



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Ethel Edwards Papers,  
circa 1929-1999, in the Archives of American Art

Sarah Mundy

Funding for the processing of this collection was provided by the  
Smithsonian Institution Collections Care and Preservation Fund

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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>	Ethel Edwards papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.edwaethe
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1929-1999
<b>Extent:</b>	11.2 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Edwards, Ethel, 1914-1999
<b>Language:</b>	English  The collection is in English
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of painter, illustrator, and educator Ethel Edwards (1914-1999) measure 11.2 linear feet and date from circa 1929 to 1999. The papers are comprised of biographical materials, correspondence, writings and notes, business records for the Wellfeet Art Gallery that she operated with her husband Xavier Gonzalez along with records for Edwards' personal business activities, printed materials, three scrapbooks, photographic materials, artwork, and 32 sketchbooks.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 1999 by the estate of Ethel Edwards Gonzalez.

### Related Materials

Also found at the Archives of American Art are the papers of Ethel Edwards' husband, Xavier Gonzalez.

### Processing Information

This collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Sarah Mundy in 2016 with funding provided by the Smithsonian Institution Collections Care and Preservation Fund. The Archives of American Art has implemented accelerated processing when possible to increase information about and access to more of our collections. For this collection, accelerated processing included arrangement to the series, subseries and folder levels, adhering to the creator's original arrangement as much as possible. Generally, folder contents were simply verified with the original folder titles, but items within folders were not arranged further. All materials were rehoused in archival folders and boxes for long-term stability, but staples and other fasteners have not all been removed.

## Preferred Citation

Ethel Edwards papers, circa 1929-1999. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Washington, D.C. Research Center.

## Conditions Governing Use

The Ethel Edwards 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

Ethel Edwards (1914-1999) was a painter, illustrator, and educator active in New Orleans, LA, New York City, Provincetown, RI, and Wellfleet, MA.

Ethel Edwards was born in New Orleans in 1914 and attended Newcomb College in 1933 on scholarship. Her instructor for life drawing, watercolor, and portrait drawing was painter Xavier Gonzalez, whom she married in 1936 in Texas, where Gonzalez ran a summer school. She studied in Paris from 1937 to 1938. She returned to Alpine, Texas where, in 1939, she won a national mural competition to paint a mural in the U.S. Post Office in Lampasas, Texas. In 1942 she completed a second post office in Lake Providence, Louisiana.

In 1942, Edwards and Gonzalez moved to New York City, where Edwards continued to paint, working with powdered color and egg-oil emulsion and experimenting with line in various media and surfaces. She also worked as a fashion illustrator for *Town and Country* and *Fortune* magazines in 1944 and 1945. In 1946, her illustrations for Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince* were shown at the Museum of Modern Art. She regularly exhibited in New York City, Provincetown, and Wellfleet, Massachusetts on Cape Cod, where she and Gonzalez also operated the Wellfleet Art Gallery which served as a gallery, studio, and art school. For many years, she taught at the Art Students League and Truro Center for the Arts.

Edwards died in New York in 1999.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of painter, illustrator, and educator Ethel Edwards (1914-1999) measure 11.2 linear feet and date from circa 1929 to 1999. The papers are comprised of biographical materials, correspondence, writings and notes, business records for the Wellfleet Art Gallery that she operated with her husband Xavier Gonzalez along with records for Edwards' personal business activities, printed materials, three scrapbooks, photographic materials, artwork, and 32 sketchbooks.

Biographical materials consist of address, awards, membership documents, obituaries, resumes, and scattered teaching files for the Art Students League and the Truro Center for the Arts. Correspondence is with Xavier Gonzalez, galleries, and friends and colleagues including Franklin Backus, Sally Knudson Reynolds, Hall Groat, and Immi Storrs.

Writings and notes include a travel journal; various writings, essays, and notes about art by Edwards; a few writings about Edwards by others; and a speech transcript by Nelson A. Rockefeller. Business records consist of files for Wellfleet Art Gallery and Studio; documents concerning painting commissions for the Department of Interior Bureau of Reclamation; records of sales, inventory, and artwork donations; scattered exhibition files; and funding applications.

Printed materials include printed reproductions of artwork, brochures and clippings, exhibition catalogs and announcements, magazines and journals, posters, and press releases. There are three scrapbooks containing exhibition announcements, clippings, and photographs of artwork.

Photographs are of Edwards, her studio, family and friends, students, works of art, photographer Elaine Croce, and travel in Asia. Artwork includes sketches by Edwards, Ulrich Erben, and unidentified artists, as well as 32 sketchbooks by Edwards.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 9 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1936-1999 (0.5 linear feet; Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1940s-1990s (2.0 linear feet; Box 1-3)
- Series 3: Writings and Notes, 1937-1980s (0.5 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 4: Business Records, 1949-1994 (0.5 linear feet; Box 3-4)
- Series 5: Printed Materials, circa 1940s-1990s (2.0 linear feet; Box 4-6, 13)
- Series 6: Scrapbooks, 1940s-1960s (0.2 linear feet; Box 6, 13)
- Series 7: Photographic Materials, 1937-circa 1992 (3.0 linear feet; Box 6-9, 13)
- Series 8: Artwork, circa 1929-1980s (0.2 linear feet; Box 9)
- Series 9: Sketchbooks, circa 1936-circa 1994 (2.3 linear feet; Box 9-12, 14)

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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:

Art -- Study and teaching  
Art teachers -- United States  
Artists' studios -- Photographs  
Illustrators -- United States  
Painters -- United States  
Painting, Modern -- 20th century -- United States  
Women artists

Types of Materials:

Photographs  
Scrapbooks  
Sketchbooks  
Transcripts  
Travel diaries

Names:

Art Students League (New York, N.Y.)  
Backus, Franklin T., 1813-1870  
Croce, Elaine  
Gonzalez, Xavier, 1898-1993  
Reynolds, Sally K.  
Rockefeller, Nelson A. (Nelson Aldrich), 1908-1979  
Storrs, Immi  
Truro Center for Arts -- Faculty  
United States. Department of the Interior. Bureau of Reclamation  
Wellfleet Art Gallery

Occupations:

Muralists -- United States

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1936-1999

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

Biographical materials include address books and cards, awards, genealogical material, membership documents, obituaries for Edwards, resumes, and scattered teaching files for the Art Students League and Truro Center for the Arts.

Box 1, Folder 1-3	Addresses , circa 1950-circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 4	Award Certificates , 1936-1977
Box 1, Folder 5	Genealogy , circa 1952
Box 1, Folder 6	Identification Cards , 1944-1985
Box 1, Folder 7-10	Memberships , 1971-1997
Box 1, Folder 11	Obituaries for Edwards , 1999
Box 1, Folder 12	Resumes , 1960s-1980s
Box 1, Folder 13-14	Teaching, Art Students League , 1980-1995
Box 1, Folder 15	Teaching, Truro Center for the Arts , 1980-1991

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1940s-1990s

### *2 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3)*

Correspondence is both personal and professional. Correspondents include friends, colleagues, and family, including Edwards' husband Xavier Gonzalez. Additional correspondents include Franklin Backus, Sally Knudson Reynolds, artists Hall Groat and Immi Storrs, and galleries and arts organizations regarding exhibitions and sales of artwork.

Box 1, Folder 16-20	Personal , 1950s-1980s
Box 2, Folder 1	Personal , 1980s
Box 2, Folder 2-8	Personal , 1990s
Box 2	Professional
Box 2, Folder 9-11	General , 1940s-1990s
Box 2, Folder 12	Andre Wauters Gallery , 1976-1979
Box 2, Folder 13	Arpa, Jose, Regarding , 1992
Box 2, Folder 14	Backus, Franklin , circa 1981
Box 2, Folder 15	Bates College , 1996-1998
Box 2, Folder 16	Century Club , 1988-1991
Box 2, Folder 17	Chandler Gallery , 1991
Box 2, Folder 18	D.H. Hershel Gallery , circa 1978
Box 2, Folder 19-21	Exhibitions, Regarding, 1954-1993
Box 2, Folder 22	Fairweather Hardin Gallery , 1964-1969
Box 2, Folder 23	Groat, Hall , 1985
Box 2, Folder 24	Hait Gallery , 1973-1974
Box 2, Folder 25	Hand in Hand Galleries , 1985-1986
Box 2, Folder 26	Kendall Art Gallery , 1977-1980
Box 2, Folder 27	Left Bank Gallery , circa 1975-1988
Box 2, Folder 28	Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation , 1977-1991
Box 3	Professional
Box 3, Folder 1	The Newark Museum , 1982



Box 3, Folder 2	Off the Boulevard Gallery , 1978-1979
Box 3, Folder 3	Reynolds, Sally Knudson , 1982-1995
Box 3, Folder 4	Rising Tide Gallery , 1989-1990
Box 3, Folder 5	Selig Manufacturing Co., Inc. , 1976
Box 3, Folder 6	Sibley Gallery , 1981-1983
Box 3, Folder 7	Storrs, Immi , circa 1983
Box 3, Folder 8	Summit Gallery , 1980-1984

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## Series 3: Writings and Notes , 1937-1980s

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

Writings by Edwards include one journal documenting her travels within the United States and in Europe, various writings and notes about art philosophy, and artist's quotes. There are a few writings by others about Edwards and a speech by Nelson A. Rockefeller's for *The Family of Man* (1955) exhibition at the Modern Museum of Art.

Box 3, Folder 9	Travel Journal , 1937
Box 3, Folder 10-13	Various Writings About Art, 1937-1980s
Box 3, Folder 14-16	Notes , circa 1970s
Box 3, Folder 17	By Others, About Edwards , 1970s-1980s
Box 3, Folder 18	By Others, Various , 1953-1983

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## Series 4: Business Records , 1949-1994

### *0.5 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4)*

Business records for the Wellfleet Art Gallery include inventories and price lists of Edwards' and other artists' artwork, a guest book, and a drawing of the gallery grounds. Personal business records include files concerning about commissioned paintings for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, donations of Edwards' and Gonzalez's artwork, funding applications to the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial and the Louis Comfort Tiffany foundations, inventories of Edwards' work at other galleries, and sales records. Additionally, there are scattered files for Edwards' exhibitions at the Architectural League of New York's Chair Fair, Chase Manhattan Bank, Grand Central Art Galleries, Norman Kramer Gallery, and St. Peter's College in New Jersey.

Box 3, Folder 19	Wellfleet Art Gallery, Drawing of Grounds , circa 1970
Box 3, Folder 20	Wellfleet Art Gallery, Guest Book , 1984
Box 3, Folder 21-24	Wellfleet Art Gallery, Inventory , 1949-1989
Box 3, Folder 25	Wellfleet Art Gallery, Price Lists , 1965
Box 3, Folder 26	Commission, Paintings for Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation , 1970-1973
Box 4, Folder 1	Donations of Paintings , 1958-1980
Box 4, Folder 2-11	Exhibitions, 1951-1994
Box 4, Folder 12-13	Funding Applications , 1980-1989
Box 4, Folder 14	Inventory, Various Galleries , 1985-1986
Box 4, Folder 15	Sales, Ledger , 1949-1957
Box 4, Folder 16	Sales, Auction at Truro Center for the Arts , 1991

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## Series 5: Printed Materials, circa 1940s-1990s

*2 Linear feet (Boxes 4-6, 13)*

This series contains artwork reproductions, four books that reference Edwards' artwork, brochures and clippings, catalogs and announcements for exhibitions of artwork by Edwards and others, magazines and journals, posters for exhibitions, and press releases.

Box 4, Folder 17	Artwork Reproductions , 1950s-1970s Oversized material housed in Box 13.
Box 4, Folder 18	Book, <i>397 Chairs</i> , 1988
Box 4, Folder 19	Book, <i>Contemporary American Painting and Sculpture</i> , 1955
Box 4, Folder 20	Book, <i>Prize-Winning Art: Book 7</i> , 1967
Box 4, Folder 21	Book, <i>Prize-Winning Watercolors: Book 7</i> , 1967
Box 4, Folder 22	Brochures , 1958-1990
Box 4, Folder 23	Business Cards , circa 1970s
Box 4, Folder 24-33	Clippings , 1935-circa 1980 Oversized material housed in Box 13.
Box 4, Folder 34	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements , circa 1950s-1980s
Box 5, Folder 1-11	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements , circa 1950s-1980s
Box 5, Folder 12-14	Gallery Publications, circa 1950s-1980s
Box 5, Folder 15-20	Magazines and Journals , circa 1940s-1980s
Box 6, Folder 1	Magazines and Journals , circa 1940s-1980s
Box 6, Folder 2	Posters , 1980s-1990s
Box 6, Folder 3	Press Releases , circa 1950s
Box 13	Oversized Artwork Reproductions from Box 4, Folders 17, 1950s-1970s
Box 13	Oversized Clippings from Box 4, Folders 24-33, 1935-circa 1980

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## Series 6: Scrapbooks, 1940s-1960s

*0.2 Linear feet (Boxes 4, 13)*

Three scrapbooks, mostly relating to exhibitions of Edwards' artwork, contain biographical information, exhibition announcements, clippings of exhibition reviews, and photographs of her artwork.

Box 13                      Scrapbook 1, 1940s-1950s

Box 6, Folder 4            Scrapbook 2, 1940s-1950s

Box 6, Folder 5            Scrapbook 3, 1950s-1960s

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## Series 7: Photographic Materials , 1937-circa 1992

### *3 Linear feet (Boxes 6-9, 13)*

Photographs are of Edwards, including portraits, images of the artist in her studio, with Xavier Gonzalez and others at exhibitions and in the studio, and with her students at the Art Students League. Personal photographs are of family, photographer Elaine Croce, and travel in Japan and other areas of Asia. Photographs of works of art include works by Edwards, her students, and a mixture of Edwards' work along with the work of unidentified artists. Additional images of works of art are found in six photo albums.

Box 6, Folder 6-14	Edwards , circa 1940s-circa 1990
Box 6, Folder 15-16	Edwards, Studio , 1960s-1980s
Box 6, Folder 17	Edwards, Collage Class at Art Students League , circa 1992
Box 6, Folder 18-20	Edwards with Others , circa 1940s-1991 Oversized material housed in Box 13.
Box 6, Folder 21	Family , circa 1970s
Box 6, Folder 22	Elaine Croce , 1986
Box 7, Folder 1-2	Travel , 1950s
Box 7, Folder 3-4	General , 1937-1980s
Box 7, Folder 5-19	Works of Art, circa 1950-circa 1990 Oversized material housed in Box 13.
Box 8, Folder 1-9	Works of Art, circa 1950-circa 1990
Box 8, Folder 10-15	Six Disbound Photo Albums of Works of Art, circa 1940s-circa 1990 The album covers were removed; however, the original order of each album remains the same.
Box 8, Folder 16-19	Works of Art, Exhibitions , circa 1950-circa 1990
Box 8, Folder 20	Works of Art, Student Artwork , circa 1980s
Box 8, Folder 21-24	Works of Art, circa 1940s-circa 1990
Box 9, Folder 1-12	Works of Art, circa 1940s-circa 1990
Box 13	Oversized photographs of Edwards with Others from Box 6, Folders 17-19, circa 1940s-1991
Box 13	Oversized Photographs of Works of Art from Box 7, Folder 5-19, circa 1950-circa 1990

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## Series 8: Artwork , circa 1929-1980s

### *0.2 Linear feet (Box 9)*

Artwork consists of paint sketches by Edwards and Ulrich Erben, sketches by unidentified artists, and source material for art projects.

Box 9, Folder 13-14	Paint Sketches by Edwards , circa 1929-circa 1980s
Box 9, Folder 15	Paint Sketch by Ulrich Erben , circa 1970s
Box 9, Folder 16	Pencil/Ink Sketches by Unidentified Artists , circa 1950s-1970s
Box 9, Folder 17	Paint Sketches by Unidentified Artists , circa 1950s-1980s
Box 9, Folder 18	Source Material for Artwork , circa 1970s-1980s

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## Series 9: Sketchbooks , circa 1936-circa 1994

### 2.3 Linear feet (Boxes 9-12, 14)

Thirty-two sketchbooks span nearly six decades contain abstract illustrations, still lifes, and sketches of people and street scenes in various mediums. Additionally, some notes and printed materials are scattered throughout.

Box 9, Folder 19-26	Sketchbook 1-8, circa 1936-circa 1949
Box 10, Folder 1-11	Sketchbook 9-19, circa 1950-circa 1960
Box 11, Folder 1-6	Sketchbook 20-25, circa 1974-circa 1990
Box 12, Folder 1-3	Sketchbook 26-28, circa 1991-circa 1994
Box 14	Sketchbook 29-32, circa 1943-circa 1960

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