



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Rackstraw Downes Research  
Material Concerning Fairfield Porter, 1962-2000,  
bulk 1970-1979, in the Archives of American Art

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2013 July 24

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## Collection Overview

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Repository:</b> | Archives of American Art   |
| <b>Title:</b>      | Rackstraw Downes research material concerning Fairfield Porter   |
| <b>Identifier:</b> | AAA.downrack   |
| <b>Date:</b>       | 1962-2000<br>(bulk 1970-1979)  |
| <b>Creator:</b>    | Downes, Rackstraw  |
| <b>Extent:</b>     | 1 Linear foot  |
| <b>Language:</b>   | English .  |
| <b>Summary:</b>    | The Rackstraw Downes research material concerning Fairfield Porter measure 1.0 linear foot and date from 1962 to 2000, with the bulk of the material dating from 1970-1979. Downes used the material to compile, edit and write the introduction to <i>Fairfield Porter: Art In Its Own Terms - Selected Criticism 1935-1975</i> published in 1979. Research materials include articles about Porter, exhibition catalogs, photocopies of letters and some original correspondence, theses and manuscripts. Also included are project files for the publication of <i>Art In Its Own Terms</i> . |

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Donated by Rackstraw Downes in 2012.

### Processing Information

This collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid prepared in 2013 by Rachel Salzmann. 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 and folder level. Generally, items within folders were simply verified with folder titles, but not arranged further. Folders within boxes were not numbered. The collection was rehoused in archival containers and folders, but not all staples and clips were removed.

### Preferred Citation

The Rackstraw Downes research material concerning Fairfield Porter, 1962-2000, bulk 1970-1979. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

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## Biographical / Historical

Rackstraw Downes (1939-), a landscape painter and author in New York City, edited and wrote the introduction to *Fairfield Porter: Art In Its Own Terms: Selected Criticism 1935-1975*. Born in Kent, England, Downes received a B.A. in English literature from Cambridge University in 1961 and earned an M.F.A. from the Yale School of Arts in 1961. Downes was personally acquainted with Porter.

Fairfield Porter (1907-1975), a painter, art critic and poet, resided in Southampton, New York. Porter was a strong advocate for figure painting. He wrote for *ArtNews* and *The Nation*, and eventually became art editor for *The Nation*.

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## Scope and Contents

The Rackstraw Downes research material concerning Fairfield Porter measure 1.0 linear foot and date from 1962 to 2000, with the bulk of the material dating from 1970-1979. Downes used the material to compile, edit and write the introduction to *Fairfield Porter: Art In Its Own Terms - Selected Criticism 1935-1975* published in 1979. Research materials include articles about Porter, exhibition catalogs, photocopies of letters and some original correspondence, theses and manuscripts. Also included are project files for the publication of *Art In Its Own Terms*.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into two series:

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Research Material, 1962-2000 (0.7 linear feet; Box 1)
  - Series 2: Files on *Fairfield Porter: Art In Its Own Terms, Selected Criticism 1935-1975*, 1973-1992 (0.3 linear feet; Box 1)
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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Porter, Fairfield

Occupations:

Art critics -- New York (State) -- Southampton

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Research Material, 1962-2000

#### 0.7 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series contains many photocopies of Porter's writings published as early as 1935. Photocopies of letters from Fairfield Porter are to various recipients including: John MacWhinnie, Robert Dash, David Shapiro, Ron Padgett, Edith Schloss, Frank O'Hara, and Howard Griffin. Downes's correspondence with Fairfield and Anne Porter are the original letters, as are those from Porter to Poppy and Lucien Day.

After the publication was completed, Downes continued to add material. He subsequently compiled the bibliography included in the exhibition catalog, *Fairfield Porter: Realist Painter in an Age of Abstraction*, published in 1982 by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA.

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 1     | Printed Material - Essays by Fairfield Porter (1958-1961) , circa 1970s                   |
| Box 1, Folder 2-4   | Printed Material - Articles about Fairfield Porter, 1970-2000                             |
| Box 1, Folder 5-6   | Printed Material - Essays and Reviews of Art by Fairfield Porter (1935-1974), circa 1970s |
| Box 1, Folder 7     | Printed Material - Exhibition Catalogs, 1969-1995   |
| Box 1, Folder 8     | Printed Material - Reviews and Articles , 1969-1999                                       |
| Box 1, Folder 9     | Theses and Manuscripts by Anne Devaney, 1999  |
| Box 1, Folder 10    | Theses and Manuscripts by Ted Leigh, 1973-1977  |
| Box 1, Folder 11-12 | Theses and Manuscripts by John T. Spike, 1990   |
| Box 1, Folder 13    | Chronology and Partial Bibliography, 1970   |
| Box 1, Folder 14    | Bibliography for Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1982   |
| Box 1, Folder 15    | Excerpts from Fairfield Porter letters (1968-1975), circa 1970s                           |
| Box 1, Folder 16    | Letters from Fairfield Porter to Howard Griffin (1977), circa 1970s                       |
| Box 1, Folder 17    | Letters from Fairfield Porter (1961-1975), circa 1970s                                    |
| Box 1, Folder 18    | Letters from Fairfield Porter to Frank O'Hara (1955) , 1977                               |
| Box 1, Folder 19    | Letters from Anne Porter to Rackstraw Downes, 1976-1997                                   |
| Box 1, Folder 20    | Letters from Fairfield Porter to Rackstraw Downes, 1966-1975                              |

Box 1, Folder 21      Letters from Fairfield Porter to Poppy and Lucien Day, 1962-1972

Box 1, Folder 22      Letters from Rackstraw Downes to Fairfield Porter, 1966-1975

Box 1, Folder 23      Research Notebook, circa 1970s

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## Series 2: Files on *Fairfield Porter: Art In Its Own Terms, Selected Criticism 1935-1975, 1973-1992*

### 0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: This series contains material related to the book's publication and includes permissions, correspondence, some financial records, and the manuscript.

Box 1, Folder 24 Introduction and Outline, 1973-1975

Box 1, Folder 25 Photographs for Publication, circa 1977

Box 1, Folder 26 Permissions- Original, 1978-1992

Box 1, Folder 27 Miscellaneous Fairfield Porter Writings (circa 1940-1973), circa 1977

Box 1, Folder 28 Financial Reports, Expenses and Reviews, 1978

Box 1, Folder 29 Correspondence with Taplinger Publishing, 1978

Box 1, Folder 30-33 Manuscript, 1978

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