



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Louis Bunce Papers,  
1890s-1983, in the Archives of American Art

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Smithsonian Institution Collections Care and Preservation Fund

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Louis Bunce papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.buncloui
<b>Date:</b>	1890s-1983
<b>Extent:</b>	9.1 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Bunce, Louis, 1907-1983
<b>Language:</b>	English  Collection is in English.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of Portland, Oregon painter, printmaker, and educator Louis Bunce (1907-1983) measure 9.1 linear feet and date from the 1890s to 1983. Found are biographical materials, correspondence, writings and notes, interviews and interview transcripts, organizational records, personal business records, printed materials, nine scrapbooks, eighteen sketchbooks, artwork, and photographs. A few audiovisual recordings are scattered throughout series.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Louis Bunce papers were donated by the artist's son, Jon Bunce in 1984.

### Related Materials

Also in the Archives of American Art are two oral history interviews with Bunce, one conducted on October 29, 1965 by Dorothy Bestor and a second conducted on December 3-13, 1982 by Rachel Rosenfield, for the Archives of American Art's Northwest Oral History Project

### Available Formats

Portions of this collection, including Jackson Pollock letters, catalog, and announcement, are available on 35 mm microfilm reel 3999 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2016, with funding provided by the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund. The Archives of American Art has implemented minimal processing tactics when possible in order to increase information about and access to more of our collections.

Minimal processing included arrangement to the series, subseries, and folder levels. Generally, items within folders were simply verified with folder titles, but not arranged further. The collection was rehoused in archival containers and folders, but not all staples and clips were removed.

## Preferred Citation

Louis Bunce papers, 1890s-1983. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment. Use of archival audiovisual recordings with no duplicate access copy requires advanced notice.

## Conditions Governing Use

The Louis Bunce papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

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## Biographical / Historical

Louis Bunce (1907-1983) was a painter, printmaker, and educator active in Portland, Oregon. His modernist style influenced many artists in the Pacific Northwest.

Born in Wyoming in 1907, Bunce began his art education at the Museum Art School in Portland Oregon in 1925. After two years, he moved to New York City to study at the Art Students League. During the great Depression, Bunce returned to Oregon and worked for the federal WPA Section of Painting and Sculpture. He painted murals for post offices in Portland (St. Johns neighborhood), and Grants Pass. Bunce moved back to New York in 1940, where he continued working as a WPA mural and easel painter, and befriended fellow artists Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Robert Motherwell, Franz Kline, and other American modernists.

A prominent member of the arts scene of Portland, Bunce taught at the Museum Art School (now the Pacific Northwest College of Art) from 1946 until 1972. In 1949, he and his wife Gloria opened the Kharouba Gallery, the first art gallery in Portland to show modernist, avant-garde, and experimental art. In 1958, Bunce's abstract mural for the Portland International Airport created some controversy over its modernist style. The mural can still be seen in the airport.

Bunce married twice, to Eda Hult and Gloria Scott. With Eda, he had a son, Jon Bunce. Louis Bunce died in Portland, Oregon in 1983 from an aneurysm.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of Portland, Oregon painter, printmaker, and educator Louis Bunce (1907-1983) measure 9.1 linear feet and date from the 1890s to 1983. Found are biographical materials, correspondence, writings and notes, interviews and interview transcripts, organizational records, personal business records, printed materials, nine scrapbooks, eighteen sketchbooks, artwork, and photographs. A few audiovisual recordings are scattered throughout series.

Biographical materials include address and appointment books, awards, life documents, resumes, and Bunce family genealogical records. There is a video recording of Bunce's retirement party from the Portland Museum School and of Bunce hanging his artwork for a show at the Fountain Gallery.

Bunce's correspondence is with his wives, Eda and Gloria, family, friends, fellow artists, and galleries and institutions. Notable correspondents include Jackson Pollock, Pee Wee Russell, and Max Weber. Writings and notes by Bunce include a notebook containing sales information, lists of works of art, sketches, and artist's statements. There are also autobiographical sketches and a video recording of a 1961 television show hosted by Bunce entitled "The Jazz Arts" depicting Bunce painting while jazz musicians perform. There are a few writings about Bunce by others.

There are two recorded interviews and three transcripts of interviews with Bunce conducted by Rachel Griffin, Wendy Wells of the Fountain Gallery, the Oregon Historical Society, KOIN TV, and an art student.

Organizational records document Louis Bunce's association with the Portland Center for the Visual Arts and the Portland Building Public Art Selection Committee of the Metropolitan Arts Commission. Personal business records include agreements and contracts, including an agreement with Sally Judd to form a gallery, consignment records, income and sales records, price lists and inventories (see also series 3 for a notebook containing lists of artwork and sales information), and personal legal documents. Printed materials consist of bulletins, clippings, and exhibition catalogs and announcements. There is also a video recording of a broadcast of KGW-TV depicting Bunce painting an outdoor mural.

Nine mixed media scrapbooks contain sketches, notes, printed material, photographs, correspondence, project proposals, writings, notes, addresses, receipts and sales records. Many of the scrapbooks contain artwork drawn directly onto the paper while some have artwork pasted into the pages. Eighteen sketchbooks of Bunce depict abstract drawings, figures, portraits, landscapes, and street scenes in pencil, pen and watercolor. Also found is a Valentine's Day-themed flipbook by Bunce and unidentified sketches likely by John Hammack and others.

Photographs are of Bunce, Bunce's family, Bunce at events, Bunce with his art, and Bunce at work in his studio. Also found are photographs of travel, stills of footage used on KOIN-TV, works of art, and exhibitions.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 11 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1902-1983 (Box 1, 13; 0.7 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1916-1983 (Box 1-3; 1.7 linear feet)
- Series 3: Writings and Notes, 1940-1970s (Box 3; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 4: Interviews and Interview Transcripts, 1955-1982 (Box 3; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 5: Organizational Records, 1970s-1983 (Box 3; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 6: Personal Business Records, 1948-1983 (Box 3-4; 0.8 linear feet)
- Series 7: Printed Material, 1930s-1980s (Box 4-6, 13; 1.7 linear feet)
- Series 8: Scrapbooks, 1941-1982 (Box 6, 9-10; 1.0 linear feet)
- Series 9: Sketchbooks, 1940-1960s (Box 6-7, 11; 1.2 linear feet)
- Series 10: Artwork, circa 1944-1979 (Box 7, 13-15; 0.6 linear feet)
- Series 11: Photographs, 1890s-1981 (Box 7-8, 12; 0.9 linear feet)

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Artists' studios -- Photographs

Types of Materials:

Interviews  
Photographs  
Scrapbooks  
Sketchbooks  
Sketches  
Sound recordings  
Transcripts  
Video recordings

Names:

Bunce, Edna  
Bunce, Gloria  
Fountain Gallery of Art  
Griffin, Rachael  
Hammack, John  
Judd, Sally  
KOIN-TV (Television station : Portland, Or.)  
Metropolitan Arts Commission (Portland, Or.)  
Oregon Historical Society  
Pollock, Jackson, 1912-1956  
Portland Center for the Visual Arts  
Portland Museum School -- Faculty  
Russell, Pee Wee  
Weber, Max, 1881-1961  
Wells, Wendy

Occupations:

Educators -- Oregon  
Painters -- Oregon -- Portland  
Printmakers -- Oregon

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1902-1983

*0.7 Linear feet (Box 1, 13)*

Found are three address books and loose notes, three appointment books, awards and certificates, a guest book for a 1968 exhibition, Bunce family genealogical records, resumes, identification cards, and travel documents. The appointment books also include notes on sales and loans, resume drafts, addresses, lists of works of art, and sketches. Also found is one five-minute videorecording showing Bunce's retirement party at the Portland Museum School and of Bunce hanging his show at the Fountain Gallery.

Box 1, Folder 1	Address Books, circa 1950
Box 1, Folder 3-5	Appointment Books, 1979-1982
Box 1, Folder 6-7	Awards and Certificates, 1917-1980 Oversized material housed in Box 13, F1
Box 1, Folder 8	Cooking, 1960s
Box 1, Folder 9	Genealogy Records, 1930s
Box 1, Folder 10	Guest Book, 1968
Box 1, Folder 11	Identification and Membership Cards, 1942-1983
Box 1, Folder 12	Memorial Service Program, 1983
Box 1, Folder 13	Passports, 1960s
Box 1, Folder 14	Personalized Newspaper, circa 1960
Box 1, Folder 15	Resumes, 1940s-1970s
Box 1, Folder 16	Video Recording of Retirement and of Bunce Hanging Art, circa 1977 <i>1 videocassettes (u-matic)</i>
Box 1, Folder 17	Travel, 1969
Box 1, Folder 18	Wedding Invitation, 1902
Box 13, Folder 1	Oversized Certificate, 1920

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## Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1916-1983

### 1.7 Linear feet (Box 1-3)

Bunce's correspondence is with family, colleagues, artists, and galleries and institutions. Correspondents include Eda Bunce, Gloria Bunce, John Hammack, John Heller Gallery, Jackson Pollock, Pee Wee Russell, Max Weber, and many others. Some letters are illustrated, including handmade birthday cards. Letters from Jackson Pollock discuss Pollock's move to The Springs on Long Island; upcoming shows; various abstract artists, including William Baziotis, Arshile Gorky, Adolph Gottlieb, Mark Rothko, and Spivak, and mentions his plans to visit Bunce in Oregon. Also, he sends an exhibition catalog *First Exhibition Jackson Pollock, Paintings and Drawings* (1943), and an announcement for a painting exhibition, April 2-20 [1946], both at Art of This Century.

Box 1, Folder 19	General, 1930-1939
Box 1, Folder 20-21	General, 1940-1949
Box 1, Folder 22-28	General, 1950-1959
Box 1, Folder 29	General, 1960
Box 2, Folder 1-15	General, 1960-1969
Box 2, Folder 16-22	General, 1970-1979
Box 2, Folder 23-26	General, 1980-1982
Box 3, Folder 1	General, 1983
Box 3, Folder 2-7	Undated, circa 1916-circa 1983

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## Series 3: Writings and Notes, 1940-1970s

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

Writing and notes by Bunce include a notebook containing sales information, lists of works of art, sketches, and artist statements. There are also autobiographical essays and a 1961 video recording of "The Jazz Arts," a Frank Parr Production television show written by Ernie Hood featuring Bunce painting while "No Way Out" jazz musicians perform. There are scattered unsigned writings by others and one by Joachim Gasquet.

Box 3, Folder 8	Notebook, 1940-1949
Box 3, Folder 9	Autobiographical Sketches, circa 1950s
Box 3, Folder 10	Notes, on Art, 1940s-1970s
Box 3, Folder 11	"The Jazz Arts," hosted by Louis Bunce, 1961 <i>1 Videocassette</i>
Box 3, Folder 12	by Others, circa 1940s

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## Series 4: Interviews and Interview Transcripts, 1955-1982

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

There are two recorded interviews and three transcripts of interviews with Louis Bunce. An audio tape contains an interview conducted on March 13, 1955 by Couch and Rachel Griffin discussing Bunce's exhibition. A forty minute interview conducted by Wendy Wells of the Fountain Gallery dates from circa 1982. Other interviews were conducted for the Oregon Historical Society, KOIN TV, and an art student named Gleason.

Box 3, Folder 13	by Couch and Rachel Griffin, 1955
Box 3, Folder 14	with KOIN TV, Transcript, circa 1960s
Box 3, Folder 15	by Mr. Gleason, Transcript, circa 1960s
Box 3, Folder 16	by Charles Digregorio from the Oregon Historical Society, Transcript, 1978
Box 3, Folder 17	by Wendy Wells, circa 1982 <i>1 videocassettes (u-matic)</i>

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## Series 5: Organizational Records, 1970s-1983

*0.1 Linear feet (Box 3)*

Found here are files regarding Bunce's involvement in the Portland Center for the Visual Arts and the Metropolitan Arts Commission, including records about the selection of the sculpture *Portlandia*.

Box 3, Folder 18          Portland Center for the Visual Arts, circa 1970s-1983

Box 3, Folder 19          Metropolitan Arts Commission, Portland Building Public Art Selection  
Committee, 1982

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## Series 6: Personal Business Records, 1948-1983

### *0.8 Linear feet (Box 3-4)*

There are agreements and contracts for commissions, publications, media releases, and the creation of a partnership with Sally Judd to form a gallery. Consignment records are mostly from Fountain Gallery. Two divorce and separation records are between Louis D. Bunce and Gloria Bunce as well as another Louis Bunce, likely the artist's father. Income and sales records documents artwork sales.

Box 3, Folder 20	Agreements and Contracts, 1968-1982
Box 3, Folder 21	Consignment Records, 1980s
Box 3, Folder 22	Divorce and Separation Records, 1959-1973
Box 4, Folder 1-5	Income and Sales Records, 1948-1982
Box 4, Folder 6	Lease, 1959
Box 4, Folder 7	Mortgage and Real Estate Records, 1967
Box 4, Folder 8	Price Lists and Inventories, 1972-1979
Box 4, Folder 9-13	Receipts, 1960s-1983
Box 4, Folder 14	Will, 1981

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## Series 7: Printed Material, 1930s-1980s

### *1.7 Linear feet (Box 4-6, 13)*

Printed materials include bulletins, clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and food-related publications. There is also a thirty-second video recording of Bunce painting an outdoor mural that was produced by KGW-TV.

Box 4, Folder 15	KWG-TV, Bunce Painting a Mural, 1961 <i>1 Videocassette</i>
Box 4, Folder 16-17	Bulletins, 1930s-1970s
Box 4, Folder 18-22	Clippings, 1930s-1970s
Box 5, Folder 1-8	Clippings, 1950s-1980s Oversized material housed in Box 13, F2
Box 5, Folder 9-17	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1930s-1980s
Box 6, Folder 1-5	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1930s-1980s
Box 6, Folder 6	Food Publications, 1960s
Box 5, Folder 8	Oversized Clippings, 1957

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## Series 8: Scrapbooks, 1941-1982

### *1 Linear foot (Box 6, 9-10)*

Nine scrapbooks contain sketches, notes, printed material, photographs, correspondence and drafts of letters, project proposal estimates, writings, notes, addresses, receipts, and sales records. Some scrapbooks may include a variety of materials while Scrapbook 8 only contains artwork. It is likely that all of the scrapbooks were compiled by Bunce and some include miniature sketches possibly used as a model for a later works of art pasted into the book while other sketches were done directly onto the paper.

Box 6, Folder 7	Scrapbook 1, 1941-1974
Box 6, Folder 8	Scrapbook 2, 1963-1982
Box 6, Folder 9	Scrapbook 3, 1969
Box 6, Folder 10	Scrapbook 4, 1978
Box 6, Folder 11	Scrapbook 5, 1970s
Box 6, Folder 12	Scrapbook 6, 1982
Box 9, Folder 1	Scrapbook 7, 1932-1950s
Box 10, Folder 1	Scrapbook 8, 1940s
Box 10, Folder 2	Scrapbook 9, 1950-1954

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## Series 9: Sketchbooks, 1940-1960s

### 1.2 Linear feet (Box 6-7, 11)

Eighteen sketchbooks depict abstract drawings, figures, portraits, landscapes, and street scenes in a variety of media. Some are labeled with locations, but many are unidentified. Some sketches are miniature versions of works of art Bunce intended to create.

Box 6, Folder 13	Sketchbook 1, circa 1940 Portraits, pencil drawings
Box 6, Folder 14	Sketchbook 2, 1947 Boats and abstract drawings in pen and pencil
Box 6, Folder 15	Sketchbook 3, 1950s Botanical and abstract drawings in pen, crayon, pencil and colored pencil
Box 6, Folder 16	Sketchbook 4, 1950s Abstract drawings and doodles in pencil and watercolor
Box 6, Folder 17	Sketchbook 5, 1950s Heads and abstract drawings in watercolor and colored pencil
Box 6, Folder 8	Sketchbook 6, 1950s Portraits and doodles in pencil
Box 6, Folder 9	Sketchbook 7, 1950s Portraits, abstract drawings, and ships in pencil, colored pencil and watercolor
Box 7, Folder 1	Sketchbook 8, 1950s Hood River scenes in pencil
Box 7, Folder 2	Sketchbook 9, 1950s Newport, Oregon landscapes in pencil
Box 7, Folder 3	Sketchbook 10, circa 1950s Portland, Oregon scenes and landscapes in pen and pencil
Box 7, Folder 4	Sketchbook 11, 1950s Abstract drawings in pen, pencil, and watercolor
Box 7, Folder 5	Sketchbook 12, 1950s Abstract drawings and doodles in pencil and watercolor
Box 7, Folder 6	Sketchbook 13, 1960s Abstract drawings, portraits and landscapes in pencil, colored pencil, and pen
Box 11, Folder 1	Sketchbook 14, 1940 Abstract drawings and figures in pencil, watercolor and pen
Box 11, Folder 2	Sketchbook 15, 1950s Faces and abstract drawings in pencil and colored pencil

Box 11, Folder 3	Sketchbook 16, 1950s Abstract drawings in pencil
Box 11, Folder 4	Sketchbook 17, 1950s Landscapes and abstract drawings in pencil and watercolor
Box 11, Folder 5	Sketchbook 18, 1950s Abstract figures in watercolor and pencil

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## Series 10: Artwork, circa 1944-1979

### *0.6 Linear feet (Box 7, 13-15)*

The bulk of artwork consists of sketches by Louis Bunce. Done in pencil, pen, and watercolors, sketches are of landscapes, portraits, figures, or abstract drawings. Some sketches are miniature versions of works of art Bunce intended to create. Bunce created a flipbook for Valentine's Day. Artwork by others is likely by John Hammack.

Box 7, Folder 7-15	Sketches, 1944-circa 1980 Oversized material housed in Box 13, F3 and OVs 14-15
Box 7, Folder 16	Flipbook, 1979
Box 7, Folder 17	By Others, likely John Hammack, circa 1960
Box 13, Folder 3	Oversized Sketches from Box 7, F15, 1940s-1970s
Box 14	Oversized Sketches from Box 7, F15, 1940-1970s
Box 15	Oversized Sketches from Box 7, F15, 1940s-1970s

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## Series 11: Photographs, 1890s-1981

*0.9 Linear feet (Box 7-8, 12)*

There are personal photographs and portraits of Bunce; his wives and families; colleagues; at events; with his art, and while painting and in his studio. Other photographs are stills of footage used on KOIN-TV, jazz musicians, Bunce family portraits, and travel photos. Photographs of works of art include images of Bunce's WPA-sponsored mural at the post office of Grants Pass, Oregon. Exhibition photographs are of an opening at Kharouba Gallery opening, and shows at the Benson Museum of Modern Art, Kraushaar Galleries, and the Portland Art Museum.

Box 7, Folder 18-46	Personal, 1890s-1973
Box 8, Folder 1-5	Personal, 1976-1981
Box 8, Folder 6-27	Exhibitions and Works of Art, 1940s-1970s
Box 12, Folder 1	Oversized Personal Photographs, 1930s-1960s

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