

## MS 52 Papers of Betty Churcher

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### Summary

Creator:	Churcher, Betty
Title:	Papers of Betty Churcher
Date range:	1989 – 2008
Reference number:	MS 52
Extent:	7 archive boxes + 1 large folio (featuring work by Davida Allen)
Prepared By:	Peta Jane Jones

### Overview

The archive documents the years 1989 to 2008 and relates to research undertaken by Betty Churcher for several shows she hosted for SBS and ABC on various art historical subjects, with a particular focus on Australian art and collections. Scripts of several ABC television programs such as *Take 5*, *Eye to Eye*, *Proud Possessors* and *the Art of War* (the latter for SBS) are included in the archive, along with the research notes Betty Churcher compiled in order to form the scripts for the various programs.

The archive also holds interesting examples of Betty Churcher's correspondence with various Australian artists such as William Robinson, Davida Allen and Mary Nolan (wife of Sidney Nolan). These personal letters provide insight into the esteem in which Betty was held in the personal lives of these correspondents, and many letters provide background information regarding Betty's life in the 1950's as she attended art school in London.

The collection is currently housed in 8 archival boxes. Folder headings are those retained from the original files (these files are included where they contain further

handwritten information), with original order maintained. See acquisition file number 07/0920.

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## **Administrative Information**

### **Access**

Contact the National Gallery of Australia Research Library reference desk librarians.

Phone +61 2 6240 6530

Email [rlr@nga.gov.au](mailto:rlr@nga.gov.au)

### **Provenance**

The papers of Betty Churcher were donated to the National Gallery of Australia Research Library in 2009.

### **Preferred Citation Note**

[Description and date of item], [Box/folder number], National Gallery of Australia Research Library's Archive Collection, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

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## **Biographical Note**

Betty Churcher was director of the National Gallery of Australia from 1990 to 1997, earning the nickname "Betty Blockbuster" as a result of the large-scale exhibitions of famous artworks she organised throughout her tenure.

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## **Associated Content**

### **Subject**

National Gallery of Australia Collection

### **Relationship to the National Gallery of Australia Research Library**

The Research Library Archives also holds the papers of other significant Australian gallery directors including James Mollison (MS1) and Bernard Hall (MS6).

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## **Box Description**

**Box 1 – Eye to Eye**

- Schedule and scripts for *Eye to Eye*
- Ian Fairweather
- McCubbin – Bush Burial
- Giulio Romano
- Correspondence
- *Eye to Eye* scripts

### **Box 2 – *Take 5***

- Gascoigne, Rubes, Degas, Glover, Streeton, Dobell
- Norman Lindsay
- Burke and Wills
- Rubens – self portrait
- Drysdale and Dobell

### **Box 3 – *Proud Possessors***

- Scripts
- Original *Proud Possessors* scripts
- Bronzino and Tintoretto
- Giambologna and Rembrandt
- Stanley Spencer
- Poussin
- Uttenheim Alterpiece
- Claude v. Constable
- Poussin v. Giambologna (Brisbane)
- Correspondence – Victoria and Albert Museum, National Gallery, Ashmolean, British Museum.

### **Box 4 – *Desert Art/ The Painters***

- Desert Art transcripts
- Desert Art – Rock art, George Chaloupka
- Desert Art – Yirawala
- Desert Art – Baldwin Spencer
- Desert Art – Bark paintings
- Desert Art – Invalak permission, treatment, text, correspondence

- The Painters – Correspondence
- The Painters – Peter Maralwanga
- The Painters – Nganjmina
- The Painters – Art Stories – Episode 1 – Aboriginal memorial, burial poles and burial rituals

#### **Box 5 – Desert Art/ The Painters**

- The Painters – Central Australia
- The Painters – John Mawurrdjul
- The Painters – Screensound footage
- The Painters – wall labels, pronunciation guide
- Creating Australia
- The Centre
- Desert Art Research

#### **Box 6 – Correspondence**

- Letters from William Robinson
- Correspondence 2004 – 2005 (Michelle Field and Mary Nolan)
- Miscellaneous correspondence 2005
- Miscellaneous correspondence

#### **Box 7 – Correspondence**

- Letters from Davida Allen
- *Brisbane, My Brisbane* – written by Betty Churcher
- Miscellaneous – illustrations and a musical score

#### **Box 8 – Research**

- Lectures
- Script for Hidden Treasures
- Art Brief Synopsis
- Major Harold De Vahl Rubin
- William Schutt
- Australian Modernism – episode 7
- Miscellaneous Research

