A Finding Aid to the Eastman Johnson Letters, 1851-1899, in the Archives of American Art

Erin Corley

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

September 8, 2005
Table of Contents

Collection Overview ........................................................................................................ 1
Administrative Information .............................................................................................. 1
Biographical Note............................................................................................................. 2
Scope and Content Note.................................................................................................. 2
Arrangement..................................................................................................................... 2
Names and Subjects ........................................................................................................ 2
Container Listing ............................................................................................................ 3
    Series 1: Eastman Johnson Letters, 1851-1899, undated................................. 3
Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art  
Title: Eastman Johnson letters  
Date: 1851-1899  
Identifier: AAA.johneast  
Creator: Johnson, Eastman, 1824-1906  
Extent: 0.2 Linear feet  
Language: English.  
Summary: The letters of Eastman Johnson measures 0.2 linear feet and contains 12 items that date from 1851 to 1899. The letters provide scattered documentation of his career as a painter and printmaker.

Administrative Information

Provenance

Items were donated in 1979 by Caroline Johnson Brown, Johnson's grand-niece, in 1976 by Letitia Howe, and by Charles E. Feinberg, an active donor to the Archives of American Art between 1955 and 1962, and were microfilmed after receipt.

Alternative Forms Available

The papers of Eastman Johnson were digitized in 2005 by the Archives of American Art, and total 29 images.

Processing Information

The collection was received in several accessions and microfilmed at some point after receipt on reels D10, D30, D316, 2814, 5030, 1817, and 3483. The entire collection was fully processed, arranged, and described by Erin Corley and scanned in 2005, with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation


Restrictions on Access

The collection has been digitized and is available online via AAA’s website.

Terms of 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 Note

American painter and printmaker Jonathan Eastman Johnson was born in Lovell, Maine in 1824. After apprenticing with a Boston lithographer, he moved to Washington D.C. in 1845 and became a portraitist of prominent Americans, including Daniel Webster and Dolly Madison. Beginning in 1849, Johnson spent two years at the Royal Academy in Dusseldorf, Germany, studying with Emanuel Leutze, and three years at The Hague. After returning to America in 1855, he settled in New York and focused on painting American genre subjects including Native Americans, African Americans, and farmers. He married Elizabeth Buckley in 1869, and they bought a home in Nantucket where he spent every summer for the rest of his life. After 1880, as the popularity of genre paintings declined, Johnson focused again on portraiture. He died in 1906.

Scope and Content Note

The letters of Eastman Johnson measures 0.2 linear feet and contains 12 items that date from 1851 to 1899. The letters provide scattered documentation of his career as a painter and printmaker.

The collection includes a letter to Mr. Champney concerning a painting by Eugene Benson, a letter to Charles Lanman, personal Secretary to Daniel Webster, a letter to Alfred Ordway, artist and Director of Paintings at the Boston Athenaeum, a letter to friend and patron John Coyle, and a letter to Mr. Cozzens concerning a painting which was already sold. Also found are two letters to artist and close friend Jervis McEntee, a letter to an unidentified Mrs. P, stating that he must go to Albany before starting another picture, a letter to Mr. Clark concerning a portrait, and a letter to Dr. Hochheimer regarding a print by Henry Wolf after one of Johnson's paintings. Also included in the collection is an oversize letter, written by Johnson in Dusseldorf, to his friend Charlotte Child, in which he speaks of his impressions of Germany, mutual friends, and working in Leutze's studio.

Arrangement

Due to the small size of this collection, items are categorized into one series consisting of two folders. Items are arranged chronologically.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
- Painting, Modern -- 19th century -- New York (State) -- New York
- Portrait painters -- New York (State) -- New York

Names:

- Benson, Eugene, 1837-1908
- Lanman, Charles, 1819-1895
- Leutze, Emanuel, 1816-1868
- McEntee, Jervis, 1828-1891
- Ordway, Alfred T., 1819-1897
- Wolf, Henry, 1852-1916
Series 1: Eastman Johnson Letters, 1851-1899, undated

2 Folders (Box 1, OV 2)

Folder 1

Eastman Johnson Letters, 1851-1899, undated

Notes:
- Handwritten card, "What is called the 'line' of beauty," undated
- To [Charles] Lanman, May 10, circa 1846
- To Mr. Champney, March 4, circa 1870s
- To Mr. [Alfred] Ordway, June 3, 1859
- To [John] Coyle, March 13, 1864
- To Mr. Cozzens, February 8, 1865
- To Jervis [McEntee], October 12, 1879
- To Jervis [McEntee], September 22, 1881
- To Mrs. [P.?] (name illegible, photocopy), January 16, 1884
- To Mr. Clark, June 3, 1891
- To Dr. E. Hochheimer, April 20, 1899

Box OV 2, Folder 1

Letter to Charlotte [Child], March 25, 1851

Notes: includes transcript

Return to Table of Contents