



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

**A Finding Aid to the Mary Cassatt letters,
1882-1926, in the Archives of American Art**

by Judy Ng

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

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Creator:	Cassatt, Mary, 1844-1926
Title:	Mary Cassatt letters
Dates:	1882-1926
Quantity:	0.2 linear feet
Abstract:	This small collection of sixty-three letters written by painter Mary Cassatt dates from 1882 to 1926. The bulk of these letters are to Cassatt's nephew, Robert Kelso Cassatt, and to his wife Minnie regarding family, mutual friends, and travel. The remaining letters are to friends regarding purchases of artwork, travel, and personal news. There is also one newsclipping of Cassatt's obituary.
Language:	The collection is in English.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Items in this collection are gifts of various donors. The letters to Peter and Vollard were donated by Charles Feinberg in 1955. The letters to William T. Evans, Miss Lamb, and Miss Stillman were transferred from the National Museum of Art, Smithsonian Institution in 1980. An obituary and the letters to Robert Kelso Cassatt and his wife Minnie were donated by Alexander J. Cassatt Jr., the great nephew of Mary Cassatt, in 1986.

Separated Materials

Letters written by Cassatt to Eugene Vail and Mabel and Mathilde Valet were loaned for microfilming by Ann Donohue of the National Arts Club. Loaned material is available on reel N70-77, but is not described in the container listing of this finding aid.

Related Material

The Archives of American Art also holds the Frederick A. Sweet research material on Mary Cassatt and James McNeill Whistler; Nancy Hale research material on Mary Cassatt; the Mary Cassatt collection (reel C1); and the Mary Cassatt correspondence with Emily Sartain (reel 3658).

Available Formats

This collection was digitized in its entirety in 2014 and is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

Processing Information

Each acquisition was preliminarily processed and microfilmed separately onto reels D8, 2787, and 3684. All materials were merged, processed, and described by Judy Ng in 2014 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Mary Cassatt letters, 1882-1926. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

Ownership & Literary Rights

The Mary Cassatt letters 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 Note

Painter Mary Cassatt (1844-1926) lived and worked in Paris, France. She is one of the preeminent Impressionists known for her depictions of both the social and domestic lives of women and their children.

Cassatt was born in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania and began her art studies at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts at the age of sixteen. In 1865, she traveled to Paris to further her art studies under the private tutelage of Jean-Léon Gérôme and Thomas Couture, and augmented these studies with daily copying at the Louve. From 1868 to 1877, she traveled to Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Holland to view and copy the old masters and produced works that were accepted into the Paris Salon. With the encouragement of Edgar Degas, Cassatt began painting in the avant-garde Impressionist style in 1877. For the next ten years, Cassatt exhibited Impressionist paintings to critical international acclaim. After 1887, she began to experiment with other mediums and techniques, though she continued to focus her subject matter on the lives of women and children. Through the 1890s, she became a mentor to young American artists, acted as an advisor to American art collectors, and served as an ambassador for various art institutions. In 1904, she received France's Légion d'Honneur and continued producing works through the 1900s. In 1915, Cassatt stopped painting due to her failing eyesight, and lived in Le Mesnil-Théribus, France until her death in 1926.

Scope and Content Note

This small collection of sixty-three letters written by painter Mary Cassatt dates from 1882 to 1926. The bulk of these letters are to Cassatt's nephew, Robert Kelso Cassatt, and to his wife Minnie regarding family, mutual friends, and travel. The remaining letters are to friends regarding purchases of artwork, travel, and personal news. There is also one newsclipping of Cassatt's obituary.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 1 series.

Series 1: Mary Cassatt letters, 1892-1926 (0.2 linear feet; Box 1)

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Archives of American Art under the following terms:

Subjects:

Painters--France--Paris
Women artists--France--Paris

Names:

Cassatt, Robert Kelso

Series Descriptions/Container Listing

Series 1: Mary Cassatt Letters, 1892-1926

15 folders; Box 1

The letters of painter Mary Cassatt contain 64 items and date from 1892 to 1926. The bulk of these letters are to Cassatt's nephew, Robert Kelso Cassatt, and to his wife Minnie regarding family, mutual friends, and travels in and around France. The remaining letters discuss updates and sales of artwork, the provenance behind specific works of art, and news of personal events and travels. The series also includes two letters to Robert Cassatt from his grandparents and one clipping of Cassatt's obituary from an unidentified French newspaper.

Materials are arranged by document type. Correspondence is arranged alphabetically by recipient.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Cassatt, Robert and Minnie, 1903
1	2	Cassatt, Robert and Minnie, 1904
1	3	Cassatt, Robert and Minnie, 1905
1	4	Cassatt, Robert and Minnie, 1906
1	5	Cassatt, Robert and Minnie, 1907-1908
1	6	Cassatt, Robert and Minnie, 1909-1914
1	7	Cassatt, Robert and Minnie, 1915-1920
1	8	Cassatt, Robert and Minnie, 1921-1925
1	9	Cassatt, Robert, 1882 Letters to Robert Cassatt from his grandparents.
1	10	Evans, William Thomas, 1911
1	11	Lamb, Miss, 1892-1898
1	12	Stillman, Miss, 1912-1918
1	13	Vollard, circa 1903
1	14	Peter (surname unknown), circa 1906-1914
1	15	Obituary, 1926