



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Juliette Elkon Hamelecourt Papers, 1911-2000, bulk 1940s-2000, in the Archives of American Art

Christopher DeMairo

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.

2020 October 30

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Juliette Elkon Hamelecourt papers
<b>Date:</b>	1911-2000 (bulk 1940s-2000)
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.hamejuli
<b>Creator:</b>	Hamelecourt, Juliette Elkon
<b>Extent:</b>	3.1 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	The collection is in English and French.
<b>Summary:</b>	The Juliette Elkon Hamelecourt papers measure 3.1 linear feet and date from 1911-2000, with the bulk of the records dating from 1940s-2000. The papers document Hamelecourt's career through resumes, personal business records, and writings, as well as general correspondence, printed material, scrapbooks, and photographs. The collection also contains a series of interviews conducted by Hamelecourt with artists at the Chelsea Hotel in New York.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Juliette Hamelecourt, 1978-1997, and by the Juliette Elkon Hamelecourt estate via Leonard Spremulli in 2014.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Christopher DeMairo in 2020.

### Preferred Citation

Juliette Elkon Hamelecourt papers, 1911-2000. 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.

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## Biographical / Historical

Juliette Elkon Hamelecourt (1912-2002) was a fiber artist, tapissiere, and lecturer in Haiti, New York, and Cleveland. Hamelecourt was born in Belgium and spent her early years traveling with her father in England and China. Hamelecourt first learned needlework in China at the age of 10. After her father's death a couple of years later, she returned to live in Belgium with her grandparents where Hamelecourt worked alongside her grandmother who was a volunteer conservationist, repairing chasubles for the local clergy. Hamelecourt's early tapestries were ultimately lost or destroyed during World War II when she and her family moved to New York as refugees. Until the late 1950s she worked as a culinary editor, food consultant, and author of non-fiction, while needlework remained a hobby. Hamelecourt first visited Haiti reporting on French Caribbean cuisine in the late 1950s, and soon after moved there as a representative for the World Craft Council. In Haiti, she trained local women to embroider designs from their own environment and folklore. Hamelecourt moved to the Chelsea Hotel in New York around 1970, at this time she began receiving commissions for her work--some of which she sub-contracted to her Haitian embroiderers--and consulting as a designer. She established an embroidery workshop at the hotel with a grant from the New York Council on the Arts. Hamelecourt moved to Cleveland, Ohio in 1980.

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## Scope and Contents

The Juliette Elkon Hamelecourt papers measure 3.1 linear feet and date from 1911-2000, with the bulk of the records dating from 1940s-2000. Biographical material consists of resumes, notes and other writings, as well as some personal business records such as contracts, price lists, loan agreements, and consignment lists. Correspondents include customers, museums, galleries, friends, publishers, and family members and discussions regard exhibitions, sales, food, and personal matters. The collection's printed material consists of clippings about Hamelecourt, Haiti, the Chelsea Hotel, and other artists; exhibition announcements, invitations, and catalogs; press releases, newsletters, and bulletins; articles written by Hamelecourt; reproductions of her artwork; and the book jacket from Hamelecourt's *Edith Cavell: Heroic Nurse* (1958). Hamelecourt's scrapbooks contain a variety of material such as correspondence with museums, galleries, and family members about her life and artwork as well as correspondence for historical and cultural research purposes; photographs and slides of Hamelecourt, artwork, family, and friends; printed material; sketches; drafts of her autobiography; and biographical papers pertaining to her marriage in 1969. The collection also contains a series of interviews conducted by Hamelecourt with artists at the Chelsea Hotel including Arman, Bettina, Bernard Childs, Rita Fetcher, Eugenie Gershoy, Adolph Cook Glassgold, Maxwell Gordon, and others.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1972-1991 (Box 1; 7 folders)
  - Series 2: Correspondence, 1943-1999 (Box 1; 12 folders)
  - Series 3: Interviews with Chelsea Hotel Artists, circa 1980 (Box 1; 5 folders)
  - Series 4: Printed Material, 1943-2000 (Box 2; .8 linear feet)
  - Series 5: Scrapbooks, 1911-1999 (Box 2-3, OV 4; 1 linear foot)
  - Series 6: Photographs, 1940-1990s (Box 3; 5 folders)
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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:

Women artists  
Women textile artists

Types of Materials:

Interviews  
Sound recordings

Names:

Bettina, 1903-  
Brown, Robert Delford  
Chelsea Hotel  
Childs, Bernard, 1910-1985  
Fecher, Rita  
Gershoy, Eugenie, 1901?-1983 or 6  
Glassgold, Adolph, 1899-  
Gordon, Maxwell, 1910-1982

Occupations:

Fiber artists -- New York (State) -- New York  
Tapissiers -- New York (State) -- New York

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1972-1991

#### 7 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Included are resumes, a sketch of the artist, notes and other writings as well as some personal business records such as contracts, price lists, loan agreements, and consignment lists documenting the work of Juliette Hamelecourt.

Box 1, Folder 1	Contracts, 1988, 1991, undated
Box 1, Folder 2	Personal Business, 1972-1976, undated
Box 1, Folder 3	Portrait Sketch, 1977
Box 1, Folder 4	Resumes, 1975-1990s
Box 1, Folder 5	Spring Arts Festival, Certificate, 1972
Box 1, Folder 6	Writings, undated
Box 1, Folder 7	Writings, "Juliette Hamelecourt: Portrait of an Embroiderer," By Hariet Alonso, circa 1980s

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1943-1999

### 12 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Found here is Juliette Hamelecourt's correspondence with customers, museums, friends, publishers, and family regarding exhibitions, sales, food, and personal matters. Included in this series is one folder composed of prints and correspondence by fellow Chelsea Hotel resident Eugenie Gershoy.

Box 1, Folder 8	Gershoy, Eugenie, circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 9	Grants, 1973-1988
Box 1, Folder 10-18	General, 1943-1999, undated
Box 1, Folder 19	Holiday Greeting Cards, 1970s-1990s

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## Series 3: Interviews with Chelsea Hotel Artists, circa 1980

### *5 Folders (Box 1)*

Scope and Contents: Included are 15 sound cassettes consisting of interviews Hamelecourt conducted with residents of the Chelsea Hotel in New York.

Box 1, Folder 20	List of Artist Interviews, undated
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Box 1, Folder 21, Item 1	Arman Pierre Fernandez, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 21, Item 2	Bettina, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 21, Item 3	Robert Delford Brown; Rhett Brown, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 21, Item 4	Bernard Childs, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 22, Item 5	Bernard Childs, 1980 October 19 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 22, Item 6	Rita Fecher, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 22, Item 7	Rita Fecher; Stanley, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 22, Item 8	Alan Frumkin on Maryan, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 23, Item 9	Herbert Gentry, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 23, Item 10	Eugenie Gershoy, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 23, Item 11	Eugenie Gershoy, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 23, Item 12	Maxwell Gordon, 1980 June 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 24, Item 13	Adolph Cook Glassgold, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 24, Item 14	Maryan (Pinchas Burstein), As Told By Juliette, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 24, Item 15	Rene Shapshank; Eugenie Gershoy, circa 1980 1 Sound cassette

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## Series 4: Printed Material, 1943-2000

## 0.8 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Included are clippings about Hamelecourt, Haiti, the Chelsea Hotel, and other artists; exhibition announcements, invitations, and catalogs; periodicals, press releases, newsletters, and bulletins; articles written by Hamelecourt; reproductions of her artwork; and the book jacket from Hamelecourt's *Edith Cavell: Heroic Nurse* (1958).

Box 2, Folder 1	Artist Information, circa 1976, 1990s
Box 2, Folder 2	Clippings About Hamelecourt, 1972-1993
Box 2, Folder 3	Clippings, Haiti, 1960s-1980s
Box 2, Folder 4	Clippings, Various Topics, circa 1950s-1990s
Box 2, Folder 5	Edith Cavell: Heroic Nurse (1958), By Juliette Elkon, Book Jacket, 1958
Box 2, Folder 6	Exhibition Announcements and Invitations, 1967-1996
Box 2, Folder 7-10	Exhibition Announcements and Invitations, Others, 1982-1997
Box 2, Folder 11-13	Exhibition Catalogs, 1971-1997
Box 2, Folder 14	Exhibition Catalogs, Others, circa 1944-1997
Box 2, Folder 15	Exhibition Catalog, Dinner with the Presidents (1961), 1961
Box 2, Folder 16	Pamphlet, "Censorship of Contemporary Art: A Resource Directory", 1985
Box 2, Folder 17	Periodicals, 1975-2000
Box 2, Folder 18	Press Releases, Newsletters, and Bulletins, 1975-1994
Box 2, Folder 19	Professional Organizations, Cleveland Artists Foundation, 1993-1997
Box 2, Folder 20	Reproductions, circa 1970s
Box 2, Folder 21	Writings by Hamelecourt, 1943-1945, 1974

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## Series 5: Scrapbooks, 1911-1999

### 1 Linear foot (Box 2-3, OV 4)

Scope and Contents: Hamelecourt's scrapbooks contain a variety of material such as correspondence with museums, galleries, and family members about her life and artwork as well as correspondence for historical and cultural research purposes; photographs and slides of Hamelecourt, artwork, family, and friends; printed material; sketches; drafts of her autobiography and other writings; and biographical papers pertaining to her marriage in 1969.

Box 2, Folder 22-24	Early Years, 1911-1965
Box 2, Folder 25	Early Haiti, 1950s-1969
Box 3, Folder 1	Early Haiti, 1950s-1969
Box 3, Folder 2-4	Haiti, 1960-1969
Box 3, Folder 5-6	New York, circa 1965-1975
Box 3, Folder 7-8	Chelsea Hotel, circa 1972-1982
Box 3, Folder 9-11	Chelsea Hotel, 1974-1999
Oversize 4	Chelsea Hotel, 1984
Box 3, Folder 12-13	Untitled, 1955-1983

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## Series 6: Photographs, 1940-1990s

### 5 Folders (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Photographs, slides, and some transparencies of Hamelecourt's artwork as well as images of the artist, her friends, and artwork by others.

Box 3, Folder 14	Artwork, 1950s-1970s
Box 3, Folder 15	Artwork, Slides, 1969-1998
Box 3, Folder 16	Artwork, Other Artists, circa 1970s-1980s
Box 3, Folder 17	Photographs of Hamelecourt, 1940-1992
Box 3, Folder 18	Friends, 1946, 1990s

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