, when he registered for a BA (FA) degree. He obtained this Unisa degree in 1939. In 1965 Battiss launched the pilot issue of *De Arte*, for many years the only academic art journal in the country.

He introduced printmaking techniques by way of exhibitions. In 1970 silkscreen techniques were introduced. Prof Walter Battiss was also responsible for the purchasing of art works for the Unisa Art Collection which had been initiated in the early sixties. He retired in 1971 and in the same year, Walter Battiss was awarded an Honorary DLitt et Phil degree in recognition of his contribution to the development of art and art appreciation in South Africa. Walter Battiss was a very productive artist and held many solo exhibitions in South Africa and abroad. Always an enthusiastic traveler, he loved visiting islands, Europe, USA, UK, Africa and the Middle East. He was an excellent correspondent who wrote many letters to his friends in South Africa, including to John Wickens.

Walter Battiss died at the age of 76 at his holiday home in Port Shepstone.

John Wickens' Scrapbook of Walter Battiss materials (c1912, 1947-1994) (1 Box, 0.1 linear metres)

John Wickens' Scrapbook of Walter Battiss materials was donated to the Unisa Library Archives by John's sister, Mrs Pat Franklin of Cape Town, in 2001. John Wickens, a former Boys High pupil of Battiss and a librarian by profession, died circa 2000. Wickens had lovingly kept a Scrapbook on the life and artistic career of his friend Battiss.

The items were removed from the original plastic sleeves as some of the printed newsletters were negatively affected by the plastic sleeves. The numerical order of the items in the inventory reflects the original order within the *Scrapbook*. The contents of the *Scrapbook* (c1912, 1947-1994), consist of illustrated correspondence and envelopes, art catalogues, poetry, invitations to art exhibitions, stamps, *Fook Nooks*, press cuttings, photographs of Battiss, sketches and a 1982 poster *AprilFooks Day*. The archival materials are of great research value to scholars interested in Battiss' oeuvre, as well as in the development, history and teaching of twentieth-century South African art.

Cite as	John Wickens' Scrapbook of Walter Battiss materials, Accession 140 in the Manuscripts Collection. Unisa Archives.
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John Wickens' Scrapbook of Walter Battiss

Manuscripts Collection Acc 140 (1 Box)

1	Signed photograph (monochrome) of Walter Battiss with Fook Island medallion	no date
2	Walter Battiss exhibition, Hoffer Art Gallery invitation	1978
3	John Wickens (front row, left), group photograph, Library Services, Transvaal Education Department	no date
4	Catalogue of Battiss paintings for sale {copy}	no date
5	Prof Walter Battiss exhibition, Walter Schwitter Art Gallery invitation {copy}	1965
6	Envelope addressed to John Wickens	1967
7	Envelope addressed to John Wickens with Fook Island stamp	no date
8	Walter Battiss exhibition invitation (fragment)	no date
9	Walter Battiss with flower in lapel (colour photograph)	no date
10	Lucky Rain Postcard with Fook Island stamp	no date
11	Illustrated letter to John Wickens from Battiss with poem	1967
12	Letter to John Wickens from Battiss about visits to Greece, Comoros, Madagascar and Turkey	1975
13	Envelope addressed to John Wickens	1975
14	Letter to John Wickens thanking him for sympathy expressed at death of Grace Battiss-Anderson; Battiss also wrote about water colour paintings	1975
15	Two envelopes (one with Fook Island stamp) addressed to John Wickens; Letter about Fook Island bronze coin and self-portrait {these items are all glued together on one page}	1975
16	Postcard from Honolulu with Fook Island stamp	1976
17	Photostat of Battiss drawing <i>How I got across the USA</i> . Note on item: <i>retrieved from waste paper basket, received from Marié</i> {Rautenbach}	1977
18	Letter to John Wickens from Battiss thanking him for poem	1976
19	Envelope addressed to John Wickens (from the USA)	1976
20	Letter to John Wickens from Battiss (5 pages) about his and Coos' memorable experience in three USA deserts (near Arizona, New Mexico and California)	1976
21	Envelope addressed to John Wickens	1976
22	Card: <i>The Yellow Caravan, Pam's Produce</i>	no date

23	Letter to John Wickens from Battiss (2 pages) about his garden and friends Marie and Elizabeth	1976
24	Illustrated letter to John Wickens (envelope included) from Battiss about the Royal Theatre, London, books and art	1977
25	Letter with illustrations to John Wickens (envelope included) about the USA, art, William Burroughs and Rosenquist	1977
26	Illustrated letter to John Wickens (3 pages) from New York about Boston, Moby Dick, the Whale Museum at Nantucket, Eugene's wedding in Los Angeles and friends Gregory Press, Gerrit and Margaret Hilhorst	1978
27	Envelope addressed to John Wickens with US and Fook Island stamps	1978
28	Walter Battiss exhibition, Pretoria Art Museum invitation	1979
29	Two pen sketches of boat <i>Marie</i> , signed Walter {copy}	no date
30	Photograph of Walter Battiss with younger brother	c 1912
31	Walter Battiss exhibition, DS Vorster Gallery preview invitation {handmade}	c 1950
32	Pamphlet describing publication <i>Battiss</i> (painting on cover, <i>Ten people in a Mopipi Tree</i>) published by Bruce Attwood of The Broederstroom Press	1985
33	Illustrated fragment (2 pages) about Moby Dick, Hawaii, Fook Lucky Rain Card, painting made of view from Hilton Hotel, San Francisco {see item 41} and museum exhibition of drawings and photos of Christo's <i>Running Fence</i>	no date
34	Envelope (with Hatfield post office stamp) addressed to John Wickens	1978
35	<i>Fook Nooks</i> inscribed, <i>To John, Yours, Walter</i>	no date
36	<i>Fook Nooks</i> (first page), inscribed <i>To Marié, Yours, Walter</i> {copy}	no date
37	Walter Battiss exhibition, Hoffer Art Gallery invitation	1981
38	Walter Battiss exhibition, with a few works in collaboration with Norman Catherine, Hoffer Art Gallery invitation, inscribed <i>To John, Yours, Walter</i>	1977
39	Walter Battiss exhibition, Hoffer Art Gallery invitation	1980
40	Walter Battiss exhibition, Hoffer Art Gallery invitation	1984
41	Photograph of Battiss' painting of San Francisco skyline {Battiss created the painting especially for John Wickens}	no date
42	Walter Battiss exhibition, University of Natal invitation (draft copy), Jack Heath Gallery, Pietermaritzburg	1979
43	Walter Battiss exhibition, University of Pretoria invitation, Van Wouw House	1976
44	Walter Battiss, University of Pretoria exhibition catalogue, Van Wouw House, inscribed <i>To John, Yours Walter</i>	1976

45	<i>Walter Battiss by Walter Battiss</i> no 3/100, produced by Documents of South African Art in cooperation with the Fook Madgic Press	no date
46	Walter Battiss exhibition, Rand Afrikaans University invitation	1982
47	Botswana folktales, official first day cover with four stamps designed by Battiss	1980
48	Photograph of Butcher Shop door, with note <i>Leisure (Battiss) Bay, South Coast, Natal</i>	no date
49	Walter Battiss exhibition, Goodman Gallery invitation	1983
50	Walter Battiss..... by the Limpopo exhibition, Goodman Gallery invitation	1990
51	Handwritten poem by Battiss <i>Muddle Headed</i> (draft)	no date
52	Walter Battiss, Tahiti Plus exhibition, Goodman Gallery invitation inscribed <i>Walter Battiss, Love to John</i>	1978
53	Walter Battiss at the Goodman Gallery, exhibition invitation	1989
54	Rhodian Commission series of four Walter Battiss water-colour prints, pamphlet	no date
55	The Kings of Fook Island, Walter Battiss, Batt-155 and A Tribute to King Ferd the Third by Norman King Norman, Goodman Gallery exhibition invitation	1986
56	Battiss and the spirit of the Place, University of South Africa exhibition invitation	1989
57	Walter Battiss exhibition, Hoffer Art Gallery invitation	1989
58	Illustrated letter to Mr Cope on Bushman paintings and photographs of oil paintings {copy}	1947
59	Drawing with Battiss' note <i>done to boost sale of remaining stock of Limpopo, at Jan van Schaik's request</i> , inscribed <i>Vir Marié veel liefde Walter 23.9.79</i> {copy}	1979
60	Illustrated letter to Marié Rautenbach from New York about visit to Sullivan Island, South Carolina, and the Pompeii 79 AD exhibition at the Boston Art Museum {copy}	1978
61	<i>Battiss in the Hadhramaut – sketches of Southern Arabia</i> by Murray and Elzabé Schoonraad, publicity pamphlet	1985
62	Fook Festival exhibition, Goodman Gallery invitation	1975
63	Walter Battiss "Predominantly Limpopo Portfolio" exhibition, Goodman Gallery invitation	1991
64	Illustrated letter addressed to <i>Dearest John</i> {copy}	1978

65	Pretoria Art Museum Leaflet, includes Walter Battiss biography and description of paintings	1977
66	Letter from AJ Werth, Director, Pretoria Art Museum, to John Wickens about forthcoming Battiss exhibition	1979
67	Fook Island Olympics '88, post card to John Wickens from Christine	1990
68	Pencil sketch of <i>Shoddy bird's nest</i> , Potgietersrust, inscribed <i>To John, love Walter</i>	1980
69	Note from Battiss <i>The first monument on wheels – a monument is your best companion now {copy}</i>	no date
70	Philately of Fook, Zook and Ferd Third, Newsmagazine Supplement	1994
71	AprilFooks Day exhibition, Goodman Gallery poster	1982
72	Walter Battiss, press cuttings (7 items)	1977-1988
73	Death of Walter Battiss, 20 August 1982, press cuttings (8 items)	1982