



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to Tom Ray Letters from Henry Bridgewater, 1992-1999, in the Archives of American Art

Ryan Evans

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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

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Tom Ray letters from Henry Bridgewater
Date:	1992-1999
Identifier:	AAA.raytom
Creator:	Ray, Tom
Extent:	0.2 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	Tom Ray letters from Henry Bridgewater measures 0.2 linear feet and consists of forty-five letters to Tom Ray from Henry Bridgewater dating from 1992-1999, written during his incarceration at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Bridgewater writes about his works of art, in particular, lamps he created that he would send to Ray for him to trade and sell to other folk art collectors.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 2019 by Tom Ray.

Processing Information

The collection was processed in 2021 by Ryan Evans.

Preferred Citation

Tom Ray Letters from Henry Bridgewater, 1992-1999. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center.

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Biographical / Historical

Henry Bridgewater (1925-2001) was a sculptor and outsider artist in Angola, Louisiana known for his wood-carved lamps of iconic figures and celebrities including cowboys, Wyatt Earp, Dolly Parton, Madonna, and Tina Turner. Tom Ray was a patron and informal art dealer for Bridgewater after befriendng him in the early 1990s, while Bridgewater served two live sentences at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, Angola.

Scope and Contents

Tom Ray letters from Henry Bridgewater measures 0.2 linear feet and consists of forty-five letters to Tom Ray from Henry Bridgewater dating from 1992-1999, written during his incarceration at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Bridgewater writes about his works of art, in particular, lamps he created that he would send to Ray for him to trade and sell to other folk art collectors.

Arrangement

Due to its small size, this collection is arranged into one series.

- Series 1: Tom Ray Letters From Henry Bridgewater, 1992-1999 (0.2 Linear Feet: Box 1)
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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:

African American artists
African American sculptors
Arts in prisons
Outsider art

Names:

Bridgewater, Henry

Occupations:

Art dealers -- Louisiana -- New Orleans
Sculptors -- Louisiana
Self-taught artists -- Louisiana

Container Listing

Series 1: Tom Ray Letters from Henry Bridgewater, 1992-1999

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Found here are forty-five letters to Tom Ray from Henry Bridgewater dating from 1992-1999, written during his incarceration at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. Bridgewater writes about his works of art, in particular, lamps he created that he would send to Ray for him to trade and sell to other folk art collectors.

Box 1, Folder 1 Correspondence, 1992

Box 1, Folder 2 Correspondence, 1993

Box 1, Folder 3 Correspondence, 1994

Box 1, Folder 4 Correspondence, 1995

Box 1, Folder 5 Correspondence, 1996

Box 1, Folder 6 Correspondence, 1997

Box 1, Folder 7 Correspondence, 1998

Box 1, Folder 8 Correspondence, 1999

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