



Smithsonian Institution

Jerry L. Thompson Collection

A Preliminary Finding Aid

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Smithsonian American Art Museum, Research and Scholars Center
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian American Art Museum, Research and Scholars Center
Title:	Jerry L. Thompson Collection
Identifier:	SAAM.Photo.THO
Date:	1983 - 1989
Creator:	Thompson, Jerry L., 1945 (Photographer)
Extent:	3 Linear feet
Language:	No linguistic content; Not applicable .
Summary:	This collection contains photographic material taken during Jerry L. Thompson's career at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY). The collection includes black-and-white photographic prints, negatives and color transparencies documenting the work of four prominent American sculptors: Erastus Dow Palmer, Frederic Remington, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and John Quincy Adams Ward.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Gift from Jerry L. Thompson, July 2014.

Processing Information

A collection level record has been created and minimal level processing is currently underway.

Preferred Citation

Jerry L. Thompson Collection, Smithsonian American Art Museum

Restrictions

The collection, which is undergoing processing and cataloging, is open for research use in the Photograph Archives, Smithsonian American Art Museum. Advance appointments are required.

Conditions Governing Use

Copyright to photographs from the Jerry L. Thompson Collection is held by the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Requests for permission to reproduce photographs from the collection must be submitted in writing to the Photograph Archives. Certain works of art, as well as photographs of those works of art, may be protected by copyright, trademark, privacy or publicity rights, or other interests not owned by the Smithsonian American Art Museum. It is the applicant's responsibility to ascertain whether any such rights exist, and to obtain any other permission necessary to reproduce and publish the image.

Biographical / Historical

Jerry L. Thompson has been a professional photographer since 1973. Born in Houston, Texas in 1945, he studied at the University of Texas and Yale University. From 1972 to 1975, he served as Walker Evans' principle assistant; and was a member of the faculty of Yale University from 1973 to 1980. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts (1977) and the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation (also in 1977). In addition to his portraits from the Coney Island amusement park of the early 1970s and his street work in New York City neighborhoods, he is best known as a photographer of sculpture.

Thompson began photographing sculpture in the mid-1970s. His first major project was to photograph the African works in the collection of the Museum of Primitive Art in New York City. In the early 1980s, Thompson began work for the Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC). Under the direction of Lewis I. Sharp, curator of American sculpture and administrator of the American Wing, Thompson served as photographer-in-residence, photographing all the American works of sculpture in the museum's collection. He has also done extensive photography documenting the sculpture of Erastus Dow Palmer, Frederic Remington, John Quincy Adams Ward, and Augustus Saint-Gaudens. His work on the two latter sculptors included their major outdoor public monuments.

Initially in his career, he used black-and-white 8x10 inch negatives, but eventually began to work with color transparency materials as well. In 2013, his book *Why Photography Matters* was published by MIT Press.

Scope and Contents

Comprised of 3 linear feet, this collection contains black-and-white photographic prints, negatives and color transparencies taken by Jerry L. Thompson documenting the work of four prominent American sculptors: Erastus Dow Palmer, Frederic Remington, Augustus Saint-Gaudens and John Quincy Adams Ward. Each artist is represented by approximately 100 photographs. The collection includes images of over twenty outdoor public monuments by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, including multiple views and details of the Adams Memorial (Rock Creek Park, Washington, DC), taken in 1985-1986. The collection includes detailed photographs of 16 major casts by Frederic Remington.

Arrangement

Photographic materials are arranged alphabetically by artist's name.

Bibliography

Selected photographs from the collection have been published in:

Greenthal, Kathryn. *Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Master Sculptor*. NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Boston: G.K. Hall, 2009.

Kirstein, Lincoln, Jerry L. Thompson and Marian Adams. *Memorial to a marriage: an album on the Saint-Gaudens Memorial in Rock Creek Cemetery commissioned by Henry Adams in honor of his wife, Marian Hooper Adams*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Abrams, 1989.

Shapiro, Michael Edward and Peter H. Hassrick. *Frederic Remington: The Masterworks*. NY: Harry N. Abrams, in association with The Saint Louis Art Museum, 1988.

Sharp, Lewis I. *John Quincy Adams Ward: Dean of American Sculpture*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press and Associated University Presses, 1985.

Webster, J. Carson. *Erastus D. Palmer: Sculpture-Ideas*. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press and Associated University Presses, 1983.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art, American -- Photographs
Sculpture, American

Names:

Palmer, Erastus Dow, 1817-1904
Remington, Frederic, 1861-1909
Saint-Gaudens, Augustus, 1848-1907
Ward, John Quincy Adams, 1830-1910