



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Edwin Ambrose Webster Papers, 1821-1968, in the Archives of American Art

Judy Ng

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection was provided by
The Walton Family Foundation and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

2016 November 2

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Edwin Ambrose Webster papers
Date:	1821-1968
Identifier:	AAA.webse
Creator:	Webster, E. Ambrose (Edwin Ambrose), 1869-1935
Extent:	2.2 Linear feet
Language:	The collection is in English.
Summary:	The papers of painter and educator Edwin Ambrose Webster measure 2.2 linear feet and date from 1821 to 1968. Found within the papers are biographical material; business and personal correspondence; writings; teaching and research files, including information on Webster's participation in the 1913 Armory show; printed material; artwork; and photographic materials of Webster, his family and friends, and his work.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The papers were donated in 1974 by the wife of Mrs. Webster's nephew, Mrs. Karl F. Rodgers. Additional materials were donated by Mrs. Rodgers in 1975.

Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2016 and is available on the Archives of American Art's website. Materials which have not been scanned include blank pages, blank versos of photographs, and duplicates. In some cases, exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages scanned.

Processing Information

Materials received a preliminary level of arrangement after receipt and portions of the collection were microfilmed onto reels D30 and 866. All accessions were merged and the collection was processed, described, and prepared for scanning by Judy Ng in 2016 with funding provided by The Walton Family Foundation and the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Edwin Ambrose Webster papers, 1821-1968. 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. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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Biographical / Historical

Painter and educator Edwin Ambrose Webster (1869-1935) lived and worked in Provincetown, Massachusetts and was known for his vibrant landscapes and for opening the first modernist art school in Provincetown.

Born in Chelsea, Massachusetts, Webster began his art studies at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts under Frank Benson and Edmund Tarbell, where he received a three year scholarship to study abroad at the Academie Julian. There, he studied under Jean Laurens and Jean-Joseph Constant and was awarded several additional student prizes for his work. Upon his return, Webster established himself as a founding member of the burgeoning art colony in Provincetown, opening his Summer School of Art in 1900, which he operated for the next thirty five years.

Alongside his teaching duties, Webster continued to develop a modernist style and was invited to exhibit in the 1913 Armory Show. In 1918, he traveled to France to study Cubism under Albert Gleizes and Jean Metzinger, and upon his return to Provincetown, began incorporating these techniques into his paintings as well as into his lectures and classes. As an active organizer within the art colony, Webster helped to found the Provincetown Art Association in 1914 and served as its director from 1917 to 1919. In 1916, he also hosted the first exhibition of the woodblock carving group, the Provincetown Printers, at his studio. Webster died at his Provincetown home in 1935.

Scope and Contents

The papers of painter and educator Edwin Ambrose Webster measure 2.2 linear feet and date from 1821 to 1968. Found within the papers are biographical material; business and personal correspondence; writings; teaching and research files, including information on Webster's participation in the 1913 Armory show; printed material; artwork; and photographic materials of Webster, his family and friends, and his work.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 8 series.

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1821-1930 (5 folders; Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1900-1940 (2 folders; Box 1)
- Series 3: Writings, 1910-1930 (3 folders; Box 1)
- Series 4: Teaching Files, 1930-1933 (5 folders; Box 1)
- Series 5: Printed Materials, 1911-1939 (0.4 linear feet; Box 1, OVs 5-6)
- Series 6: Artwork, 1890-1930 (1.1 linear feet; Boxes 1-3, Artifacts 4, 7)
- Series 7: Photographic Materials, 1875-1930 (8 folders; Box 1)
- Series 8: Karl Rodgers Research Files, 1940-1968 (6 folders; Box 1)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Study and teaching -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Names:

Armory Show (1913: New York, N.Y.)

Occupations:

Art teachers -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown

Painters -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1821-1930

5 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical materials include address books, certificates, military records, and geneological information for the Webster and Emerson families.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Available: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Box 1, Folder 1 [Address Book, circa 1850-1930](#)

Box 1, Folder 2 [Address Books, circa 1850-1930](#)

Box 1, Folder 3 [Certificates, 1911-1922](#)

Box 1, Folder 4 [Military Records, 1864-1866](#)

Box 1, Folder 5 Webster and Emerson Family, 1821-1930
[Image\(s\): Webster and Emerson Family: 1821-1867](#)
Notes: Oversized material housed in Box 2, Folder 1

Box 2, Folder 1 Oversized Webster Family material scanned with Box 1, Folder 5, 1821-1930

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1900-1940

2 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Personal correspondence is with family and friends. Professional correspondence includes letters from collecting institutions, galleries, and museums regarding the acquisition or exhibition of Webster's works.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 6	Personal, circa 1900-1936
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Box 1, Folder 7	Professional, circa 1920-1940
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Series 3: Writings, 1910-1930

3 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Writings consist of four notebooks and Webster's 1926 diary, which he kept during his travels abroad in La Guade, France.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 8 [Diary, 1926](#)

Box 1, Folder 9 [Notebook, circa 1910-1930](#)

Box 1, Folder 10 [Notebooks, circa 1928](#)

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Series 4: Teaching Files, 1930-1933

5 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Teaching files include Webster's informal student account records and notes, promotional material, professional printing blocks, and model cutouts used to teach the Golden Section/Golden Mean.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 11	Account Records, 1931-1933
Box 1, Folder 12	Golden Section Model, circa 1930
Box 1, Folder 13	Notes, circa 1931-1933
Box 1, Folder 14	Printing Blocks, circa 1930
Box 1, Folder 15	Promotional Material, circa 1930

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Series 5: Printed Materials, 1911-1939

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 5-6)

Scope and Contents: Printed material includes clippings, bulletins, exhibition announcements and catalogs, posters, reproductions of artwork, and several French language monographs and periodicals on art related topics.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Available Formats: The bulk of this series has been scanned. In some cases exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages scanned.

Box 1, Folder 16	Bulletins, 1925, 1936
Box 1, Folder 17	Clippings, circa 1914-1938 Notes: Oversized materials housed in OV 5
Box 1, Folder 18	Exhibition Announcement and Catalogs, circa 1915-1939
Box 1, Folder 19	Exhibition Catalogs, Other Artists, 1924-1938
Box 1, Folder 20	Monographs, Le Cento Città D'Italia Illustrate, circa 1924-1929
Box 1, Folder 21	Monographs, On Gauguin and Matisse, circa 1911-1925
Box 1, Folder 22	Periodicals, Cahiers D'Art, 1929
Box 1, Folder 23	Periodicals, L'Amour de L'Art, 1921
Box 1, Folder 24	Periodicals, L'Art Vivant, 1926-1927
Box 1, Folder 25	Periodicals, L'Illustration, 1929 Notes: Oversized materials housed in OV 5
Box 1, Folder 26	Posters, circa 1915-1930 Notes: Oversized material housed in OV 6
Box 1, Folder 27	Reproductions of Artwork, circa 1915-1930 Notes: Oversized materials housed in Box 2, Folder 1 and OV 5
Box OV 5	Oversized Clippings scanned with Box 1, Folder 17, circa 1914-1938
Box OV 5	Oversized Periodicals, L'Illustration scanned with Box 1, Folder 25, 1929
Box OV 6	Oversized Posters scanned with Box 1, Folder 26, circa 1915-1930
Box OV 5	Oversized Reproductions of Artwork scanned with Box 1, Folder 27, circa 1915-1930

Box 2, Folder 1

Oversized Reproductions of Artwork scanned with Box 1, Folder 27, circa
1915-1930

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Series 6: Artwork, 1890-1930

1.1 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3, Artifacts 4 and 7)

Scope and Contents: Artwork includes prints and sketches of Webster's work, including numerous figure studies of men, women, and children in graphite, charcoal, and pastels. Two of Webster's palettes and a paintbox, are also included in the series.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type and subject.

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 28	Palettes and Paintbox, circa 1890-1930 Image(s): Palette and Paintbox: circa 1890-1930 Notes: Oversized materials housed in Artifact Cabinet
Box 1, Folder 29	Prints, Graphs, and Paintings, circa 1890-1930 Notes: Oversized material housed in Box 2, Folder 2
Box 1, Folder 30	Sketchbooks, circa 1890-1930
Box 1, Folder 31	Sketches, Buildings, circa 1890-1930
Box 1, Folder 32	Sketches, Woodwork, circa 1890-1930
Box 1, Folder 33	Sketches, Miscellaneous, circa 1890-1930 Notes: Oversized materials housed in OV 6
Box 2, Folder 3	Sketches, Portraits, circa 1890-1930
Box 2, Folder 4	Sketches, Men, circa 1890-1930
Box 2, Folder 5	Sketches, Men and Women, circa 1890-1930
Box 3, Folder 1	Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930
Box 3, Folder 2	Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930
Box 3, Folder 3	Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930
Box 3, Folder 4	Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930
Box 4	Palette and Paintbox, circa 1890-1930 Notes: Digitized with Box 1, Folder 28
Box 7	Palette, circa 1890-1930 Notes: Digitized with Box 1, Folder 28
Box 2, Folder 2	Oversized Graphs and Paintings scanned with Box 1, Folder 29, circa 1890-1930

Box OV 6

Oversized Sketch, Miscellaneous scanned with Box 1, Folder 33, circa 1890-1930

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Series 7: Photographic Materials, 1875-1930

8 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Photographic materials are of Webster with friends, family, and students at his Summer Art School. There are also photographs of individual family members, unidentified individuals, and reproductions of artwork by Webster and other artists.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by subject.

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 34	Edwin Ambrose Webster, circa 1880-1930
Box 1, Folder 35	Edwin Ambrose Webster with Friends, circa 1900-1925
Box 1, Folder 36	Edwin Ambrose Webster with Students, circa 1920-1930
Box 1, Folder 37	Georgianna Rodgers Webster, circa 1905-1930
Box 1, Folder 38	Webster and Emerson Family, circa 1875-1910
Box 1, Folder 39	Unidentified Individuals and Groups, circa 1890-1920
Box 1, Folder 40	Reproductions of Artwork by Webster, circa 1920-1930
Box 1, Folder 41	Reproductions of Artwork by Others, circa 1920-1930

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Series 8: Karl Rodgers Research Files, 1940-1968

6 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Research files gathered by Webster's nephew, Karl Rodgers, consist of biographical notes and research on Webster's artwork, including materials related to his participation in the Armory Show; posthumous correspondence with collectors, galleries, and museums; and miscellaneous printed material.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Available Formats: This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 42	Biographical Notes, circa 1940-1941
Box 1, Folder 43	List of Artworks, circa 1960-1968
Box 1, Folder 44	Armory Show, 1962-1963
Box 1, Folder 45	Collectors, 1946-1968
Box 1, Folder 46	Galleries and Museums, 1963-1965
Box 1, Folder 47	Clippings, circa 1963-1965

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