



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

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.

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Archives of American Art
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Rose Lamb papers
Date:	circa 1870-1961 (bulk 1870-1900)
Identifier:	AAA.lambrose
Creator:	Lamb, Rose
Extent:	0.8 Linear feet
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

Rose Lamb papers, circa 1870-1961, bulk circa 1870-1900. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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 Aimée Lamb, Rose's niece.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 4 series:

Missing Title:

- 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:

Subjects:

Women artists
Women educators
Women painters

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, Aimée, 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)

Scope and Contents: 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)

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)

Scope and Contents: 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.

Arrangement: 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	
Box 1, Folder 2	From William Morris Hunt, 1878
Box 1, Folder 3	Miscellaneous Letters, 1890-1898, 1914
Box 1, Folder 4	Undated Miscellaneous Letters, circa 1890-1900
Box 1, Folder 5	Photocopies of Letters located at other repositories, 1890s
Box 1, Folder 6	Letters to Aimée Lamb regarding Rose Lamb, 1952, 1960-1961

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Series 3: Photographs, circa late 1800s

(Boxes 1-2; 0.2 linear feet)

Scope and Contents: 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.

Arrangement: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 7	Photographs of People, circa late 1800s
Box 1, Folder 8	Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s Notes: (Oversized items housed in Box 2)
Box 1, Folder 9	Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s Notes: (Oversized items housed in Box 2)
Box 1, Folder 10	Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s Notes: (Oversized items housed in Box 2)
Box 1, Folder 11	Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s Notes: (Oversized items housed in Box 2)
Box 1, Folder 12	Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s Notes: (Oversized items housed in Box 2)
Box 2	Oversized Photographs of Artwork, circa late 1800s (Items scanned with Box 1, Folders 8-12)

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Series 4: Artwork, circa 1870-late 1800s

(Box 1-2, OV 3; 0.3 linear feet)

Scope and Contents: 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.

Arrangement: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 13	Sketchbook, circa 1870
Box 1, Folder 14	Charcoal Drawings, circa 1870s-1880s (Oversized items housed in Box 2)
Box 1, Folder 15	Watercolor Portrait of a Woman, circa late 1800s
Box 1, Folder 16	Watercolor Landscape Paintings, circa late 1800s
Box 1, Folder 17	Painting on Canvas, circa late 1800s Image(s): Paintings on Canvas Notes: (1 oversized canvas housed in Box 2)
Box 1, Folder 18	Painting on Canvas, circa late 1800s Image(s): Paintings on Canvas Notes: (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)

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