



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Gary Erbe papers, circa 1968-2006, in the Archives of American Art

Allessandra Liberati

The processing of this collection received Federal support from the Smithsonian  
Collections Care and Preservation Fund, administered by the National  
Collections Program and the Smithsonian Collections Advisory Committee.

2023 October 17

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical .....	2
Scope and Contents .....	2
Arrangement .....	2
Names and Subjects .....	
Container Listing .....	
Series 1: Biographical Materials, circa 1972-2004 .....	4
Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1971-2004 .....	5
Series 3: Exhibition Files, circa 1975-2006 .....	6
Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1968-2005 .....	8
Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1972-2002 .....	10

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Gary Erbe papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1968-2006
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.erbegary
<b>Creator:</b>	Erbe, Gary T., 1944-
<b>Extent:</b>	3.8 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The Gary Erbe papers measure 3.8 linear feet and date from circa 1968-2006. They illustrate his career through biographical material, correspondence, exhibition files, and printed and photographic material.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The Gary Erbe papers were donated in 1991, 2002, and 2006 by Gary Erbe.

### Processing Information

This collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared, by Alessandra Liberati in 2023.

### Preferred Citation

Gary Erbe papers, circa 1968-2006, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Researchers interested in accessing born-digital records or audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact References Services for more information.

### Conditions Governing Use

The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning such rights and restrictions and it is the user's responsibility to determine whether rights or restrictions exist and to obtain any necessary permission to access, use, reproduce and publish the collections. Please refer to the Smithsonian's Terms of Use for additional information.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Gary Erbe (1944-) is a painter who works primarily in Union City, New Jersey.

Gary Erbe was born in Union City, New Jersey and is a self-taught artist and oil painter who is best known for his *trompe l'oeil* style paintings. Erbe's interest in art began when he became fascinated by his school's textbook illustrations. His stepfather was a main supporter of his art, and following his stepfather's death Erbe produced very little art.

When he turned sixteen, Erbe dropped out of high school and moved into an apartment in Weehawken, New Jersey where he met his first wife Edny whom he married in 1963 and with whom he had two children, one of which was contemporary artist Chantell Van Erbé. To support his family he worked as an apprentice at an engraving company and painted in his spare time, teaching himself. Erbe was particularly inspired by William Michael Harnett and John F. Peto who applied a *trompe l'oeil* approach to their paintings. In 1969, Erbe explored Levitational Realism, a more contemporary method to *trompe l'oeil*. In 1978 he divorced Edny and moved into his own studio in Union City where he met his second wife, local artist Anna Vedovelli, who he then divorced three years later. By 1996, Erbe married Zeny Santos and they lived in his studio in Union City before moving to Hoboken, New Jersey, and finally to Nutley, New Jersey.

Since 1970 Erbe's work has been exhibited extensively in museums such as the Canton Museum of Art, the Brinton Museum, the Boca Raton Museum of Art, the Heckscher Museum of Art, the Baum School of Art, and the Reading Public Museum among others. His work is also in the permanent collections of various renowned institutions including The Phillips Collection, The Butler Institute of American Art, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 2016 the Butler Institute of American Art published the book *Footprints: The Art and Life of Gary Erbe*.

Erbe is currently living in Nutley, New Jersey where he maintains a studio and continues to paint.

---

## Scope and Contents

The Gary Erbe papers measure 3.8 linear feet and date from circa 1968-2006. Biographical material contains several awards and certificates as well as one videotape titled *Brand New Day* which originally aired on WPIX on July 29, 1983. Correspondence is with galleries, art museums, business associates, and friends.

Exhibition files contains materials relating to various exhibitions Erbe participated in at galleries including the Pastel Society of America, the Ettinger Gallery, the Philbrook Museum of Art, the Butler Institute of American Art, Allied Artists of America, the exhibition *The Best of American Realism*, and the Meridian *True Colors* (2001) exhibition. Materials regarding the Butler Institute of American Art include one videotape titled *At the Butler* recorded on May 25, 1985. Also included are files pertaining to several one-man exhibitions at the ACA Gallery, Alexander Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida Museum of Art, the Canton Art Institute, the James A. Michener Art Museum, Montclair Art Museum, the National Arts Club, New Britain Museum of American Art, New Jersey State Museum, the Sordoni Gallery- Wilkes College, the Woodmere Art Museum, a twenty-five year retrospective, and two exhibitions curated by Erbe, *The Salgamundi Club: An American Institution* (1998) and *Gabriela Delloso: An Artist's Journey* (2006).

Printed material includes exhibition announcements and catalogs, newspaper clippings, and various published magazines featuring articles on Erbe and his artwork. Photographic material contains thirty-three photographs and several negatives of Erbe. Also included are photographs of Erbe and his family as well as works of art, exhibition installations, and miscellaneous photographs. Sixty-one slides are included which mainly depict works of art by Erbe.

---

## Arrangement

This collection consists of five series.

- Series 1: Biographical Materials, circa 1972-2004 (.2 Linear feet: Box 1 and OV 6)
  - Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1971-2004 (.6 Linear feet: Box 1)
  - Series 3: Exhibition Files, circa 1975-2006 (1.7 Linear feet: Boxes 1-3)
  - Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1968-2005 (1.2 Linear feet: Boxes 3-5 and OV 7)
  - Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1972-2002 (.1 Linear feet: Box 5)
- 

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Trompe l'oeil painting

Types of Materials:

Video recordings

Occupations:

Painters -- New Jersey  
Self-taught artists

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Materials, circa 1972-2004

*.2 Linear feet (Box 1 and OV 6)*

Scope and Contents: Biographical material contains several awards and certificates as well as one videotape titled *Brand New Day* which originally aired on WPIX on July 29, 1983. Correspondence is with galleries, art museums, business associates, and friends.

Box 1, Folder 1 "Brand New Day", WPIX - channel 9, 1983, Jul. 29  
1 Videocassettes (Betamax)

Box 1, Folder 2 Awards and Certificates, circa 1972-2004

Oversize 6 Awards and Certificates, circa 1972-2004

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1971-2004

### .6 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence is with galleries, art museums, business associates, and friends.

Contents:

Box 1, Folder 3 Correspondence (1970s), circa 1971-1979

Box 1, Folder 4 Correspondence (1980s), circa 1980-1989

Box 1, Folder 5-7 Correspondence (1990s), circa 1990-1999

Box 1, Folder 8-11 Correspondence (2000s), circa 2000-2004

Box 1, Folder 12 Mitch Zamarin, circa 2003

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 3: Exhibition Files, circa 1975-2006

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

Scope and Contents: Exhibition files contains materials relating to various exhibitions Erbe participated in at galleries including the Pastel Society of America, the Ettinger Gallery, the Philbrook Museum of Art, the Butler Institute of American Art, Allied Artists of America, the exhibition *The Best of American Realism*, and the Meridian *True Colors* (2001) exhibition. Materials regarding the Butler Institute of American Art include one videotape titled *At the Butler* recorded on May 25, 1985.

Also included are files pertaining to several one-man exhibitions at the ACA Gallery, Alexander Gallery, Boca Raton, Florida Museum of Art, the Canton Art Institute, the James A. Michener Art Museum, Montclair Art Museum, the National Arts Club, New Britain Museum of American Art, New Jersey State Museum, the Sordoni Gallery- Wilkes College, the Woodmere Art Museum, a twenty-five year retrospective, and two exhibitions curated by Erbe, *The Salgamundi Club: An American Institution* (1998) and *Gabriela Dellosso: An Artist's Journey* (2006).

#### Group Shows

Box 1, Folder 13	Albuquerque Museum , circa 1999
Box 1, Folder 14-15	Allied Artists of America, Inc. , circa 1975-2001
Box 1, Folder 16	Audubon Artists, circa 1989-1998
Box 1, Folder 17	Boca Raton, Florida Museum of Art, circa 1995
Box 1, Folder 18	Braford Brinton Memorial, circa 2000-2003
Box 2, Folder 1-5	Butler Institute of American Art, circa 1983-2001 Folder four includes one video cassette (Betamax).
Box 2, Folder 6	Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts, circa 1986-1997
Box 2, Folder 7	Ettinger Gallery, circa 2003-2004
Box 2, Folder 8	General Electric Corporate Headquarters, circa 1979
Box 2, Folder 9	Harmon-Meek Gallery, circa 2002-2003
Box 2, Folder 10	Henry Gasser Traveling Exhibition (2004), circa 2003-2004
Box 2, Folder 11-12	Meridian International Center, circa 1999-2002
Box 2, Folder 13	Montclair Art Museum, circa 1980-1988
Box 2, Folder 14	Morris Museum in New Jersey, circa 1994
Box 2, Folder 15	National Academy of Design, circa 1976-1988



Box 2, Folder 16	National Arts Club, circa 1997-1999
Box 2, Folder 17	Newark Museum, circa 1997
Box 2, Folder 18	Pastel Society of America, circa 2002-2003
Box 2, Folder 19	Philbrook Museum of Art, circa 2003-2004
Box 2, Folder 20	Springfield, Missouri Art Museum, circa 1999-2000
Box 2, Folder 21	Twenty-Five Year Retrospective, circa 1991-1995

#### One Man Shows

Box 3, Folder 1	ACA Gallery, circa 1995-2005
Box 3, Folder 2	Alexander Gallery in New York, circa 1982
Box 3, Folder 3	Canton Art Institute, circa 1986-1988
Box 3, Folder 4	James A. Michener Art Museum in Pennsylvania, circa 1994
Box 3, Folder 5	National Arts Club, circa 2000
Box 3, Folder 6	New Britain Museum of American Art, circa 1976
Box 3, Folder 7	New Jersey State Museum, circa 1983
Box 3, Folder 8	Sordoni Gallery, Wilkes College in Pennsylvania, circa 1984-1985
Box 3, Folder 9	Woodmere Art Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, circa 1986-1988

#### Curated by Erbe

Box 3, Folder 10	Gabriela Dellosso: An Artist's Journey (2006), circa 2006
Box 3, Folder 11-12	The Salmagundi Club: An American Institution (1998), circa 1998-2004

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1968-2005

### 1.2 Linear feet (Boxes 3-5 and OV 7)

Scope and Contents: Printed material includes exhibition announcements and catalogs, newspaper clippings, and various published magazines featuring articles on Erbe and his artwork.

Box 3, Folder 13	Exhibition Announcements (1960s), circa 1968-1969
Box 3, Folder 14	Exhibition Announcements (1970s), circa 1971-1979
Box 3, Folder 15	Exhibition Announcements (1980s), circa 1981-1989
Box 3, Folder 16	Exhibition Announcements (1990s), circa 1990
Box 3, Folder 17	Exhibition Announcements (2000s), circa 2004
Box 3, Folder 18	Undated Exhibition Announcements, circa 1968-2004
Box 3, Folder 19	Exhibition Catalogs (1970s), circa 1970-1979
Box 3, Folder 20	Exhibition Catalogs (1980s), circa 1984-1989
Box 3, Folder 21	Exhibition Catalogs (1990s), circa 1990-1991
Box 3, Folder 22-23	Exhibition Catalogs (2000s), circa 2000-2003
Box 3, Folder 24	The Best of Oil Painting (1996), by Tom Nicholas and John C. Terelak , circa 1996
Box 3, Folder 25	"Painting Timeless Thoughts: How Gary T. Erbe Turns Ideas into Art" by Bonnie Iris, circa 2004
Box 3, Folder 26	Print of an Etching by Erbe, circa 1990
	Magazines
Box 4, Folder 1	Actualidades (1979), circa 1979
Box 4, Folder 2	American Artist (1974, 1983, 1992), circa 1974-1992
Box 4, Folder 3	American Art Review (2000), circa 2000
Box 4, Folder 4	Antique Toy World (1995), circa 1995
Box 4, Folder 5	Arts (1982), circa 1982
Box 4, Folder 6-7	Arts News (1982, 1998, 1999, 2000), circa 1982-2000

Box 4, Folder 8	Ford Times (1978) , circa 1978
Box 4, Folder 9	Gallery Guide (2000), circa 2000
Box 4, Folder 10	International Artist (2002), circa 2002
Box 4, Folder 11	La Revue Moderne (1972), circa 1972
Box 4, Folder 12	New Jersey (1984), circa 1984
Box 4, Folder 13	New Jersey Music and Arts (1971, 1976), circa 1971-1976
Box 4, Folder 14	Miscellaneous Magazines , circa 1998-2005
Box 5, Folder 1	Newspaper Clippings, circa 1969-2005
Oversize 7	Newspaper Clippings, circa 1969-2005

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 5: Photographic Material, circa 1972-2002

### .1 Linear feet (Box 5)

Scope and Contents: Photographic material contains thirty-three photographs and several negatives of Erbe. Also included are photographs of Erbe and his family as well as works of art, exhibition installations and miscellaneous photographs. Sixty-one slides are included which mainly depict works of art by Erbe.

Box 5, Folder 2	Erbe, Gary, circa 1972-1991
Box 5, Folder 3	Erbe, Gary, Negatives, circa 1972-1991
Box 5, Folder 4	Erbe, Gary, Slides, circa 1972-1991
Box 5, Folder 5	Mr. Zona's Commercial Art Class, circa 2002
Box 5, Folder 6	Photographs of Artwork, circa 1972-1991
Box 5, Folder 7	Photographs of Artwork, Negatives, circa 1972-1991
Box 5, Folder 8	Photographs of Artwork, Slides, circa 1972-1991

[Return to Table of Contents](#)