



# Smithsonian

## *Archives of American Art*

### A Finding Aid to the Photographs of Karl Francis Theodore Bitter and Gustave Gerlach, circa 1892-circa 1915, in the Archives of American Art

Stephanie Ashley

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection  
was provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Photographs of Karl Francis Theodore Bitter and Gustave Gerlach
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1892-circa 1915
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.gerlmarg
<b>Creator:</b>	Gerlach, Margaret
<b>Extent:</b>	0.8 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The photographs and papers of sculptor Karl Francis Theodore Bitter and his pupil and colleague Gustave Gerlach measure 0.8 linear feet and date from circa 1892-circa 1915. The collection documents the work and studio practice of Bitter and Gerlach primarily through photographs and a photograph album, in addition to paper records including a proposal and lists of work completed for two international expositions, news clippings, and two drawings by Bitter on his personal stationary.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The papers were donated in 2019 by Mary K. McGuigan and John F. McGuigan Jr., art historians and collectors in Milford, Pennsylvania, who purchased the collection at auction. The collection was originally compiled by Gustave's daughter, Margaret.

### Related Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds the Karl Theodore Francis Bitter Papers, 1887-circa 1977.

### Available Formats

The collection was digitized in 2019 and is available on the Archives of American Art website.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Stephanie Ashley in 2019. The collection was digitized in 2019 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

### Preferred Citation

Photographs of Karl Francis Theodore Bitter and Gustave Gerlach, circa 1892-circa 1915. 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Austrian born sculptor Karl Bitter (1867-1915) was active in New York City, New York. He exhibited his works at worldwide expositions and examples of his sculpture and memorials can be found throughout the United States. Sculptor Gustave Gerlach (b. 1866) was a pupil and colleague of Bitter's and was also active in New York City.

Karl Theodore Francis Bitter was born in Vienna, Austria, where he trained as a sculptor. While serving in the Austrian military in 1889, Bitter immigrated to the United States and applied for citizenship. Ultimately, Bitter settled in New York City and worked as an assistant in a home decorating firm while establishing his reputation as a sculptor. After working as a sculptor at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and as director at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, in 1901, Bitter was named head of the sculpture programs at both the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri, and the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco, California. Bitter was awarded the silver medal of the Paris Exposition, 1900; the gold medal of the Pan-American Exposition, 1901; and the gold medal at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, 1904.

Bitter offered work to sculptor Gustave Gerlach after seeing some of his sculpture. Gerlach subsequently assisted Bitter at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition as superintendent of sculpture, and at the 1904 and 1915 expositions. Following Bitter's sudden death in 1915, Gerlach proposed the execution of a memorial fountain for him in Weehawken, New Jersey, based on an original design by Bitter. However, due to anti-German sentiment in the United States at that time, Gerlach was unable to proceed with the memorial and ultimately returned the money he had raised for the fountain.

Bitter and Gerlach worked with many prominent sculptors of the day, including Isidore Konti, Adolph Weinman, and Alexander Stirling Calder who was named acting-chief of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition. Bitter and Calder both employed the services of renowned model Audrey Munson.

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## Scope and Contents

The photographs and papers of sculptor Karl Francis Theodore Bitter and his pupil and colleague Gustave Gerlach measure 0.8 linear feet and date from circa 1892-circa 1915. The collection documents the work and studio practice of Bitter and Gerlach primarily through photographs and a photograph album, in addition to paper records including a proposal and lists of work completed for two international expositions, news clippings, and two drawings by Bitter on his personal stationary.

Papers include lists of artwork for the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, and the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, in St. Louis, Missouri.

Photographs number approximately 250 and document the studio practice and work of Karl Bitter and Gustave Gerlach during Gerlach's tenure in Bitter's studio. Photos include images of Bitter, Gerlach, Isidore Konti, Joseph Sibbel, and other sculptors and studio assistants, and depict important works in progress such as Bitter's *Alexander Hamilton* and monumental sculpture for the 1901, 1904, and 1915 expositions, including Bitter's *Standard Bearer* (1901) and Adolph Weinman's *Destiny of the Red Man* (1904).

As a child Gerlach's daughter, Margaret, evidently spent time watching her father at work. She compiled this collection of photographs and papers and provided historical context in notes on the versos of some of the items.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as two series.

- Series 1: Papers, circa 1892-circa 1915 (7 folders; Box 1)
- Series 2: Photographs, circa 1895-circa 1915 (0.7 linear feet Boxes 1-2, OV's 3-4)

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Names:

Bitter, Karl Theodore Francis, 1867-1915  
Calder, Alexander Stirling, 1870-1945  
Gerlach, Gustave, b. 1866  
Konti, Isidore, 1862-1938  
Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1904: Saint Louis, Mo.)  
McGuigan, John F., Jr. (John Fuller)  
McGuigan, Mary K.  
Pan-American Exposition (1901: Buffalo, N.Y.)  
Weinman, Adolph A. (Adolph Alexander), 1870-1952

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Papers, circa 1892-circa 1915

#### 7 Folders (Box 1)

**Scope and Contents:** Notes and addresses include Bitter's address in New York, and those of other artists including Solon Borglum, Charles Keck, Adolph Weinman, and Enid Yandell. Also found are Gerlach's list of expenses for creating the West Hoboken honor roll board for a local school; two envelopes with brief biographical notes by Gerlach's daughter and notes that probably relate to photos in the collection but were separated from their contents; and Gerlach's proposal for the Karl Bitter memorial fountain that was never realized, with a "list of subscribers" who donated money for the cause.

The series includes lists of proposed sculpture and associated costs for the 1901 Pan-American Exposition. One list has costs and another has dates for when works were started and finished. Also found is a typescript of Bitter's proposal for the 1904 exposition followed by lists of artwork for each area with number, location, sculptor, and total cost. The lists include notations indicating when works were finished and received. The proposal is incomplete with the first three pages missing, but it outlines Bitter's vision for the exposition and mentions artists selected to participate such as Daniel Chester French, Frederic Remington, Augustus St. Gaudens, Adolph Weinman, and others, and documents his appointment of Gerlach as his foreman "who has assisted me most effectually on former occasions..."

News clippings relate to work by Bitter and others including exposition work. Other printed material consists of a catalog fragment of the Religious Sculpture of Joseph Siebel, and a National Academy of Design death notice for Augustus St. Gaudens. There are also two pieces of Bitter's stationary with pen and ink sketches.

Box 1, Folder 1      [Addresses and Notes, circa 1900-circa 1915](#)

Box 1, Folder 2      [Bitter Memorial Committee Appeal, circa 1915](#)

Box 1, Folder 3      [Lists of Artwork for Pan-American Exposition \(1901\), 1900-1901](#)

Box 1, Folder 4      [Proposal and Lists of Artwork for Louisiana Purchase Exposition \(1904\), circa 1903-1904](#)

Box 1, Folder 5      [Printed Material, 1907](#)

Box 1, Folder 6      [Printed Material, News Clippings, circa 1892-circa 1915](#)

Box 1, Folder 7      [Pen and Ink Drawings by Bitter, circa 1900-circa 1915](#)

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## Series 2: Photographs, circa 1895-circa 1915

### 0.7 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2, OVs 3-4)

**Scope and Contents:** Photographs include six head shots of Bitter; a photo of him standing with his sculpture of Alexander Hamilton; two photos of him on horseback and with his riding club; and two photos of the exterior of one of his homes. Photos of Bitter and Gerlach include Gerlach beside a large sculpture and one of Gerlach and Bitter in the studio with Isidore Konti.

Photographs of Joseph Sibbel Studio are notated to indicate that they include Gerlach, Fritz Hoffman, and Joseph Sibbel. Other unidentified artists and assistants appear in many of the photographs of studios including those for the 1901, 1904, and 1915 expositions. Also found is a studio portrait of model Audrey Munson.

Photos of artwork are primarily of sculpture by Bitter, Alexander Stirling Calder, Gustave Gerlach, Isidore Konti, and others. They include busts, reliefs, statuary, and monumental sculpture. One photo of artwork by Konti is inscribed to Bitter by Konti. Also found is a photograph album which appears to primarily document the 1904 exposition and includes photographs of Adolph Weinman's *Destiny of the Red Man*.

**Arrangement:** Photographs of people and Bitter's home are followed by photographs of artwork arranged by artist or studio. Artwork by unidentified artists is loosely arranged by subject matter. The photograph album is housed at the end of the series.

Box 1, Folder 8      [Photographs of Karl Bitter, circa 1900-circa 1915](#)  
Notes:      Oversized photos housed in OV 3

Box 1, Folder 9      [Photographs of Karl Bitter and Gustave Gerlach, circa 1900-circa 1915](#)  
Notes:      Oversized photos housed in OV 3

Box 1, Folder 10      [Photographs of Exterior of Bitter's Home, circa 1900-circa 1915](#)

Box 1, Folder 11      [Photographs of Artists at Joseph Sibbel Studio, circa 1900](#)

Box 1, Folder 12      [Photograph of Audrey Munson, circa 1900-circa 1915](#)

Box 1, Folder 13      [Photographs of Unidentified Artists in Studios, circa 1900-circa 1915](#)

Box 1, Folder 14      [Photograph of Unidentified Man, circa 1900](#)

### Photographs of Artwork

Box 1, Folder 15      [Artwork by Karl Bitter, circa 1900-circa 1915](#)  
Notes:      Oversized photos housed in OV 4

Box 1, Folder 16      [Artwork by Alexander Stirling Calder, circa 1912-circa 1915](#)

Box 1, Folder 17      [Artwork by Gustave Gerlach, circa 1895-circa 1915](#)  
Notes:      Oversized photos housed in OV 4

Box 1, Folder 18      [Artwork by Gustave Gerlach, circa 1895-circa 1915](#)

Box 1, Folder 19      [Artwork by Gustave Gerlach, circa 1895-circa 1915](#)

Box 1, Folder 20	<a href="#">Artwork by Isidore Konti, circa 1900-circa 1915</a> Notes: Oversized photos housed in OV 4
Box 1, Folder 21	<a href="#">Artwork at Joseph Sibbel Studio, circa 1900-circa 1915</a>
Box 1, Folder 22	<a href="#">Artwork Unidentified, Children and Cherubs, circa 1900-circa 1915</a>
Box 1, Folder 23	<a href="#">Artwork Unidentified, Children and Cherubs, circa 1900-circa 1915</a>
Box 1, Folder 24	<a href="#">Artwork Unidentified, Classical Themes, circa 1900-circa 1915</a> Notes: Oversized photos housed in OV 4
Box 1, Folder 25	<a href="#">Artwork Unidentified, Classical Themes, circa 1900-circa 1915</a>
Box 1, Folder 26	<a href="#">Artwork Unidentified, Classical Themes, circa 1900-circa 1915</a>
Box 2, Folder 1	<a href="#">Artwork Unidentified, Eagles, circa 1900-circa 1915</a>
Box 2, Folder 2	<a href="#">Artwork Unidentified, Native American Themes, circa 1900-circa 1915</a>
Box 2, Folder 3	<a href="#">Artwork Unidentified, Plaques, and Seated Figure, circa 1900-circa 1915</a>
Box 2, Folder 4	<a href="#">Artwork Unidentified, Religious Themes, circa 1900-circa 1915</a>
Box 2, Folder 5	<a href="#">Reproductions of Artwork, circa 1900-circa 1915</a>
Box 2, Folder 6	<a href="#">Photograph Album, circa 1900-circa 1904</a>
Oversize 3	Oversized Photos of Karl Bitter and Bitter and Gustave Gerlach digitized with Box 1, Folders 8 and 9
Oversize 4	Oversized Photos of Artwork by Karl Bitter, Gustave Gerlach, Isidore Konti, and Unidentified, Classical digitized with Box 1, Folders 15, 17, 20, and 24

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