



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Marta Adams Papers, circa 1914-circa 1991, in the Archives of American Art

Anna Rimel

Funding for the processing of this collection was provided by the Smithsonian Institution Collections Care and Preservation Fund.

27 June 2016

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical .....	2
Scope and Contents .....	2
Arrangement .....	3
Names and Subjects .....	
Container Listing .....	
Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1918-circa 1980 .....	5
Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1929-circa 1978 .....	6
Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1914-circa 1978 .....	7
Series 4: Legal and Estate Papers, circa 1963-circa 1991 .....	8
Series 5: Printed Materials, circa 1940s-circa 1988 .....	9
Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1916-circa 1980s .....	10
Series 7: Scrapbook, circa 1963-circa 1964 .....	11
Series 8: Artwork, circa 1920s-circa 1978 .....	12

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Marta Adams Papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1914-circa 1991
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.adammart
<b>Creator:</b>	Adams, Marta
<b>Extent:</b>	4.2 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	The bulk of the collection is in English; some records are in Spanish.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of sculptor, painter, and writer Marta Adams measure 4.2 linear feet, and date from circa 1914 to circa 1991. In 1935, Adams made her first visit to Mexico, and began spending more time there than in the United States. There, she met Diego Rivera who stimulated her interest in oil painting. In 1952 she moved to Mexico permanently. Found within are biographical materials, correspondence, writings and notes, legal and estate papers, printed materials, photographic material, one mixed-media scrapbook, and artwork, including three portfolios of lithographs, <i>30 Grabados de Galo Galecio</i> , 1946, containing 30 engraving prints by Galecio and <i>Estampas de la Revolucion Mexicana</i> , 1947, containing 85 engraving prints by 16 artists of the Taller de Gracia Popular, and <i>Drawings: Seymour Swetsoff</i> , 1949.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The bulk of Marta Adams papers were donated to the Archives in 1992 by the estate of Katherine Adams Kulmala (Adams's daughter) via Jonathan Strong, executor. In 1992, a sketch and a section of a watercolor were donated to the Archives by Phyllis Hughes, who purchased the artwork at an auction held at the Concord Art Association in Massachusetts. A small watercolor and letter by Marta Adams donated in 2023 by Sally Kuhn, a family friend.

### Processing Information

Multiple accessions were merged and archivally processed and a finding aid prepared by Anna Rimel in 2016 with funding provided by the Smithsonian Institution's Collections Care and Preservation Fund. The Archives of American Art has implemented accelerated processing when possible to increase information about and access to more of our collections. For this collection, accelerated processing included arrangement to the series, subseries and folder levels, adhering to the creator's original arrangement as much as possible. Generally, folder contents were simply verified with the original folder titles, but items within folders were not arranged further. All materials were rehoused in archival folders and boxes for long-term stability, but staples and other fasteners have not all been removed.

## Preferred Citation

Marta Adams papers, circa 1914-circa 1991. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

## Terms of Use

The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning such rights and restrictions and it is the user's responsibility to determine whether rights or restrictions exist and to obtain any necessary permission to access, use, reproduce and publish the collections. Please refer to the [Smithsonian's Terms of Use](#) for additional information.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Marta Adams (1891 or 1893-1978) was a painter, sculptor, and writer, active in Boston, Massachusetts and Mexico. Born in Germany in 1891 or 1893, Marta Arnstem immigrated to Massachusetts around 1915, and married Edward Brinley Adams in 1916 who died in 1922. She apprenticed with sculptor Hans Stangl in Munich during the winter of 1925. Before moving back to Cambridge in 1933, Adams showed drawings and sculpture at the Günther Galerie in Munich, and was part of a social circle that included cartoonist Otto Nückl, writer A. M. Frey, and painter Karl Zerbe, among others. Animals were her favorite subject used in most of her artwork, though she also included flowers, and had a series on open-heart surgery. In 1935, Adams made her first visit to Mexico, and began spending more time there than in the United States. There, she met Diego Rivera who stimulated her interest in oil painting. In 1952 she moved to Mexico permanently. She exhibited with the Boris Mirski Gallery in Boston, and had numerous exhibitions in Mexico.

---

## Scope and Contents

The papers of sculptor, painter, and writer Marta Adams measure 4.2 linear feet, and date from circa 1914 to circa 1991. Found within are biographical materials, correspondence, writings and notes, legal and estate papers, printed materials, photographic material, one mixed-media scrapbook, and artwork, including three portfolios of lithographs, *30 Grabados de Galo Galecio*, 1946, containing 30 engraving prints by Galecio and *Estampas de la Revolucion Mexicana*, 1947, containing 85 engraving prints by 16 artists of the Taller de Gracia Popular, and *Drawings: Seymour Swetsoff*, 1949. .

Biographical material includes address books, curriculum vitae, a passport, awards and certificates, and immigration materials.

Correspondence comprises the bulk of the collection and is primarily personal in nature. Most of the correspondence is between Marta and her daughter Kay Kulmala, though there are several files of a blend of personal and professional correspondence to and from others. Additional correspondents include other family members and friends, as well as the Galerie Günther Franke and Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes. Notable correspondents include Charles L. and Hetty Kuhn, Raquel Jodorowsky, and Kojin Toneyama, among others.

Writings include drafts and manuscripts by Adams, of poetry and children's stories, as well as notes for an unpublished autobiography. Also found are writings about Adams by others.

After Marta Adam's death, her daughter, Kay Kulmala, dealt with her estate by conducting inventories, discussing exhibitions, and facilitating auctions of Adam's artwork, documented via legal and estate papers found within the collection.

Printed materials include clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs,

Photographs are of the artist, friends and family, and artwork. Also included are two family photograph albums. One scrapbook contains letters, notes, drawings, and photographs, and appears to have been created by friends and peers for Adams.

Artwork includes Christmas card designs, sketches and illustrations, mixed media collages by Marta Adams, and a small watercolor "House and Tree" by Marta Adams. Also included are works by others including a signed lithograph by Leopoldo Méndez, and prints by Xavier Guerrero, José Clemente Orozco, Jose Guadalupe Posada, and Alfredo Zalce. There are three limited editions of portfolios of lithographs, *30 Grabados de Galo Galecio*, 1946, containing 30 engraving prints by Galecio, *Estampas de la Revolucion Mexicana*, 1947, containing 85 engraving prints by 16 artists of the Taller de Grafica Popular, and *Drawings: Seymour Swetsoff*, 1949.

---

## Arrangement

This collection is arranged as 9 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1918-circa 1980 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1, Box 6)
- Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1929-circa 1978 (1.8 linear feet; Boxes 1-2)
- Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1914-circa 1978 (0.1 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 4: Legal and Estate Papers, circa 1963-circa 1991 (0.3 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 5: Printed Materials, circa 1940s-circa 1988 (0.7 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1916-circa 1980s (0.7 linear feet; Boxes 3-6)
- Series 7: Scrapbook, circa 1963-circa 1964 (1 folder; Box 5)
- Series 8: Artwork, circa 1920s-circa 1978 (0.4 linear feet; Boxes 5-6, OV 7)

---

## Names and Subject Terms

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

### Subjects:

Latino and Latin American artists  
Prints, Mexican  
Women artists  
Women authors  
Women painters  
Women sculptors

### Types of Materials:

Photograph albums  
Photographs  
Scrapbooks  
Sketches

### Names:

Galecio, Galo, 1908-1993  
Galerie Günther Franke

Guerrero, Xavier, 1896-  
Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (Mexico)  
Jodorowsky, Raquel  
Kuhn, Charles L. (Charles Louis), 1901-  
Kuhn, Hetty  
Kulmala, Kay  
Méndez, Leopoldo, 1902-1969  
Orozco, José Clemente, 1883-1949  
Posada, José Guadalupe, 1852-1913  
Swetsoff, Seymour  
Taller de Gráfica Popular (Mexico City, Mexico)  
Toneyama, Kōjin, 1921-  
Zalce, Alfredo, 1908-2003

Occupations:

Animal sculptors -- Massachusetts -- Boston  
Animal sculptors -- Mexico  
Authors -- Massachusetts -- Boston  
Authors -- Mexico  
Painters -- Massachusetts -- Boston  
Painters -- Mexico  
Sculptors -- Massachusetts -- Boston  
Sculptors -- Mexico

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1918-circa 1980

#### *0.2 Linear feet (Box 1, Box 6)*

Scope and Contents: Found here are five address books, an honorable mention award certificate from the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, curriculum vitae, immigration papers for Marta Adams and various family and friends, and a passport and marriage certificate.

Box 1, Folder 1-3	Address Books, circa 1918-circa 1978
Box 1, Folder 4	Addresses and Appointment Notes, circa 1918-circa 1978
Box 6, Folder 1	Award Certificate, 1962
Box 1, Folder 5	Curriculum Vitae, circa 1979-circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 6	Immigration Papers, 1948-1955
Box 1, Folder 7	Immigration Materials of Family Friends, circa 1971-circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 8	Passport and Marriage Certificate, 1916-1974

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1929-circa 1978

### 1.8 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence is primarily with Marta's daughter, Kay Adams, and some letters are illustrated; sometimes written in Spanish as well as English; and may include photographs and postcards as well as letters. Other correspondence is with galleries and museums such as Galerie Günther Franke and the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, as well as artists and other family members and friends. Other correspondents include Raquel Jodorwosky, Charles L. and Hetty Kuhn, and Kojin Toneyama, among others.

Box 1, Folder 9-37      Between Marta Adams and Kay Adams, circa 1929-circa 1978

Box 2, Folder 1-17      Between Marta Adams and Kay Adams, circa 1967-circa 1978

Box 2, Folder 18-21      With Others, circa 1947-circa 1978

[Return to Table of Contents](#)



## Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1914-circa 1978

### 0.1 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Found here are drafts and manuscripts of poetry and children's stories; notes for Adam's unpublished autobiography; and writings about Marta Adams by others.

Box 3, Folder 1	Drafts, Haikus and Dreams, circa 1940-circa 1970
Box 3, Folder 2-3	Drafts, Children's Stories, circa 1951-circa 1955
Box 3, Folder 4	Manuscript, Children's Book, circa 1914-circa 1978
Box 3, Folder 5-6	Notes for Autobiography, circa 1914-circa 1945
Box 3, Folder 7	Writings by Others About Marta Adams, circa 1978

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 4: Legal and Estate Papers, circa 1963-circa 1991

### 0.3 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Records document estate auctions, inventories, and possible exhibitions of artwork, organized by Kay Kulmala after Adam's death in 1978.

Box 3, Folder 8	Estate Auction of Artwork, circa 1990-circa 1991
Box 3, Folder 9	Estate Auction Clippings and Papers, circa 1991
Box 3, Folder 10	Estate Inventory and Lists of Artwork, circa 1980s
Box 3, Folder 11	Estate Notes, circa 1980s
Box 3, Folder 12	General Legal and Estate Materials, circa 1963-circa 1983
Box 3, Folder 13-14	Posthumous Exhibitions and Placement of Artwork, circa 1978-circa 1990

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 5: Printed Materials, circa 1940s-circa 1988

### *0.7 Linear feet (Box 3)*

Scope and Contents: Printed materials include clippings, exhibition announcements, and catalogs. Most of the clippings are in Spanish.

Box 3, Folder 15-22	Clippings, circa 1940s-circa 1986
Box 3, Folder 23-28	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, circa 1942-circa 1980
Box 3, Folder 29	General Printed Materials, circa 1981-circa 1988

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 6: Photographic Material, circa 1916-circa 1980s

### 0.7 Linear feet (Boxes 3-6)

Scope and Contents: Black and white photographs, snapshots, and negatives are of the artist, friends and family, and Marta Adam's works of art. Also found are two family photograph albums.

Box 3, Folder 30-31	Portraits of Marta Adams, circa 1916-circa 1978
Box 3, Folder 32	Family and Friends, circa 1918-circa 1962 Notes: Oversized photograph housed in Box 6, Folder 1.
Box 3, Folder 33-35	Artwork, circa 1918-circa 1978
Box 4, Folder 1-10	Artwork, circa 1918-circa 1978
Box 4, Folder 11	Family Photograph Album 1, circa 1920-circa 1930s
Box 5, Folder 1	Family Photograph Album 2, circa 1920-circa 1930s
Box 5, Folder 2-3	Family Photograph Album, Loose Photographs and Negatives, circa 1920-circa 1957

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 7: Scrapbook, circa 1963-circa 1964

### 1 Folder (Box 5)

Scope and Contents: A mixed-media scrapbook contains letters, notes, drawings, and photographs. Likely, it was created by friends and peers for Adams.

Box 5, Folder 4	Scrapbook, circa 1963-circa 1964
-----------------	----------------------------------

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 8: Artwork, circa 1920s-circa 1978

### 0.4 Linear feet (Boxes 5-6, OV 7)

Scope and Contents: Found here are Christmas card designs, mixed media collages, and sketches and illustrations by Marta Adams including a small watercolor "House and Tree." In addition, there are three engravings by Leopoldo Méndez, one engraving by Alfredo Zalce, one lithograph by José Clemente Orozco, one pencil sketch by Xavier Guerrero, and several unidentified sketches and prints by other artists. Also included are three limited editions of portfolios of lithographs, *30 Grabados de Galo Galecio*, 1946, containing 30 engraving prints by Galecio, *Estampas de la Revolucion Mexicana*, 1947, containing 85 engraving prints by 16 artists of the Taller de Grafica Popular, and *Drawings: Seymour Swetsoff*, 1949. Researchers may be interested to note that a file of "Self-Portraits by Friends" appears to be a compilation of self-portrait and caricature sketches with signatures requested as entrance to an unidentified exhibition, as a possible illustrated guestbook.

Box 5, Folder 5	Christmas Card Designs, circa 1930s-circa 1970s
Box 5, Folder 6	Mixed Media Collages, circa 1932-circa 1970s Notes: Oversized mixed media collages housed in Box 6, Folder 4, and OV 7.
Oversize 7	Oversized Mixed Media Collages
Box 5, Folder 7-8	Sketches and Illustrations, circa 1966-circa 1978 Notes: Oversized sketches and illustrations housed in Box 6, Folder 4.
Box 5, Folder 9	Engravings by Leopold Méndez, circa 1940s-circa 1960s Notes: Oversized engraving housed in OV 7.
Oversize 7	Oversized Engravings by Leopold Méndez
Box 6, Folder 5	Engraving by Alfredo Zalce, 1945
Box 5, Folder 10	Limited Edition Book with Signed Prints, Galo Galecio: Bajo la Linea del Ecuador, 1946
Box 6, Folder 2	Limited Edition Book with Posters, Estampas de la Revolución Mexicana, 1947
Box 6, Folder 3	Limited Edition Book with Prints, Drawings: Seymour Swetsoff, 1949
Box 5, Folder 11	Lithograph by José Clemente Orozco, circa 1920s-circa 1940s
Box 6, Folder 5	Pencil Sketch by Xavier Guerrero, circa 1920s-circa 1978
Box 5, Folder 12	Sketches by Others, "Self-Portraits by Friends," Pen and Pencil, circa 1936-circa 1942 Notes: Oversized pencil sketch housed in Box 6, Folder 5.

Box 5, Folder 13

Unidentified Sketches and Prints by Others, circa 1949-circa 1976

[Return to Table of Contents](#)