



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Roi Partridge Papers, 1909-2003 (bulk 1909-1984), in the Archives of American Art

Catherine Gaines

August 21, 2007

Archives of American Art  
750 9th Street, NW  
Victor Building, Suite 2200  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Roi Partridge papers
<b>Date:</b>	1909-2003 (bulk 1909-1984)
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.partrou
<b>Creator:</b>	Partridge, Roi, 1888-1984
<b>Extent:</b>	1 Linear foot
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of California printmaker and educator Roi Partridge measure 1.0 linear foot and date from 1909-2003, with the bulk of the material dated 1909-1984. Found here are scattered correspondence, notes and writings, a scrapbook, printed material, and photographs. Several of the documents date from the time Partridge was married to photographer Imogen Cunningham, particularly family correspondence and a travel log of family car camping trips to the west. The same travel log documents one sketching trip Partridge made with Eugen Neuhaus.

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

Gryffyd Partridge donated his father's papers to the Archives of American art in 1992 and 1995. A final gift was received from Janet [Mrs. Gryffyd] Partridge in 2003.

### Separated Material

A portion of the gifts received from Gryffyd Partridge were separated and filed with the Imogen Cunningham papers, some of which had been earlier donated by Gryffyd.

### Related Material

The Archives of American Art holds the papers of Imogen Cunningham, Partridge's first wife, which contain additional Partridge family correspondence and photographs. An untranscribed oral history interview of Roi Partridge conducted by Steve Steinberg in 1980 is also available.

### Alternative Forms Available

A portion of the collection is available on 35 mm microfilm reel 5028 at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

### Processing Information

The 1992 accession was processed and microfilmed on reel 5028 in 1995. Two additions were merged and the collection was processed and described by Catherine S. Gaines in 2007.

## Preferred Citation

Roi Partridge papers, 1909-2003 (bulk 1909-1984). Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions on Access

The collection is open for research. Patrons must use microfilm copy. Use of the unmicrofilmed portion requires an appointment.

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## Biographical Note

Roy George Partridge (later known as Roi) was born in Centralia, Washington, in 1888, the son of a newspaper publisher and a pianist mother who accompanied silent films in Seattle movie houses. His mother enrolled him in a drawing and painting course at age 10. By 1907, the family had moved to Kansas where Partridge enrolled in studio courses at the newly established Fine Arts Institute of Kansas City. From there he then went to New York City to study at the school of the National Academy of Design during 1909 and 1910.

In 1910, with an art student friend from Seattle and enough cash to last a month, Partridge traveled to Europe and through a severe economy and by selling his etchings, managed to stay for four years. Between 1910 and 1914, he studied etching with Brockhoff in Munich, and rented a studio in Paris from 1911-1914. Once he had produced a sufficient number of prints, his friends John Butler and Clare Shepard arranged for an exhibition of his work in Seattle. They were assisted by Imogen Cunningham who sent her photo to Partridge and began corresponding with him.

The outbreak of World War I forced Partridge's return to Seattle where he and Imogen Cunningham finally met face to face. They were married within a matter of months. In their early years together, Roi managed to earn a living selling his prints and Imogen worked for Edward S. Curtis, whose photographs of American Indians had not yet achieved recognition. The couple soon produced three sons, Gryffy and twins Padraic and Rondal. The family soon moved to San Francisco where Partridge worked as an artist in an advertising agency that also employed Maynard Dixon. During this time, he became friendly with the young Dorothea Lange who worked at the shop where Partridge had his film developed. After their marriage, Dixon and Lange established a close, long term friendship with the Partridge family.

In 1920, Partridge joined the faculty of Mills College as an art instructor, teaching design, painting, printmaking, lettering, and photography for 26 years. Partridge was such a popular teacher that the number of art students rose sharply and, for a time, art became the institution's most popular major. He was named chairman of the Art Department in 1923, and served as the first director of the college's art gallery from 1925 through 1935.

While teaching, Partridge remained an active artist and participated in exhibitions throughout the country at venues such as the Honolulu Art Academy, de Young Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Toronto Art Gallery, and the Museum of Modern Art. Among the prizes and medals awarded him were: Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, Seattle (1909), National Academy of Design (1910), Panama Pacific Exposition (1915), Art Institute of Chicago (191), Brooklyn Museum (1921), San Francisco Museum (1921), Los Angeles Museum of Art (1922, 1925, 1929), California Society of Print Makers (1929), and Library of Congress (1943). Partridge is represented in the permanent collections of many museums, colleges, and libraries, among them: Walker Art Gallery, Honolulu Academy of Art, San Diego Fine Arts Society, Milwaukee Art

Gallery, Mills College, Scripps College, New York Public Library, and Library of Congress. Partridge also illustrated several books, and *The Graphic Art of Roi Partridge: a Catalogue Raisonné* by Anthony R. White was published in 1988.

Imogen Cunningham and Roi Partridge, both strong-willed and not given to compromise, divorced in 1934. They reconciled in the 1960s and remained on friendly terms until her death in 1976. Partridge's second wife, Marian Lyman, died in 1940. The following year, he married May Ellen Fisher, a teacher, who survived him.

In addition to his professional activities, Partridge pursued a wide variety of other interests. During the 1920s, he, Imogen, and their boys took numerous camping trips throughout California and New Mexico. With his third wife, May Ellen, he became an avid folk dancer and enthusiastic gardener, raised chickens and chinchillas, and kept bees. They had the opportunity to travel to Hawaii and Japan. In Japan, Partridge expanded his Japanese print collection which was eventually donated to the Mills College Art Gallery.

Roi Partridge died in Walnut Creek, California, on January 25, 1984.

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## Scope and Content Note

The papers of California printmaker and educator Roi Partridge measure 1.0 linear foot and date from 1909-2003, with the bulk of the material dated 1909-1984. Found here are scattered correspondence, notes and writings, a scrapbook, printed material, and photographs. Several of the documents date from the time Partridge was married to photographer Imogen Cunningham, particularly family correspondence and a travel log of family car camping trips to the west. The same travel log documents one sketching trip Partridge made with Eugen Neuhaus.

General and family correspondence consists largely of incoming letters with some copies and drafts of outgoing letters. General correspondence is mainly professional in nature and documents exhibitions, commissions, teaching, memberships in artists' organizations, and participation in the WPA Public Works of Art Project. A small number of letters from friends concerning personal and social matters are scattered throughout. Among the correspondents are Ansel Adams, Sherwood Anderson, John Taylor Arms, Hollywood Riviera Galleries, Dard Hunter, the Estate of Bertha Jacques [Elizabeth Linsky, executor], National Academy of Design, and Print Makers Society of California. Family correspondence includes letters to Roi Partridge from family members. Letters to Gryffyd's family are from Imogen Cunningham and Roi Partridge; letters from others about family members are also included.

Among the notes and writings are a travel log that documents car camping trips through California and New Mexico taken by Roi Partridge, Imogen Cunningham, and their three sons between 1924 and 1926. The volume also includes Roi's account of a 1926 sketching trip taken with Eugen Neuhaus along the California coast.

A scrapbook contains clippings and feature articles about Roi Partridge, along with exhibition announcements and reproductions. Additional printed material is about or mentions Roi Partridge and his family, Ansel Adams, and Imogen Cunningham. There are also family Christmas cards with reproductions of etchings and drawings by Roi Partridge.

Photographs are of people and art work, including photographs of Roi and May Ellen Partridge, and Donald Bear, the first Director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art (Janet Lineberger - later Mrs. Gryffyd Partridge - served as his assistant in the early 1940s). There are numerous photographs and negatives of art work by Roi Partridge (with appraisal and catalog information), and a photograph of Peter Blos' portrait of Partridge.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 5 series:

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1909-1993 (Box 1; 0.3 linear ft.; reel 5028)

- Series 2: Notes and Writings, 1924-1964 (Box 1; 5 folders.; reel 5028)
- Series 3: Scrapbook, 1922-1977 (Box 1; 0.1 linear ft.)
- Series 4: Printed Material, 1913-2003 (Box 1; 0.25 linear ft.; reel 5028)
- Series 5: Photographs, 1940-1987 (Box 1; 0.3 linear ft.; reel 5028)

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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:

Etchers -- California -- San Francisco  
Printmakers -- California -- San Francisco

### Types of Materials:

Christmas cards  
Drafts (documents)  
Notes  
Photographs  
Scrapbooks  
Travelogs

### Names:

Adams, Ansel, 1902-1984  
Anderson, Sherwood, 1876-1941  
Arms, John Taylor, 1887-1953  
Cunningham, Imogen, 1883-1976  
Hunter, Dard, 1883-1966  
Jacques, Bertha  
Linsky, Elizabeth  
National Academy of Design (U.S.)  
Neuhaus, Eugen, 1879-1963  
Partridge, Roi, 1888-1984  
Public Works of Art Project

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1909-1993

(Box 1; 0.3 linear ft.; reel 5028)

**Scope and Contents:** General and family correspondence consists largely of incoming letters with some copies and drafts of outgoing letters. General correspondence is mainly professional in nature and documents exhibitions, commissions, teaching, memberships in artists organizations, and participation in the WPA Public Works of Art Project. A small number of letters from friends concerning personal and social matters are scattered throughout. Among the correspondents are Ansel Adams, *American Artist*, Sherwood Anderson, John Taylor Arms, *Art Instruction*, Hollywood Riviera Galleries, Dard Hunter, Estate of Bertha Jacques [Elizabeth Linsky, executor], National Academy of Design, and Print Makers Society of California. Family correspondence includes letters to Roi Partridge from Uncle Arnold Frank George, his father, and son Padraic. Letters addressed to Gryffyd and family are from Imogen Cunningham and Roi Partridge; letters from others about family members are also included.

**Arrangement:** The series is arranged into 2 subseries:

- Subseries 1.1: General Correspondence, 1915-1993
- Subseries 1.2: Family, 1909-1985

#### 1.1: General Correspondence, 1915-1993

Box 1, Folder 1-2	Roi Partridge, 1915-1993
Box 1, Folder 3	Roi Partridge, 1930-1934, undated (reel 5028)

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#### 1.2: Family, 1909-1985

Box 1	Roi Partridge
Box 1, Folder 4	From Arnold Frank George (Uncle Frank), 1909-1916, undated
Box 1, Folder 5	From A. E. Partridge [father], 1942-1944, undated
Box 1, Folder 6	From Padraic [son] and Marjorie Partridge, 1960-1973, undated
Box 1	Gryffyd and Janet Partridge and Family
Box 1, Folder 7	From Imogen Cunningham [mother], 1961-1972
Box 1, Folder 8	From Roi Partridge [father], 1947-1966
Box 1, Folder 9	From Roi Partridge [father], 1967-1973

Box 1, Folder 10	From Roi Partridge [father], 1974-1976
Box 1, Folder 11	From Roi Partridge [father], 1977-1983, undated
Box 1, Folder 12	From Roi Partridge [father], 1955-1984, undated (reel 5028)
Box 1, Folder 13	From Others (re: Family), 1942-1978
Box 1, Folder 14	From Others (re: Family), 1980-1985 (reel 5028)

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## Series 2: Notes and Writings, 1924-1964

*(Box 1; 5 folders; reel 5028)*

Scope and Contents: Found here are notes, lists, a poem, and a travel log that documents car camping trips through California and New Mexico taken by Roi Partridge, Imogen Cunningham, and their three sons between 1924 and 1926. The same volume includes Roi's account of a 1926 sketching trip along the California coast with Eugen Neuhaus.

Box 1, Folder 15	Lists of Prints by Roi Partridge, undated
Box 1, Folder 16	Miscellaneous Lists, 1964, undated
Box 1, Folder 17	Notes, Talk on the Differences between Engraving and Etching, undated
Box 1, Folder 18	Miscellaneous Notes, 1976, undated
Box 1, Folder 19	Poem by Roi Partridge, "To Our Friends Who Art Not in Heaven," undated (reel 5028)
Box 1, Folder 20	Travel Log of Roi Partridge and Imogen Cunningham, 1924-1946 (1 vol., reel 5028)

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## Series 3: Scrapbook, 1922-1977

*(Box 1; 0.1 linear ft.)*

Scope and Contents: A disbound scrapbook containing clippings and feature articles about Roi Partridge, along with exhibition announcements and reproductions.

Box 1, Folder 21	Scrapbook, 1922-1977
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## Series 4: Printed Material, 1913-2003

*(Box 1; 0.25 linear ft.; reel 5028)*

Scope and Contents: Printed material consists mainly of articles and miscellaneous items about or mentioning Roi Partridge and family members, Ansel Adams, and Imogen Cunningham. Also included are exhibition announcements of Roi Partridge, his photographer son Rondal, Imogen Cunningham, and other artists; *A Seattle Heritage: The Fine Arts Society*, a book by Anne H. Calhoun that mentions Partridge; and family Christmas cards with reproductions of etchings and drawings by Roi Partridge.

Box 1	Articles
Box 1, Folder 22	Ansel Adams, 1982
Box 1, Folder 23	Imogen Cunningham, 1951-2001, undated
Box 1, Folder 24	Elizabeth Partridge, 1995-1999
Box 1, Folder 25	Janet Lineberger [Partridge], 1941
Box 1, Folder 26	Loren Partridge, 2003
Box 1, Folder 27	Roi Partridge, 1959 (reel 5028)
Box 1, Folder 28	Roi and May Ellen Partridge, 1976-1995, undated
Box 1, Folder 29	Rondal Partridge, 1997-2003
Box 1, Folder 30	Book - <i>A Seattle Heritage: The Fine Arts Society</i> by Anne H. Calhoun, 1942
Box 1	Exhibition Announcements
Box 1, Folder 31	Imogen Cunningham, 1984-1999, undated
Box 1, Folder 32	Roi Partridge, 1977-1990
Box 1, Folder 33	Roi Partridge, 1988, undated
Box 1, Folder 34	Rondal Partridge, 1996
Box 1, Folder 35	Other Artists, 1981-1995, undated
Box 1	Miscellaneous Printed Material
Box 1, Folder 36	Imogen Cunningham, 1951-1993, undated
Box 1, Folder 37	Roi Partridge, 1988

Box 1, Folder 38                      Rondal Partridge, undated

Box 1, Folder 39                      Arts Organizations and Museums, 1913-1993

Box 1, Folder 40                      Reproductions, Christmas Cards featuring Etchings by Roi Partridge,  
1967-1981, undated

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## Series 5: Photographs, 1940-1987

*(Box 1; 0.3 linear ft.; reel 5028)*

Scope and Contents: Photographs are of people and art work. People depicted are Roi and May Ellen Partridge. There is also one photograph of Donald Bear, the first Director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art (Janet Lineberger - later Mrs. Gryffyd Partridge - served as Bear's assistant in the early 1940s). Photographs and negatives of art work by Roi Partridge (with appraisal and catalog information) were removed from an unknown number of three-ring binders. In addition, there is a photograph of Peter Blos' portrait of Partridge.

Box 1, Folder 41	Art Work by Peter Blos - Portrait of Roi Partridge, circa 1949 (reel 5028)
Box 1	Art Work by Roi Partridge (with appraisal and catalog information)
Box 1, Folder 42-43	Drawings of California, 1987, undated
Box 1, Folder 44	Drawings of Hawaii: Box 1, undated
Box 1, Folder 45	Drawings of Hawaii: Box 2, undated
Box 1, Folder 46	Drawings of Japan, undated
Box 1, Folder 47	Photographs, undated
Box 1	People
Box 1, Folder 48	Donald Bear (first Director, Santa Barbara Museum of Art), circa 1941
Box 1, Folder 49	Roi Partridge; Roi Partridge and May Ellen Partridge, undated (reel 5028)
Box 1	Negatives - Art Work by Roi Partridge
Box 1, Folder 50	Drawings of California, undated
Box 1, Folder 51	Drawings of Hawaii: Box 1, undated
Box 1, Folder 52	Drawings of Hawaii: Box 2, undated
Box 1, Folder 53	Drawings, Unidentified (California, Hawaii, and Japan), undated
Box 1, Folder 54	Photographs, undated

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