



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

**A Finding Aid to the Jean Crotti Papers, 1913-1973,
bulk 1913-1961, in the Archives of American Art**

by Jean Fitzgerald

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

April 21, 2009

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Creator:	Crotti, Jean, 1878-1958
Title:	Jean Crotti papers
Dates:	1913-1973, bulk 1913-1961
Quantity:	1.7 linear feet
Abstract:	The scattered papers of French Dada painter Jean Crotti measure 1.7 linear feet and date from 1913-1973, with the bulk of the material dated 1913-1961. Found within the papers are autobiographical notes and essays; correspondence with family and colleagues, among them Jean Cocteau, Andre Crotti, Suzanne Duchamp, Marcel Duchamp, Albert Gleizes, Christian a.k.a. Georges Herbiet, Henri Matisse, Francis Picabia, and Jacques Villon; notes and writings by Crotti and others; art work by Crotti and Paul Guillaume; a scrapbook; and additional printed material. Photographs are of Crotti, Suzanne Duchamp, Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso, and other family and friends; and of Crotti's art work. There are audio recordings on phonograph records of three interviews with Crotti and one with Mr. and Mrs. Paul Blancpain.
Language:	English and French

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Jean Crotti papers were donated in two installments in 1981 by Andr © Buckles and Alice Buckles Brown, Crotti's great-nephew and great-niece.

Separated Material

Two sketches and a print were also lent by Andr © Buckles in 1981 for microfilming on reels 2394-2395 and returned. This material is not described in the container listing of this finding aid.

Alternative Forms Available

This site provides access to the papers of **Jean Crotti** in the Archives of American Art that were digitized in 2010, and total 1,551 images. Sound recordings have been digitized and are available in the Archives of American Art offices.

Materials not digitized include an etching plate by Crotti and photographs of artwork. Only the covers and title pages of most published books and exhibition catalogs were scanned.

Processing Information

Portions of the collection were microfilmed on reels 2394-2395 shortly after donation. Previously microfilmed and unmicrofilmed portions were merged, arranged, and described by Jean Fitzgerald in April 2009, and the collection was digitized in 2010 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Jean Crotti papers, 1913-1973, bulk 1913-1961. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

Ownership and Literary Rights

The Jean Crotti 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 Note

Jean Crotti (1870-1958) was a Dadaist painter who worked primarily in Paris, France and New York. He was married to Suzanne Duchamp, Marcel Duchamp's sister, and friends with notable avant-garde and Dada European and American painters of the period. He is also known for creating the "Gemmail" technique of layering colored glass that produced unique color combinations when illuminated.

Jean Crotti was born April 24, 1878 in Bulle, near Fribourg, Switzerland, the son of a painting contractor. The family moved to Fribourg in 1887.

Beginning in 1898, Crotti struggled with questions of a religious and spiritual nature while at the School of Decorative Arts in Munich. Dissatisfied there, he moved to Paris in 1901, where he spent a year studying at the Académie Julian under Tony-Robert Fleury and Jules Lefebvre. Still dissatisfied in 1902, he established a small independent studio in the Rue Fontaine.

Crotti exhibited a canvas at the Salon des Indépendants in 1907, and was accepted as a member of the Salon d'Automne in 1909. From 1910 to 1912, he was influenced by Cubism and its offshoot, Orphism.

To escape from wartime Paris in 1914, Crotti and his first wife, Yvonne Chastel, moved to New York City where Crotti had his first solo exhibition at the Bourgeois Gallery. In 1915, Crotti met Francis Picabia and also shared a studio with Marcel Duchamp who was a major influence. Crotti began his Dada period and was included in an exhibition of French paintings at the Montross Gallery in New York, with Duchamp, Albert Gleizes, and Jean Metzinger.

Crotti separated from his first wife, Yvonne Chastel, in 1916 and returned to Paris alone. By 1917, Crotti's marriage had dissolved and he married Suzanne Duchamp in 1919. Crotti met Suzanne Duchamp, also a painter, through his friendship with her brother Marcel Duchamp. During this time, Crotti completed and exhibited paintings associated with the Dada movement. One of his more notable works was entitled *Explacatif*, bearing the word "Tabu" that expressed Crotti's concepts of mystery and infinity with spiritual overtones.

In 1935 Crotti began to research a new technique using layers of colored glass, referred to as "gemmail." The term is a contraction of "gem" referring to the colored glass and "enamel" referring to the method of affixing the pieces of glass to each other. After much experimentation, an "enamel" fixative was found that would permanently hold the glass pieces in place while still allowing light to shine through all the layers. Several prominent artists including Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso became interested in using this medium. Crotti had the process patented, but in 1955 ceded the rights to Roger Malherbe who adapted it to commercial uses.

Jean Crotti died on January 30, 1958 in Paris, France.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of French Dada painter Jean Crotti measure 1.7 linear feet and date from 1913 to 1973, with the bulk of the materials dating from 1913-1961. Among the papers are autobiographical essays, correspondence with friends and family, including many letters from Marcel Duchamp, notes and writings by and about Crotti,

printed materials, one scrapbook, drawings by Crotti and others, photographs of Crotti and his family and friends, photographs of artwork, and three audio recordings of interviews with Crotti.

Biographical material consists of autobiographical notes and an autobiographical manuscript *Ma Vie*.

Correspondence is with family members and colleagues. Correspondents include his brother André, wife Suzanne Duchamp, and other family members. There are eleven folders of correspondence between Suzanne's brother Marcel Duchamp and the Crotti family. A 1918 letter from Duchamp to Crotti is illustrated by Duchamp. Additional letters to Jean Crotti are from Jean Cocteau, Albert Gleizes, Georges Herbiet a.k.a. "Christian", Henri Matisse, Francis Picabia, and Jacques Villon. Three folders of letters from Georges Herbiet a.k.a. "Christian" include references to Francis Picabia and Germaine Everling and discussions of art criticism and Picabia's role in avant-garde art movements. Herbiet also describes a new painting procedure that he claims to have invented using a product that is impervious to acids, water, oil, or alcohol. There is a single letter from Jean Crotti to Pablo Picasso following their meeting in Cannes in which Crotti discusses a design with spheres and includes a sketch of his idea. There are also single letters to Crotti from Raoul Dufy, Walter Pach, and actor Pierre Renoir.

Notes and writings include poems, a script, and miscellaneous writings by Crotti concerning his art theories including "Tabu" and gemmail. Writings about Crotti are by miscellaneous authors including writers Waldemar George, André Salmon, and artists Armand Nakache, Amédée Ozenfant, and Michel Seuphor.

Art work includes seven folders of drawings and an etching plate by Crotti, 83 drawings by Paul Guillaume, and portrait drawings of Crotti by Henri Coudour and Francis Picabia.

A scrapbook contains clippings, a letter from Paul Guillaume and a letter to Elizabeth Crotti from a friend describing a 1932 Jean Crotti exhibition in the Balzac Galleries in New York City, and a typescript "Una Collezione a Parigi" by Gino Severini.

Additional printed material includes clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs for Crotti and others, reproductions of art work, and books *Jean Crotti* (1930) and *Jean Crotti et la Primitif du Spirituel* (1959) by Waldemar George.

Photographs are of Crotti, his family, friends, colleagues, and art work by Crotti and by Suzanne Duchamp. Of particular interest are photographs of composer Edgard Varèse and his wife Louise with Suzanne Duchamp, Jean Crotti, and art advocate Mary Reynolds in 1924, photographs of Crotti and Georges Braque examining a gemmail art work, and photographs of Crotti and Suzanne Duchamp talking with Pablo Picasso at Cannes and at the home of Bertrande Blancpain in 1957.

Sound recordings include two phonograph records of interviews with Jean Crotti, including topics "Assignment Switzerland" and "Assignment World." A third phonograph record contains an instantaneous disk recording of correspondence between Mr. and Mrs. Paul Blancpain as well as an additional interview with Crotti.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 8 series:

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1954-1955 (Box 1; 3 folders)

Series 2: Correspondence, 1916-1961 (Box 1; 43 folders)

Series 3: Notes and Writings, 1924-1958 (Box 1; 27 folders)

Series 4: Art Work, 1913-1925 (Box 1, 3; 12 folders)

Series 5: Scrapbook, 1931-1935 (Box 1; 1 folder)

Series 6: Printed Material, 1921-1973 (Box 1, 2, 3; 0.5 linear feet)

Series 7: Photographs, 1920-1957 (Box 2; 25 folders)

Series 8: Sound Recordings, 1955 (Box 3; 1 folder)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art criticism
Avant-garde (Aesthetics)
Dadaism
Painters--France--Paris
Painters--France--Paris--Interviews
Painting--Technique

Types of Materials:

Drawings
Essays
Interviews
Photographs
Poems
Scrapbooks
Sound recordings

Names:

Blancpain, Paul
Braque, Georges, 1882-1963
Christian, 1895-1969
Cocteau, Jean, 1889-1963
Coudour, Henri
Crotti, Andre
Duchamp, Marcel, 1887-1968
Duchamp, Suzanne, 1889-1963
Dufy, Raoul, 1877-1953
Everling, Germaine
Gleizes, Albert, 1881-1953
Guillaume, Paul, 1891-1934
Matisse, Henri, 1869-1954
Nokache, Armand
Ozenfant, Amédée, 1886-1966
Pach, Walter, 1883-1958
Picabia, Francis, 1879-1953
Picasso, Pablo, 1881-1973 -- Photographs
Renoir, Pierre, 1885-1952
Reynolds, Mary, 1891-1950
Salmon, André, 1881-1969
Seuphor, Michel, 1901-1999
Severini, Gino, 1883-1966
Varèse, Edgard, 1883-1965
Varese, Louise
Villon, Jacques, 1875-1963
Waldemar George, 1893-

Series Descriptions/Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1954-1955

(Box 1; 3 folders)

Biographical material consists of autobiographical notes and an autobiographical manuscript *Ma Vie*.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box	Folder	
1	1-2	Autobiographical Notes, 1954-1955 (2 folders)
1	3	Autobiographical Manuscript <i>Ma Vie</i> , undated

Series 2: Correspondence, 1916-1961

(Box 1; 43 folders)

Correspondence is with family members and colleagues, including his brother Andr ©, wife Suzanne Duchamp, brother-in-law Marcel Duchamp, Jean Cocteau, Albert Gleizes, Georges Herbiet a.k.a. "Christian", Henri Matisse, Francis Picabia (includes a photograph of Picabia), and Jacques Villon.

There are eleven folders of correspondence with Marcel Duchamp, mostly letters written by Duchamp to Jean Crotti, Suzanne Duchamp, and other family members. A 1918 letter from Duchamp to Crotti is illustrated by Duchamp. Three folders of letters from Georges Herbiet a.k.a. "Christian" include references to Francis Picabia and Germaine Everling and discussions of art criticism and Picabia's role in avant-garde art movements. Herbiet also describes a new painting procedure that he claims to have invented using a product that is impervious to acids, water, oil, or alcohol.

Also among the correspondence is one letter to Pablo Picasso discussing a design with spheres and a sketch, and single letters from Raoul Dufy, Walter Pach, actor Pierre Renoir, and Henri Matisse. The letter from Matisse discusses the design of a palette.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box	Folder	
1	4-6	Letters from Georges Herbiet a.k.a. "Christian" to Jean Crotti, 1922-1929 (3 folders)
1	7	Letters from Jean Cocteau to Jean Crotti, 1953-1959
1	8-11	Letters from Jean Crotti to Andr�©, Marie, and Lysbeth Crotti, undated, 1940-1957, (4 folders)
1	12	Letter from Jean Crotti to Marcel Duchamp, 1953
1	13	Letters from Jean Crotti to Suzanne Duchamp, 1943
1	14	Letter from Jean Crotti to Pablo Picasso, 1957
1	15	Letters from Jean Crotti to Miscellaneous Colleagues, 1936-1957, undated
1	16	Letters from Pierre De Massot to Jean Crotti, 1922
1	17	Letters from Roland Dorgeles to Jean Crotti, undated

1	18-27	Letters from Marcel Duchamp to Jean Crotti, Yvonne Crotti, and Suzanne Duchamp, 1916-1961, undated (folder 21 includes an illustrated letter from Duchamp.) (10 folders)
1	28	Letter from Raoul Dufy to Jean Crotti, 1938
1	29	Letters from Waldemar George to Jean Crotti, 1925-1958, undated
1	30	Letters from Albert Gleizes to Jean Crotti, 1938, undated
1	31	Letters from Henri Matisse to Jean Crotti, 1923-1936
1	32	Letter from Walter Pach to Jean Crotti, 1931
1	33	Letters from Clément Pansaers to Jean Crotti, 1921-1922
1	34-35	Letters from Francis Picabia to Jan Crotti (2 folders), 1922-1928, undated
1	36	Letter from Pierre Renoir to Jean Crotti, 1923
1	37	Letters from André Salmon to Jean Crotti, 1922-1925, undated
1	38	Letters from Paul Signac to Jean Crotti, 1923, undated
1	39	Letters from L. Stoppelaere to Jean Crotti, 1922, undated
1	40	Letters from Jean Villern (?) to Jean Crotti, 1929
1	41-42	Letters from Jacques Villon to Jean Crotti and Suzanne Duchamp, 1918-1961, undated (2 folders)
1	43-46	Letters from Miscellaneous Correspondents to Jean Crotti, 1917-1955, undated (4 folders)

Series 3: Notes and Writings, 1924-1958

(Box 1; 27 folders)

Notes and writings include poems, a script, and miscellaneous writings by Crotti concerning his art theories. Miscellaneous writings by others are primarily about Crotti.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box	Folder	
1	47	Lists of Art Work, 1950, undated
1	48	Miscellaneous Notes, 1937-1950, undated
1	49	Poems by Jean Crotti, 1936, undated
1	50	Script <i>Porte Sans Issue</i> , undated
1	51-52	Notebook and Writings Concerning <i>Tabu</i> , undated (2 folders)
1	53-60	Miscellaneous Writings by Jean Crotti, 1934-1957, undated (8 folders)
1	61	Manuscript about Jean Crotti by Jean Bouret; Typescript about Jean Crotti by Jean Cassou, undated
1	62	Typescript about Jean Crotti by Raymond Cogniat, 1936
1	63	Writings about Jean Crotti by Waldemar George, undated

1	64	Writings about Jean Crotti by Georges-Armand Masson; Typescripts about Jean Crotti by Jean-Daniel Maublanc, 1936-1943, undated
1	65	Typescript "Rapport de la Commission des F ^{tes} de la Soci ^t des Amateurs d'Art" by Ren ^o Idzkowski, 1937
1	66	Manuscripts about Jean Crotti by Claude M ^{oran} , 1924, undated
1	67	Typescript about Jean Crotti by Armand Nakache, undated
1	68	Typescript about Jean Crotti by Am ^d Ozenfant, 1947
1	69	Writings about Jean Crotti by Andr ^o Salmon, undated
1	70	Typescript about Jean Crotti by Michel Seuphor, undated
1	71-73	Writings about Jean Crotti by Miscellaneous Authors, 1928-1958, undated (3 folders)

Series 4: Art Work, 1913-1925

(Box 1, 3; 12 folders)

Art work consists of drawings by Crotti and others including a portrait of Crotti by Francis Picabia, and drawings by Paul Guillaume. Also included is an etching plate created by Crotti.

The bulk of this series has been scanned. Items not digitized include the etching plate and a folder of photographs of works of art loaned by Crotti to the Archives of American Art for microfilming.

Box	Folder	
1	74-80	Drawings by Jean Crotti, 1913, undated (7 folders; Oversized Material also housed in Box 3) partially scanned
1	81	Etching Plate by Jean Crotti, undated (not scanned)
1	82	Drawing of Jean Crotti by Henri Coudour, undated
1	83	Drawing by Paul Guillaume, 1923
1	84	Drawing of Jean Crotti by Francis Picabia, 1925

Box	Folder	
3	1	Three Oversized Drawings by Jean Crotti, undated, (scanned with Box 1, Folder 77)

Series 5: Scrapbook, 1931-1935

(Box 1; 1 folder)

The scrapbook contains clippings, a letter from Paul Guillaume and a letter to Elizabeth Crotti from a friend describing a 1932 Jean Crotti exhibition in the Balzac Galleries in New York City, and a typescript by Gino Severini.

This series has been scanned in its entirety.

Box	Folder	
1	85	Scrapbook, 1931-1935

Series 6: Printed Material, 1921-1973

(Box 1-3; 0.5 linear feet)

Printed material includes clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs for Crotti and others, reproductions of art work, and books about Crotti.

This series has been partially scanned. Items not scanned include a folder of reproductions of works of art by Crotti. Also, published books and catalogs of which only the covers and title pages are scanned.

Box	Folder	
1	86	Clippings, 1925
1	87-89	Clippings, 1928 (3 folders)
1	90	Clippings, 1929-1931
1	91	Clippings, 1936
1	92	Clippings, 1937
1	93	Clippings, 1938
1	94-95	Clippings, 1939 (2 folders)
1	96-98	Clippings, 1942 (3 folders)
1	99-100	Clippings, 1943 (2 folders)
1	101	Clippings, 1944
1	102-103	Clippings, 1945 (2 folders)
1	104-105	Clippings, 1946 (2 folders; Oversized Material also housed in Box 3)
1	106	Clippings, 1947
1	107	Clippings, 1948
1	108	Clippings, 1949
1	109-110	Clippings, 1950 (2 folders)
1	111	Clippings, 1954-1955
1	112	Clippings, 1956-1957
1	113	Clippings, 1958-1959
1	114	Clippings, 1961-1970
1	115-116	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, undated (2 folders) partially scanned
1	117	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1921 (partially scanned)
1	118	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1930

		(partially scanned)
1	119	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1936 (partially scanned)
1	120-121	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1937 (partially scanned; 2 folders)
1	122	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1938-1939 (partially scanned)
1	123	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1942-1943 (partially scanned)
1	124	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1945-1946 (partially scanned)
1	125	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1955 (partially scanned)
1	126	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1956 (partially scanned)
1	127	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1957-1959 (partially scanned)

Box	Folder	
2	1	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1965 (partially scanned)
2	2	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1970 (partially scanned)
2	3	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1973 (partially scanned; Oversized Material also housed in Box 3)
2	4	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs for Others, 1952-1962 (partially scanned)
2	5	Reproductions of Art Work, undated <i>(not scanned)</i>
2	6	Book <i>Jean Crotti</i> by Waldemar George, 1930 <i>(not scanned)</i>
2	7	Book <i>Jean Crotti et la Primaut?© du Spirituel</i> by Waldemar George, 1959 <i>(not scanned)</i>
2	8-9	Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1937-1956, undated <i>(2 folders; Oversized Material also housed in Box 3)</i>

Box	Folder	
3	2	An Oversized Clipping, 1946 (scanned with Box 1, Folder 104)
3	2	An Oversized Exhibition Announcement Poster, 1973 (scanned with Box 2, Folder 3)
3	2	An Oversized Galley Proof Sheet of Illustrations about French Aviation, undated (scanned with Box 2, Folder 8)

Series 7: Photographs, 1920-1957

(Box 2; 25 folders)

Photographs are of Crotti, his family, friends, and colleagues including Bertrande Blancpain, Georges Braque examining a gemmail art work, Suzanne Duchamp, Pablo Picasso, Mary Reynolds, composer Edgard Varèse, and Jacques Villon. There are also photographs of art work by Crotti and by Suzanne Duchamp.

This bulk of this series has been scanned. Photographs of works of art have not been scanned.

Box	Folder	
2	10-13	Photographs of Jean Crotti, 1922-1957, undated (4 folders)
2	14	Photographs of Suzanne Duchamp, 1933-1948, undated
2	15	Photographs of Jean Crotti with Friends and Colleagues, 1920-1955, undated
2	16	Photographs of Jean Crotti on <i>Bateau Moineau</i> , 1956
2	17	Photographs of Jean Crotti with Georges Braque, Examining a Gemmail Art Work, 1956
2	18	Photographs of Jean Crotti and Suzanne Duchamp with Pablo Picasso and Bertrande Blancpain, 1956
2	19	Photographs of Jean Crotti with Pablo Picasso at Palais du Festival in Cannes, 1957
2	20	Photographs of an Unidentified Exhibition Installation, undated
2	21	Photographs of Salon des Independants Exhibition Installation, 1953
2	22-30	Photographs of Art Work by Jean Crotti, undated (not scanned; 9 folders)
2	31-32	Photographs of Art Work by Suzanne Duchamp, undated (not scanned; 2 folders)
2	33	Photograph of Art Work by Camille Pissarro, undated (not scanned)
2	34	Photograph of Lake Michigan, undated

Series 8: Sound Recordings, 1955

(Box 3; 1 folder)

Sound recordings include two phonograph records of interviews with Jean Crotti, including topics "Assignment Switzerland" and "Assignment World." A third phonograph record is an instantaneous recording of correspondence between Mr. and Mrs. Paul Blancpain and Crotti.

Box	Folder	
3		Phonograph Recordings of Interviews with Jean Crotti and recorded correspondence with Mr. and Mrs. Paul Blancpain, 1955, undated 3 sound discs (lacquer) These recordings have been digitized for research access.