

A Finding Aid to the Esther Baldwin Williams and Esther Williams Papers, 1887-1984, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Hanson

Funding for the processing and digitization of this collection was provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art 2012 April 12

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: Esther Baldwin Williams and Esther Williams papers

Date: 1887-1984

Identifier: AAA.willesth

Creator: Williams, Esther Baldwin, 1867-1964

Extent: 2.1 Linear feet

Language: English .

Summary: The papers of Boston area painters Esther Baldwin Williams and

daughter Esther Williams measure 2.1 linear feet and date from 1887 to 1984. The scattered papers of both women include biographical information, personal business records, correspondence, writings and notes, two diaries, four sketchbooks, printed materials, photographs,

and one photograph album.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Esther Baldwin Williams and Esther Williams papers were donated in two installments by Peter McKinney, step-son of Esther Williams in 1974 and by Nadia Williams, Esther Baldwin William's daughter-in-law in 1985.

Related Material

Among the holdings of the Archives of American Art are the papers of Esther William's husband Roland Joseph McKinney.

Available Formats

The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2012 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, publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages scanned.

Processing Information

The Esther Baldwin Williams and Esther Williams papers were arranged and microfilmed upon receipt in 1974 and 1985 on reels 917-918, 921, and 3975; these reels are no longer in circulation. In 2012, all accessions were fully merged, processed, and described by Jayna Hanson and digitized with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Esther Baldwin Williams and Esther Williams papers, 1887-1984. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

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 Note

Esther Baldwin Williams (1867-1964) and her daughter Esther Williams (1907-1969) were painters active in Boston, Paris, and New York City.

Esther Baldwin Williams was born Esther Mabel Baldwin on December 11, 1867 to a prominent Boston family of artists. She began her art education under her uncle Joseph Foxcroft Cole and worked with her cousin Adelaide Chase Cole. Adelaide and Esther shared a studio in Greenwich Village in 1888. The two cousins also traveled to Paris in 1877 and 1891 to paint. Esther Baldwin concentrated on portraiture and often painted the women in her social circle.

Esther Baldwin became engaged to Oliver Williams in 1898. They married and moved to 96 Beacon Street in Boston where they raised their children, Oliver, Thomas, and Esther. Around 1900, the Williams met Maurice and Charles Prendergast. Esther became a friend and patron of Maurice and the two shared a studio for some time and exchanged letters. Esther Baldwin continued to work in portraiture, focusing her work on her children and relatives and did not pursue a professional career. In addition to painting, Esther Baldwin and Oliver Williams inspired a passion for music in their children.

Born in 1907, Esther Williams inherited her mother's interest in the arts. Unlike her mother, she desired a professional career as a painter. She first studied at the Museum of Fine Arts School, Boston in 1925 and later went to Paris to study under Andre Lhote. Upon returning to the United States, she moved to New York City and enrolled with the Art Students League. She married Roland Joseph McKinney, director of the Baltimore Museum of Art and the Los Angeles County Museum.

Esther Williams is known for her portraits, paintings of flowers, circus and orchestra scenes, and for her impressionistic style. She was represented by Grace Horne Gallery in the 1930s and switched to Kraushaar Galleries in 1940.

Esther Baldwin Williams died in 1964. Her daughter, Esther Williams died shortly thereafter in 1969.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Boston and New York area painters Esther Baldwin Williams and daughter Esther Williams measure 2.1 linear feet and date from 1887 to 1984. The scattered papers of both women include biographical information, personal business records, correspondence, writings and notes, two diaries, four sketchbooks, printed materials, photographs, and one photograph album.

For clarity, Esther Baldwin Williams and Esther Williams are referred to by their proper names throughout this finding aid.

Biographical information includes a membership card to the Rockport Art Association for Esther Williams and a biographical sketch of Esther Baldwin Williams

Personal business records include receipts for purchases of artwork by Esther Baldwin Williams, banking documents, exhibition entry forms and sales receipts for Esther William's works.

Correspondence includes incoming letters and drafts of outgoing letters. The majority of the correspondence is that of Esther Williams, including a considerable amount of letters to her parents. There are letters to Esther Williams from her friends Louis Eilshemius, Furman J. Finck, and Leon Kroll, and both Grace Horne Galleries and Kraushaar Galleries. Esther Baldwin Williams' correspondence includes personal letters from Maurice Prendergast.

Writings and notes include two diaries kept by Esther Baldwin Williams that date from 1892 until 1902 and cover her life in Paris and later in Boston. Some of the diary pages are illustrated with sketches. The series also includes scattered notes, including Charles Prendergast's Notes on Formula of Ebonizing Technique.

There are four sketchbooks, likely by Esther Baldwin Williams, of pencil and watercolor sketches of cats, babies and children, orchestral scenes, portraits, and architecture.

Scattered printed materials include a copy of *Cezanne's Studio* given to Esther Baldwin Williams by Maurice Prendergast, a copy of a family history by Nadia Williams, exhibition announcements and catalogs, clippings, and miscellany.

There is one photograph of an unidentified work of art and a circa 1900 family photo album with mostly unidentified photos of babies, children, and family members.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 7 series:

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1942-1979 (2 folders; Box 1)
- Series 2: Personal Business Records, 1893-1966 (9 folders; Box 1)
- Series 3: Correspondence, 1887-1961 (0.7 linear feet; Boxes 1-2)
- Series 4: Writings and Notes, 1892-1947 (0.2 linear feet; Box 2)
- Series 5: Sketchbooks and Sketches, circa 1900 (0.2 linear feet; Boxes 2-3)
- Series 6: Printed Material, 1883-1984 (0.2 linear feet; Box 3)
- Series 7: Photographs, circa 1900-circa 1920 (0.3 linear feet; Boxes 3-4)

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 -- France -- Paris Expatriate painters -- France -- Paris Painting -- Technique Women artists Women painters

Types of Materials:

Diaries Photographs Sketchbooks Sketches

Names:

Eilshemius, Louis M. (Louis Michel), 1864-1941 Finck, Furman J., 1900-Grace Horne Galleries Kraushaar Galleries Kroll, Leon, 1884-1974 Prendergast, Charles, 1863-1948 Prendergast, Maurice Brazil, 1858-1924 Williams, Esther, 1907-1969 Williams, Nadia, 1910-

Occupations:

Painters -- Massachusetts -- Boston Painters -- New York (State) -- New York

Places:

France -- Paris -- Description and Travel

Massachusetts -- Boston -- Description and Travel

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1942-1979

2 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and There is a membership card to the Rockport Art Association and a biographical sketch of

Contents: Esther Baldwin Williams.

Available This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Box 1, Folder 1 Biographical Sketch, 1979

Box 1, Folder 2 Membership Card, 1942

Series 2: Personal Business Records, 1893-1966

9 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents:

Business records are very scattered. They include receipts of purchases made at an auction and galleries by Esther Baldwin Williams. Esther Williams' records consist of banking records, exhibition entry forms, loan and sales receipts, and consignment receipts from

Kraushaar Galleries.

Available

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Box 1, Folder 3	Auction Receipts, 1893
Box 1, Folder 4	Art Purchase Receipts, 1899, 1905-1925
Box 1, Folder 5	Banking Materials, circa 1910
Box 1, Folder 6	Confirmations and Receipts, 1939-1945
Box 1, Folder 7	Consignment Receipts, Kraushaar Galleries, 1942-1948
Box 1, Folder 8	Dues, circa 1930
Box 1, Folder 9	Exhibition Entry Forms, 1937
Box 1, Folder 10	Loan Receipts, 1936-1941
Box 1, Folder 11	Sales Receipts, 1966

Series 3: Correspondence, 1887-1961

0.7 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents:

Incoming and outgoing correspondence is found for both women, however, the majority of correspondence is that of Ester Williams. Esther Williams wrote many letters to her parents while she was in Paris. She discusses her painting, her thoughts about life, impressions of current events, and her daily activities. There is also routine business correspondence with galleries, institutions, and associations, including the Rockport Art Association, concerning sales, loans, and commissions. Notable correspondents found among Esther Williams letters are Louis Eilshemius, Furman J. Finck, and Leon Kroll.

Esther Baldwin Williams was a friend and patron of Maurice Prendergast and her correspondence contains a significant number of letters written to her by Prendergast. He writes about his health, including his loss of hearing in 1905, the "eye strain" which forced him to give up painting that same year, and his illness in Venice in 1911. He also writes about sales of his paintings to Williams, exhibitions of his work, of mutual friends Charles Prendergast, Arthur B. Davies, and William Glackens, the influence of Cézanne on his work, of his reaction to French paintings in Paris in 1907, and of his reaction to a jury's rejection of a Luks painting in 1904 and of the superiority of the Luks painting over a Sargent painting that was accepted by the jury for exhibition. There are also letters to Esther Williams from other friends.

Available Formats:

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

The correspondence of Esther Baldwin Williams and Esther Williams is arranged together Arrangement:

by name of correspondent.

Box 1, Folder 12	Esther Williams to Her Parents, 1931-1932
Box 1, Folder 13	Esther Williams to Her Parents, 1933
Box 1, Folder 14	Esther Williams to Her Parents, 1938
Box 1, Folder 15	Esther Williams to Her Parents, 1947
Box 1, Folder 16	Esther Williams to Her Parents, 1948
Box 1, Folder 17	Esther Williams to Her Parents, 1949 January-April
Box 1, Folder 18	Esther Williams to Her Parents, 1949 May
Box 1, Folder 19	Esther Williams to Her Parents, 1955, 1961
Box 1, Folder 20	Esther Williams to Her Parents, circa 1930-1940s
Box 1, Folder 21	Esther Baldwin Williams to Esther Williams, 1947-1948
Box 1, Folder 22	Esther Baldwin Williams to Oliver Williams, 1942
Box 1, Folder 23	Esther Baldwin Williams Letters, circa 1900, 1887

Box 1, Folder 24	Unidentified Family Members, 1917
Box 1, Folder 25	Alan, Mrs. Joseph, 1941-1944
Box 1, Folder 26	Albany Institute of History and Art, 1941-1945
Box 1, Folder 27	American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1944
Box 1, Folder 28	American Library of Color Slides, 1941
Box 1, Folder 29	Art Institute of Chicago, 1935-1943
Box 1, Folder 30	Artist Dealer Committee, 1940
Box 1, Folder 31	Artists for Victory, 1944
Box 1, Folder 32	A, 1950 Notes: : • Acheson, George
Box 1, Folder 33	The Barnetts, 1944, 1947
Box 1, Folder 34	Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1937-1940
Box 1, Folder 35	Bradley, Mary, 1941
Box 1, Folder 36	Brooklyn Museum, 1939
Box 1, Folder 37	Budworth and Son, 1939
Box 1, Folder 38	Burroughs, John Rolfe, 1938-1946
Box 1, Folder 39	B, 1941-1950 Notes: Barron, Grace Bates, Nathan W. Beal, Mrs. Gifford Berrall, Lloyd Biddle, Will Bidder, Gina Borne, Mrs. Adolphe Brandeis, Irma Brooks, Reva Brown, Elizabeth Wentworth Winifred, H. B.
Box 1, Folder 40	California Thoroughbred Breeders Association, 1948
Box 1, Folder 41	Carnegie Institute, 1936-1949

Box 1, Folder 42	Carson, Margaret, 1944
Box 1, Folder 43	Chamberlain, Grace M., 1941-1947
Box 1, Folder 44	Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1937-1939
Box 1, Folder 45	Cram, Caroline, 1946-1951
Box 1, Folder 46	C, 1939-1945 Notes: • Creighton, Bessy
Box 1, Folder 47	Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, 1935
Box 1, Folder 48	De Young Memorial Museum, 1943
Box 1, Folder 49	Detroit Institute of Arts, 1943
Box 1, Folder 50	Doelper, Mrs. Margaret, 1945-1947
Box 1, Folder 51	Doll and Richards Inc., 1941
Box 1, Folder 52	D, 1941-1944 Notes: D'Antuire, Leanne Damrosch, Mr. Desfosses, Beatrice Dunn, Mrs. Henry W.
Box 1, Folder 53	Edwards, Lucretia, 1948-1950
Box 1, Folder 54	Edwards, W.D., 1937-1950
Box 1, Folder 55	Eilshemius, Louis M., 1930-1936
Box 1, Folder 56	Finck, J. Furman and Millie, 1943-1944
Box 1, Folder 57	Finck, J. Furman and Millie, 1945-1948
Box 1, Folder 58	Freuler, Helen M., 1947
Box 1, Folder 59	Golden Gate International Exposition, 1938-1940
Box 1, Folder 60	Grace Horne Galleries, 1935-1944
Box 1, Folder 61	G, 1941-1957 Notes: Galande, Jane Goldstone, Harmon Greene, N. Guglin, Marie G., Elliot

Box 1, Folder 62	Hibbard, A.T., 1943	3-1944
Box 1, Folder 63	H, 1941-1947 Notes: •	Haranki, N. Hartwell, Mrs. Hathaway, Calvin H., John
Box 1, Folder 64	Institute of Modern	Art, Boston, 1937-1939
Box 1, Folder 65	John Herron Art In	stitute, 1939-1940
Box 1, Folder 66	Jordan Marsh Con	npany, 1937-1940
Box 1, Folder 67	Kraushaar Art Gall	eries, 1940-1946
Box 1, Folder 68	Kraushaar Art Gall	eries, 1947-1952
Box 1, Folder 69	Kroll, Leon and Ge	enevieve, 1929-1942
Box 1, Folder 70	K, 1943-1947 Notes:	Katzenstein, Irving Killam, Louise Kleinschmidt, Eleanor Stevens
Box 1, Folder 71	Los Angeles Coun	ty Museum of History, Science, and Art, 1944
Box 1, Folder 72	L, 1941-1947 Notes:	Latimer, Glenna Laylin, John Lockwood, John Lundbergh, Holger
Box 1, Folder 73	Mayer, Mrs. Arthur	; 1950
Box 1, Folder 74	Montclair Art Muse	eum, 1942-1943
Box 1, Folder 75	M, 1941-1950 Notes: •	Mathews, Alison Money, T. Davis
Box 1, Folder 76	National Art Societ	ty, 1939
Box 1, Folder 77	New Britain Institut	te, 1950
Box 1, Folder 78	New York World's	Fair Exhibition, 1939
Box 1, Folder 79	N, 1941 Notes: •	Nellies, C.

Box 1, Folder 80	Prendergast, Eugenie and Charles, 1941-1948
Box 1, Folder 81	Prendergast, Maurice, 1904-1918
Box 1, Folder 82	Prendergast, Maurice, 1904-1918 Notes: (Duplicates, Xerox Copies)
Box 1, Folder 83	Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 1940
Box 1, Folder 84	Penny, Laura, 1939
Box 1, Folder 85	Pepper, Charles H., 1936-1947
Box 1, Folder 86	Pittsburgh Art Company, 1940
Box 1, Folder 87	P, 1941 Notes: Peterson, Eva Pikard, Aunt Paul P.
Box 1, Folder 88	Radcliffe College Alumnae Association, 1938
Box 1, Folder 89	Rhys, Hedley, 1950
Box 1, Folder 90	Rockport Art Association, 1937-1948
Box 1, Folder 91	Rosebault, C.J., 1944-1947
Box 1, Folder 92	Ruellan, Andree, 1941-1947
Box 1, Folder 93	R, 1950 Notes: Rich, Dan Rieffel, Mary Riezler, Katherine Rothenberg, Mrs. Harold Ruart, Cornet de Ways R., Charlotte
Box 1, Folder 94	Shaw, George R., 1940
Box 1, Folder 95	Smith College, 1945
Box 1, Folder 96	Society for the Presevation of New England Antiquities, Inc., 1938-1939
Box 1, Folder 97	Studio Guild Inc., 1938
Box 1, Folder 98	S, 1941-1944 Notes: Scott, Mrs. Palmer Studin, Charles

	Sugrand, Elsce
Box 2, Folder 1	Taylor, Molly, circa 1960
Box 2, Folder 2	Toledo Musuem of Art, 1935-1944
Box 2, Folder 3	Watson, Forbes, 1947
Box 2, Folder 4	Weyhe Gallery, 1940-1941
Box 2, Folder 5	White, Peregrine, 1941
Box 2, Folder 6	Whitney Museum of American Art, 1936-1940
Box 2, Folder 7	Windsor, Mary P., 1941
Box 2, Folder 8	Worchester Art Museum, 1937-1945
Box 2, Folder 9	United American Artists, 1939
Box 2, Folder 10	T, U, V, W, 1941-1946 Notes:
Box 2, Folder 11	First Names Only, 1941-1949 Notes:
Box 2, Folder 12	Drafts of Letters, 1943
Box 2, Folder 13	Fragments, circa 1930s

Series 4: Writings and Notes, 1892-1947

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents:

Writings include two diaries kept by Esther Baldwin Williams from 1892 until 1902, covering time spent in Paris, and later in Boston. The diaries discuss personal relationships with friends and family as well as art and music; some pages are illustrated with sketches. Also found in this series are scattered notes, including lists of works of art, family members, visitors to an exhibition, and Esther William's concerts. Notes include Charles Prendergast's

Notes on Formula of Ebonizing Technique.

Available

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Box 2, Folder 14	Esther Baldwin William's Diary, 1892-1896
Box 2, Folder 15	Esther Baldwin William's Diary, 1897-1902
Box 2, Folder 16	Lists of Works of Art, circa 1940s
Box 2, Folder 17	Lists of Family Members, circa 1940
Box 2, Folder 18	Lists of Esther's Concerts, circa 1930s
Box 2, Folder 19	Lists of Exhibition Visitors, 1947
Box 2, Folder 20	Notes, circa 1940-1947
Box 2, Folder 21	Charles Prendergast's Notes on Formula of Ebonizing Technique, 1902-1910

Series 5: Sketchbooks and Sketches, circa 1900

0.2 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3)

Scope and Four sketchbooks, and loose sketches tucked into sketchbooks, likely by Esther Baldwin Contents:

Williams, contain pencil and watercolor sketches of cats, babies and children, orchestral

scenes, portraits, and architecture.

Available This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by artist and document type.

Box 2, Folder 22	Esther Baldwin Williams Sketchbook, circa 1900 Notes: Architecture, portraits, babies
Box 2, Folder 23	Esther Baldwin Williams Sketchbook, circa 1900 Notes: Children, babies, cats
Box 3, Folder 1	Esther Baldwin Williams Sketchbook, circa 1900 Notes: Cats
Box 3, Folder 2	Esther Baldwin Williams Sketchbook, circa 1900 Notes: Orchestras
Box 3, Folder 3	Loose Sketches, circa 1900

Series 6: Printed Material, 1883-1984

0.2 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Scattered printed materials include a copy of *Cezanne's Studio* given to Esther Baldwin Contents: Williams by Maurice Prendergast, a copy of a family history by Nadia Williams, exhibition

announcements and catalogs for J Foxcroft Cole, Adelaide Cole Chase, and Maurice Prendergast, materials concerning Louis Eilshemuis, bulletins for museums and art

organizations, clippings, a playbill, and blank postcards.

Available This series has been partially scanned. Only the cover and title page of Charles Abbot

Formats: Baldwin and his Family, by Nadia Williams has been scanned.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged by document type.

Box 3, Folder 4	Cezanne's Studio, by Ambrose Vollard, 1915
Box 3, Folder 5	Charles Abbot Baldwin and his Family, by Nadia Williams, 1984
Box 3, Folder 6	Poem by L. Eilshemius, 1900
Box 3, Folder 7	Exhibition Catalog, J. Foxcroft Cole, 1883 Notes: Annotated with prices and purchases
Box 3, Folder 8	Exhibition Catalog, Adelaide Cole Chase, circa 1917-1920 Notes: Fragment
Box 3, Folder 9	Exhibition Catalogs and Announcement, Maurice Prendergast, 1925-1950
Box 3, Folder 10	Concerning Louis Eilshemuis, circa 1930
Box 3, Folder 11	Clippings, 1949-1969
Box 3, Folder 12	Museum and Art Organization Bulletins, circa 1937-1944
Box 3, Folder 13	Business Cards, circa 1950s
Box 3, Folder 14	Blank Exhibition Entry Forms, 1939-1942
Box 3, Folder 15	Playbill, circa 1920s
Box 3, Folder 16	Blank Postcards, circa 1950s, 1908
Box 3, Folder 17	Postcards of Maurice Prendergast's Works of Art, circa 1950s

Series 7: Photographs, circa 1900-circa 1920

0.3 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4)

Scope and There is one photograph of an unidentified work of art and a family photo album circa 1900 with photos of babies, children, and family members. The photo album is largely unlabeled. Contents: Available

This series has been partially scanned. Some of the photographs of children in the family

Formats: album have not been scanned.

Box 3, Folder 18 Photograph of Unidentified Work of Art, circa 1920

Box 3, Folder 19 Loose Photographs Tucked into Scrapbook, circa 1900

Box 4, Folder 1 Photo Album, circa 1900