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
Identifier: AAA.webse
Date: 1821-1968
Extent: 2.2 Linear feet
Creator: Webster, E. Ambrose (Edwin Ambrose), 1869-1935
Language: English

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
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.

Conditions Governing Use

The Edwin Ambrose Webster 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.

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.

- 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
  Painters -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown

Types of Materials:
  Photographs

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

Occupations:
  Art teachers -- Massachusetts -- Provincetown
Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1821-1930

5 Folders (Box 1)

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

Materials are arranged by document type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 1    Address Book, circa 1850-1930
                   Image(s): Address Book: circa 1850-1930

Box 1, Folder 2    Address Books, circa 1850-1930
                   Image(s): Address Books: circa 1850-1930

Box 1, Folder 3    Certificates, 1911-1922
                   Image(s): Certificates: 1911-1922

Box 1, Folder 4    Military Records, 1864-1866
                   Image(s): Military Records: 1864-1866

Box 1, Folder 5    Webster and Emerson Family, 1821-1930
                   Image(s): Webster and Emerson Family: 1821-1867
                   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)

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.

Materials are arranged by document type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 6  Personal, circa 1900-1936
Image(s): Personal: circa 1900-1936

Box 1, Folder 7  Professional, circa 1920-1940
Image(s): Professional: circa 1920-1940
Series 3: Writings, 1910-1930

3 Folders (Box 1)

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

Materials are arranged by document type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 8  Diary, 1926
Image(s): Diary: 1926

Box 1, Folder 9  Notebook, circa 1910-1930
Image(s): Notebook: circa 1910-1930

Box 1, Folder 10  Notebooks, circa 1928
Image(s): Notebooks: circa 1928

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Series 4: Teaching Files, 1930-1933

5 Folders (Box 1)

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.

Materials are arranged by document type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 11  Account Records, 1931-1933
Image(s): Account Records: 1931-1933

Box 1, Folder 12  Golden Section Model, circa 1930
Image(s): Golden Section Model: circa 1930

Box 1, Folder 13  Notes, circa 1931-1933
Image(s): Notes: circa 1931-1933

Box 1, Folder 14  Printing Blocks, circa 1930
Image(s): Printing Blocks: circa 1930

Box 1, Folder 15  Promotional Material, circa 1930
Image(s): Promotional Material: circa 1930

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Series 5: Printed Materials, 1911-1939

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

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

Materials are arranged by document type.

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
Image(s):  Bulletins: 1925, 1936

Box 1, Folder 17  Clippings, circa 1914-1938
Image(s):  Clippings: circa 1914-1938
Oversized materials housed in OV 5

Box 1, Folder 18  Exhibition Announcement and Catalogs, circa 1915-1939
Image(s):  Exhibition Announcement and Catalogs: circa 1915-1939

Box 1, Folder 19  Exhibition Catalogs, Other Artists, 1924-1938
Image(s):  Exhibition Catalogs, Other Artists: 1924-1938

Box 1, Folder 20  Monographs, Le Cento Città D'Italia Illustrate, circa 1924-1929
Image(s):  Monographs, Le Cento Città D'Italia Illustrate: circa 1924-1929

Box 1, Folder 21  Monographs, On Gauguin and Matisse, circa 1911-1925
Image(s):  Monographs, On Gauguin and Matisse: circa 1911-1925

Box 1, Folder 22  Periodicals, Cahiers D'Art, 1929
Image(s):  Periodicals, Cahiers D'Art: 1929

Box 1, Folder 23  Periodicals, L'Amour de L'Art, 1921
Image(s):  Periodicals, L'Amour de L'Art: 1921

Box 1, Folder 24  Periodicals, L'Art Vivant, 1926-1927
Image(s):  Periodicals, L'Art Vivant: 1926-1927

Box 1, Folder 25  Periodicals, L'Illustration, 1929
Image(s):  Periodicals, L'Illustration: 1929
Oversized materials housed in OV 5

Box 1, Folder 26  Posters, circa 1915-1930
Image(s):  Posters: circa 1915-1930
Oversized material housed in OV 6
Box 1, Folder 27  Reproductions of Artwork, circa 1915-1930
Image(s): Reproductions of Artwork: circa 1915-1930
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)

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.

Materials are arranged by document type and subject.

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  
Oversized materials housed in Artifact Cabinet

Box 1, Folder 29  
Prints, Graphs, and Paintings, circa 1890-1930  
Image(s): Prints, Graphs, and Paintings: circa 1890-1930  
Oversized material housed in Box 2, Folder 2

Box 1, Folder 30  
Sketchbooks, circa 1890-1930  
Image(s): Sketchbooks: circa 1890-1930

Box 1, Folder 31  
Sketches, Buildings, circa 1890-1930  
Image(s): Sketches, Buildings: circa 1890-1930

Box 1, Folder 32  
Sketches, Woodwork, circa 1890-1930  
Image(s): Sketches, Woodwork: circa 1890-1930

Box 1, Folder 33  
Sketches, Miscellaneous, circa 1890-1930  
Image(s): Sketches, Miscellaneous: circa 1890-1930  
Oversized materials housed in OV 6

Box 2, Folder 3  
Sketches, Portraits, circa 1890-1930  
Image(s): Sketches, Portraits: circa 1890-1930

Box 2, Folder 4  
Sketches, Men, circa 1890-1930  
Image(s): Sketches, Men: circa 1890-1930

Box 2, Folder 5  
Sketches, Men and Women, circa 1890-1930  
Image(s): Sketches, Men and Women: circa 1890-1930

Box 3, Folder 1  
Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930  
Image(s): Sketches, Women: circa 1890-1930

Box 3, Folder 2  
Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box, Folder</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Image(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3, Folder 3</td>
<td>Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930</td>
<td>Image(s): Sketches, Women: circa 1890-1930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3, Folder 4</td>
<td>Sketches, Women, circa 1890-1930</td>
<td>Image(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Palette and Paintbox, circa 1890-1930</td>
<td>Digitized with Box 1, Folder 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Palette, circa 1890-1930</td>
<td>Digitized with Box 1, Folder 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2, Folder 2</td>
<td>Oversized Graphs and Paintings scanned with Box 1, Folder 29, circa 1890-1930</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OV 6</td>
<td>Oversized Sketch, Miscellaneous scanned with Box 1, Folder 33, circa 1890-1930</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Series 7: Photographic Materials, 1875-1930

8 Folders (Box 1)

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.

Materials are arranged by subject.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 34</th>
<th>Edwin Ambrose Webster, circa 1880-1930</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image(s)</td>
<td>Edwin Ambrose Webster: circa 1880-1930</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 35</th>
<th>Edwin Ambrose Webster with Friends, circa 1900-1925</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image(s)</td>
<td>Edwin Ambrose Webster with Friends: circa 1900-1925</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 36</th>
<th>Edwin Ambrose Webster with Students, circa 1920-1930</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image(s)</td>
<td>Edwin Ambrose Webster with Students: circa 1920-1930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 37</th>
<th>Georgianna Rodgers Webster, circa 1905-1930</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image(s)</td>
<td>Georgianna Rodgers Webster: circa 1905-1930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 38</th>
<th>Webster and Emerson Family, circa 1875-1910</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image(s)</td>
<td>Webster and Emerson Family: circa 1875-1910</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 39</th>
<th>Unidentified Individuals and Groups, circa 1890-1920</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image(s)</td>
<td>Unidentified Individuals and Groups: circa 1890-1920</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 40</th>
<th>Reproductions of Artwork by Webster, circa 1920-1930</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image(s)</td>
<td>Reproductions of Artwork by Webster: circa 1920-1930</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 41</th>
<th>Reproductions of Artwork by Others, circa 1920-1930</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image(s)</td>
<td>Reproductions of Artwork by Others: circa 1920-1930</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Series 8: Karl Rodgers Research Files, 1940-1968

6 Folders (Box 1)

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.

Materials are arranged by document type.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box 1, Folder 42  Biographical Notes, circa 1940-1941
    Image(s): Biographical Notes: circa 1940-1941

Box 1, Folder 43  List of Artworks, circa 1960-1968
    Image(s): List of Artworks: circa 1960-1968

Box 1, Folder 44  Armory Show, 1962-1963
    Image(s): Armory Show: 1962-1963

Box 1, Folder 45  Collectors, 1946-1968
    Image(s): Collectors: 1946-1968

Box 1, Folder 46  Galleries and Museums, 1963-1965
    Image(s): Galleries and Museums: 1963-1965

Box 1, Folder 47  Clippings, circa 1963-1965
    Image(s): Clippings: circa 1963-1965

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