



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Guy Pène Du Bois  
Papers in the Archives of American Art

Judy Ng

Processing of this collection was funded by the Terra Foundation for American Art

2013 August 2

Archives of American Art  
750 9th Street, NW  
Victor Building, Suite 2200  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Guy Pène Du Bois papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.duboguyp
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1900-1963 (bulk 1920-1963)
<b>Extent:</b>	2 linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Pène Du Bois, Guy , 1884-1958
<b>Language:</b>	English  The collection is in English.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of painter and art critic Guy Pène Du Bois measure 2.0 linear feet and date from circa 1900 to 1963 with the bulk of the materials dating from 1920 to 1963. Found within the papers are biographical material; personal and professional correspondence, including letters from Royal Cortissoz and Edward Hopper; writings, including essays, journals, short stories, and drafts of the autobiography <i>Artists Say the Silliest Things</i> ; personal business records; printed material; and artwork.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Guy Pène Du Bois papers were donated by Pène Du Bois' daughter, Yvonne McKenney, in 1971.

An addition of two journals by Pène Du Bois was donated in 2017 by Martha Fleischman.

### Separated Materials

Sketches and etching proofs were loaned in 1970 for microfilming on reel 29 and returned to Pène Du Bois' children Yvonne McKenney and William Pène Du Bois. Loaned material is available at Archives of American Art offices and for interlibrary loan but is not described in the container listing of this finding aid.

### Related Materials

The Archives also holds the Guy Pène Du Bois and Mary Lightfoot Tarleton correspondence.

### Available Formats

Portions of this collection are available on 35 mm microfilm reel 28 at the Archives of American Art offices, and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the

papers as described in this finding aid does not reflect the order of the collection on microfilm due to reprocessing.

## Processing Information

Materials received a preliminary level of processing at some point after donation and were microfilmed onto reel 28. All materials were fully processed and described by Judy Ng in 2013 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

The 2017 addition was processed by Ryan Evans in 2018.

## Preferred Citation

Guy Pène Du Bois papers, circa 1900-1963, bulk 1920-1963. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

## Conditions Governing Use

The Guy Pène Du Bois 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

Painter and art critic Guy Pène Du Bois (1884-1958) lived and worked in New York City, New York and was known for his realist paintings, essays, and art reviews.

Pène Du Bois was born in Brooklyn, New York to the art critic Henri Pène Du Bois and his wife Laura. After he showed an early interest in art, his' family supported his decision to enroll in William Merritt Chase's New York School of Art at the age of 15. There, Pène Du Bois trained with the realist painters Robert Henri and Kenneth Hayes Miller along with fellow students George Bellows, Edward Hopper, and Rockwell Kent. In 1905, he traveled to Paris and studied briefly with the artist Thèophile Steinlen, but returned to New York the following year after the death of his father. To help support his family, he found work as an illustrator and cartoonist for the *New York American*, and was promoted to the position of art critic for the newspaper in 1909.

In 1911, Pène Du Bois married his wife, Florence Duncan, and became an assistant writer for the *New York Tribune* under Royal Cortissoz (1913). Pène Du Bois also wrote art reviews for the *New York Post* (1916-1918), and was a writer and later editor of *Arts and Decoration* (1913-1915, 1917-1921). During these years, Pène Du Bois also began to establish a career as a realist painter of note. His work was included in the 1913 Armory Show, after which he signed on as a member of the Kraushaar Gallery stable. Throughout the 1910s, Pène Du Bois exhibited in numerous galleries and museums, and held his first one-man show in 1918 at the Whitney Studio Club.

From 1920 to 1924, Pène Du Bois taught at the Art Students League, and spent the latter part of the 1920s in France with his family. After seven years, he moved his family back to Connecticut and opened the Guy Pène Du Bois School of Art in Stonington, Connecticut. Throughout the 1930s, Pène Du Bois continued painting and received commissions to design federal murals in upstate New York (1937) and Boston (1942). In 1940, Pène Du Bois published his autobiography, *Artists Say the Silliest Things*. After

the death of his wife in 1950, Pène Du Bois lived and traveled with his daughter's family and died in her home in Boston in 1958.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of painter and art critic Guy Pène Du Bois measure 2.0 linear feet and date from circa 1900 to 1963 with the bulk of the materials dating from 1920 to 1963. Found within the papers are biographical material; personal and professional correspondence, including letters from Royal Cortissoz and Edward Hopper; writings, including essays, journals, short stories, and drafts of the autobiography *Artists Say the Silliest Things*; personal business records; printed material; and artwork.

Biographical materials consist of certificates, a curriculum vitae, passport, and a photograph of two unidentified women.

Correspondence is primarily with Pène Du Bois' family, friends, and business associates. The series includes significant correspondence from fellow art critic Royal Cortissoz; artists Raphael Soyer and Edward Hopper; and writers Samuel Duff McCoy, Lincoln Isham, and Newton Booth Tarkington. Other correspondents of note include C.W. Kraushaar Art Galleries and Pène Du Bois' son, the children's book illustrator William Pène Du Bois.

Writings include book drafts of Pène Du Bois' autobiography, *Artists Say the Silliest Things*, journal entries, 35 essays, 8 short stories, and various writing fragments and notes.

Personal business records consist of account and sales records from C.W. Kraushaar Art Galleries, book and publishing contracts, and receipts for art supply purchases.

Printed material includes a brochure for the Guy Pène Du Bois School of Art, clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and miscellaneous printed material.

Artwork consists of pen and ink sketches by Pène Du Bois and a print by an unknown artist.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series.

- Biographical material, 1929-1954 (4 folders; Box 1)
- Correspondence, 1908-1958 (0.5 linear feet; Box 1)
- Writings, circa 1900-1954 (1.1 linear feet; Box 1-4)
- Personal business records, circa 1920-1949 (3 folders; Box 3)
- Printed material, circa 1920-1963 (0.3 linear feet; Box 3)
- Artwork, circa 1920-1954 (2 folders; Box 3)

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Cultures:

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

Painters -- New York (State) -- New York  
Painting, American -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Photographs  
Prints  
Sketches

Names:

C.W. Kraushaar Art Galleries  
Cortisoz, Royal, 1869-1948  
Hopper, Edward, 1882-1967  
McCoy, Samuel Duff, 1882-  
Pène du Bois, William, 1916-1993  
Soyer, Raphael, 1899-1987  
Tarkington, Booth, 1869-1946

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1929-1954

*4 folders (Box 1)*

Biographical materials consist of certificates, a curriculum vitae, passport, and a photograph of two unidentified women.

Materials are arranged by document type.

Box 1, Folder 1	Certificates, 1940-1942
Box 1, Folder 2	Curriculum Vitae, circa 1935-1954
Box 1, Folder 3	Passport, 1929-1930
Box 1, Folder 4	Photograph, Two Unidentified Women, circa 1940-1954

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1908-1958

### *0.5 linear feet (Box 1)*

Correspondence is primarily with Pène Du Bois' family, friends, and business associates. The series includes significant correspondence from fellow art critic Royal Cortissoz; artists Raphael Soyer and Edward Hopper; and writers Samuel Duff McCoy, Lincoln Isham, and Newton Booth Tarkington. The over 180 letters to Lincoln Isham detail Pène Du Bois' daily life, in addition to covering his thoughts on writing, philosophy, politics, and news of his family.

Other correspondents of note include C.W. Kraushaar Art Galleries and Pène Du Bois' son, the children's book illustrator William Pène Du Bois. There are also letters of condolences addressed to Pène Du Bois' daughter, Yvonne McKenney.

Correspondence is arranged alphabetically by correspondent.

Box 1, Folder 5	A Miscellaneous, 1940-1949
Box 1, Folder 6	American Artists Group Inc., 1939-1954
Box 1, Folder 7	B Miscellaneous, 1929-1952
Box 1, Folder 8	Bartlett, Clay, 1949-1950
Box 1, Folder 9	C Miscellaneous, 1936-1945
Box 1, Folder 10	Carnegie Institute, 1937-1949
Box 1, Folder 11	Cooper Union, 1942-1954
Box 1, Folder 12	Cortissoz, Royal, 1930-1933
Box 1, Folder 13	C.W. Kraushaar Art Galleries, 1940-1947
Box 1, Folder 14	D Miscellaneous, 1940-1941
Box 1, Folder 15	Du Bois, George, 1951-1956
Box 1, Folder 16	Du Bois, Guy Pène, 1941-1954
Box 1, Folder 17	Du Bois, William Pène, 1944-1949
Box 1, Folder 18	Du Bois, William Pène and Jane, 1950-1953
Box 1, Folder 19	Du Bois, William Pène and Willa, 1953-1956
Box 1, Folder 20	Duncan, Rita Jean, 1950-1954
Box 1, Folder 21	Duncan, Robert, 1949-1955
Box 1, Folder 22	E-H Miscellaneous, 1939-1954
Box 1, Folder 23	Hopper, Edward, 1931-1954



Box 1, Folder 24	I Miscellaneous, 1950
Box 1, Folder 25-27	Isham, Lincoln and Lea, 1942-1955
Box 1, Folder 28	J-M Miscellaneous, 1908-1954
Box 1, Folder 29	Macy, George, 1945
Box 1, Folder 30	McCoy, Samuel Duff and Neely, 1949-1953
Box 1, Folder 31	Merritt, Nancy Lucas, 1951-1954
Box 1, Folder 32	N-P Miscellaneous, 1939-1954
Box 1, Folder 33	Q-S Miscellaneous, 1939-1952
Box 1, Folder 34	Soyer, Raphael, 1951-1955
Box 1, Folder 35	T Miscellaneous, 1930-1940
Box 1, Folder 36	Tarkington, Newton Booth, 1943-1946
Box 1, Folder 37	U Miscellaneous, 1950
Box 1, Folder 38	U.S. Treasury Department, 1936-1938
Box 1, Folder 39	V-W Miscellaneous, 1940-1950
Box 1, Folder 40	Watson, Forbes, 1932-1953
Box 1, Folder 41	X-Z Miscellaneous, 1940
Box 1, Folder 42	Unknown and Illegible, circa 1940-1954
Box 1, Folder 43-44	Condolences, A-Z, 1958

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## Series 3: Writings, circa 1900-1954

### 1.1 linear feet (Box 1-4)

Writings include book drafts of Pène Du Bois' autobiography, *Artists Say the Silliest Things*, 2 bound journals dating from 1913-1955, journal entries, 35 essays on various art related topics, 8 short stories, and various writing fragments and notes. The journal entries are primarily writing exercises in essay style and cover diverse topics of fashion, character studies, art history, and current events.

Materials are arranged by document type.

Box 1, Folder 45-46	Book, <i>Artists Say the Silliest Things</i> , Part One, circa 1930-1940
Box 1, Folder 47	Book, <i>Artists Say the Silliest Things</i> , Part One (copy 1, incomplete), circa 1930-1940
Box 1, Folder 48	Book, <i>Artists Say the Silliest Things</i> , Part One (fragments), circa 1930-1940
Box 1, Folder 49	Book, <i>Artists Say the Silliest Things</i> , Part One (handwritten draft, incomplete), circa 1930-1940
Box 1, Folder 50-51	Book, <i>Artists Say the Silliest Things</i> , Part Two, circa 1930-1940
Box 1, Folder 52	Book, <i>Artists Say the Silliest Things</i> , Part Two (copy 1), circa 1930-1940
Box 1, Folder 53	Book, <i>Artists Say the Silliest Things</i> , Part Two (copy 2, incomplete), circa 1930-1940
Box 1, Folder 54	Book, <i>Artists Say the Silliest Things</i> , Part Two (handwritten draft), circa 1930-1940
Box 1, Folder 55	Book, Untitled, Chapters 1-2, circa 1920-1954
Box 1, Folder 56	Book Proposals, circa 1940-1954
Box 1, Folder 57	Book Reviews, circa 1920-1954
Box 1, Folder 58	Essay, "Apes and Angels in Art", circa 1930-1954
Box 1, Folder 59	Essay, "Art and Decoration", circa 1930-1954
Box 1, Folder 60	Essay, "Art and the Decline of the Bourgeoise", circa 1930-1954
Box 1, Folder 61	Essay, "Art is Art and Life is Life", circa 1930-1954
Box 1, Folder 62	Essay, "Children's Books", circa 1930-1954
Box 1, Folder 63	Essay, "Classicism", circa 1930-1954
Box 1, Folder 64	Essay, "Clothes and War and Art", circa 1930-1954
Box 1, Folder 65	Essay, "Contrasts and Contemporaneous Art", circa 1930-1954

Box 1, Folder 66	Essay, "Decoration", circa 1930-1954
Box 1, Folder 67	Essay, "Eclectics", circa 1930-1954
Box 1, Folder 68	Essay, "Disordered Notes of an Ex Art Critic", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 1	Essay, "Essay Written for an American", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 2	Essay, "Eyes are Windows", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 3	Essay, "Forbears of the Fashionable Linguists", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 4	Essay, "High Art and Hillbillies", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 5	Essay, "Holley and the Square", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 6	Essay, "Note on Fashion", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 7	Essay, "Note on Modern Art", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 8	Essay, "Note on Statues", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 9	Essay, "Note on the American Scene Painting", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 10	Essay, "On the Satirist", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 11	Essay, On Artists and World Affairs, circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 12	Essay, On Children's Book Fair, circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 13	Essay, On Denys Wortman, circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 14	Essay, On French Modernism, circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 15	Essay, On Intellectualism, circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 16	Essay, On Seeing Art, circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 17	Essay, On Space, circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 18	Essay, On Style and Fashion, circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 19	Essay, "Realism", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 20	Essay, "Romanticism", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 21	Essay, "Seeing Could Be Believing", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 22	Essay, "Seeing in Its Relation to the Visual Arts", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 23	Essay, "Turnabout in Art", circa 1930-1954

Box 2, Folder 24	Essay, "War and Art", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 25	Journal Entries, 1949-1953
Box 4, Folder 1	Journal, 1913-1925
Box 4, Folder 2	Journal, 1926-1955
Box 2, Folder 26	Stories, "1907 New York," "Question of Bravery," "Sailors," "The Square", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 27	Story, "Final Flourish", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 28	Story, "Over-Lord", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 29	Story, "Staten Island", circa 1920-1954
Box 2, Folder 30	Story, "Wild Horses in Harlem", circa 1930-1954
Box 2, Folder 31-32	Fragments, Handwritten, circa 1920-1954
Box 3, Folder 1-2	Fragments, Typescripts, circa 1920-1954
Box 3, Folder 3	Fragments, Introductions, circa 1920-1954
Box 3, Folder 4	Fragments, Stories, circa 1920-1954
Box 3, Folder 5	Notes, circa 1920-1954
Box 3, Folder 6	"Letters of Frederick von Elder," by Unknown Author, circa 1920-1954
Box 3, Folder 7	"Moral Freedom--Natural Law," by W.W. Sherman, circa 1920-1954

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## Series 4: Personal Business Records, circa 1920-1949

*3 folders (Box 3)*

Personal business records consist of account and sales records from C.W. Kraushaar Art Galleries, two book and publishing contracts, and miscellaneous receipts for art supply purchases.

Materials are arranged by document type.

Box 3, Folder 8	Account Records, C.W. Kraushaar Art Galleries, 1937-1944
Box 3, Folder 9	Contracts, 1930-1945
Box 3, Folder 10	Receipts, circa 1920-1949

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## Series 5: Printed Material, circa 1920-1963

*0.3 linear feet (Box 3)*

Printed material includes a brochure for the Guy Pène Du Bois School of Art, clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and miscellaneous printed material.

Materials are arranged by document type.

Box 3, Folder 11	Brochure, Guy Pène Du Bois School of Art, 1940
Box 3, Folder 12-13	Clippings, circa 1920-1963
Box 3, Folder 14-18	Clippings, 1920-1963
Box 3, Folder 19	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1954-1960
Box 3, Folder 20	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, Other Artists, 1942-1943
Box 3, Folder 21	Periodical, <i>Magazine of Art</i> , 1943
Box 3, Folder 22	Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1931-1945

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## Series 6: Artwork, circa 1920-1954

*2 folders (Box 3)*

Artwork consists of pen and ink sketches by Pène Du Bois and a print by an unknown artist.

Materials are arranged by artist.

Box 3, Folder 23            Sketches, circa 1920-1954

Box 3, Folder 24            Artwork by Others, 1931

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