



Smithsonian *Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

Henri Vever Papers

Colleen Hennessey and Lara Amrod

2011



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Collection Overview

Repository:	Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives
Title:	Henri Vever Papers
Date:	1867-1932
Identifier:	FSA.A1988.04
Creator:	Vever, Henri, 1854-1942
Extent:	2.5 Linear feet (circa 35 items)
Language:	English; French
Summary:	The papers of Parisian jeweler and art collector Henri Vever (1854-1942) include six diaries; a ledger of his art acquisitions; original oil paintings by Vever; and photographs. The materials document Vever's circle of friends, patrons, and other art collectors in turn-of-the-century Paris.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Henri Vever Papers were donated to the Archives by the grandson of Henri Vever, François Mautin, in 1988. Additionally, Mr. Mautin donated six original oil paintings by Henri Vever to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in 1988. These paintings were transferred to the Archives in 1993.

Provenance

Gift of François Mautin, 1988

Related Archival Materials

The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery holds the, *Vever Collection of Islamic Manuscripts*. Additionally, the Archives holds, *the Vever Family Photograph Album* which contains photographs depicting the Vever family from 1881-1930 and the family estate in Noyers, France.

Alternate Formats

A portion of the collection has been microfilmed and is available through the Archives.

Processing Information

This collection was processed by Linda M. Machado, 2001.

Preferred Citation

Henri Vever Papers. FSA.A1988.04. National Museum of Asian Art Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of François Mautin, 1988.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Restrictions on Use

No restrictions on use.

Biographical Information

Henri Vever Chronology

1854	Vever born in Metz, France.
1870	Following the German annexation of Metz during the Franco-Prussian War, the Vever family leaves Metz for Luxembourg.
1871	Jean-Jacques Ernest Vever (father of Henri) buys a jewelry studio in Paris. Vever begins apprenticeship at Loguet and at Hallet and attends night classes at the Ecole des Art Décoratif in Paris.
1873	Vever enters the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the studios of M.A. Millet and J.L. Gérôme.
1881	Jean-Jacques Ernest Vever retires and Vever and his brother Paul assume control of the jewelry shop (Maison Vever). Henri Vever marries Jeanne Monthiers.
1882	Jeanne Vever gives birth to Marguerite Vever, the couple's only child.
1885	Vever buys first painting.
1891	Vever travels to Russia where the Maison Vever takes part in a jewelry exhibition in Moscow.
1892	Vever becomes a regular participant of the dîners japonisants organized by art dealer Siegfried Bing.
1893	Vever appointed commissioner for jewelry to the World's Columbian Exposition, in Chicago. Maison Vever exhibits jewelry at the Exposition.
1894	Vever donates forty Japanese prints to the Louvre.
1900	Vever joins the Société Franco-Japonasie and is elected the mayor of Noyers, France.
1906-1908	Vever publishes, <i>Bijouterie Française au XIXe Siècle</i> .
1913	With Georges Marteau, Vever authors, <i>Miniatures Persanesa</i> catalogue of the 1912 Exposition des Arts Musulmans.
1915	Paul Vever dies.
1919	Maison Vever commissioned to make sword of honor offered to Marshall Ferdinand Foch by the city of Paris to celebrate the end of World War I.
1921	Vever retires.
1939	Marguerite Vever dies.
1942	Henri Vever dies.
1982	Maison Vever closes.

Jeweler, art collector, and author Henri Vever was born in Metz, France in 1854. Together with his older brother Paul, Henri Vever managed the family jewelry firm, Maison Vever, from 1881 until Paul's death in 1915 and Henri's retirement in 1921. As an art collector, Vever amassed a large collection of European, Asian, and Islamic art. Through his work as a jeweler, art collector, and author, Henri Vever played an important role in the twentieth-century art world.

To equip him with the proper skills to run Maison Vever, Henri Vever apprenticed in the studios of Louguet and of Hallet and attended the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs in 1871. Two years later, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts accepted Henri and he entered the studios of artists M.A. Millet and J.L. Gérôme. Jean-Jacque Ernest Vever retired from Maison Vever in 1881 and his two sons, Henri and Paul, assumed control.

The youngest son of Jean-Jacques Ernest Vever, Henri Vever was born into a family of jewelers. His grandfather, Pierre-Paul Vever, launched a successful jewelry shop in Metz in 1854. Upon retirement, Pierre-Paul Vever's son, Henri's father, assumed control of the shop. With the German annexation of Metz during the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, Jean-Jacque Ernest Vever took his family to Luxembourg and one year later acquired a jewelry shop at 19 Rue de la Paix in Paris and named the new shop Maison Vever.

That same year Henri married Jeanne Monthiers and she gave birth to the couple's only child, Margeurite, in 1882. Henri, Jeanne, and Margeurite Vever lived at 19 Rue de la Paix in the same building that housed Maison Vever. In 1892 Jeanne Vever inherited her family's estate in Noyers, France.

The Vever brothers ran a very successful jewelry studio. Not only did Maison Vever's clientele base expand during their tenure, but its designs were often prizewinners at various expositions around the world. The 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris offers an example. The Maison Vever submission won a Grand Prix at this exposition in which the art movement Art Nouveau played a major role.

Henri Vever was a proponent of the Art Nouveau movement, a turn-of-the-century art movement whose adherents sought to forge a new, modern style, one that would, "reunite art and craft." According to curator Glenn Lowry, Vever's interest in Art Nouveau affected the Maison Vever's designs. "...during the 1880s many of the Maison Vever's designs were highly traditional, by the beginning of the 1890s the firm was at the vanguard of the art nouveau movement.

In addition to his work at Maison Vever, Vever amassed an enormous and influential collection of European, Asian, and Islamic art. Initially a collector of European art, by the late 1880s Vever's collecting interests expanded to include Asian and then Islamic art works. According to Lowry, Vever's interest in Islamic art was sparked in 1891 when he traveled to Moscow to participate in a jewelry exhibition. In approximately 1892 Vever joined *Les Amis de l'Art Japonais*, a group whose members met for dinners at which they discussed Japanese art. Claude Monet was also a member of this group.

From 1906 to 1908, Vever published a three-volume series, *Bijouterie Française au XIXe Siècle*. This set became the, "standard text on nineteenth-century jewelry". Through his art collections, writings, and profession, Henri Vever played an important role in the twentieth-century art world. He acquired a large art collection and often loaned pieces out for exhibition to various galleries and museums throughout the world. Henri Vever retired from Maison Vever in 1921 and the sons of Paul Vever, André and Pierre, took over the reigns. Henri Vever died in 1942 at the country estate in Noyers. Maison Vever continued operation until 1982 when it permanently shut its doors.

Scope and Content Note

The Henri Vever Papers measure 2.5 linear feet (35 items) and span the years 1875 --1932. The collection contains six diaries, an account ledger, 20 photographs, one guest list, one ceremonial pommel, and six original oil paintings by Henri Vever.

Arrangement

This collection is organized into five series:

Series 1: Diaries, 1878-1901

Series 2: Account Ledger, 1894, 1907-1917

Series 3: Photographs, 1867-1932, n.d

— Subseries 3.1: Henri Vever and Family

— Subseries 3.2: Vever Family Estate in Noyers, France

Series 4: Art Works, 1914-1915

— Subseries 4.1: Pommel

— Subseries 4.2: Le Havre, France

— Subseries 4.3: Château de Noyers

General

For a more detailed look at the life of Henri Vever, please see the following publication from which much of this biographical information originates: Lowry, G.D. with Nemazee, S. (1988). *A jeweler's eye: Islamic arts of the book from the Vever Collection*. Washington D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution with Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Biographical Overview

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1870	Following the German annexation of Metz during the Franco-Prussian War, the Vever family leaves Metz for Luxembourg.
1871	Jean-Jacques Ernest Vever (father of Henri) buys a jewelry studio in Paris. Vever begins apprenticeship at Loguet and at Hallet and attends night classes at the Ecole des Art Décoratif in Paris.
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1921	Vever retires.
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1942	Henri Vever dies.
1982	Maison Vever closes.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Art -- Collectors and collecting -- France -- Paris
Art nouveau
Art, Asian
Art, European
Art, Islamic
Jewelry -- History -- Nineteenth century -- France
Jewelry -- History -- Twentieth century -- France
Works of art

Types of Materials:

Diaries
Photographs

Names:

Vever, Henri, 1854-1942

Occupations:

Art dealers -- France -- Paris

Places:

Le Havre (France)
Paris (France)

Container Listing

Series 1: Diaries, 1878-1901

Scope and Contents: This series comprises six diaries kept by Henri Vever. They span the years 1878 to 1901 and all are handwritten and in French. All the diaries include later annotations by Mr. Vever's grandson, Francois Mautin. The diaries document the day-to-day happenings of Mr. Vever's personal and professional lives. The earliest of the diaries dates from 1878. The diary from 1891 documents Vever's travels to Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, Turkey, Greece, and Italy. Four diaries are sequentially titled, "HV [Henri Vever] 1", "HV2", "HV 3", and "HV 4". These four diaries contain continuous entries starting in 1898 and ending in 1901. The series is arranged chronologically.

Box 1, Folder 1	Diary, 1878 Notes: Annotated by F. Mautin on July 1984
Box 1, Folder 2	Diary, 1891 Notes: Travel journal. Annotated by F.M. [Francois Mautin] July to Sept. 1891. Handwritten, in French.
Box 1, Folder 3	Diary, 1898 Notes: "H.V. 1" Annotated by F. [Francois] Mautin. 1st entry 1 January 1898, last 5 May 1898. Handwritten, in French.
Box 1, Folder 4	Diary, 1898 Notes: "H.V.2" Annotated by Francois Mautin 1st entry, 9 May 1898, last 25 Nov. 1898. Handwritten, in French.
Box 1, Folder 5	Diary, 1898-1899 Notes: "H.V.3" Annotated by Francois Mautin 1st entry, 26 Nov. 1898, last 5 Nov. 1899. [1 Enclosure --program from Conservatoire National de Musique, Société des Concerts. April 1899.]. Handwritten, in French.
Box 1, Folder 6	Diary, 1899-1901 Notes: "H.V.4" Annotated by Francois Mautin. 1st entry 6 Nov. 1899, last 11 March 1901. Handwritten, in French.
Box 1, Folder 7	FSA A1988.04 4.1: Dinner List: "Dîner des amis de l'art Japonais" Guest list and addresses for a dinner, guests include Claude Monet., 1893 4 Items (handwritten pages) Creator: Vever, Henri, 1854-1942 Notes: FSA A1988.04 4.1 Handwritten list of guests to a dinner by Société des amis de l'art japonais (Society of Friends of Japanese Art), likely held in Paris in 1893. Guests included an array of notable artists, politicians, collectors, dealers and publishers. Jeweler, art collector, and author Henri Vever was born in Metz, France in 1854. Together with his older brother Paul, Henri Vever

managed the family jewelry firm, Maison Vever, from 1881 until Paul's death in 1915 and Henri's retirement in 1921. As an art collector, Vever amassed a large collection of European, Asian, and Islamic art. Through his work as a jeweler, art collector, and author, Henri Vever played an important role in the twentieth-century art world.

The Société des amis de l'art japonais (Society of Friends of Japanese Art) was first organized in 1892 by the Paris Asian art dealer Sigfried Bing. Vever was a founding member. The group held dinners multiple times each year to discuss their interest primarily in Japanese prints.

Guest list of Les Amis de Art Japonaise Diner

Names: Vever, Henri, 1854-1942
Monet, Claude, 1840-1926
Whistler, James McNeill, 1834-1903
Clemenceau, Georges, 1841-1929
Zorn, Anders, 1860-1920

Topic: Art -- Collectors and collecting -- France -- Paris
Art, Asian
Art, Japanese

Place: Paris (France)
France -- Ile-de-France -- Paris

Occupation: Art dealers -- France -- Paris

Box 1, Folder 8

Communion Card [from the family photo album]

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Series 2: Account Ledger, 1894, 1907-1917

Scope and Contents: This series comprises a one-volume ledger, with enclosures, maintained by Vever for 1894 and 1907 to 1917 to record his art purchases. Items enclosed in the ledger are housed next to the volume in a separate folder. Entries include year, date, name of dealer or auction house from which the item was purchased, a description of the purchase, and the asking and paid prices (in French francs). The series comprises one ledger book and a folder of items enclosed in the ledger (including the record for 1894).

Box 2, Folder 1-2

Account Ledger, 1907–1917, 1894

Notes: "H.V Comptes Arts. 1907 a 1917 et 1894." [Henri Vever Art Accounts 1907 to 1917 and 1894. Items enclosed in ledger are housed in folder 2]. Handwritten, in French.

FSA A1988.04 2.2: [Account Ledger, 1907-1917](#)

175 Items (pages of handwriting)

Creator: Vever, Henri, 1854-1942

Language: French.

Notes: FSA A1988.04 2.2

This collection is in a box with a smaller, unbound purchase ledger dated 1894.

Handwritten ledger of Henri Vever's purchases of art from dealers between January 1907 and July 1917. Dealers include Yamanaka Sadajiro, Marcel Bing and George Joseph Demotte.

Jeweler, art collector, and author Henri Vever was born in Metz, France in 1854. Together with his older brother Paul, Henri Vever managed the family jewelry firm, Maison Vever, from 1881 until Paul's death in 1915 and Henri's retirement in 1921. As an art collector, Vever amassed a large collection of European, Asian, and Islamic art. Through his work as a jeweler, art collector, and author, Henri Vever played an important role in the twentieth-century art world.

Names: Vever, Henri, 1854-1942

Yamanaka, Sadajiro

Topic: Art -- Collectors and collecting -- France -- Paris

Art, Asian

Art, European

Art, Islamic

Place: Paris (France)

France -- Ile-de-France -- Paris

Genre/Form: Works of art

Photographs

Occupation: Art dealers -- France -- Paris

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Series 3: Photographs, 1867-1932, undated

Scope and Contents: This series comprises twenty black and white photographs. It is subdivided into two subseries. Subseries one comprises fourteen photographs of Henri Vever and his family and subseries two comprises sixteen photographs of the Vever family estate in Noyers. The estate was the Monthiers family estate and inherited by Henri Vever's wife, Jeanne, in 1892. Each subseries is arranged chronologically.

Subseries 3.1: Photographs of the Vever family, 1867-1932, undated

Box 2, Folder 3	Henri and Paul Vever, circa 1867 Notes: Studio portrait. Annotated on back, "Paul (L) Henri (R) Vever 1867 (?) Henri looks much younger about 10 years old which would make it 1864."
Box 2, Folder 3	Henri Vever, circa 1875 Notes: Henri Vever in military uniform. Annotated on back, 'Henri Vever --circa 1875. 1854-1942 (military service). Studio: Photographie J. Caron, Nancy.
Box 2, Folder 3	Henri Vever, circa 1880 Notes: Annotated on back, "Henri Vever (1854.1942) circa 1880." Studio: A. Dietsche, Paris.
Box 2, Folder 3	Henri Vever, circa 1895 Notes: Henri Vever. Portrait on cabinet card. Photographer, Léon Colson
Box 2, Folder 3	Henri and Jeanne Vever, 1895-1900 Notes: Henri and Jeanne Vever and bicycles. Annotated on back, 'Henri Vever (born 1854) and his wife Jeanne (née Monthiers) circa 1895 --1900.
Box 2, Folder 4	Marguerite Vever, 1903 Notes: Studio portrait. Annotated on back, "Marguerite Vever (H.V. only daughter) Then 27 years old" Studio: Cautin & Berger, Paris.
Box 2, Folder 4	Henri and Jeanne Vever, 1930 Notes: 2 copies. Annotated on back, "Henri et Jeanne Vever. Noyers circa 1930."
Box 2, Folder 4	[Henri Vever], 1931 Notes: Annotated on back, "1931, 71 years old." Studio: Abel Photographe. Paris.
Box 2, Folder 5	Henri Vever, 1931 Notes: Annotated on back, "Henri Vever 1931. 1854 --1942." Studio: Abel Photographe, Paris.
Box 2, Folder 5	Henri Vever, 1931

Notes: Studio portrait. Annotated on back, 'Henri Vever 1931. 1854-1942.

Box 2, Folder 5 Henri Vever, 1931
Notes: Studio portrait. Annotated on back, "Henri Vever (1854 --1942), 1932." Studio: Walery, Paris.

Box 2, Folder 5 Photograph of Andre Mautin and envelope, undated
Notes: Envelope addressed to Madame Andre in Rabat.

Box 2, Folder 5 Andre Mautin, Marguerite Vever, and two unidentified children, undated
Notes: Envelope addressed to Madame Andre in Rabat.

Box 2, Folder 5 1 photograph of a drawing, undated
Notes: Modern print of an 1890 drawing by Henri Vever. Annotated on back, "Exact size of the original. Jean Hilaire Monthiers. 1822 --1892. Father of Jeanne Monthiers 1861 --1948, wife of Henri Vever. Drawn by Henri Vever 1890."

Subseries 3.2: Photographs of the family estate in Noyers, France, 1924, undated

Box 2, Folder 6 Photograph, 1924
Notes: Vever family estate in Noyers, France.

Box 2, Folder 6 Photograph, undated
Notes: Vever family estate in Noyers, France.

Box 2, Folder 6 Photograph, undated
Notes: Vever family estate in Noyers, France.

Box 2, Folder 6 Photograph, undated
Notes: Vever family estate in Noyers, France. Annotated on back.

Box 2, Folder 6 Picture postcards, 1924
Notes: 2 picture postcards of the Vever family estate in Noyers, France.

Box 2, Folder 7 Family Photo Album
A photograph album with photographs, dated 1881-1930, of various Vever family members and the family estate in Noyers, France.
Summary: A photograph album with photographs, dated 1881-1930, of various Vever family members and the family estate in Noyers, France.

Box 2, Folder 8 Duplicate Smithsonian photo prints

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Series 4: Art Works, 1914-1915

Scope and Contents: This series comprises six oil paintings by Henri Vever. This series is subdivided into two subseries. Subseries one consists of Vever's depictions of Ste. Adresse in Le Havre, France. The second series comprises Vever's depictions of the Château de Noyers.

Subseries 4.1: Pommel, 1918

Box 3	Pommel, 1918 Notes: Reproduction of pommel of ceremonial sword given to Marshal Foch in 1918 by city of Paris. Designed by H. Vever.
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Subseries 4.2: Le Havre, France, 1914

Box 4, Folder 1	“Coucher de Soleil à Ste. Adresse (Le Havre)” by Henri Vever, 1914 Notes: Oil on canvas mounted on paperboard. 16.3 cm H x 22.7 cm W x 0.3 cm DS1988.2
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Box 4, Folder 2	“Coucher de Soleil à Ste. Adresse (Le Havre)” by Henri Vever, 1914 Notes: Oil on canvas mounted on paperboard. 16.3 cm H x 22.7 cm W x 0.3 cm DS1988.3
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Box 4, Folder 3	“Coucher de Soleil à Ste. Adresse (Le Havre)” by Henri Vever, 1914 Notes: Oil on canvas mounted on paperboard. 16.3 cm H x 22.7 cm W x 0.3 cm DS1988.4
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Box 4, Folder 4	“Coucher de Soleil à Ste. Adresse (Le Havre)” by Henri Vever, 1914 Notes: Oil on canvas mounted on paperboard. 16.3 cm H x 22.7 cm W x 0.3 cm DS1988.5
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Subseries 4.3: Château de Noyers (Eure), 1914

Box 4, Folder 5	“Château de Noyers (Eure),” by Henri Vever, 1914 Notes: Oil on wood. 20.9 cm H x 27.5 cm W x 0.3 cm. DS1998.6
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Box 4, Folder 6	“Château de Noyers (Eure),” by Henri Vever, 1914 Notes: Oil on wood. 20.9 cm H x 27.5 cm W x 0.3 cm. DS1998.7
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