A Finding Aid to the Rose Lamb Papers, circa 1870-1961, bulk circa 1870-1900, 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.

April 17, 2008
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art
Title: Rose Lamb papers
Identifier: AAA.lambrose
Date: circa 1870-1961
(bulk 1870-1900)
Extent: 0.8 Linear feet
Creator: Lamb, Rose
Language: English .
Summary: The papers of Boston area portrait painter Rose Lamb date from circa 1870 to 1961, with the bulk of the material dating from circa 1870 to 1900, and measure 0.8 linear feet. The collection contains a diploma; letters from artists, writers, historians, and others, including nine letters from former teacher and friend William Morris Hunt; photographs of unidentified people and artwork by Lamb; and original artwork, including a sketchbook, charcoal drawings, watercolors, and two oil paintings.

Administrative Information

Provenance
This collection was donated by Aimée and Rosamond Lamb, nieces of Rose Lamb in installments, primarily from 1980 to 1985. They donated the nine letters to Lamb from William Morris Hunt in 1976.

Related Material
Also available at the Archives of American Art are the Aimée Lamb (niece of Rose Lamb) papers, 1888-1991. Original letters to Rose Lamb from Mary Cassatt and Childe Hassam are available at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Alternative Forms Available
The papers of Rose Lamb in the Archives of American Art were digitized in 2009, and total 224 images.

Photocopies of letters from originals found at outside archival repositories have not been scanned.
Processing Information

The collection was microfilmed in the order in which it was received on reels 1309 and 3888. The entire collection was fully processed, arranged, and described by Erin Corley in 2008 and digitized in 2009 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation


Restrictions on Access

Use of the original papers requires an appointment.

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Biographical Note

Rose Lamb (1843-1927) was a portrait painter and drawing instructor of Boston, Massachusetts. Lamb was born in Boston to a prominent family and was a student of William Morris Hunt and Helen Knowlton during the 1870s. Though she did not exhibit often during her lifetime, she was a successful portraitist specializing in portraits of children. Lamb was an active member of Boston society, befriending many artists, writers, and other cultural figures, and her portraits were in great demand among prominent Boston families. She traveled to Europe in 1881, 1890, and 1914, perhaps taking art classes while there in 1881. In 1884, and possibly later, she assisted George Bartlett as a drawing instructor at the South Boston School of Art. In 1900 she suffered a severe illness and stopped painting. For the remainder of her life she instead pursued travel and social activities. Rose Lamb died in 1927.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Boston area portrait painter and drawing instructor Rose Lamb date from circa 1870 to 1961, with the bulk of the material dating from circa 1870 to 1900, and measure 0.8 linear feet. The collection contains a diploma; letters from artists, writers, historians, and others, including nine letters from former teacher and friend William Morris Hunt; photographs of unidentified people and artwork by Lamb; and original artwork, including a sketchbook from circa 1870, charcoal drawings, two watercolors, and two oil paintings. Artwork depicts landscapes, children, and other figure studies.

Correspondence within the the collection includes 19 letters from artists, such as Albert Sterner, Ross Turner, Howard Pyle, and Charles H. Woodbury; writers Anne Thackeray Ritchie, Margaret Deland, and Alfred Noyes; and historians John Fiske and Albert Bushnell Hart. Also found are nine letters from former teacher and friend William Morris Hunt. Eight of his letters describe in detail his work on the painting of
murals in the Capitol building in Albany, New York, and one letter discusses his painting of portraits in North Easton, Massachusetts. Also among the correspondence are four letters to Aimee Lamb, Rose’s niece.

### Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 4 series:

- Series 1: Diploma, 1881 (Box 1, OV 3; 1 folder)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1878-1914, 1952-1961 (Box 1; 5 folders)
- Series 3: Photographs, circa late 1800s (Boxes 1-2; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 4: Artwork, circa 1870-late 1800s (Box 1-2, OV 3; 0.3 linear feet)

### Names and Subject Terms

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

**Types of Materials:**
- Charcoal drawings
- Oil paintings
- Photographs
- Sketchbooks
- Watercolor paintings

**Names:**
- Deland, Margaret Wade Campbell, 1857-1945
- Fiske, John
- Hart, Albert Bushnell, 1854-1943
- Hunt, William Morris, 1824-1879
- Lamb, Aimee, 1893-1989
- Noyes, Alfred, 1880-1958
- Pyle, Howard, 1853-1911
- Ritchie, Anne Thackeray, 1837-1919
- Sterner, Albert, 1863-1946
- Turner, Ross, 1847-1915
- Woodbury, Charles H. (Charles Herbert), 1864-1940

**Occupations:**
- Art teachers -- Massachusetts -- Boston
- Portrait painters -- Massachusetts -- Boston
Container Listing

Series 1: Diploma, 1881

(Box 1, OV 3; 1 folder)
This series consists of a Diploma certificate given to Rose Lamb by the Massachusetts Charitable Mechanics Association for contributing in their fourteenth exhibition in September 1881.

Box 1, Folder 1   Diploma, 1881
(Oversized, housed in OV 3)
Image(s)

Box OV 3   Oversized Diploma, 1881
(Item scanned with Box 1, F1)

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1878-1914, 1952-1961

(Box 1; 5 folders)

Correspondence includes nine letters to Rose Lamb from her former teacher William Morris Hunt. Eight of his letters describe in detail his work on the painting of murals in the Capitol building in Albany, New York, and one letter discusses his painting of portraits in North Easton, Massachusetts. Also found in this series are 19 other miscellaneous letters sent to Rose Lamb from friends and acquaintances, including artists Howard Pyle, Albert Sterner, Ross Turner, and Charles H. Woodbury; writers Anne Thackeray Ritchie, Margaret Deland, and Alfred Noyes; and historians John Fiske and Albert Bushnell Hart. Also found is a typed invitation sent to her from Henry James. Topics of letters include replies to invitations, thank-you notes, and other general news.

Also found here, but not scanned, are photocopies of letters located at other repositories, including four letters from Mary Cassatt and one letter from Childe Hassam.

There are also four letters to Aimée Lamb, Rose Lamb's niece. Letters to Aimée Lamb consist of two letters from art historian John Frost and two letters from Harvard University Library. These letters inquire about Rose Lamb's friendship with the novelist Sarah Orne Jewett.

Correspondence is arranged chronologically within each folder. The bulk of this series has been scanned; photocopies of letters have not been scanned.

Letters to Rose Lamb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 2</th>
<th>From William Morris Hunt, 1878</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 3</td>
<td>Miscellaneous Letters, 1890-1898, 1914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 4</td>
<td>Undated Miscellaneous Letters, circa 1890-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 5</td>
<td>Photocopies of Letters located at other repositories, 1890s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 1, Folder 6</td>
<td>Letters to Aimée Lamb regarding Rose Lamb, 1952, 1960-1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Series 3: Photographs, circa late 1800s

(Boxes 1-2; 0.2 linear feet)

Photographs of people include a photograph of a woman and child, a woman outdoors with two children, and two portraits of an elderly woman, all unidentified. Additional photographs are of artwork, believed to have been painted by Rose Lamb, though most of the photographs are not labeled or dated.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 7  Photographs of People, circa late 1800s
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 8  Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s
Image(s)
(Oversized items housed in Box 2)

Box 1, Folder 9  Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s
Image(s)
(Oversized items housed in Box 2)

Box 1, Folder 10 Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s
Image(s)
(Oversized items housed in Box 2)

Box 1, Folder 11 Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s
Image(s)
(Oversized items housed in Box 2)

Box 1, Folder 12 Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s
Image(s)
(Oversized items housed in Box 2)

Box 2 Oversized Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s
(Items scanned with Box 1, Folders 8-12)
Series 4: Artwork, circa 1870-late 1800s  
(Box 1-2, OV 3; 0.3 linear feet)

Found here are drawings and paintings by Rose Lamb. One sketchbook found here includes sketches in charcoal, pencil, and watercolor of human figures and landscapes. Also found are ten loose charcoal drawings of portraits and landscapes. One of the landscapes is signed "RL" and dated 1876. Watercolors include a portrait of an unidentified woman and two landscapes. Also found in this series are two paintings on canvas, one unfinished work depicting a woman and two children and the other a portrait of a child.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 13  Sketchbook, circa 1870  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 14  Charcoal Drawings, circa 1870s-1880s  
(Oversized items housed in Box 2)  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 15  Watercolor Portrait of a Woman, circa late 1800s  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 16  Watercolor Landscape Paintings, circa late 1800s  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 17  Painting on Canvas, circa late 1800s  
Image(s): Paintings on Canvas  
(1 oversized canvas housed in Box 2)

Box 1, Folder 18  Painting on Canvas, circa late 1800s  
Image(s): Paintings on Canvas  
(1 oversized canvas housed in OV 3)

Box 2  Charcoal Drawings, circa 1870s-1880s  
(Items scanned with Box 1, F14)

Box 2  Oversized Painting on Canvas, circa late 1800s  
(Item scanned with Box 1, F17)

Box OV 3  Oversized Painting on Canvas, circa late 1800s  
(Item scanned with Box 1, F18)