



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Edward Plunkett Papers, circa 1900-2006, in the Archives of American Art

Ryan Evans

2021 June 3

Archives of American Art  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Edward Plunkett papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1900-2006
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.plunedwar
<b>Creator:</b>	Plunkett, Edward M. (1922-2011)
<b>Extent:</b>	4.2 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>Edward Plunkett papers measure 4.2 linear feet and date from circa 1900-2006. Biographical material includes a hand-written biography, identification cards including a United States passport, and a series of autobiographical essays written by Plunkett in his later years at a retirement community in Madison, Wisconsin. The correspondence series is comprised heavily of mail art sent to Plunkett correspondents including Robert Delford Brown, Russell Butler (a.k.a. buZ blurr), Anna Banana, Buster Cleveland, Crackerjack Kid, Ken Friedman, John Held, Jr., E. F. Higgins III, Ray Johnson, Tim Mancusi, Carlo Pittore, May Wilson, William Wilson, and W. S. Stipe. The printed material series includes editioned mail art publications including <i>Collective Farm, No. 3</i>, <i>Post-Office Dinner, 1982 (number 15/100)</i>, and unused source material for his mail and collage art. The photographic material series consists of some images of Plunkett, his earlier, more traditional artworks, and snapshots from his travels. The artwork series consists of traditional drawings, paintings, and collages on paper, in addition to a number of altered published books, miniature booklets, and collaged notebooks in various states of being finished. Many of the interleaved notebooks have not been glued to the paper.</p>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 2019 and 2020 by Wendy Fern Hutton, niece of Edward M. Plunkett.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed by Ryan Evans in 2021.

### Preferred Citation

Edward Plunkett Papers, circa 1900-2006. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center.

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## Biographical / Historical

Edward M. Plunkett (1922-2011) was a mail artist, painter, and educator based in New York City. Plunkett was born in Highland Park, Michigan, attended the University of Chicago and the School of the Chicago Art Institute, and went on to teach at The Chicago Art Institute. Plunkett came to New York City in 1949 to pursue graduate studies at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University and then the Sorbonne in Paris before settling permanently in New York. Plunkett's mature style as an exhibiting painter and illustrator often included social scenes and city life in a caricature-like style heavily influenced by Surrealism. In a 1977 article in *Art Journal* Plunkett describes his engagement with the emerging genre of mail art and how he coined the name "New York Correspondence School" in the early 1960s to describe the work he was making with contemporaries such as Ray Johnson. His paintings have been exhibited at The Whitney Museum in New York, in museums in Holland, Switzerland and The Museum of Modern Art in Paris. His work is found in numerous collections including The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and his mail art is featured in many art and manuscript collections of mail artists.

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## Scope and Contents

Edward Plunkett papers measure 4.2 linear feet and date from circa 1900-2006. Biographical material includes a hand-written biography, identification cards including a United States passport, and a series of autobiographical essays written by Plunkett in his later years at a retirement community in Madison, Wisconsin. The correspondence series is comprised heavily of mail art sent to Plunkett correspondents including Robert Delford Brown, Russell Butler (a.k.a. buZ blurr), Anna Banana, Buster Cleveland, Crackerjack Kid, Ken Friedman, John Held, Jr., E. F. Higgins III, Ray Johnson, Tim Mancusi, Carlo Pittore, May Wilson, William Wilson, and W. S. Stipe. The printed material series includes editioned mail art publications including *Collective Farm, No. 3, Post-Office Dinner, 1982 (number 15/100)*, and unused source material for his mail and collage art. The photographic material series consists of some images of Plunkett, his earlier, more traditional artworks, and snapshots from his travels. The artwork series consists of traditional drawings, paintings, and collages on paper, in addition to a number of altered published books, miniature booklets, and collaged notebooks in various states of being finished. Many of the interleaved notebooks have not been glued to the paper.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged in five series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1952-2004 (0.1 linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1946-2002 (1 linear foot: Boxes 1-2)
- Series 3: Printed Material, circa 1900-2006 (0.8 linear feet: Box 2)
- Series 4: Photographic Material, circa 1950-1999 (0.2 linear feet: Boxes 2-3)
- Series 5: Artwork, circa 1935-1999 (2.1 linear feet: Boxes 3-5, OV 6-9)

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Mail art

Occupations:

Educators -- Illinois -- Chicago

Mail artists -- New York (State) -- New York

Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1952-2004

#### *0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)*

Scope and Contents: Biographical material includes a hand-written biography, identification cards including a United States passport, and a series of autobiographical essays written by Plunkett in his later years at a retirement community in Madison, Wisconsin.

Box 1, Folder 1	United States Passport, circa 1952-1956
Box 1, Folder 2	Library, Credit Cards, circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 3	Autobiographical Essays, circa 2001-2004

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## Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1946-2002

*1 Linear foot (Boxes 1-2)*

Scope and Contents: The correspondence series is comprised heavily of mail art sent to Plunkett correspondents including Robert Delford Brown, Russell Butler (a.k.a. buZ blurr), Anna Banana, Buster Cleveland, Crackerjack Kid, Ken Friedman, John Held, Jr., E. F. Higgins III, Ray Johnson, Tim Mancusi, Carlo Pittore, May Wilson, William Wilson, and W. S. Stipe.

Box 1, Folder 4	A - D, circa 1961-1999
Box 1, Folder 5	Mike Belt, circa 1973-1977
Box 1, Folder 6	Robert Delford Brown, circa 1992-1995
Box 1, Folder 7	Robert Buecker, Buecker and Harpsichords, 1962, 1981
Box 1, Folder 8	Russell Butler (buZ blurr), 1998, 1999
Box 1, Folder 9	Richard C., 1998, 2002
Box 1, Folder 10-13	Buster Cleveland, 1979, 1993-1998
Box 1, Folder 14	Bruce Conner, circa 1963-1974
Box 1, Folder 15	Fletcher Copp, 1975, 1979
Box 1, Folder 16	Jerry Dreva, 1977, 1978
Box 1, Folder 17	E - J, circa 1946-1997
Box 1, Folder 18	John Evans, 1986, 1999
Box 1, Folder 19	Albert M. Fine, 1966, 1981
Box 1, Folder 20	John Held, Jr., circa 1976-1999
Box 1, Folder 21	E. F. Higgins III, 1985-1999
Box 1, Folder 22	Stuart Horn , The Northwest Mounted Valise, circa 1969-1972
Box 1, Folder 23	Peter Hutton, 1966, 1967
Box 1, Folder 24	K - O, circa 1965-1985
Box 1, Folder 25	Karen Korell, circa 1976-1977
Box 1, Folder 26	Annie Lee Long (Anna Banana), circa 1972, 1994

Box 1, Folder 27	Tim Mancusi, circa 1997, 1999
Box 1, Folder 28	Richard Merkin, circa 1976-1958
Box 1, Folder 29	P - T, circa 1965-1999
Box 1, Folder 30	Ed Paschke, 1979, 1991
Box 1, Folder 31	Carlo Pittore, 1979, 1991
Box 1, Folder 32	Steve Random, 1987
Box 1, Folder 33	Sphinx, circa 1970s
Box 1, Folder 34	William "Picasso" Gaglione and Darlene Domel, Stampland/ Stamp Art Gallery, circa 1996-1999
Box 1, Folder 35	Marie Stilkind, circa 1969
Box 1, Folder 36	Bill Stipe, circa 1982-1999
Box 1, Folder 37	W - Z, circa 1978-1999
Box 1, Folder 38	Chuck Welch (Cracker Jack Kid), 1995
Box 1, Folder 39	Robert M. Watts, Yam Festival, circa 1962-1979
Box 1, Folder 40	H. C. Westermann, 1970
Box 2, Folder 1	May Wilson, circa 1968-1975
Box 2, Folder 2	William S. Wilson, circa 1996-1999
Box 2, Folder 3	Karl Wirsum, 1964, 1967
Box 2, Folder 4	Returned Mail, circa 1975-1988
Box 2, Folder 5	Unidentified Sender, circa 1960s-2000

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## Series 3: Printed Material, circa 1900-2006

## 0.8 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: The printed material series includes editioned mail art publications including *Collective Farm, No. 3, Post-Office Dinner, 1982 (number 15/100)*, and unused source material for his mail and collage art.

Box 2, Folder 6	Plunkett Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, circa 1959-1985
Box 2, Folder 7	Plunkett Press, circa 1950s-2006
Box 2, Folder 8	Collecting Farm No. 3: Post Office Dinner (1982, 15/100), 1982
Box 2, Folder 9	Fine Art by Albert M. Fine, Emily Harvey Gallery Edition (1991), 1991
Box 2, Folder 10	Lightworks No. 22: The Ray Johnson Issue, circa 1998
Box 2, Folder 11	Mail Art Is Not Fine Art: It is the Artist Who is Fine (Inscribed by H. R. Fricker) (1987, 72/150), circa 1987
Box 2, Folder 12	Ray Johnson, In-Between Books (1978) with stamps by the Sticker Dude, circa 1978, 2003
Box 2, Folder 13	Twelve Illustrations from Paintings, 1976-1979 by Brian Buczak, Money for Food Press (1980, A.P. 40/50), 1980
Box 2, Folder 14	Editioned Rubber Stamp for Ed Plunkett, "The New York Correspondence School" by "Picasso" Gaglione (6/20), 1999
Box 2, Folder 15	Mail Art, circa 1984-2006
Box 2, Folder 16	Post Cards (Blank), circa 1910-1970s
Box 2, Folder 17	Sheet Music, circa 1920s
Box 2, Folder 18	Source Material, Clippings, circa 1950s-1990s
Box 2, Folder 19	Source Material, Ephemera, circa 1920s-1960s
Box 2, Folder 20-22	Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1900-1994

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## Series 4: Photographic Material, circa 1950-1999

### *0.2 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3)*

Scope and Contents: The photographic material series consists of some images of Plunkett, his earlier, more traditional artworks, and snapshots from his travels.

Box 2, Folder 23	Edward Plunkett, circa 1950-1970s
Box 2, Folder 24	Travel Snapshots, circa 1960s-1990s
Box 3, Folder 1	Edward Plunkett Artwork, circa 1960s-1990s

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## Series 5: Artwork, circa 1935-1999

### 2.1 Linear feet (Boxes 3-5, OV 6-9)

Scope and Contents: The artwork series consists of traditional drawings, paintings, and collages on paper, in addition to a number of altered published books, miniature booklets, and collaged notebooks in various states of being finished. Many of the interleaved notebooks have not been glued to the paper.

Box 3, Folder 1	Drawings on Paper, circa 1940s-1970s
Oversize 6	Drawings on Paper, circa 1940s-1970s
Box 3, Folder 2	Prints on Paper, circa 1945
Oversize 7	Paintings on Paper, 1944
Oversize 8	Paintings on Paper, circa 1940s-1970s
Oversize 9	Collage and Stamps on Paper, circa 1960s-1990s
Box 3, Folder 3	Miniature Stamp Booklets, circa 1960s-1990s
Box 3, Folder 4	Altered Book Seurat and the Evolution of "La Grande Jatte", circa 1935, 1960s
Box 3, Folder 5	Altered Book The Fishes, circa 1957-1970s
Box 3, Folder 6	Altered Book Paul Klee Museum of Modern Art, circa 1940, 1970
Box 4, Folder 1	Altered Book Miro 1924-1940, circa 1960, 1970
Box 4, Folder 2	Altered Book Mondrian: Paintings, circa 1958, 1970
Box 4, Folder 3	Altered Book Mondrian: Paintings, circa 1958, 1970s
Box 3, Folder 7-19	Collaged Notebooks, Untitled, circa 1960s-1990s
Box 4, Folder 4-17	Collaged Notebooks, Untitled, circa 1960s-1990s
Box 5, Folder 1-23	Collaged Notebooks, Untitled, circa 1960s-1990s

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