



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Samuel Putnam Avery papers

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Samuel Putnam Avery papers
Identifier:	AAA.aversamu
Date:	1857-1902
Extent:	800 Items ((on 3 microfilm reels))
Creator:	Avery, Samuel Putnam, 1822-1904
Language:	English .

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Lent for microfilming 1964 by the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Location of Originals

Originals in Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Available Formats

35mm microfilm reels NMM26, NMM26a, NMM27 available at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

Restrictions

The Archives of American art does not own the original papers. Use is limited to the microfilm copy.

Biographical / Historical

Copper and wood engraver, art dealer, connoisseur and advisor to important collectors. Eventually Avery gave up commercial engraving and devoted himself exclusively to collecting and dealing art; particular specialty being old Dutch paintings and romantic French landscape painters. A founder of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, many of the paintings in that collection were selected by him. He gave notable collections of architectural books to Columbia University, and of engravings and etchings to the New York Public Library.

Scope and Contents

Correspondence, including letters, calling cards and sketches from American and European artists, among them Albert F. Bellows, Eugene Benson, Edwin H. Blashfield, Rosa Bonheur, Adolph W. Bouguereau, Samuel Colman, Clarence Cook, Jasper F. Cropsey, F. O. C. Darley, Charles F. Daubigny, John Durand, Sanford R. Gifford, E. D. E. Greene, Augustus Hoppin, Victor Hugo, John La Farge, Jules Lefebvre, Jervis McEntee, Charles H. Moore, William S. Mount, Thomas A. Richards, Launt Thompson, Henry T. Tuckerman, and James McNeill Whistler; five diaries, 1871-1882, detailing annual buying trips to Europe; catalogs, clippings, and miscellaneous publications pertaining to the Avery Art Gallery.

Scope and Contents

Travel diaries were written exclusively during the summers of 1871-1882 while in Europe (ca.780 p.). Avery visited England, France, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, and Italy, visiting galleries and studios, and attending sales in the major cities. In his entries, he lists the works that he sees and art purchases that he makes, detailing prices, sizes, and frame requirements. Avery spent most of his time visiting dealers, making shipping arrangements, and commissioning work from a variety of artists. He visited auction houses such as Christie's in London, and "bric a brac shops" where he purchased not only paintings, but also furniture, tapestries and jewelry. He mentions several dealers throughout Europe, especially the P.L. Everard Company and Mr. Boughton in London, and Mr. Van Hinsberg in Belgium. His social engagements included gallery exhibitions, concerts, trips to the opera, and dinners. He describes the French city of Ecoeu and the Italian countryside vividly. Avery also records his meeting with the Spanish artist Cutazzi, and describes in detail the finery of the Makart studio in Vienna. Throughout the diaries, he corresponds and meets with Mr. Everard, Mr. Boughton, James McNeill Whistler, Vincent Van Gogh, and people he refers to only as Sam and Mary. Avery writes often of his occasional traveling companion, Mr. Lucas. Beginning in 1873, he mentions his wife, letters to her, and gifts that he buys her. At the end of the diary, he lists his accounts during these years.

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

Names:

Bellows, A. F. (Albert Fitch), 1829-1883
Benson, Eugene, 1837-1908
Blashfield, Edwin Howland, 1848-1936
Bonheur, Rosa, 1822-1899
Bouguereau, William Adolphe, 1825-1905
Colman, Samuel, 1832-1920
Cook, Clarence, 1828-1900
Cropsey, Jasper Francis, 1823-1900
Darley, Felix Octavius Carr, 1822-1888
Daubigny, Charles François, 1817-1878
Durand, John, 1822-1908
Gifford, Sanford Robinson, 1823-1880

Greene, Edward D. E., 1823-1879
Hoppin, Augustus, 1828-1896
Hugo, Victor, 1802-1885
James McNeill Whistler, 1834-1903
La Farge, John, 1835-1910
Lefebvre, Jules, 1836-1911
McEntee, Jervis, 1828-1891
Moore, Charles Herbert, 1840-1930
Mount, William Sidney, 1807-1868
Richards, T. Addison (Thomas Addison), 1820-1900
Thompson, Launt, 1833-1894
Tuckerman, Henry T. (Henry Theodore), 1813-1871

Occupations:

Art dealers -- New York (State) -- New York
Engravers -- New York (State) -- New York