



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Ogden M. Pleissner Papers,  
1928-1976, in the Archives of American Art

Jean Fitzgerald

January 2007

Archives of American Art  
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<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>	Ogden M. Pleissner papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.pleiogde
<b>Date:</b>	1928-1976
<b>Extent:</b>	3.2 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Pleissner, Ogden M.
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of painter Ogden M. Pleissner measure 3.2 linear feet and date from 1928-1976. Found within the papers are biographical material, scattered letters, artwork, nine scrapbooks, over one foot of printed material, and photographs.

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## Administrative Information

### Provenance

Ogden M. Pleissner donated his papers to the Archives in 1972 and 1976.

### Processing Information

The papers were processed to an intermediate level in January 2007 by Jean Fitzgerald.

### Preferred Citation

Ogden M. Pleissner papers, 1928-1976. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions on Access

The collection is open for research. Use requires an appointment.

### Ownership and Literary Rights

The Ogden M. Pleissner papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

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## Biographical Note

Ogden Minton Pleissner was born on April 29, 1905 in Brooklyn, New York, son of George W. and Christine Minton Pleissner. He began his education at the Brooklyn Friends School. One summer while a teenager, he was sent to Charlie Moore's ranch in Dubois, Wyoming, in order to improve his health. During

pack trips, camping, and trout fishing in Yellowstone Park and the Buffalo Forks country, Pleissner became devoted to the outdoor life, developing his skills as a hunter and fisherman. He began drawing images of horses, cowboys, Native Americans, and scenery and realized that his interest in art was strong enough to pursue it in school.

From 1924 to 1927 Pleissner attended the Art Students League in New York, studying under George Bridgman and Frank V. DuMond. Pleissner continued his studies with DuMond in Cape Breton, where he also met Mary Corbett whom he married in 1929. In the following year, Pleissner held his first solo exhibition at the Macbeth Gallery in New York. Although he maintained a studio in New York City, Pleissner and his wife spent many summers in Wyoming, later expanding their travel to Europe.

In 1940 Pleissner was elected a National Academician. Two years later, he was commissioned by the U.S. Office of Emergency Management on the advice of the Section of Fine Arts to visit various war industries to make a group of 10 paintings depicting the work in these plants.

In 1943, Pleissner was commissioned as Captain in the Army Air Forces to work as an artist with the Historical Division, painting a record of the Air Force activities. After training, he was deployed to Anchorage, Alaska, and from there he visited many of the Aleutian Islands. Due to lack of funding, his original mission was changed, and he was put on inactive duty in November 1943, in order to continue his work as a War Art Correspondent for *Life* magazine. This allowed him to complete his paintings of the Aleutian Islands. In the spring of 1944, he flew to headquarters in London, England, later following the Normandy invasion through northern France, he painted scenes from the critical battle at St. Lo. In the summer of 1945, *Life* magazine sent him on a tour of Europe to make a series of paintings of the most significant battle sites, including Omaha Beach, Remagen, and Anzio.

During his post-war career, Pleissner participated in many organizations, including his service as vice-president of the National Academy of Design, director of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, and trustee at the Shelburne Museum in Vermont. He was also a member of the Salmagundi Club, the National Arts Club, and the Brooklyn Society of Artists. His work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Philadelphia Museum.

In the 1970s Pleissner traveled extensively in Europe and spent summers at his studio in Pawlet, Vermont.

Ogden M. Pleissner died of a heart attack on October 24, 1983 in London, England.

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## Scope and Content Note

The papers of painter Ogden M. Pleissner measure 3.2 linear feet and date from 1928-1976. Found within the papers are biographical material, scattered letters, artwork, eight scrapbooks, printed material, and photographs.

Biographical material includes Pleissner's U. S. Army Certificate of Service, an autobiographical essay, and miscellaneous notes. Scattered letters dating from 1942-1976 primarily concern Pleissner's service in the U. S. Army. There are also letters from colleagues and friends including artists Harrison Cady and Stow Wengenroth.

Nine scrapbooks contain clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and scattered letters from art organizations and colleagues including Juliana Force, Charles Vezin, and Stow Wengenroth. An additional 1.2 linear feet of printed material consists primarily of clippings, and exhibition catalogs and announcements. Also found within the papers is one etching, and photographs of Pleissner, his colleagues, exhibitions and artwork.

## Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 6 series. All series are arranged chronologically.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1943-1971 (Box 1; 2 folders)
  - Series 2: Letters, 1942-1976 (Box 1; 13 folders)
  - Series 3: Art Work, undated (Box 1; 1 folder)
  - Series 4: Scrapbooks, 1930-1953 (Boxes 1-2; 29 folders)
  - Series 5: Printed Material, 1928-1975 (Box 2; 1.2 linear feet)
  - Series 6: Photographs, 1958-1974 (Boxes 3-4; 31 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:

Art and war  
Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

Types of Materials:

Photographs  
Scrapbooks

Names:

Cady, Harrison, 1877-1970  
Force, Juliana, 1876-1948  
Vezin, Charles, 1858-1942  
Wengenroth, Stow, 1906-

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, 1943-1971

*(Box 1; 2 folders)*

Biographical material consists of a U.S. Army Certificate of Service, an award certificate, and a curriculum vitae. Also included is an autobiographical typescript *About the Artist* and miscellaneous notes including hunting score cards decorated with reproductions of Pleissner's art work.

Box 1, Folder 1	Certificates and Curriculum Vitae, 1943-1971
Box 1, Folder 2	Typescript and Miscellaneous Notes, 1949-1950

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## Series 2: Letters, 1942-1976

*(Box 1; 13 folders)*

Letters primarily concern Pleissner's service in the U. S. Army. There are also scattered letters from colleagues and friends including artists Harrison Cady and Stow Wengenroth, and Texas Governor John Connally.

Box 1, Folder 3	Letters, undated
Box 1, Folder 4	Letters, 1942
Box 1, Folder 5	Letters, 1943
Box 1, Folder 6-7	Letters, 1944 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 1, Folder 8-10	Letters, 1945 <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 1, Folder 11	Letters, 1946
Box 1, Folder 12	Letters, 1947-1949
Box 1, Folder 13	Letters, 1950-1959
Box 1, Folder 14	Letters, 1965-1969
Box 1, Folder 15	Letters, 1970-1976

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## Series 3: Artwork, undated

*(Box 1; 1 folder)*

Artwork consists of an etching depicting an ancient European street with overhanging buildings.

Box 1, Folder 16

Etching, undated

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## Series 4: Scrapbooks, 1930-1953

*(Boxes 1-2; 29 folders)*

This series consists of unbound scrapbook pages containing clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, miscellaneous printed material, and three photographs of artwork. There are also scattered letters from art organizations and colleagues including Juliana Force, Charles Vezin, and Stow Wengenroth. Scrapbook 8 contains an exhibition catalog, *The Army at War*, illustrated with photographs of artists on the battlefield.

Box 1, Folder 17-19	Scrapbook 1, 1930-1932, undated <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 1, Folder 20-22	Scrapbook 2, 1932-1934 <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 1, Folder 23	Scrapbook 3, 1933-1935
Box 1, Folder 24-26	Scrapbook 4, 1935-1936 <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 1, Folder 27-30	Scrapbook 5, 1936-1940 <i>(4 folders)</i>
Box 1, Folder 31-33	Scrapbook 6, 1937-1939 <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 1, Folder 34-37	Scrapbook 7, 1939-1944 <i>(4 folders)</i>
Box 1, Folder 38	Scrapbook 8, 1941-1945
Box 2, Folder 1-4	Scrapbook 8, 1941-1945 <i>(4 folders)</i>
Box 2, Folder 5-7	Scrapbook 9, 1946-1953 <i>(3 folders)</i>

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## Series 5: Printed Material, 1928-1975

*(Box 2; 1.2 linear feet)*

Printed material includes clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and miscellaneous printed material including a book, *Air War Against Hitler's Germany*, that contains illustrations by Pleissner.

Box 2, Folder 8	Clippings, undated
Box 2, Folder 9	Clippings, 1940-1943
Box 2, Folder 10	Clippings, 1944-1945
Box 2, Folder 11-13	Clippings, 1946 <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 2, Folder 14	Clippings, 1947
Box 2, Folder 15-17	Clippings, 1948 <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 2, Folder 18-19	Clippings, 1949 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 2, Folder 20-21	Clippings, 1950 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 2, Folder 22-25	Clippings, 1951-1954 <i>(4 folders)</i>
Box 2, Folder 26-28	Clippings, 1956 <i>(3 folders)</i>
Box 2, Folder 29-30	Clippings, 1958 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 2, Folder 31-32	Clippings, 1959 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 2, Folder 33-34	Clippings, 1960 <i>(2 folders)</i>
Box 2, Folder 35	Clippings, 1961
Box 2, Folder 36-37	Clippings, 1962 <i>(2 folders)</i>

Box 2, Folder 38-42	Clippings, 1963-1968 (5 folders)
Box 2, Folder 43-44	Clippings, 1969 (2 folders)
Box 2, Folder 45	Clippings, 1972-1974
Box 2, Folder 46	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, undated
Box 2, Folder 47	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1928-1933
Box 2, Folder 48	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1944
Box 2, Folder 49	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1946
Box 2, Folder 50	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1947-1948
Box 2, Folder 51	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1949
Box 2, Folder 52-56	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1950 (5 folders)
Box 2, Folder 57-58	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1951 (2 folders)
Box 2, Folder 59	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1952
Box 2, Folder 60	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1953
Box 2, Folder 61	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1956
Box 2, Folder 62	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1957-1958
Box 2, Folder 63	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1959
Box 3, Folder 1-3	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1962-1963 (3 folders)
Box 3, Folder 4	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1964-1966
Box 3, Folder 5-8	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1967-1970 (4 folders)

Box 3, Folder 9-10	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1972-1973 (2 folders)
Box 3, Folder 11	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1975
Box 3, Folder 12	Programs, 1956-1967
Box 3, Folder 13	Brochure for the Art Students League, 1951
Box 3, Folder 14-15	Catalogs for Artwork, 1947-1963, undated (2 folders)
Box 3, Folder 16	Reproductions of Artwork, undated
Box 3, Folder 17	Booklet <i>Significant War Scenes</i> by Battlefield Artists, undated
Box 3, Folder 18	Booklet <i>Michigan on Canvas</i> , 1947
Box 3, Folder 19	Book <i>Air War Against Hitler's Germany</i> , 1964
Box 3, Folder 20	Book <i>Directory of Honorary Appointments</i> , Smithsonian Institution, 1967
Box 3, Folder 21	Miscellaneous Printed Material, undated

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## Series 6: Photographs, 1958-1974

*(Boxes 3-4; 31 folders)*

Photographs are of Pleissner, his colleagues, exhibition installations, and artwork. There are also two unbound albums containing photographs of artwork

Box 3, Folder 22	Photographs of Pleissner, 1974, undated
Box 3, Folder 23	Photographs of Pleissner with Colleagues, 1958-1964, undated
Box 3, Folder 24	Photographs of Exhibition Installations, undated
Box 3, Folder 25-29	Photograph Album 1 of artwork, undated <i>(5 folders)</i>
Box 3, Folder 30-35	Photograph Album 2 of artwork, undated <i>(6 folders)</i>
Box 3, Folder 36-42	Miscellaneous Photographs of Artwork, undated <i>(7 folders)</i>
Box 4, Folder 1-10	Miscellaneous Photographs of Artwork, undated <i>(10 folders)</i>

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