



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Robert Ebendorf
Papers, 1920-2015, bulk 1960-2010,
in the Archives of American Art

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Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Robert Ebendorf papers
Identifier:	AAA.ebenrobe
Date:	1920-2015 (bulk 1960-2010)
Extent:	4.8 Linear feet 0.554 Gigabytes
Creator:	Ebendorf, Robert, 1938-
Language:	Collection is in English.
Summary:	The papers of metalsmith and jeweler Robert Ebendorf measure 4.8 linear feet and 0.554 GB and date from 1920 to 2015, with the bulk of the material from 1960 to 2010. The papers document Ebendorf's career through scattered biographical material; business correspondence with galleries, universities, and professional groups as well as personal correspondence with friends and family, including a large collection of mail art; artist statements, teaching philosophies, and reflections by Ebendorf as well as writings by others; application materials for the artist's position as Belk Chair at East Carolina University, student fellowship applications, and other teaching files; audio and video recordings of interviews in digital format; inventories, invoices, and publicity material, including several folders of notes and materials for retrospectives; exhibition catalogs, news clippings, and other printed material; sketches, cut paper, and collage work loose and in sketchbooks; and photographic materials of the artist, friends, family, and artwork.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Robert Ebendorf in 2015.

Related Materials

Also in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview of Robert Ebendorf conducted 2004 April 16-18, by Tacey Rosolowski, in Greenville, N.C.

Processing Information

The collection was processed to a minimal level, and a finding aid was prepared by Kimberley Henze in 2015. Born-digital materials were processed by Kirsi Ritosalmi-Kisner in 2019 with funding provided by Smithsonian Collection Care and Preservation Fund.

Preferred Citation

Robert Ebendorf papers, 1920-2015, bulk 1960-2010. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Use of sound recordings requires advance notice. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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Biographical / Historical

Robert Ebendorf (1938-) is a metalsmith and jeweler in Greenville, North Carolina. Ebendorf was born in Topeka, Kansas, and earned a BFA in 1958 and an MFA in 1963 from the University of Kansas. Upon receiving a Fulbright grant, he studied in Norway at the School for Applied Arts and Crafts in 1963 and returned to work at Norway Silver Designs in Fredikstad on a Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation grant from 1965 to 1966.

A founding member and once president of the Society of North American Goldsmiths, Ebendorf has been deeply committed to forwarding the metals field as an innovator, organizer, and teacher. The artist is known for his original combinations of precious and non-precious materials alongside found objects and has held teaching positions at Stetson University, the State University of New York at New Paltz, Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Maine, Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina, and East Carolina University.

Scope and Contents

The papers of metalsmith and jeweler Robert Ebendorf measure 4.8 linear feet and 0.554 GB and date from 1920 to 2015, with the bulk of the material from 1960 to 2010. The papers document Ebendorf's career through scattered biographical material; business correspondence with galleries, universities, and professional groups as well as personal correspondence with friends and family, including a large collection of mail art; artist statements, teaching philosophies, and reflections by Ebendorf as well as writings by others; application materials for the artist's position as Belk Chair at East Carolina University, student fellowship applications, and other teaching files; inventories, invoices, and publicity material, including several folders of notes and materials for retrospectives; audio and video recordings of interviews in digital format; exhibition catalogs, news clippings, and other printed material; sketches, cut paper, and collage work loose and in sketchbooks; and photographic materials of the artist, friends, family, and artwork.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as nine series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1920-2014 (Boxes 1, 6; 0.2 linear feet, ER01-ER02; 0.554 GB)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1965-2015 (Boxes 1-2; 1.1 linear feet)
- Series 3: Writings, circa 1945-2014 (Box 2; 4 folders)
- Series 4: Teaching Files, 1974-2012 (Box 2; 5 folders)
- Series 5: Personal Business Records, circa 1963-2006 (Box 2; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 6: Printed Material, 1949-2015 (Boxes 2-3, 6; 0.7 linear feet)
- Series 7: Artwork, circa 1940-1987 (Boxes 3, 6; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 8: Sketchbooks, circa 1963-1968 (Boxes 3, 6; 5 folders)
- Series 9: Photographs, circa 1920-2012 (Boxes 3-7; 1.9 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Study and teaching
Mail art

Types of Materials:

Collages
Sketchbooks
Sketches

Names:

East Carolina University -- Faculty

Occupations:

Jewelers -- North Carolina
Metal-workers -- North Carolina

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1920-2014

0.2 Linear feet (Boxes 1, 6)

0.554 Gigabytes (ER01-ER02)

Biographical material includes academic transcripts from the University of Kansas; professional and personal awards and certificates; a curriculum vitae circa 2010; lifetime achievement awards and applications; family files; a purchased love letter written to a black soldier in 1920; pins and conference nametags; audio and video recordings of interviews in digital format; and a citizen commendation from the New York City Police Department. Miscellaneous biographical material consists of a business card, high school graduation program, letter to parents from the Kansas Governor for their 50th wedding anniversary, workshop flyer with brief bio, wedding announcement with Aleta Braun, and photocopies of portrait illustrations by Jess Taylor.

Box 1, Folder 1	Academic Transcripts, 1957-1963
Box 1, Folder 2-3	Awards and Certificates, 1954-2014
Box 1, Folder 4	Curriculum Vitae, circa 2010
Box 1, Folder 5	ECU Lifetime Achievement Award, Letters of Recommendation, 2003-2014
Box 1, Folder 6	Family, Herb Ebendorf, 1982-2007
Box 1, Folder 7	Family, Sue Springer, 1963-1974
Box 1, Folder 8	Gardner Award Application, 2010 <i>Includes born-digital records, see ER01</i> Oversized printed application template housed in Box 6, Folder 1.
Folder ER01	Ebendorf: In His Own Words, Digital Video Recording, 2010 <i>0.205 Gigabytes (One computer file)</i>
Box 1, Folder 9	Gardner Award, Letters of Recommendation, 2010
Box 1, Folder 10	Love Letter (Purchased), 1920
Box 1, Folder 11	Miscellaneous Biographical Material, 1954-2006
Folder ER02	Robert Ebendorf Interview with Melinda Penkava, WUNC, Milwaukee, WI, Digital Audio Recording, 2003 <i>0.349 Gigabytes (Five computer files)</i>
Box 1, Folder 13	Pin and Nametags, 2004, undated

Box 6, Folder 1

Gardner Application and Police Department Commendation, 1979-2010

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1965-2015

1.1 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Correspondence is chiefly collaged, drawn, and stitched mail art with wife Aleta Braun, a colleague's son Louis Bailey, students, and friends. There is also business correspondence with museums, universities, and professional societies regarding commissions, exhibitions, and academic positions; correspondence with Emprise Financial in Kansas; and personal correspondence with friends, family, and colleagues.

Box 1, Folder 14	Business Correspondence, 1965-2013
Box 1, Folder 15	Correspondence with Emprise Financial, 2006-2010
Box 1, Folder 16-18	Mail Art, Aleta Braun, 1997-2015
Box 1, Folder 19-25	Mail Art, Louis Bailey, 2000-2003
Box 2, Folder 1-3	Mail Art, Miscellaneous, 2000-2014
Box 2, Folder 4	Personal Correspondence, 1978-2015

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Series 3: Writings, circa 1945-2014

4 Folders (Box 2)

Writings by Robert Ebendorf include artist statements, short autobiographies, teaching philosophies, reflections, and exhibition statements, while writings about Ebendorf include essays, reports, speeches, and a manuscript of *Robert W. Ebendorf: The Work in Depth* published by the Racine Art Museum. Also found in this series are a poem and short essay by Elliot Smith; a biography sent by the artist's uncle Herb mentioning Ebendorf's great-grandfather circa 1945; a short story by daughter Brittany; and an application essay by wife Aleta Braun for the Jentel Artist Residency in Wyoming.

Box 2, Folder 5	Writings by Robert Ebendorf, circa 1988-2013
Box 2, Folder 6	Writings About Robert Ebendorf, circa 1975-2014
Box 2, Folder 7	Writings by Elliot Smith, undated
Box 2, Folder 8	Writings by Family, circa 1945-2004

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Series 4: Teaching Files, 1974-2012

5 Folders (Box 2)

This series consists of application materials for the Belk Distinguished Chair position at East Carolina University, student applications and letters of recommendation for various fellowship programs, and miscellaneous teaching files, including student project proposals, certificates of teacher-student impact from ECU, research notes, and a list of international museums and galleries, possibly for Fulbright study.

Box 2, Folder 9	ECU Application, Belk Chair, 1998-1999
Box 2, Folder 10	ECU Application, Letters of Recommendation, 1998-1999
Box 2, Folder 11	Miscellaneous Teaching Files, 1984-2012
Box 2, Folder 12-13	Student Applications and Letters of Recommendation, 1974-2003

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Series 5: Personal Business Records, circa 1963-2006

0.4 Linear feet (Box 2)

Personal business records include images, correspondence, and publicity material for the Formica design award won by Ebendorf and then-wife Ivy Ross in 1984. Files on retrospective exhibitions includes images of and notes on material to be included, checklists of artwork, exhibition writings, loan receipts, and correspondence. Also found in this series are inventories of artwork, a mailing list of individuals and museums, and records of financial and material exchanges with museums.

Box 2, Folder 14	Formica Corporation, 1984
Box 2, Folder 15-19	Inventories, 1978-2006
Box 2, Folder 20	Mailing List, undated
Box 2, Folder 21	Museum Invoices, Receipts, and Loan Records, 1978-2003
Box 2, Folder 22	Retrospective at NC State, 2003
Box 2, Folder 23	Retrospective at New Paltz, 1989
Box 2, Folder 24-30	Retrospective at New Paltz, Material and Notes, circa 1963-1989

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Series 6: Printed Material, 1949-2015

0.7 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3, 6)

This series contains magazines, bulletins, and news clippings regarding Ebendorf and his artwork as well as exhibition announcements, brochures, catalogs, and signage.

Box 2, Folder 31-34	Exhibition Announcements and Brochures, 1965-2015 Oversized exhibition poster housed in Box 6, Folder 2.
Box 3, Folder 1	Exhibition Announcements and Brochures, 1989-2015
Box 3, Folder 2-3	Exhibition Catalogs, 1980-2008 Oversized exhibition catalog housed in Box 6, Folder 2.
Box 3, Folder 4	Exhibition Signage, circa 2013
Box 3, Folder 5	Magazines and Bulletins, 1973-2014 Oversized Florida Craftsmen bulletin housed in Box 6, Folder 2.
Box 3, Folder 6-17	News Clippings, 1949-2014 Oversized news clippings housed in Box 6, Folder 2.
Box 6, Folder 2	Oversized Exhibition Posters & Catalogs, News Clippings, and Bulletin, circa 1968-2006

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Series 7: Artwork, circa 1940s-1987

0.2 Linear feet (Boxes 3, 6)

This series contains artwork from Ebendorf's childhood in the 1940s, a collaged book titled "The Pilgrim of Love," cut-paper designs on cardstock, scans of sketches and sketchbook pages, as well as a number of loose sketches and drawings, including a set from Ebendorf's freshman class, Nature Drawing I, at the University of Kansas in 1956.

Box 3, Folder 18	Childhood Artwork, circa 1940
Box 3, Folder 19	Collage Book, "The Pilgrim of Love", undated
Box 3, Folder 20	Cut-Paper Work, undated
Box 3, Folder 21-22	Scanned Sketches, circa 1963-1987
Box 3, Folder 23-25	Sketches, undated Oversized loose sketches housed in Box 6, Folder 3.
Box 6, Folder 3	Drawings and Loose Sketches, undated
Box 6, Folder 4	Nature Drawing I, 1956

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Series 8: Sketchbooks, 1963-1966, undated

5 Folders (Boxes 3, 6)

Most of the sketchbooks included are from Ebendorf's time in Norway with a Fulbright Fellowship from 1963 to 1964 and a Tiffany Foundation Grant from 1965 to 1966. An additional sketchbook includes images of designs for a medal commissioned by the Medical College of Georgia.

Box 3, Folder 26	Medical College of Georgia Commission, circa 1968
Box 3, Folder 27	Norway Tiffany, Small, 1965-1966
Box 6, Folder 5	Norway Fulbright: Norwegian Folk Museum, 1963-1964
Box 6, Folder 6	Norway Fulbright: Norwegian Folk Museum and Natural History Museum, 1963-1964
Box 6, Folder 7	Norway Tiffany, Large, 1965-1966

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Series 9: Photographs, circa 1920-2012

1.9 Linear feet (Boxes 3-7)

This series includes formal and informal images of the artist with works, in his studio, and teaching students. There are also photographs, negatives, and an annotated album of family, friends, and colleagues as well as color transparencies of the house Ebendorf shared with first wife Sue Springer in New Paltz in the early 1980s. Images of exhibitions and artwork include photographs, negatives, color transparencies, an extensive collection of 35-mm slides, and digital prints. An oversized portrait photograph of Ebendorf is housed in OV 7.

Box 3, Folder 28-33	Robert Ebendorf, 1938-2012 Oversized photographs of Robert Ebendorf housed in Box 6, Folder 8, and OV 7.
Box 4, Folder 1	Ebendorf Family, Photographs and Slides, circa 1920-1980
Box 4, Folder 2	Family, Friends, and Colleagues, 1965-2007
Box 4, Folder 3	Family, Friends, and Colleagues, Album, 1997
Box 4, Folder 4	Family, Friends, and Colleagues, Negatives, undated
Box 4, Folder 5	House at New Paltz, Color Transparencies, 1980s
Box 4, Folder 6	Exhibitions, circa 1960-2005
Box 4, Folder 7-20	Artwork, circa 1950-2010 Oversized photographs of artwork housed in Box 6, Folder 8.
Box 4, Folder 21-22	Artwork, Color Transparencies, 1938-1985, undated
Box 4, Folder 23	Artwork, Negatives, undated
Box 4, Folder 24-32	Artwork, Slides, 1965-2002
Box 5, Folder 1-8	Artwork, Slides, 1980-2004
Box 5, Folder 9-10	Artwork, Digital Prints, circa 2000-2010
Box 6, Folder 8	Oversized Photographs of Robert Ebendorf and Artwork, circa 1965-2005
Box OV 7	Oversized Photograph of Robert Ebendorf, circa 2000

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