

MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM

# MORGAN RUSSELL ARCHIVES AND COLLECTION

*A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE*

by

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and

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*Foreword by Marilyn S. Kushner, Curator of Prints and Drawings, Brooklyn Museum*  
*History and Overview by Gail Stavitsky, Chief Curator, Montclair Art Museum*  
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## FOREWORD

Marilyn S. Kushner  
*Curator of Prints and Drawings*  
*Brooklyn Museum*

Morgan Russell holds a fascinating and significant place in the history of early twentieth-century American painting. After training in architecture, sculpture, and drawing in New York, Russell lived in Paris during an exciting era when, stirred on by recent Impressionist and Post-Impressionist methods of seeing the world, he and a number of American painters looked at their surroundings with new eyes. It was a time when Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Georges Braque were pushing the boundaries of accepted art making, and such rising luminaries, among many others, exchanged ideas at Leo and Gertrude Stein's popular weekly salon at 27, rue de Fleurus. Morgan Russell was there. He took classes with Matisse, he studied color theory with Ernest Percyval Tudor-Hart, he analyzed the old masters in Paris and Italy, and within only several years of his arrival, Russell collaborated with fellow American painter Stanton Macdonald-Wright to create the art movement Synchronism—up to that moment the most original and inspired American contribution to the advent of color-based abstraction on the European continent.

With the exception of two trips to the United States, Russell stayed in Europe, predominantly in France, for well over three decades (1909 to 1946). Throughout this time he extensively recorded his thoughts and observations in artists' sketchbooks, he worked through his color concepts in exquisite watercolors, he sketched tirelessly on recycled bits of paper, he painted scores of oils on canvas (in both abstract and representational modes), he corresponded with numerous friends and colleagues, he scoured magazines for relevant imagery, and he treasured exotic postcards. Much to the benefit of those interested in the artist and the period, Morgan Russell rarely threw anything away.

Such materials have since come to comprise the Morgan Russell Archives and Collection of the Montclair Art Museum, a precious source of information for anyone who wants to learn more about Russell the artist, the origins of American abstract painting, or the tenor of the European art world in the first half of the twentieth century. Over the years these documents and artworks have been sifted through by scholars and informally sorted by various owners. That sterling provenance stands as a testament to the foresight of those who recognized the historic significance of this body of material and strove, sometimes against all odds, to preserve it. The list includes Russell's friend and expert art printer Louis Sol; the pioneering scholar William Agee; the private collectors Benjamin Garber and Henry Reed; the distinguished curator Gail Levin; the Whitney Museum of American Art; and, ultimately, the Montclair Art Museum.

The Montclair Art Museum recently tackled the enormously complicated task of thoroughly organizing these invaluable archives. In the process, previously unidentified studies for completed paintings have been discovered. Russell's writings have been carefully cataloged. A comprehensive guide has been painstakingly compiled. Finally, scholars will be able to study the material with ease and with the assurance that all significant data is being accessed. A broader public will benefit from new research and exhibitions. New issues pertaining to Russell's work, his historical significance, and the extent of his artistic accomplishment may well be determined from newly uncovered or previously unstudied papers. In short, the *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection*

*Enhancement Project* has surely opened up countless new horizons to explore. Doubtless we will all benefit from this critically important contribution that the Montclair Art Museum has made to the fuller understanding and appreciation of American twentieth-century art.

## HISTORY AND OVERVIEW *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection*

Gail Stavitsky  
*Chief Curator, Montclair Art Museum*

The story of how the Montclair Art Museum became the premier repository of the art and papers of leading American modernist Morgan Russell is a fascinating tale. It encompasses the origins of abstract art, as well as the pioneering efforts of scholars and patrons to reconstruct the overlooked role of American modern artists in this major phenomenon of the early twentieth century.

The Morgan Russell Archives and Collection were donated in 1985 by Henry M. Reed, a resident of Caldwell, New Jersey, who served on the Museum's Board and Art Committee from 1985 to 1990. They consist of well over 3,000 drawings and sketches; 8 oil paintings; 11 watercolors; over 70 artist's notebooks; a voluminous collection of correspondence; close to 400 photographs of the artist, his work, friends, family, and other subjects; and many other documents. Until the recent completion of the *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection Enhancement Project, 2004–2006*, these treasures had never been fully inventoried. Yet it was known that they comprised a unique record of the complexities of Russell's aesthetic and intellectual adventures, especially his development of the first declared American modern art movement, Synchronism (meaning "with color"), from about 1912 to 1914.

For unknown reasons, Russell left these voluminous papers in his home in France when he returned to the United States in May 1946. Located in Aigremont, a remote town southeast of Paris in the province of Burgundy, Russell's home was acquired as a vacation retreat by Louis Sol, an important art publisher and family friend since the mid-1920s, who is in fact featured in a group-portrait painting by Russell, *The Sol Family*, ca. 1917–22, recently donated to the Museum by trustee Gregg Seibert (2003).

There in Aigremont the moldering, bug-infested papers lay, covered by vines, until 1964, when they were discovered by the pioneering scholar of American modernism, William C. Agee. While a young graduate student at Yale University, Agee served a summer internship in 1962 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, where he met librarian Bernard Karpel. The two men discussed various problems of American art history, and the following summer Karpel put Agee in touch with Benjamin Garber, a collector, interior decorator, and art consultant. A former dancer and student of Martha Graham who subsequently resuscitated her reputation, Garber had also studied painting with Amédée Ozenfant, in New York. In 1950 he saw the exhibition *Three American Pioneers of Abstract Art* at the Rose Fried Gallery, which featured the work of Russell, his colleague and cofounder of Synchronism Stanton Macdonald-Wright, and the Cubist painter Patrick Henry Bruce. Primarily intrigued with the work of Bruce, Garber met the artist's widow, Helen, many years later. Garber's subsequent research for a monograph on Bruce led him to an appreciation of Russell as well as the acquaintance of Karpel. Over the

years Garber assembled an important collection of the work of Bruce, Russell, Macdonald-Wright, and others.

Realizing that he had only scratched the surface of a much greater, historical chronicle, Garber sponsored Agee's trip to France in the winter of 1964. Following leads pointing to theretofore overlooked treasures, Agee was sent to Louis Sol, who readily placed the Russell papers at his disposal. At the instigation of Garber, Agee curated the groundbreaking exhibition *Synchromism and Color Principles in American Painting, 1910-1930*, at M. Knoedler & Co., New York, in October 1965. The exhibition catalog by Agee represented the first scholarly study of Russell. That fall Garber purchased the Morgan Russell papers and brought them to the United States. One of the visitors to the Knoedler show was Reed, who was dazzled by Morgan Russell's work, in which he appreciated "a raw kaleidoscope of color." At that time a partner of the Montclair firm of Askin, Weber & Reed, Inc., a professional insurance company, Reed was initially more interested in another artist in the show, Arthur Burdett Frost Jr., son of A. B. Frost, the renowned New Jersey illustrator of Joel Chandler Harris's classic *Uncle Remus and His Friends*. Reed had already begun writing an important text about the Frost family, *The A.B. Frost Book*, subsequently published in 1967 by Charles Tuttle & Co. Fascinated with the senior Frost's horror-stricken discovery of his son's modernist allegiance with Paul Cézanne, Henri Matisse, and Pablo Picasso, Reed had begun to study American artists in France before World War I.

Having met Agee at the Knoedler show and acquired his catalog, Reed promptly came to learn of Garber's holdings. In 1973 he bought the entire cache of Russell papers from Garber, as well as works by other artists associated with Synchromism, namely Frost Jr., Bruce, and Russell's friend, Andrew Dasburg. Reed studied the Russell papers in their large cartons for years; he eventually began the important task of translating the artist's notebooks—many scribbled coarsely from cover to cover in a random mixture of *Franglais*—and, in 1975, Reed wrote a manuscript titled "Synchromism and Related Tendencies in American Abstract Painting," which, although it went unpublished, was praised by former Whitney Museum of American Art Director John I. H. Baur as "a book which promises to be an important contribution to the history of American art." In any event, Reed felt that he possessed "something that was far too important for any one private individual to own." At length, he was contacted by Gail Levin, a Rutgers University graduate student, who immediately recognized the significance of the material in Reed's possession. Levin subsequently authored several articles on Russell and organized two important exhibitions: a small show of his Synchromist studies from 1910 to 1922 for the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1976, and the pioneering *Synchromism and American Color Abstraction: 1910-1925* for the Whitney Museum of American Art, in 1978.

Finally, in recognition of the enormous importance of the material and the need for its perpetual safekeeping, Reed donated the Russell papers and attendant artworks to the Whitney Museum of American Art, where Levin was a curator. Dissatisfied with the Whitney's archival and exhibition policies as they pertained to the Russell holdings, on Levin's departure from the Whitney in 1984, Reed secured the formal return of the collection. In 1985 Reed decided to donate the Morgan Russell Archives and Collection permanently to the Montclair Art Museum, where it would fruitfully augment the Museum's already distinguished collection of American art.

In 1990 Marilyn Kushner, in her capacity as Curator of Collections of the Montclair Art Museum, published the first scholarly book-length study of Russell to accompany the

artist's first full-scale, traveling retrospective, which she curated. In 1997, after assuming a post as Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Brooklyn Museum, Kushner revisited the Montclair Art Museum to guest-curate with Gail Stavitsky *Morgan Russell: The Origins of a Modern Masterpiece*, which featured many of the Archives' gems for the first time, thereby illuminating the evolution of Russell's first entirely abstract-Synchromist painting, *Synchromy in Blue Violet*, of 1913. Finally, in 2004 the Montclair Art Museum received a major grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, which made possible the goal, long deferred, of comprehensively updating, inventorying, reorganizing, preserving, and newly researching the Morgan Russell Archives and Collection. We are profoundly grateful for the Luce Foundation's support, without which this project could never have been realized.

## ARCHIVAL PERSPECTIVE *Connecting the Dots*

Nancy Johnson  
*Archivist*

I first saw the Morgan Russell Collection in late 1998 during a one-day consultation at the Montclair Art Museum. Even after the cursory look afforded that day, it was apparent that nothing about this collection was ordinary. Its very vastness—the fact that there were thousands of disparate scraps and shards, each one covered with writing and sketches, some annotated in French, others in English—was daunting, even a little forbidding, but also intriguing. Here was an artist who expressed himself relentlessly, both in words and in images, over many decades. There was no doubt that this was an important collection that needed a good deal of work to make it accessible to the public as well as a new generation of art historians. That day I had no idea I had already started on a long and fascinating journey into the life and mind of a brilliant and under-appreciated artist.

When I returned to MAM in the spring of 2004, it was to join a team that Gail Stavitsky had assembled to give the Russell collection the treatment it needed and so clearly deserved. A generous grant from the Luce Foundation would provide the critically important elements of time, expertise, and resources.

As the consulting archivist on the project, my role entailed regularly guiding and participating in the processing of this collection's extensive archives, as well as collaborating with Project Director Gregory Galligan to create a series-level finding guide, or comprehensive guide. We were fortunate in inheriting a general order at the outset: the material had been grouped into categories around format, such as correspondence, printed material, and so on. But within these groups, there was little means of navigating, making browsing or searching for something specific a cumbersome task. There were also idiosyncratic pockets of order provided by Russell himself: dates on notebooks; dated or otherwise labeled bundles of disparate notes; notes and dates inscribed on letters. The rest was up to us.

We began with the drawings. It was a good place to start. To give this large collection order and make it approachable, we decided to sort the drawings into thematic categories. In the process, Russell's interests and obsessions emerged readily: searching for the S curve in a spine, deconstructing a still life or a figure, confronting personal demons, studying anatomy and the old masters. Almost immediately we found a cache

of drawings relating to Russell's *Sol Family* portrait, a recent gift to the museum. Discoveries kept on coming and coming.

As I read through the correspondence, sorted loose notes into subject groups, and perused the clippings, catalogs, receipts, maps, and doodles that Russell had kept, what had at first appeared as an indiscriminate jumble gradually became a tightly interrelated web. Some of the exhibition catalogs and clippings concerned artists whose letters were in the archives, many of whom Russell mentioned in his writings; many of the correspondents knew each other; Russell's gender identity issues were hinted at in letters from friends, as well as in self-portraits in dresses, or in numerous clippings and advertisements that he had privately harbored.

The team assembled for this project could not have been better. We talked frequently and easily, continually comparing our notes and perspectives. As we connected these many dots and dashes, Russell's life and personality took shape. The straightforward finding aid that we had set out to construct became a repository for our new discoveries and observations. And we had only scratched the surface.

Russell himself proves to be a fascinating, obsessive, compelling artist. The Morgan Russell Archives and Collection provides a rare opportunity to trace his ever-changing viewpoint, not only over his own creative output but also over an exciting and turbulent era in the history of early modernist painting. I look forward to the new discoveries that are sure to come from those who delve into this archives and collection.

## CURATORIAL COMMENTARY

### Rediscovering Morgan Russell *Reflections on a Review of the Artist's Notebooks*

Gregory Galligan  
Director

Morgan Russell Archives and Collection Enhancement Project, 2004–2006

*This essay is dedicated to the artist's stepdaughter, Simone Joyce, for her generous contributions to the memory of Morgan Russell at the Montclair Art Museum, and to Henry M. Reed and Family, for tirelessly championing him.*

#### *A Meeting with Michelangelo*

Standing in the Musée du Louvre, in the shadow of an old statue, Morgan Russell experienced his first artistic epiphany. It was the spring of 1909, and more accomplished artists were making history: Henri Matisse forging a new decorative mode of painting, Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque “pioneering Cubism” in ways that would forever redefine what it meant to paint a picture. Fresh from New York, and having just completed rudimentary studies in sculpture, anatomy, and life drawing at the Art Students League—not to mention a quick tutoring in painting under Robert Henri—Russell now stood awestruck before Michelangelo’s *Dying Slave*, of 1513, which had thoroughly seduced him.<sup>1</sup> In this serpentine, muscular captive, soaring skyward like a proto-Brancusi, Russell had discovered a perfect metaphor for what was, to date, his entire creative philosophy.

Other painters have spoken eloquently of such an awakening. Matisse himself (with whom Russell was about to study) experienced his own version only a decade earlier, before a diminutive canvas of three women bathing in a verdant landscape. Matisse had spied this easel picture by Paul Cézanne, his already legendary contemporary, in 1899, in the shop of the avant-garde dealer Ambroise Vollard, just as he was quitting the place

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<sup>1</sup> Both this statue (measuring about 7½ feet in height) and its companion piece, the *Captive [or Rebel] Slave*, were originally conceived by Michelangelo along with others that were to occupy the lowest tier of a freestanding version of the tomb of Pope Julius II (1443–1513). After the original, colossal plan of 1513 was considerably scaled back in favor of a wall tomb, The *Dying Slave* passed from Michelangelo to his Florentine friend Roberto Strozzi. The subsequent provenance of this statue varies slightly according to one’s sources, but it is generally believed that the *Dying Slave* passed from Strozzi to either King Henry II or François I, then to the Constable Anne de Montmorency, and finally, by the early seventeenth century, to Cardinal Richelieu. Both the *Dying Slave* and the *Captive Slave* made their way into the collections of the Musée du Louvre in the wake of the French Revolution, by being acquired—either by purchase or forceful appropriation—about 1793–94 for the Muséum Central des Arts, where they were exhibited among a collection of otherwise exclusively antique sculpture; see Frederick Hartt, *Michelangelo: The Complete Sculpture*, rev. ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, n.d.), and Hugo Chapman, *Michelangelo Drawings: Closer to the Master* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005).

thinking that nothing had particularly struck him.<sup>2</sup> Mystical Buddhists refer to such enlightenment as an instance of *zazen*, a sudden penetration of all rational and discursive thinking by a clear and concise “take” on reality, which arrives seemingly out of nowhere but in truth issues from countless hours of untroubled attention. Something similar, if not quite as mystical, now took hold of Russell, even if the larger import of his conversion escaped, for the moment, his full comprehension.

In retrospect it is unthinkable that Russell had not already admired the *Dying Slave* long before this firsthand encounter, in all likelihood by way of a radically downsized reproduction. It is all but certain, for instance, that a miniature copy of Michelangelo’s Renaissance masterpiece occupied the drawing studio of George B. Bridgman, of the Art Students League, since a plaster replica of its companion, *Captive [or Rebel] Slave*, may be cited in a photograph of Bridgman correcting a student’s figure drawing in his popular method book *Constructive Anatomy*, of 1924.<sup>3</sup> Equally conceivable, such a simulacrum could have been at hand in the sculpture studio of James Earle Fraser, also of the Art Students League. There were also, of course, fine etchings and photographs of the *Dying Slave* circulating widely in America at the turn of the twentieth century, in standard art histories and scholarly monographs on Italian Renaissance masters, such as John Addington Symonds’s exhaustive *Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, of 1893.<sup>4</sup> Russell could hardly have failed to appreciate that in such magisterial studies the *Dying Slave* was almost invariably hailed as the only self-contained work of Michelangelo to qualify as

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<sup>2</sup> Ambroise Vollard (1867–1939) virtually made his name as a dealer in avant-garde pictures when he provided Cézanne with his first solo exhibition (of more than 150 paintings) in 1895. Matisse considered Cézanne’s *Trois baigneuses (Three Bathers)*, of 1879–82, so important to his development as a painter that he donated it to the Musée du Petit Palais de la Ville de Paris in 1936—yet only after communing with it continually in his studio for over three decades; for Matisse’s testament to the picture’s critical impact on his aesthetic sensibility, see Henri Matisse, *Matisse on Art*, ed. Jack D. Flam (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978), 75; see also *Cézanne*, exh. cat., Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1996, 198–99. In all likelihood Russell saw this painting as early as 1910, when Matisse lent it for exhibition in Paris. Matisse himself would have his first solo exhibition with Vollard in June 1904.

<sup>3</sup> George B. Bridgman, *Constructive Anatomy* (New York: Stirling, 1968), 61; Bridgman (1865–1943), a Canadian by birth, studied with the academic Orientalist Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824–1904), at the École des Beaux Arts, Paris. Bridgman thus provided a direct link to the French academic tradition for many American painters of the early modern era, indeed, throughout the early 1930s. This photograph dates from a considerably later era (probably the late 1930s) than Russell’s attendance at the Art Students League, but it remains instructive as to the kinds of plaster replicas that would have occupied Bridgman’s studio at virtually any date throughout his tenure at the League. The anatomical sketches by Russell in the Morgan Russell Archives of the Montclair Art Museum probably date from his study with Bridgman, given that they closely approximate those typically found in standard anatomical guides for artists at the turn of the twentieth century, such as Paul Richter’s classic *Artistic Anatomy*, trans. and ed. Robert Beverley Hale (1890; New York: Watson-Guption, 1986).

<sup>4</sup> John Addington Symonds, *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti: Based on Studies in the Archives of the Buonarroti Family at Florence*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1893); a full-page photograph of the *Dying Slave* (here referred to as the *Captive Slave*), as it was displayed before a blank wall in the Louvre’s Italian Renaissance sculpture galleries, is found between pages 86 and 87. Symonds’s comprehensive and elegiac study of Michelangelo would be reissued in no less than three editions between 1893 and 1911, thus virtually punctuating Russell’s early artistic development.

“the most fascinating creation of the master’s genius.”<sup>5</sup> A comparable bit of hyperbole may be found in John La Farge’s *Great Masters*, of a decade later, in which the author-artist gushes,

Rarely has the rhythm of the body been so wonderfully sung....The expression of thought in dream, that belongs to every part of the body, makes of the Sleeping [or Dying] Captive a special creation of sculpture; a perfect example of what separates its maker from all other artists, the using of the entire human form as expression of sentiment.”<sup>6</sup>

These lavish and lyrical tomes, among others, were indispensable vehicles of visual education for Russell and countless early modernist American painters and sculptors—among them the young “Mrs. John Payne Whitney” (Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney), Russell’s colleague and eventual patron—long before they could make the requisite transatlantic pilgrimage to Europe in order to peruse such nonpareils in person.

So why should an artistic “warhorse” like the *Dying Slave* constitute a momentous talisman for Russell at that particular juncture, just as he was finally able to survey its marble contours in the round and at his own leisure? Although it is hardly possible to answer that question conclusively, a composite set of circumstances in which Russell found himself in the spring of 1909 surely contributed to his breathless stance before this *beautiful* embodiment of human suffering.

A close reading of Russell’s notebooks of the period betray that it was neither the difficult subject of dying, nor the equally uncomfortable topic of slavery, that so impressed him. Russell seems also have been all but oblivious to the probability that Michelangelo had intended the *Dying Slave* to function partly as a reflexive personification of the liberal arts—if not painting itself—and their susceptibility to decline after the death of their illustrious patron, Pope Julius II.<sup>7</sup> The latter message is suggested by the sketchy, rough-hewn ape that emerges from behind the slave’s right calf, the ape being already by the

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>6</sup> John La Farge, *Great Masters* (New York: McClure, Phillips and Co., 1903), 58.

<sup>7</sup> An alternative reading suggests that Michelangelo planned for this and other *slaves* to function as individual personifications for the liberal arts, the *Dying Slave* for painting and the *Captive [or Rebel] Slave* for sculpture. It is also possible that these statues were intended to trigger a Neoplatonic interpretation; see Hartt, *Michelangelo*, as in note 1, 134–39. It is generally believed that Michelangelo intended to place the *Dying Slave* flush against a pilaster somewhere along the front of the freestanding tomb, so that it could be appreciated principally from a frontal perspective; the *Captive [Rebel] Slave*, by contrast, would have occupied an open corner along the side of the tomb. John Pope-Hennessy recounts that “The [*Dying Slave*] was intended to be seen only against the flat pilaster to the left of the center of the tomb [of Pope Julius II], and the system on which it is composed depends from the *David*, so that the figure is closed in on itself. On one side the curved line of the leg is balanced by the unbroken contour of the torso, and on the other the straight line of the leg is balanced by the curved line of the waist, while above the two forearms are posed on corresponding diagonals”; Pope-Hennessy, *Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture* (London and New York: Phaidon, 1970), 31.

sixteenth century a common symbol for the fine arts of “imitation” and here supplanting the more common, supportive tree stump.<sup>8</sup>

Rarely in his numerous extant notebooks (there number over seventy, dating from about 1908 to the late 1930s) does Russell bother to remark on *any* such representational subject in Michelangelo’s work. This is odd for one engaged in the appreciation of figurative art, which expressly mimics subjects drawn from nature, literature, or other realms of “everyday reality.” By 1909, however, Russell had already proved no common apprentice. It is worth recalling, for instance, that Russell’s earliest training had been in the relatively abstract discipline of architecture, after the example of his father, who had died in 1895, when Russell was only nine. Not until he had posed for sculpture classes by James Earle Fraser, of the Art Students League and briefly roomed with a young sculptor in New York did Russell begin to consider the career of an artist over that of a designer and builder. And it was ultimately Gertrude Whitney, deep into her own study of sculpture at that moment, who seems to have detected something of a fledgling *painter* in Russell. It was Whitney who, presumably on gut instinct, sent Russell in the spring of 1906 on his first trip to Europe. After touring France and Italy, Russell dallied in Paris as late as October, taking in the famous Salon d’Automne and copying in its halls the color scheme of a painting by Paul Gauguin—probably as a gesture of self-initiation into the profession.<sup>9</sup> Thus convinced of his new calling, Russell finally returned to New York that fall and promptly submitted himself to a rigorous program in anatomy, drawing, and sculpture at the Art Students League, as though to swiftly garner a host of requisite skills for a resettling in France less than two years later, at which time he is on record as first encountering Michelangelo’s statue in person.<sup>10</sup>

Looking back, it is clear that Russell’s private and professional makeup at that moment comprised a powerful mix of thoroughly Victorian and modernist factors, some a long time bearing on him, others growing out of more recent, and fortuitous, circumstances. As for his professional development, already by 1907 Russell had tried his hand at

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<sup>8</sup> There are presently a number of competing and conflicting interpretations of Michelangelo’s rendering of this ape, some arguing that he intended it as a sign of the liberal arts, others that he meant to trigger a Neoplatonic reading of the statue, and at least one other scholar proposing that it was included only *after* this sculpture was rejected for the tomb plan, given that its presence causes the base of the sculpture to expand beyond the space that was originally allotted to it; see the sources cited in note 1 for a representative example of the divergence in interpretation of the ape that prevails among Michelangelo scholars; a representative example of the use of the tree stump motif as a sculptural support in the sculpture of Greco-Roman antiquity is Polykleitos’s *Doryphorous* (*Spear Bearer*), of about 440 BC, a statue that Russell would eventually sketch from the eponymous marble Roman copy at the Museo Nazionale in Naples (Russell was in Naples in the winters of 1933 and 1934). This rendition in ink, drawn in loose, broad strokes as though done from short-term memory, now resides in the Morgan Russell Collection, Montclair Art Museum.

<sup>9</sup> Russell copied Gauguin’s *Nave Nave Mahana* (*Delightful Days*), of 1896; see Marilyn Kushner, *Morgan Russell*, exh. cat., Montclair Art Museum, 1990, 28–29. It is notable that the format of a much later color scheme that Russell would devise for a colored light projection would recall the laterally repetitive, relieflike composition of this painting; see Russell’s *Study in Transparency*, ca. 1913–25 (oil on tissue paper mounted on wood) in Kushner, 108–9.

<sup>10</sup> It is entirely possible that Russell actually first saw the *Dying Slave* in person during his first trip to Paris in 1906 or a subsequent visit of 1908; what is ultimately unique about the encounter of 1909 was that it finally *satisfied* Russell in such a way that the encounter itself achieved historical significance.

everything from Impressionism to Symbolism, with Claude Monet and Gauguin as his primary examples. It was Matisse and Auguste Rodin, however, who would serve for Russell (as for so many artists on both sides of the Atlantic) as true liberators from his academic study of the old masters and their equally old methods.<sup>11</sup> And by the time he purposely sought out Michelangelo's widely celebrated *Dying Slave* at the Louvre, Russell had already become familiar, at first hand, with some of the most advanced currents in contemporary painting, principally via the work of Picasso, Braque, André Derain, and Cézanne, among many others. Russell accomplished this expeditiously, not only by regularly making the usual circuit of Paris galleries and annual salons but also by taking advantage of the rough guide to current painting that was the weekly salon of Gertrude and Leo Stein, at 27, rue de Fleurus, which he regularly frequented (as did his fellow American expatriates Max Weber and Patrick Henry Bruce at that juncture). Granted, in early 1909 there was, as yet, no such thing as Cubism proper, although in hindsight it is possible to see signs of its genesis.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Russell was certainly as forward thinking as any other American painter by that date, and there is nothing else at the time to suggest that he would become virtually *possessed* by a statue of a tragic subject dating from the High Italian Renaissance.

Yet it is all there, true to form itself, so to speak, in the statue's curvature. Russell knew next to nothing of this at that moment, but the resplendent S curve generated by the counterweighted stance, or *contrapposto*, of this sculpture would inform Russell's creative psyche from that day forward, like some fundamental genetic schema, or DNA string, inherent in his every creative endeavor. There was nothing exceptionally original about this scenario. Numerous artists, the famous and the obscure, had arrived at a profound appreciation for Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* long before Russell frequented the Louvre. Cézanne himself—by Russell's day already widely presumed the "father" of modern painting—had copied the *Dying Slave* at the Louvre in the mid-1880s, and from the exact same angle as would Russell some two decades later.<sup>13</sup> Even earlier, Rodin had loosely

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<sup>11</sup> Russell met Rodin at the salon of Gertrude and Leo Stein during his second visit to Paris in mid-1908. As a sculpture student at the Art Students League since early 1908, Russell probably visited the exhibition of Rodin's drawings at Alfred Stieglitz's Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession, 291, which was on view virtually the entire month of January; Russell would have had further opportunity to view such drawings in Rodin's follow-up exhibition with Stieglitz a little over a year later, in March 1909, while he was studying in New York with Robert Henri, and just before he would permanently quit New York for Paris; see *Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and His New York Galleries*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 2001, 543–44. Russell's studio would be crammed with his own heroic, Rodin-like plaster maquettes of seated and standing male nudes within months of his 1909 move to Paris; see the photography collection in the Morgan Russell Archives, Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey. A number of highly cursive figurative drawings by Russell further suggest his close study of Rodin; see series 9, Archival Drawings, *Female Figures*.

<sup>12</sup> To fully appreciate how something as radical as Cubism proper was at that moment so perfectly possible and yet completely unforeseeable, see the notably traditional proportion study that Picasso executed in the spring of 1907 for *Les Femmes d'Alger*, in *Pablo Picasso: The Early Years*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, 1997, fig. 14, p. 79.

<sup>13</sup> See *Paul Cézanne: The Basel Sketchbooks*, exh. cat., the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1988, 84. Cézanne copied the *Dying Slave* at the Louvre at least three times from the early 1880s to about 1900; see *Cézanne*, as in note 2, 438–39. It is difficult to ascertain whether Russell ever saw these particular drawings, whose exhibition history is obscure owing to their placement in a sketchbook that was in the possession of Paul Cézanne's *filis* since his father's death in October

reinterpreted Michelangelo's format in his seminal sculpture *Age of Bronze*, of 1876, a work with which Russell was surely familiar, given his profound admiration for Rodin since their meeting in 1906. In fact a close review of extant figure drawings in the Morgan Russell Archives during the course of the *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection Enhancement Project, 2004–2006*, indicates that Russell studied Rodin's drawing and sculpture closely, finally adopting the signature format of *Adam* (which Rodin had derived from his "Three Shades" over the lintel of the *Gates of Hell*) for many of his own depictions of the male body: head bent radically forward and finally abstracted into a geometric mass reminiscent of the blunt nose of a hammer. Other figure drawings by Russell point to his admiration for Rodin's *Thinker*, of 1880, as well as the *Burghers of Calais*, of 1886–87, although Russell's versions rarely reflect Rodin's emotional depth of content.<sup>14</sup> It may well have been Rodin himself who steered Russell in the direction of Michelangelo during a chance meeting at the Stein salon one fateful Saturday.<sup>15</sup>

It would take Russell years to fully explore the *Dying Slave's* full ramifications for his own artistic development. From about 1909 to the end of 1915—a period that virtually encompasses the "heroic" years when, in collaboration with Stanton Macdonald-Wright, he created Synchronism (meaning "with color"), a mode of total color abstraction—Russell repeatedly sketched the contours of the *Dying Slave* in numerous formats. In these multiple versions (all extensively documented in the Morgan Russell Archives and Collection at Montclair), he ultimately recast its implied energies into grand compositions of undulating light and color in oils on canvas—as if this single theme of the Florentine High Renaissance might eventually generate a *summa theologia* of emotional expression. To cite only one example, in a notebook dating (in the artist's own hand) from 1910–11, Russell grapples with how to move beyond painting mere flat patterns of pigment, noting to himself the importance of "modulating" color, in distinct contrast to the Symbolist technique and aesthetic of Maurice Denis—all of which takes place along with copious sketches of the human body, Michelangelo's sculpture, and various studies of architecture and still life.<sup>16</sup>

In this repeated aping, recasting, recycling, and transcribing of Michelangelo's sensuous motif, Russell gradually succeeded in synthesizing many of the key artistic developments of the immediate prewar period into a compelling stylistic and conceptual system.

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1906 (Paul Cézanne *filis* was his father's sole heir); *ibid.*, 568–69. So profound was the impact of the *Dying Slave* on Cézanne that he adopted the arrangement of its upper body for many of his female bathers (such as in *Five Bathers*, of 1885–87)—a tactic that Russell would, in turn, closely mimic; see *ibid.*, 202–3.

<sup>14</sup> It is all but certain that Russell visited Rodin's studio, which was adjacent to Matisse's *académie*, in which Russell studied from about 1909 to 1910; there he would have been able to study Rodin's *Gates of Hell* in its plaster mock-up before it was cast in bronze in 1917. On the subject of Russell's admiration for Rodin, see Kushner, as in note 9, 46–48. Russell could have studied the *Thinker* from its place in front of the Pantheon, where it was installed in 1905 after being enlarged and cast in bronze (it remained in front of the Pantheon until it was removed to the Court of Honor of the Musée Rodin, formerly the Hôtel Biron, in 1922).

<sup>15</sup> Rodin had viewed the *Dying Slave* at the Louvre about six months before executing his *Age of Bronze*, and he expressly wished to improve on Michelangelo's example by lending his form a much greater degree of naturalism; see Albert E. Elsen, *Rodin*, exh. cat., Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1963; 20–26.

<sup>16</sup> See series 4, *Writings, Private*, Notebook no. 4.2.9, 1910–11, Morgan Russell Archives.

Somehow managing to maintain—often against the odds—a remarkable degree of consistency in his ambitions, while skillfully skirting pointless repetition, Russell made it a practice to explore a wide range of visual stimuli and intellectual sources, often driving himself to the brink of a grand *Futurist* obsession, then deftly pulling back in order to maintain a broader organizational perspective on his passions. For example, the notebooks dating from this period reveal an artist deeply interested in Edgar Allan Poe’s formalist theories of literature, such as frankly discussed by the poet in his *Rationale of Verse*, of 1848.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, while Russell systematically experimented with classical poetic meters, he could shift gears and hack out a rude Futurist tone poem, complete with nonsensical utterances of “Broooooom—boom, Pse—se—se—Brrran—r’k,” in satirical mimicry of modern warfare and its senseless carnage.<sup>18</sup> This demonstrates Russell’s interest in Dadaist and Futurist techniques of disruption of all cultural norms, including long traditions of artistic representation. It also indicates that he entertained an element of chance—despite his academic training—as a metaphor for the broken, disjunctive rhythms of modern visual and aural perception.

### *Contemporary Encounters: Picasso, Cézanne, and Renoir*

Working backward and sideways simultaneously, Russell combined a deep appreciation for the old masters with a fascination for his courageous contemporaries, ultimately arriving at a tentative synthesis of numerous creative currents through the unwitting collusion of Pablo Picasso. The story goes that sometime in 1910, and in all likelihood on visiting Leo Stein—who had already become a friendly confidant and critic—Russell sat down before Picasso’s *Three Women*, of 1907–8 (which Gertrude and Leo had recently purchased out of the artist’s studio), and copied its wedge-strewn topography in order to fully fathom its structural logic. It turns out that, rather oddly—given Russell’s long fascination for geometric principles of construction—this was virtually the only decisive contribution that Cubism (or a pre-Cubist morphology) was to make to Russell’s evolving Synchronist aesthetic. On revisiting this legendary story, however, there is reason to question the common assumption that Russell “derived” his wedgelike forms—such as those plainly in evidence in his seminal *Synchromy in Orange: To Form*, of 1914—from this seminal work by Picasso. It is entirely conceivable, for instance, that Russell found in this canvas a modern quotation and validation of an early lesson he had learned from George Bridgman, who in his New York life-drawing classes routinely prescribed a “wedging and passing of forms” for the distribution of the principal masses of the human figure across any given sheet of paper.<sup>19</sup> And while it has recently become fashionable to cite certain visual analogies between Bridgman’s cubic “blocking” of the human figure (expressly to simplify its underlying masses and movements) and Cubism’s fractious and angular appearance, in actuality the relation between Bridgman’s prescriptive drawing method—a direct outcome of his distillation of the composite anatomy of the body into various mechanical schemas—and Cubism proper proves

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<sup>17</sup> See subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, nos. 4.2.3, 1909–10; and 4.2.13, ca. 1911–12, Morgan Russell Archives.

<sup>18</sup> See subseries 4.4, *Essays, creative*, 4.4.1, “Une sonorité sur 1914–1915 [A Tone-Poem on the Year 1914–15],” Morgan Russell Archives.

<sup>19</sup> George B. Bridgman, *Bridgman’s Life Drawing* (1924; New York: Dover, 1971); esp. 68–71.

entirely superficial.<sup>20</sup> Given Russell's subsequent view of Cubism as little more than a handy method for reinforcing the planar flatness of the canvas (that is, as a corrective to academic effects of illusionism), this seemingly fateful artistic encounter via the *Three Women* evidently signals Russell's own willful and fully *purposive* act of self-validation, as much as it may have constituted, in other regards, his respectful submission to Picasso's proto-abstract idiom.

Russell's evident appreciation for Cézanne, not unlike his critically informed study of Picasso, turns out to be, on reexamination, the stuff of a decidedly studied, at times even ambivalent (if always respectful), allegiance. In fact, throughout Russell's notebooks, frequent allusions made to Cézanne are often accompanied by critical asides and comparisons with other painters, and it is in the latter that Russell might finally—sometimes surprisingly—devote the greater balance of his aesthetic and philosophical capital. This raises the issue of the real import behind another common anecdote dating from Russell's early years in Paris: his borrowing from Leo Stein, at some moment in 1909, of a small Cézanne still life of apples, for close perusal and extended study (doubtless on Stein's own urging). The Morgan Russell Archives and Collection of the Montclair Art Museum is home to impressive examples of Russell's study of apples and other still-life subjects, done in watercolor or graphite (on paper), as well as a famous oil painting, *Still Life with Bananas*, of about 1912–13. In each of these instances Russell's means of rendering fruit or other objects may doubtless be regarded as “Cézanne-inspired.” The only problem with this designation, however, is that precious few of Russell's extant studies of fruit or other still-life arrangements, whether residing at Montclair or elsewhere, look particularly *Cézannesque*, if by that epithet we are to recall Cézanne's singularly fragmented, episodic transcribing of the three-dimensional object to the two-dimensional field of the paper via short, repeated planes of pigment, all of which would seem to accrue as though drawn together according to some tentative, conceptual bricklaying.<sup>21</sup>

In fact—and this is truly startling—in many instances Russell's presumably Cézannesque study of apples turns out rather ironically to approximate an entirely antithetical body of work: that of the sensuous Impressionist Pierre-Auguste Renoir. To tease out from historical eclipse Russell's self-avowed allegiance with Renoir—the latter's name crops up in Russell's aesthetic notes almost as much as, if not more often than, any other contemporary painter—at first blush seems a critical misfire. On reflection, however, it becomes clear that Russell's interest in Renoir was entirely natural; indeed, it issued effortlessly from his intent to shift painting to a *sculptural* function, whereby color would conjure up a nearly three-dimensional modeling of form within a shallow space that remained, in the final count, an essentially flat, that is, *pictorial* surface. In coming to terms with Russell's unexpected fascination for Renoir, seemingly disparate lines of inheritance to which Russell repeatedly lays claim begin to merge together with surprising precision: an ideal of beauty deriving from the Greek and Roman antique; the precision of rendering that characterizes the techniques of the Florentine school of the Italian Renaissance (namely, Giotto, Masaccio, Antonio Pollaiuolo, Leonardo, and

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<sup>20</sup> See Bridgman, *Constructive Anatomy*, as in note 3.

<sup>21</sup> A particularly strong exception is Russell's still life *Three Apples*, of ca. 1915, now in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; see Kushner, as in note 9, plate 94, p. 117; the full extent of Russell's appreciation for the work of Cézanne will be investigated at length by Gregory Galligan in an essay for the catalog accompanying the exhibition *Cézanne and American Modernism*, Montclair Art Museum and the Baltimore Museum of Art, 2009.

Michelangelo); the intense, Venetian colorism of Titian and Veronese; the sensuous, sculptural solidity and representation of movement in the Flemish school of Peter Paul Rubens; and finally, the ecstatic colorism and organic voluptuousness in the impressionism of Renoir.

Russell would have had opportunity to view Renoir's work repeatedly during his early years in Paris, when the Impressionist master was featured by the influential dealer Paul Durand-Ruel in at least six major solo and group exhibitions from 1908 to 1914—an impressive succession of venues that culminated in a momentous retrospective exhibition of over seventy works by Renoir at the Durand-Ruel galleries in April and May of 1912.<sup>22</sup> As though only a prelude, that grand display was immediately followed by an installation comprising nearly sixty of Renoir's portrait paintings.<sup>23</sup> Most tellingly, in an artist's notebook dating from that same May, Russell writes, "May 14, 1912: Impressionism at D. Ruel's house," which suggests that Russell closely followed this dealer's exhibition schedule.<sup>24</sup> Even more specific, Russell noted the title of Renoir's *Danse à la compagne*, a painting that depicts a rustic couple performing a dance step, their bodies merging to create a great S curve running nearly the full length of the oblong canvas.<sup>25</sup>

Again, Russell's avowed fascination for Renoir hardly betokened the modernist pioneer. The effusive praise of this artist by art historian Élie Faure, Russell's friend and colleague, makes it clear that already by the onset of World War I, Renoir was widely hailed as a heroic, modern Atlas bearing the entire Western tradition of figurative painting on his shoulders at a time when a host of Futurist rumblings threatened to topple it. Writing in his monumental *Histoire de l'art*, of the early 1920s, on the subject of Renoir's depiction of light, mass, and movement, Faure stated,

The carnal poem is spiritualized upon contact with an admirable love which embraces it in its ensemble, which no longer sees a detail, an accidental, an isolated or rare gesture, but only full masses whose inner force models

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<sup>22</sup> For an exhibition chronology of Renoir, see *Renoir*, exh. cat., Hayward Gallery, London, 1985.

<sup>23</sup> See subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, no. 4.2.15, May 1912, #4, Morgan Russell Archives; see also *Renoir*, as in note 22, pages 315–19. These extensive exhibitions accompanied the French translation that same year of Julius Meier-Graefe's monograph on Renoir, which was originally published in German in 1911; see *Renoir*, "Chronology," 312. In all likelihood Russell visited an exhibition of Renoir's selected works on paper in October 1906, as well as separate exhibitions of Renoir still lifes and landscapes (the latter exhibition shared with Monet) in the spring of 1908 (Russell probably missed a significant exhibition of Renoir canvases that took place in Paris later that November, as he had already returned to New York by that date). Finally, Russell could have studied Renoir's work in a group exhibition with Monet, Camille Pissarro, and Alfred Sisley, at the Durand-Ruel galleries in June 1910, before ultimately taking in the two large and successive solo shows of 1912.

<sup>24</sup> See notebook as cited in note 23; in this reference to seeing pictures at Durand-Ruel's "house" (in this instance probably meaning "place" or "gallery"), Russell also mentions seeing works by Cézanne, Renoir, and Monet. Russell had also taken in the sprawling exhibition by Durand-Ruel of over fifty paintings by Monet in 1908; see the Russell chronology entry for 1908 provided by Kushner, as in note 9, p. 188.

<sup>25</sup> See notebook 4.2.15, as in note 23.

the movement. It is summarized and heroic movement, with a voluntary and profoundly expressive use of projections and hollows, of lengthenings, deformations, and foreshortenings of arms and legs. As the [earliest] evolution of Renoir calls to mind Velazquez, and the second [period] recalls Rubens, the third, I do not know why, makes me think of Michel Angelo [*sic*]....The natural forms all meet and marry with curves suited to them, with volumes swelling with the same inner forces, and with a movement discovered and created anew by the same heart.<sup>26</sup>

Only a year earlier, Russell's former mentor Robert Henri, writing on the subject of rhythm in painting, had noted, "Strokes which move in unison, rhythms, continuities throughout the work; that interplay, that slightly or fully complement each other....See pictures by Renoir."<sup>27</sup> Russell's own intermittent reflections on the achievement of Renoir may be thought of as a natural coda to such widely circulated appreciations, which were popular on both sides of the Atlantic during the early interwar period.<sup>28</sup>

### *An Apprenticeship to Matisse*

If there was a single figure in whom Russell seems to have found the perfect mentor for his development of Synchronism, it was Henri Matisse. Beyond the felicity of latching onto a kindred sensibility, it happened at a critical developmental juncture for both teacher and student. The opportunity to study with Matisse was, for Russell, almost too perfect, following so closely on his brief apprenticeship with Henri, whose liberal aesthetic philosophy was nothing if not an extensive American preamble to the French master's even more radical sensibility. By the time Russell sought out his instruction, Matisse had achieved a relatively secure position in the Parisian avant-garde. He was already well on his way to recycling many of his most daring Fauvist experiments into the multiple, mutually complementary components of a comprehensive pedagogy—even as Matisse repeatedly protested that no painter should seek in his methods any particular system, no less a prescription for how to paint "modern" pictures.

Whereas a host of other students of the Académie Matisse would ultimately exit the school as indistinctive as they had entered it, the Americans Max Weber, Patrick Henry

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<sup>26</sup> Élie Faure, *History of Art*, trans. Walter Pach, 5 vols. (1919–21; Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing, 1937), vol. 4, "Modern Art," 443. Notably, Faure dedicated this volume to Renoir. Faure's five-volume work was immensely popular on both sides of the Atlantic and earned for him a worldwide audience. Faure celebrated his success by making a worldwide lecture tour in 1931–32, in the course of which he lectured in Los Angeles and San Francisco (between similar engagements in Mexico and Japan) while Russell was teaching at a local Los Angeles art school; see "Elie Faure to Lecture," *Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 1931, in ProQuest Historical Newspapers, *Los Angeles Times (1881–1982)*, 15; see also the two letters of 1932–33 by Faure to Russell in the Morgan Russell Archives, Montclair Art Museum.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit* (1923; Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984; orig. 1923), 76.

<sup>28</sup> For representative examples of Russell's reflections on Renoir, see subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, nos. 4.2.15, May 1912, #4; 4.2.37, June–July 1915; 4.2.42, 1915–16; and 4.2.44, 1917.

Bruce, and Morgan Russell were among the precious few to prove achievable Matisse's dearest ideal: that a painter could decisively benefit by his instruction without sacrificing his own integrity. Russell proved especially *American* in this regard, thoroughly soaking up Matisse's example and successfully redeploying it to decidedly unanticipated purposes. In fact, close examination of the artist's notebooks at the Montclair Art Museum reveals that Russell was so heavily influenced by Matisse from about 1909 to 1911—an influence only compounded by Russell's studies with the color theorist Ernest Percyval Tudor-Hart toward the tail end of that apprenticeship—that Russell could hardly have been expected to favor the comparatively architectonic sensibility of Cézanne over the cursive color sense of Renoir. To be fair to the historical record, over the course of the interwar period, there is a kind of Darwinian process of natural mutation at work in the evolution of Russell's early interest in Cézanne, from about 1909, to his ultimate endorsement of the intense colorism and linear mastery of Renoir. During this time Russell perfected and then promptly set to rest his Synchronist methods in favor of a figurative mode of painting that was in keeping with a larger shift in the Paris art world away from abstraction toward a new, Mediterranean "classicism."<sup>29</sup> But even in the case of his earliest commentaries on Cézanne, which date from shortly after his move to Paris in the spring of 1909, Russell ultimately regarded the collective Cézanne mania of the immediate prewar period, from about 1910 to 1913, at once handy for his visual education and a creative force to be thoroughly vanquished.

In the final reckoning, and as one of the most impressionable among Matisse's followers (his notes of the period suggest that he sought not only pointed criticism from the master but also fatherly validation), Russell may have unwittingly preserved for posterity one of Matisse's most skillful teaching strategies.<sup>30</sup> Articulating one of several aesthetic themes that return throughout these notebooks with the regularity of a heartbeat, Russell reminds himself, not unlike Samson fearing a haircut, never to unwittingly let dissipate his expressive powers by losing sight of the single, overriding aim of any given work. This was Russell's way of saying that he should never squander his strategic resources on

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<sup>29</sup> On the larger shift away from the geometries of Cubism toward the more cursive, so-called classical wellsprings of French art during the interwar period, see Christopher Green, *Cubism and Its Enemies: Modern Movements and Reaction in French Art, 1916–1928* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987); see also Romy Golan, *Modernity and Nostalgia: Art and Politics in France between the Wars* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).

<sup>30</sup> The extent of Russell's actual *firsthand* interaction with Matisse begs for further research at present. Russell was not, for instance, a participant in the founding of the Académie Matisse by the American painters Sarah Stein, Max Weber, and Patrick Henry Bruce, in late 1907, and by the time Russell took up a place in the master's classes two years later, Matisse, having recently moved his family from Paris to the suburb of Issy-les-Moulineaux, had cut back his personal critiques of students' work to about one day a week. There do exist photographs of plaster sculptures of male nudes by Russell from this period that Matisse "hand corrected," as it were, by drawing along their contours in ink, apparently to demonstrate the boundaries of various principal masses of the given figure—indeed, in a manner that uncannily reflects Matisse's own line drawings of female nudes dating from this period. There is also a surviving anecdote, perhaps apocryphal, to the effect that when Matisse came upon Russell's seminal *Synchrony in Orange: To Form*, of 1914, at that year's Salon des Indépendants—the same salon at which French president Raymond Poincaré gasped in front of Russell's picture, "Can anyone tell me, gentlemen, what *that* is supposed to represent?—Matisse tarried at length before it and muttered appreciative comments pertaining to its color schema; see "Où l'on voit les statues perdre la tête, et les tableaux s'affoler sur le passage de M. Poincaré," *Le Matin*, March 25, 1914, page 1.

the pursuit of minor victories. In offering himself this caveat Russell was invoking the *principe napoléonien* (Napoleonic principle): the French emperor's preferred battle strategy of bringing all his forces to bear on a single, achievable goal over responding in defensive fashion to numerous, widely scattered skirmishes.<sup>31</sup> Russell writes,

Center on your handling of masses in the movement you assign them for the greatest result....all of them will take care of themselves—sacrifice everything—spare no secondary things if need move to produce main effect, or if it does not go well—then attend to other things afterward—things such as most mediocre artists are always occupied with. Art is very much like Bonaparte's campaigns—& they are a wonderful lesson—no division of forces—no scattering of interests

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<sup>31</sup> The *principe napoléonien* seems to have been borrowed by modernist painters from the realm of Second Empire politics and contemporary lectures in war maneuvers by Marshal Ferdinand Foch (1851–1929). Indeed, at the very moment that Russell was recording a relation between such war strategy and avant-garde painting, Foch was directing the École Supérieure de Guerre, France's prestigious war college, where from 1907 to 1911 he taught an entire generation of French cadets in the *offensive à l'outrance* (cult of the offensive), a theory of strategic warfare prescribing the *offensive* battle, as well as the demoralization of the enemy, as necessary eventualities if victory were to be achieved. Foch had published his war college lectures *Des principes de la guerre* [*The Principles of War*], in 1903, which was followed only a year later by his *De la conduite de la guerre* [*On the Conduct of War*]. Although Foch's battle tactics would eventually come under widespread criticism in France for their high cost to human life (his prescribed maneuvers were ultimately blamed for the tremendous losses suffered by the French in an offensive campaign in Alsace-Lorraine), Foch was, from World War I to his death in 1929, frequently lauded in the American press as a modern-day Lafayette and Napoleon. This tide of hero worship culminated in Foch's official tour of the United States, at President Woodrow Wilson's invitation, in the fall of 1921. As an example of how far-reaching Foch's example could extend during the interwar era, Russell, at that time living at Aigremont in the French countryside, was in 1929 urgently advised by his friend, the fine art printer Louis Sol, to study Foch's battle theories; see letter by Louis Sol to Morgan Russell, 1929, Morgan Russell Archives. It is notable that among Russell's many undated self-portrait drawings, one doubtless originating from this era was executed on the verso of a full-page, close-up photographic portrait of France's other popular field marshal, Joseph Jacques Césaire Joffre (1852–1931). Especially striking is the fact that Joffre (a proponent of Ferdinand Foch's *offensive à l'outrance*), here dressed in full military regalia and turning boldly toward the observer, is countered, as it were, by Russell in a full-length self-portrait, the artist dressed in flowing robes and sporting a shoulder-length hairstyle, and holding a brush and palette, as though prepared to conquer all enemies sans bayonets and gunpowder; see subseries 9.11, *Portraiture*, Archival Drawings, Morgan Russell Archives. Russell may have executed this drawing in response to an anonymous news clipping, recently discovered in a notebook dating from about 1917–18, in which the anonymous author, invoking the *principe napoléonien*, calls for national resolve at a crucial turning point of the war; see Series 4, Notebook 4.2.44, Morgan Russell Archives. Finally, it is worth noting that Russell's friend, Élie Faure, who would write favorably about Russell's art for the July 1921 issue of *Revue de l'Époque* (an essay that was later reprinted for Russell's solo exhibition at the Galerie La Licorne, Paris, in May 1923), wrote an elegiac appreciation of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1921, in which he metaphorically equated Napoleon with a great *sculptor* and poet; see Faure, *Napoléon* (Paris: G. Crès, 1921). This book was translated into English for an American audience three years later, at the time of Russell's Paris exhibition; see Faure, *Napoleon*, trans. Jeffery E. Jeffery (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1924).

until main object attended to....The two strongest features of the art that is to be of today are as always form—mass movement, given 1<sup>st</sup> presentatively not representatively—2<sup>nd</sup> Selection, so as to best convey above....to intensify it.<sup>32</sup>

Owing to its extremely close relation to Matisse's frequently repeated advice to young painters that they should never lose sight of the overriding, dominant *tonality*, or compositional arraignment of any given picture, the *principe napoléonien* was all but certainly prescribed to Russell by Matisse himself during studio critiques at his weekly *académie*. In any event, and whatever its source, the *principe napoléonien* corresponds to the fundamental stratagem of virtually every progressive painter of the prewar era: that he or she avoid, at all cost, the fussy, illusionist ideals of academicism by opting for a visceral and immediate *effet* (effect, in the sense of a total, immediate impression) delivered strictly by means of color and composition over fragmenting that potential impact in fruitless pursuit of historical, literary, or naturalistic standards of representation.<sup>33</sup>

### *Experiments with Light, Color, and "Visual Music"*

After absorbing this microhistory, one is in a better position to appreciate why music, as an entirely formalist, or abstract, praxis, acquired such importance to an entire generation of prewar, Paris-based painters. At once a standard against which to measure their own achievement and a weapon for warding off the academic tradition, the word "music" became in itself a two-syllable maxim, the clever unpacking of which could occupy a painter for his entire career.

While others, such as Paul Klee or Wassily Kandinsky, employed the metaphor of music as a vital point of comparison, Russell took it completely at face value, coming to think of himself as the art world's Igor Stravinsky.<sup>34</sup> Writing in his notebooks on the subject, Russell reasoned that just as Claude Debussy signaled the furthest limits of tonal

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<sup>32</sup> See subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, 4.2.6, Early 1909–10, Morgan Russell Archives, Montclair Art Museum.

<sup>33</sup> This ideal was probably first impressed on Russell by Robert Henri, who stated, "The picture....must remain in the one chosen moment, in the attitude which was the result of the sensation of that moment"; see Robert Henri, *The Art Spirit* (1923; Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 81. Russell's subsequent study with Matisse only further cemented this early lesson in the *effet*, which Russell later applied to his landscapes, striving to capture in them his immediate perception of their color array (which frequently implied an emphasis on one dominant tonality) on his visual faculties.

<sup>34</sup> Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, in which he expressly equates music with the abstract potential of painting, was first published in 1911. There is no specific reference by Russell to Kandinsky in his notebooks, although it is all but certain that he was thoroughly familiar with Kandinsky's hypothesis, which spread like wildfire through the cafes and artists studios of Paris during the immediate prewar period.

impressionism, the Cubists and Futurists were “more interested in subject [unintelligible] than in evolving a new archaic beginning for [a] plastic art of the picture.”<sup>35</sup>

Thus according to Russell, what the discipline of painting clearly needed was an entirely new mode of expression, one that would courageously dispose of all impressionist fidelity to nature in favor of an entirely abstract objective. Russell therefore hailed Stravinsky’s scores—notably, the *Sacre du printemps*, of 1913—and even more so the advent of *atonal* composition, as signifying a long overdue sea change in the history of the classical tradition.<sup>36</sup>

Although today Russell’s reputation is based primarily on his Synchronist canvases, and he is often cited as a follower of the various Futurist schools of the prewar period, it is within the unprecedented realm of the entirely abstract “light show,” or—to borrow a term from the birth of cinema—*moving pictures*, that Russell betrayed perhaps his deepest ambitions. It is already well known that Russell periodically experimented with a light box, which he fitted with translucent, colored tissue papers (crumbling samples of which remain in the Morgan Russell Archives). Less widely appreciated, however, is that such experiments represented only the most rudimentary format for what was arguably Russell’s true, if forever unrealized, calling in the medium of abstract theater or, as one might say, *aesthetic cinema*. This is plainly evident in several notebooks of about 1914, in which Russell outlines in ecstatic prose and phrase fragments his plans for colossal productions of “synchronist lumineuses,” or “synchronist lumières.” These impressive terms refer to events composed exclusively of light and color, clearly intended to rival in scale and sensational effect the great panoramas and dioramas that Russell doubtless saw in his youth—indeed, Gertrude Stein regarded such spectacles as a profound influence on her own eventual appreciation of Parisian avantgarde painting.<sup>37</sup> It was as much the *kinetic* as the *coloristic* potential of such formats that attracted Russell, who wrote of one day entirely supplanting the medium of painting itself with such moving installations. This aesthetic ideal finds an echo in Élie Faure’s assertion, by the early 1920s, that traditional formats of painting—that is, oils on canvas—were poised for distinction in the

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<sup>35</sup> See subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, 4.2.36, Morgan Russell Archives. Russell in fact executed a portrait of Stravinsky, most likely from a photograph, in pencil-on-paper, which he may have wished to give Stravinsky on the maestro’s visit to Paris in January 1916. The two men failed to meet in person; see Correspondence, “Igor Stravinsky,” Morgan Russell Archives.

<sup>36</sup> During the international art season of 2004–5, Russell was featured in two major traveling exhibitions that explored the employment of music as a metaphor for the visual arts—namely, abstraction—in the early modern era; see *Sons et lumières: Une histoire du son dans l’art du XX siècle*, exh. cat., Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2004, and *Visual Music: Synaesthesia in Art and Music since 1900*, exh. cat., Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., 2005.

<sup>37</sup> For Russell’s discussion of the “synchronist lumière,” see subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, 4.2.30, ca. 1914–15, and 4.2.31, ca. 1914–15, Morgan Russell Archives; for Stein’s reference to the panorama, see Gertrude Stein, “Pictures,” in *Lectures in America*, intro. Wendy Steiner (1936; Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 59–90; the significance of this event to Stein is discussed by Gregory Galligan in his current dissertation-in-progress, “The Cube in the Kaleidoscope: The American Reception of Parisian Cubism, 1928–1942” (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University).

face of the vivacious ascendance of the *cinéplastique*, or cinema.<sup>38</sup> Underlying both men's confidence in the efficacy of pure light and color to supersede painting was an impressive, recently generated body of research in the new discipline of experimental psychology, which since the 1880s had taken root from Berlin to Boston, as the laboratories of physiologists Wilhelm Wundt, Gustave Fechner, and William James, as well as others, yielded new insights into the physiological responses of the body to various physical stimuli. Such researches uncovered the inherent subjectivity of human cognition in its reception of such stimuli and their reconstitution into dependable information about the material makeup of reality itself.<sup>39</sup> That Russell was versed, at least to some degree, in such recent developments is indicated by notes made in about 1911, in which Russell scribbles the names of Fechner, James, and Poe in loose proximity, as though to map an intrinsic connection between the physiological realities of the body with American formalist theories of aesthetic expression.<sup>40</sup>

Russell was thus among the earliest Americans to conceive of and experiment with a fledgling art of colored-light projection, seeking to bring together the visual, rhythmic, volumetric, and aural facets of painting, dance, sculpture, and music in order to constitute a single stimulating event. This heady ideal – and it was to remain little more than that, owing to a dearth of requisite capital for research and development – was what

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<sup>38</sup> Faure saw in the cinema the perfect plastic art form for approximating the kinetic effects of music, and he predicted its perfection by the Americans, citing French cinema as “a bastard [form] of degenerate theater”; Faure's aesthetic reflections on this subject appeared in a serialized article in *The Freeman*, in the United States, in 1921, and were reviewed by the *New York Times* in September of that year; see “SCREEN: The Art of Cineplastics,” *The New York Times*, September 18, 1921, p. 70; see also Élie Faure, “De la Cinéplastique,” *L'Arbre d'Éden* (Paris: Les Éditions G. Crès et Cie, 1922), 277–304; finally, Faure's essays for the *Freeman* were reprinted in a collected edition of 1923; see Élie Faure, *The Art of Cineplastics*, trans. Walter Pach (Boston: The Four Seas Company, 1923).

<sup>39</sup> There were a number of avenues by which Russell could apprise himself of such scientific developments, among them popular newspapers and periodicals, such as *Scientific American* and *Reader's Digest*, as well as displays at various international expositions, such as the comprehensive display sponsored by the physiological laboratory of Hugo Münsterberg, of Harvard University, for the Chicago World's Fair of 1893; see ed. Hugo Münsterberg, *Psychological Laboratory of Harvard University* (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University, 1893). In addition to the new discoveries about the human body that were being yielded by the discipline of experimental physiology, a quick succession of advances made in the realm of experimental and theoretical physics held great interest for painters like Russell, both in their concept of a “fourth dimension” pertaining to time and perceptual phenomena and in their suggestion of a new understanding of the subatomic realm of material reality; see Notebook 4.2.66, 1938, Morgan Russell Archives, Montclair Art Museum, in which Russell has collated news clippings on the recent discoveries of the renowned physicist Niels Bohr.

<sup>40</sup> See the reconstructed notebook in subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, 4.2.66, 1938, Morgan Russell Archives; here Russell brings together, as though referencing an otherwise far-flung, professional family, various news clippings pertaining to the current science of the atom, with notes, personal sketches, and postcards (of the American desert landscape), among other items and subjects of interest to Russell at that moment. Such compilations point to Russell's seeking scientific justification for his own theoretical propositions regarding the makeup of nature and culture, as well as deriving inspiration from these sources for a form of abstraction (with which he was toying in the interwar period) constituted by geometric and systematic swirls slowly uncoiling from an implied, if invisible, center (therein catalyzing energies simultaneously in countless directions).

lay behind Russell's hoped-for collaboration with French novelist, poet, and impresario Blaise Cendrars, on the production of a grand Synchronist ballet in the mid 1920s. As the surviving correspondence between the two men reveals, after briefly spurring Russell to proceed with his plans for such a production, literally telling him not to worry himself over the story line until well after he had completely composed the abstract program, Cocteau simply fell out of the game when he failed to secure the necessary financial backing from his usual sponsors.<sup>41</sup>

One need only imagine Russell sitting at home in Aigremont, his exhilarating conception for a grand Synchronist ballet so swiftly and cruelly evaporating, to grasp the implicit tragedy behind such turns of fate, too many of which punctuate the official Russell chronology to let stand without some kind of historical or moral reckoning. In reading his numerous notebooks, in which Russell continually maintains a sophisticated monologue on everything from personal hygiene to a new form of epic mural painting, one witnesses project after project, each of promising potential, in turn falling on deaf ears or empty purses, all the while Russell pushes forward in the solitude of his own attic studio. Alas, the bulk of Russell's projected applications for an art of light, color, and sound ended up entirely earthbound in the form of simple piano music, as Russell privately composed in his latter years a small number of four-part choral masses and plainchants on the example of Palestrina. A far cry, this, from the production of a Synchronist ballet.<sup>42</sup>

### *Self-Identity, "Aesthetic Androgeny," and the Attractions of Corsetry*

One of the most haunting and memorable of Russell's private affairs is his failure, in late 1909, to attend his mother's funeral.<sup>43</sup> Having just moved from New York to Paris by that date, Russell was doubtless simply too impoverished to make another expensive trip across the ocean (at that time he was supported by a monthly stipend from Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney). This, taken into consideration with the time lag of the letter's delivery, not to mention the weeks implied in making any transatlantic journey, would have surely caused Russell to miss the event of Miner Antoinette's burial—no matter

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<sup>41</sup> For an example of Cendrars's initial enthusiasm for the synchronist ballet, see subseries 1.1, *Correspondence*, Blaise Cendrars, letter to Russell of 10 January 1925, Morgan Russell Archives; here Cendrars encourages Russell to enjoy full poetic, or abstract, license in devising the ballet, and not to worry himself over the story line, or narrative—ultimately suggesting that they might devise one together with the dancers at the time of production.

<sup>42</sup> Russell and Stanton Macdonald-Wright attempted to build a kinetic light machine together in 1931 or 1932, while Russell was teaching in California, but the prototype utilized candle power and was damaged by fire; a small stationary light machine, about the length, depth, and width of two typical-size shoeboxes laid end to end, and constructed by Russell, resides in the collections of the Montclair Art Museum. It is accompanied by a similarly sized *Study in Transparency*, of ca. 1919–23, in oils on tissue paper, which once served as the color screen for the intended light projection (this box utilizes incandescent light bulbs), as well as a schematic drawing, *Study for Kinetic Light Machine*, ca. 1916–23; see Kushner, as in note 9, 105–09; see also subseries 4.6, *Light-box studies*, Morgan Russell Archives, for related notes by Russell.

<sup>43</sup> See the letter from Charles Otis Morgan to Morgan Russell, 1909, Morgan Russell Archives; Charles Morgan apprised Russell of his mother's death by pneumonia and her impending internment four days thence; thus Russell would surely have missed the event even had he rushed to return to the United States immediately upon receiving this letter.

how swiftly he might have addressed the issue. Just as significant, however, is that the quotidian factors implied by Russell's physically and financially straitened circumstances were doubtless compounded by a longstanding emotional ambivalence toward his mother. Although it remains to date only conjectural, there is reason to suspect that Miner Antoinette Russell had been an emotionally troubled individual, perhaps even perpetually caught up in a state of mourning over having never given birth to a daughter (whether due to fate or undocumented misfortune). Several semiautobiographical essays and notes recently reconstructed as part of a broader cataloging of Russell's manuscripts and studio notebooks suggest that Russell's mother all but certainly punished the young Morgan by forcing him into petticoats and other female garments, possibly to systematically challenge the boy's identification with the male sex by soliciting from him an excessive degree of emotional devotion. Other passages in his alternately semifictional and confessional writings suggest that Russell was regularly compelled to playact as a girl in order to satisfy his mother's desire for the affections of a daughter. Even more startlingly, Russell seems to have been forced to demonstrate a sensuous bond with his mother more befitting of her husband (though apparently falling short, at least as far as one can tell from today's point in history, of any truly physical activity).<sup>44</sup>

If we cannot say with certainty that Russell was "abused" as a pubescent boy (at least not in strict accordance with contemporary standards), it is appropriate—perhaps even necessary—to note that Russell's was no psychologically untroubled childhood. As Russell recounted in an undated essay on the subject,

The day I was put into skirts by my mother for once and all is as vivid to me after all these years as it was at the time and I feel the same emotion when recalling it as I felt when it took place—she violently pulled off all my boy's clothes, long trousers, shirts and all—and after putting me in the chemise, long and white and ornamental and the corset which she laced awfully [sic] tight—and the elaborately flounced and beribboned drawers she caught up an immense white petticoat, large and long and heavy with flowers and lace—and swung it over my head in a circular gesture of finality that there and then drowned out all masculinity from me. She said when doing it, "There—you will never get out for these for the rest of your life." Another in taffeta followed, and then a heavy long skirt which she fastened with a belt around my waist after putting me in a high necked shirt waist that buttoned up the back and seemed to be an added sign of imprisonment. For I couldn't unbutton it myself [while] in it and there I was. The sensation of the long and voluminous petticoats

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<sup>44</sup> For an introduction to Russell's semi-autobiographical alter-ego, who at the hands of his oppressive mother is transformed over the course of puberty from a young boy into a sensuous woman, see subseries 4.2, *Essays, creative*, 4.2.2, Untitled [*Lucien Manuscript*], undated, Morgan Russell Archives.

against my bare legs was a mixture of delight and strange troubling sensation.<sup>45</sup>

Throughout his life Russell delighted in donning quintessentially “female” undergarments, testifying repeatedly to his preference for petticoats and corsets, and sketching skirts and ruffles so faithfully as though viscerally relishing the repeated, ribbonlike advance and retreat of the taffeta. Russell publicly justified this behavior on largely practical grounds, asserting that women’s clothing was exceptionally comfortable; privately, he noted that it proved instrumental in promoting fine physical and mental health, as well as an exceedingly heightened sense of morality. Illustrating his points with thumbnail sketches of an androgenous torso so stiffened, Russell reflected,

It is strange how a stiffly stayed corset, even in the hottest days arouses me to thought and effort whereas when without it my mind is loose and all over the place sort of...as are my viscera when left to themselves. Probably the blood circulation is exaggerated in the head by this cutting and squeezing in the middle whereas otherwise it is mostly in the middle...Fatigue is less too as the upper part of the body is held in the air by the stays...instead of the whole weight being on the vertebral column alone and sagging as a consequence. The same can be said of high boots and neck stays and high heels; they are remarkable fatigue reducers for the skeleton and veins.<sup>46</sup>

In thus reassuring himself, Russell was unwittingly reenacting a long history of justification for genteel rituals of female binding. Throughout the late nineteenth century, the corset had been labeled alternately, and often simultaneously, an object of either liberation or oppression of the female body, at once a sign of latent sexuality and its convenient constriction.<sup>47</sup> Russell’s personal fondness for the corset or petticoat was, however, ultimately Victorian, as it was tethered to a specific definition of female identity that already by World War I was unraveling rapidly for a new generation of the “modern woman.” In other words, by the early 1920s, as the medical and moral justifications for corsetry were virtually shunted to the realm of haute couture, Russell was still entertaining the notion that binding the waistline was a proven method of osteopathic medicine.

In truth, Russell’s lifelong allegiance to petticoats and corsets grew out of a complex constellation of rational and obsessive factors. Russell privately admitted as much, confessing within the context of two semiautobiographical stories that he found the

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<sup>45</sup> See subseries 4.4, *Essays, creative*, 4.4.4 Untitled [“On being put into skirts”], undated, Morgan Russell Archives.

<sup>46</sup> See subseries 4.2, *Notebooks* [number unavailable; consult museum registrar].

<sup>47</sup> For excellent histories of the corset, see Valerie Steele, *The Corset; A Cultural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001); and Leigh Summers, *Bound to Please: A History of the Victorian Corset* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001).

brushing of a petticoat against his skin at once sensuous and mysteriously liberating.<sup>48</sup> If these qualify as positive or creative reasons for his studied dressing up as a woman, it is worth noting that Russell seems to have indulged this habit during periods of emotional and professional hardship, which finally suggests that “going female” was a convenient psychological accommodation for recurrent depression.<sup>49</sup>

Recent research on this and related subjects (carried out in the course of the *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection Enhancement Project, 2004–2006*) reveals an even more complicated psychological portrait of this artist. Apparently Russell play-acted as a woman throughout his life. In his work of the interwar period, he frequently reconceptualized his persona rather extensively. This happened during the 1920s and 1930s, when Russell had virtually abandoned his Synchronist mode of color abstraction (the style of painting for which he remains duly famous) and returned to the human figure—not unlike many of his artistic colleagues of the interwar era. Russell’s turn toward such “classicism” during this time thus differs from that of his artistic colleagues by dint of its far greater autobiographical aspect or, at the very least, private impulse. For instance, during the interwar era a good number of Russell’s drawings depicting women—life-size portraits, three-quarter or full-length nudes or women swathed in voluminous dresses—denote nothing if not the painter himself posing or prancing before a mirror. There is, moreover, a recurrent “female Russell” in these pictures—full-bodied shoulder-length hair; sparkling caricatural eyes; sensually accentuated mouth—whose direct gaze at the observer is distinctively the artist’s own, clearly corresponding to photographs of the period that show Russell’s “male” mug as similarly smart and coquettish.<sup>50</sup>

Considered in tandem, such visual coordinates attest to Russell’s thinly veiled fascination for the growing prospect of full gender transformation, a theme further supported by the recent uncovering among his private papers of various clippings of periodical ads for female cosmetics, women’s undergarments, and, by the early 1930s, plastic surgery for purely cosmetic purposes—including breast enhancements.<sup>51</sup> Given the dearth in this

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<sup>48</sup> See Russell’s erotic (if not sado-masochistic) tale in subseries 4.4, *Essays, creative*, 4.4.3, *The Clean Slate, or the Strange Life of Painter X*, Morgan Russell Archives. This story chronicles a cross-dresser’s slow evolution into a fullfledged transvestite through various forms of abuse, at once physical and psychological, to which he is regularly subjected by his female companion.

<sup>49</sup> See, for instance, the chronology of Russell’s life in Kushner, as in note 9, where repeated entries “dressed in skirts” from Russell’s notebooks date from evidently difficult interwar years of his secluded life at Aigremont.

<sup>50</sup> The author would like to acknowledge the close collaboration of Maryanna Roberts, Preparator, of the *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection Enhancement Project, 2004–2006*, in identifying the distinguishing qualities of such pictures as various mirror studies by Russell, the results of which are to be fully documented by Galligan and Roberts in a future exhibition and publication.

<sup>51</sup> See subcategories “Gender Issues” and “Personal Vanity” in series 4.1, *Loose Notes*, Morgan Russell Archives; see also subseries 6.5, *Clippings, newspaper and periodicals*, folder “Beauty Products.” Neither Russell nor his two successive wives, Emilie Fransconi and Suzanne Binon, would have had to subscribe to womens’ circulars to come across such printed promotions, as advertisements for female accouterments since the late nineteenth century often appeared in popular *men’s* periodicals as a subliminal form of erotic diversion; in addition, they issued fundamentally from male hegemony over female representation; see Leigh Summers, *Bound to Please*, as in note 47, esp. chapter 7, “Corsetry, Advertising, and Multiple Readings of the

cache of private papers of ephemera incontrovertibly belonging to either of Russell's two successive wives (Emilie Francesconi, from 1918 to 1938, and Suzanne Binon, from 1946 to her death at an unknown date), it is reasonable to surmise that these stray fossils from the realm of 1930s consumer culture belong to a formerly underrecognized strata of Russell's own perpetually malleable self-identity.

In actuality Russell's artistic employment of his own visage for sketching was often occasioned by practical need for a live model when he could hardly afford one. Thus referring to these pictures as *self-portraits* – the very term suggesting a high degree of autobiographical *intent* in the picture's conception – becomes at best problematic.<sup>52</sup> At the very least, however, much of Russell's figurative work, once dismissed as the stuff of artistic decline and a negligible reversion to Neoclassicism, begs further research for its psychological, aesthetic, and philosophical implications.

Until such a challenge is more thoroughly navigated, it seems inaccurate simply to label Russell a *cross-dresser*, much less describe this post-Victorian sexually complex man as "Russell liked to wear dresses," and leave it at that. We should perhaps also refrain from painting Russell a closet homosexual. There is in fact nothing to indicate that Russell preferred the erotic company of a man to a woman – in fact, he purposively used his sensual charms on the female sex all his life – or even dabbled in any behavior evocative of homosexual tendencies. Rather, given the period's sexual experimentation and swift expansion of behavioral boundaries for women and men alike, Morgan Russell proves an instructive bellwether. Several of Russell's notebooks show that his fantasy of "going female" was fulfilled entirely within the parameters of his domestic life, such as his description, in no unceratin terms, of his self-elected role of submissive partner in his first marriage to Emilie Francesconi. Russell writes,

....Never criticize her, [never] preach seriously, [never] show off your physical or mental strength, never appear superior or ironical nor authoritative – Don't resist – [don't] outcry and appear unhappy – talk sweetly – and

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Nineteenth-Century Female Body," 174–207. The advent of plastic surgery for cosmetic purposes slowly evolved out of its original conception for repairing severe war wounds of veterans returning from the front in World War I. By the late 1920s and early 1930s, there came to be such demand for plastic surgery's extension to the transatlantic consumer market that several clinics in Paris, London, and New York began taking on clients for purely cosmetic treatments, a trend that Russell seems to have monitored from Aigremont, perhaps even contributing to his desire to finally visit the United States in 1931–32; see "Women Who Want Faces Beautified are First to Appeal to City's New Plastic Surgery Unit," *New York Times* (1857–Current file), New York, N.Y.: Jan. 29, 1930, p. 16. It is also worth noting that it was not uncommon during the early years of plastic surgery for doctors to rely on sculptors for assistance in conceptually remodeling severely damaged portions of the patient's face prior to surgery. Russell may have entertained the possibility of employment in this area, as by the early 1930s he was in dire need of regular income.

<sup>52</sup> For this reason a recent sorting of these particular drawings into a single category in the Collection of the Montclair Art Museum led to the classification "self studies," in contradistinction to "self-portraiture" proper. Further research should lead to further refinements and qualifications of such pictures' conceptual underpinnings.

as a rule do [it] without talking about it, the things she'd prevent at first sight.<sup>53</sup>

On this and additional evidence, Russell apparently fits the model of the “intermediate sex” as defined by the Victorian radical humanitarian Edward Carpenter (1844–1929).<sup>54</sup> Carpenter argued at the turn of the twentieth century for an unprecedented acknowledgment of a male “intermediate” personality type recurring throughout recorded history, which comprised in almost equal proportion traditional character traits of both the female and the male genders in a single, holistic organism.<sup>55</sup> On the male “Uranian” manifestation of this type, which he expressly equated with many “artist-natures,” Carpenter stated,

...the more normal type of Uranian man [is a] man who, while possessing thoroughly masculine powers of mind and body, combines with them the tenderer and more emotional soul-nature of the woman—and sometimes to a remarkable degree. Such men...are often muscular and well-built, and not distinguishable in exterior structure and the carriage of body from others of their own sex; but emotionally they are extremely complex, tender, sensitive, pitiful and loving, ‘full of storm and stress, of ferment and fluctuation’ of the heart; the logical faculty may or may not in their case, be well developed, but intuition is always strong; like women they read characters at a glance, and know, without knowing how, what is passing in the minds of others; for nursing and waiting on the needs of others they have often a peculiar gift; *at the bottom lies the artist-nature, with the artist’s sensibility and perception. Such an one is often a dreamer, of brooding, reserved habits, often a musician, or a man of culture, courted in society, which nevertheless does not understand him – though sometimes a child of the people, without any culture, but always with a peculiar inborn refinement.*<sup>56</sup>

John Addington Symonds, author of the single preeminent historical monograph on Michelangelo at the turn of the twentieth century—a work with which Russell was all but certainly familiar—was a friend and colleague of Carpenter, who harbored a similar

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<sup>53</sup> See subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, 4.2.52 [1928–29], Morgan Russell Archives; in this passage, Russell discusses the desirability of a monastic life at Aigremont, during which he would only periodically venture to Paris with “Lili” [Emilie Francesconi], “as woman,” for the sole purpose of securing funds for their continued seclusion.

<sup>54</sup> See Tony Brown, ed., *Edward Carpenter and Late Victorian Radicalism* (London: Frank Cass, 1990), and Chushichi Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter, 1844–1929, Prophet of Human Fellowship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

<sup>55</sup> See “Love’s Coming of Age” and “The Intermediate Sex,” in Edward Carpenter, *Selected Writings*, ed. Noël Greig, vol. 1, “Sex” (London: GMP, 1984).

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 97, emphasis added.

interest in redefining this type of “intermediate” personality, as well as its more “homogenic” (homosexual) variation, in order to win for it a more socially respectable, if not popular, status.<sup>57</sup> As justification for this position, Carpenter marshaled an illustrious array of citations from history, literature, and art, which apparently betrayed the intermediate type and its characteristic exultation of ‘comradeship’ as a kind of constant throughout history, as well as one occurring among all cultures. Carpenter’s sources ran the gamut from antique Greek and Roman mythology, medieval Western and Persian literature, the poetry of both the Italian Renaissance and the Elizabethan eras (namely the sonnets of Michelangelo and Shakespeare), and the recent work of Walt Whitman.<sup>58</sup>

The prospect of a male type that encompassed a full range of traditional “male” and “female” temperaments finds uncanny realization in Russell’s drawings of the nude body of either gender, as almost invariably Russell suppresses the slightest impulse to render the figure’s genitalia—perhaps its most biologically determined attribute. Granted, there are artistically *formal* reasons for this omission, as Russell is almost strictly (his unwavering allegiance to this principle is truly astounding) interested in the way a *torso* may encapsulate the entire motion and momentary poise of the body. To this end, Russell often lops off the subject’s head and lower legs altogether, the latter from midcalf downward, as though he were sketching after a headless and limbless antique sculpture. This effect comes across even when he was undoubtedly drawing in a life class or from a live model—often, by default, his wife or a close friend or student—in another setting.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> See John Addington Symonds, *The Life of Michelangelo Buonarroti*, as in footnote 4; on Symonds’s relationship to Carpenter, see Chushichi Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter, 1844–1929, Prophet of Human Fellowship* (as in note 54), 123–28. Symonds himself believed in a kind of male “chivalrous love,” based on a Greek or medieval model, which designated a kind of fellowship between two men tinged with affection and existing entirely outside the realm of marriage but which fell short of actual sensual or fully sexual activity. In some ways Russell’s own play-acting as a female, coupled with his veneration of ancient Greek ideals of beauty, would seem to approach Symonds’s highly aesthetic concepts, no matter how naive and dated they may seem to us today. It is instructive to recall that early psychological investigations into, and apologies for, homosexuality and “male love” grew out of a complex melding of literary, historical, and psychological investigations. Symonds was, for instance, versed in scholarly studies of ancient Greek culture, Renaissance poetry—including the sonnets of Michelangelo—and the poetry of Walt Whitman, the latter of whom served for many American and English readers as the first public forum for the discussion of male sexuality. Russell himself was well versed in the work of Whitman, as is evidenced by a planned book cover for Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, which survives in the Morgan Russell Collection, Montclair Art Museum.

<sup>58</sup> See Edward Carpenter, *Selected Writing* (as in note 55), 200–07. It is notable that while Carpenter considered the male Uranian a perfectly natural and self-justifying—even highly *creative*—type, his arguments would soon receive an oblique rebuttal in the work of a close colleague, who would regard the “intermediate” type as constituting a kind of “sexual inversion,” or pathological deviation; see Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, vol. 1 (1897; New York: Random House, 1942).

<sup>59</sup> Complementing Russell’s predilection for focusing his attention on the torso is the fact that there is only a single overtly erotic drawing extant in the Morgan Russell Archives at Montclair. It depicts various couples in the act of sexual intercourse via small vignettes, encircling an assertive rendering, in nearly life-size scale, of a freestanding, erect penis in the center of the paper. The present lack of additional Russell erotica may be due to an early act of censorship by a surviving friend or family member, if Russell himself did not destroy the bulk of such sketches before quitting France for the United States in the spring of 1946. The sole extant erotic drawing

In such instances, one begins to suspect that human sexuality was, for Russell, a matter of, as it were, somatic economy, according to which male and female components were contained within every person and perpetually subject to proportional fluctuation. Russell hints at something like this in one of his early notebooks, by briefly (if not cryptically) referring to the growing popularity of the science of characterology, which by the early 1920s comprised multiple histories of ethnology, physiognomy, phrenology, as well as other scientific, and pseudo-scientific, disciplines.<sup>60</sup> It is most likely that Russell is referring here to the study of character (otherwise falling under the larger discipline of the study of human “temperament”) that was popularized in Russell’s day by Leander Hamilton McCormick, an independently wealthy, pseudoscientific essayist, who published a major study of the subject in 1920.<sup>61</sup> McCormick, who entirely lacked medical or scientific credentials, argued that fundamentally male and female character traits could be read from the facial structure and surface topology of a given subject automatically, as it were, by any careful observer who bothered to practice his tested methods of “scientific” analysis before a mirror.<sup>62</sup>

Russell would have been particularly drawn to McCormick’s chapter, “Comparison of the Sexes,” in which the author discusses how masculine and feminine traits are “mixed in the sexes....a blending of the two being not only usual but desirable,” and remarks, “Feminine characteristics, when not too pronounced, favourably modify a masculine disposition; those of the masculine variety likewise strengthen the feminine character.”<sup>63</sup> McCormick then launches into a systematic analysis of such traits by providing the reader with a complete system for detecting their presence via numerous cranial and facial features, such as the relative size of the eyes, the breadth of the jaw, or the coarseness or fineness of the hair.<sup>64</sup>

In hindsight such specious notions must have been irresistible to Russell, given his long allegiance to a classical ideal of beauty that derived from Greco-Roman aesthetics as recycled by various High Italian Renaissance masters, Leonardo and Michelangelo only the most prominent among them. Consequently, on the subject of Russell’s own sexuality one might safely say that while he was fond of preaching a kind of male classical aestheticism, Russell practiced, in turn, an erotic mode of self-metamorphosis that was more elusive than what that ideology might initially suggest.

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in the Morgan Russell Archives, was executed on the verso of a French bistro menu; it may have eluded an act of censorship, or even self-censorship, due to its temporary occlusion by the dinner menu; see subseries 9.9, *Male Figures*, Archival Drawings, Morgan Russell Archives.

<sup>60</sup> For a history of this eclectic mix, see Jan Strelau, *Temperament* (New York and London: Plenum, 1998), especially chapter 1, “The History and Understanding of the Concept of Temperament,” 1–58.

<sup>61</sup> L. Hamilton McCormick, *Characterology: An Exact Science* (Chicago and New York: Rand McNally; 1920).

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 40–43.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 380–407.

In this regard it is perhaps Havelock Ellis, a close colleague of both Carpenter and Symonds, who sheds the most light on Russell's particular form of transvestism. Ellis regarded the fully "homogenic" type a form of pathological deviation from the norm, which he termed "sexual inversion"; nevertheless, he reserved for the practicing heterosexual transvestite the relatively benign diagnosis of "aesthetic inversion," or "Eonism," explaining,

....Eonism....tends to occur among people who are often educated, refined, sensitive, and reserved. It is for the most part successfully concealed from the subject's friends and acquaintances, even from the nearest members of his own family. It is sometimes associated with manifestations which recall masochism or positive algolagnia. Thus it is in some aspects a form of erotic symbolism which, while it might be classified under inversion, in the wider sense of that term, yet has resemblances to erotic fetichism [sic] and occurs in the kind of people who tend to be subject to fetichism. It also resembles, in some of its features, the kind of auto-eroticism called Narcissism or erotic self-admiraton. Aesthetic inversion cannot, however, be identified with fetichism or Narcissism; the subject is not really in love either with fetich or, except in one special type, with himself.<sup>65</sup>

After providing these defining qualities, Ellis proceeds to relate a case published in the journal *Alienist and Neurologist*, of July 1895, concerning a "Commander James Robbins," a prominent citizen of the community of Cooper's Mills, Maine, who had a habit of wearing petticoats "for the sanctity of the home circle, for the partial retirement of his orchard, and for calls upon neighbors for whom his acquaintance is close." By means of this case study, among others, Ellis elaborates a male condition of abnormal identification with the opposite sex that issues from a "subjective identification with the beautiful object," or an extreme adoption, exceeding in intensity mere imitation or mimicry, of "the whole aesthetic attitude" of the object of beauty, with the result that "[the subject] achieves a completely emotional identification which is sexually abnormal but aesthetically correct."<sup>66</sup> Ellis relates this "sexual inversion" to the "sensitive artist's temperament," mentioning that this temperament "often leads the Eonist to believe," and often accurately, "that his peculiar nature has been moulded in childhood by the special circumstances of his early life." Ellis notes that these childhood circumstances are often characterized by an unusual pleasure taken by the mother "in encouraging or emphasizing the child's tendency to adopt the ways of the opposite sex."<sup>67</sup> He states, "The Eonist is more often than not married, and most tenderly and sympathetically devoted to his wife; but he attaches little importance to the sexual act, is sometimes inapt

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<sup>65</sup> Havelock Ellis, *Studies in the Psychology of Sex* (as in note 58), vol. 2, 29.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 107–8; Ellis was drawing some of his ideas from the empathic aesthetic theories of Karl Groos and Theodore Lipps, of about 1902–3, especially the latter's theory of *Einfühlung*, although Lipps insisted on a clear distinction between the realms of aesthetic experience and sexual instinct.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

for it, and much pleased if his wife is willing to forego it." Finally, Ellis suggests that an "auto-erotic sexuality" probably plays a significant factor in the development of this condition, asserting its close relation to "eunuchoidism," or "partial hermaphroditism" (that is, a condition of aesthetic androgeny), which by definition ultimately falls short of clinical disease, proper, and promises to be eventually subject to "modification by suitable gland implantation."<sup>68</sup>

### *Toward an Art Historical Morgan Russell*

Morgan Russell's most fertile years, like the careers of many American early modernists, stretched, in historical terms, all the way from American realism to Abstract Expressionism, or the heyday of Thomas Eakins to the death, only three years after Russell's own (in 1953), of Jackson Pollock. Indeed, it is sobering to recall that when Russell was readying himself and his household for repatriation to the United States in 1946, Pollock had already painted some of the most accomplished "dripped" canvases. Over this period Russell's own aesthetic had evolved from a Victorian love for the moralizing tableau to a full "modernist" appreciation of the various constitutive elements of art—form, mass, color, light—for their own sake or for their function as abbreviated signs for new standards of speed, scientific discovery, industrial development, and other types of material, intellectual, and spiritual liberation, all of which characterized modern transatlantic culture from about 1890 to the advent of World War II. And not unlike so many others of that fin de siècle era, Russell made that aesthetic journey partly by fearless pursuit of the new and partly by a more passive approach of accommodation, or what might be loosely described as a clever and convenient modification of the perpetually familiar.

This alternating mechanism of innovation and accommodation is at the heart of Russell's Promethean adoption of Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* as a schema for everything from drawing the human figure to developing one of the most daring modes of color abstraction by 1914. In fact, virtually every abstract conception generated by Russell harbored an underlying, Michelangelesque schema, such that the advent of Synchronism might be likened to the clever draping of a modernist slipcover over a classical armature. There is a very American principle of camouflage afoot in such a studio, where familiar ideals lose their recognizable profiles, only to evoke similar responses from the sentient observer while all traditional referents remain by all accounts—except those made only by the most knowing observer—largely invisible. One of the more instructive examples in this regard is Russell's nearly obsessive allegiance to an ideal of *beauty*, by which he seems to mean a formal stimulation of the senses so as to evoke a physiological response of visceral pleasure.<sup>69</sup> Russell clung to the term itself long after the majority of his contemporaries had largely jettisoned it for a new discourse revolving around the term "form," in no small part owing to a growing sense

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 109–110. There is no evidence at present suggesting that Russell was directly acquainted with this literature.

<sup>69</sup> One cannot help thinking in this regard of Matisse's famous maxim that painting should function as "a soothing, calming influence on the mind, something like a good armchair which provides relaxation from physical fatigue"; see Henri Matisse, ed. Jack Flam (as in note 20, p. 34; this quote is excerpted from Matisse's *Notes of a Painter*, published in 1908, with which Russell was doubtless very familiar.

of embarrassment over its recent history in the therapeutic aestheticism of a former generation.<sup>70</sup>

This is not to detract from Russell's truly innovative achievement in evolving a new kind of color abstraction by 1912, which he developed on the example of Matisse and Picasso, as well as Michelangelo. But no matter how one slices it, Russell's innovations fall under the category of a masterful recasting, or a clever reconfiguration of his various sources, both contemporary and art historical, rather than the creation of anything entirely unprecedented. As has been pointed out by others in discussing the history of physics, something similar might be said of Albert Einstein. There persists a popular misunderstanding of the mechanisms of genius or innovation to the effect that anything new must by definition have no claim to a prior existence in any conceivable format. Recent reconsiderations of the sophisticated and often self-contradictory qualities of "influence" or "originality" take into account that it is often the reconfiguration of existing phenomena, or intellectual capital, that ultimately qualifies as a stroke of true brilliance among an otherwise incomprehensible set of apparently competing claims and hypotheses—or partial insights awaiting fully sensible completion.<sup>71</sup>

In Russell's case a deep appreciation for architecture, as well as an early, intensive experimentation with sculpture, lay at the core of this creative, lifelong recasting. The result was that Russell's subsequent abstract painting would forever successfully boast an unmistakable element of nearly tactile, material density, where one might otherwise attribute his love of light, rhythm, and color to an elaborate postscript of French Impressionism.<sup>72</sup> Russell's early training as an architect informs his entire oeuvre. Trips to Italy and Paris in the spring of 1906, beyond proving chock-full of creative catalysts, provided Russell with a lifelong sense of creative heritage precisely where he lacked one in his personal lineage, the north-south Paris-Florence-Rome axis defining Russell as an aesthetic and philosophical individual for the remainder of his life. It is probable, in this regard, that Russell's attraction to architecture was fundamentally an *aesthetic* one. His subsequent pencil sketches of the Pantheon, the interior of a Roman bath, or St. Peter's basilica indicate an attraction to the facades and interior surfaces of imperial Roman or Tuscan Renaissance architecture and an abiding interest in discovering how their sculptural, relieflike skins might be most effectively articulated *on flat canvas or paper*. Russell's love of form is thus essentially shaped by the practicing architect; in thought and deed Russell *translates* three-dimensional masses into the hieroglyphics of the flat surface of paper or canvas rather than striving to construct anything "in the round."

From this vantage, Russell's otherwise mysterious fascination for Roman window casements is instructive. Why a future master of color abstract painting should trot around Rome or Florence recording window architecture is entirely mystifying until one

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<sup>70</sup> For further discussion of the evolution of the term *beauty to form* over the course of the early modern era—roughly 1880 to 1930—see Gregory Galligan (as in note 37).

<sup>71</sup> See, for instance, Göran Hermerén, *Influence in Art and Literature* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975).

<sup>72</sup> Russell's dominant leanings toward the tactile and spatial qualities of his materials and abstract pictorial configurations also set him, as well as his invention of Synchronism proper, distinctly apart from the Orphist work of Robert and Sonja Delaunay. The art historical confusion between the two movements, resulting in the almost invariable placement of Russell in the Delaunays' joint shadow, is at best Eurocentric in its outlook, and at worst simply historically inaccurate.

discovers that Russell found a critical lesson in proportion in such architectural details: namely, that the most compelling forms in nature and culture tend to rise from simply articulated elevations and then branch out or come to fruition in a busier climax, even in nearly top-heavy sections. Seen in this light, Russell's sketches of Roman portals, with their massive cornices and pediments surmounting straight and unadorned thresholds, can be likened to Michaelangelo's *Dying Slave*, its arms stretched dramatically over the shoulders, or, for that matter, to any muscular human body that seemingly reaches a formal climax in a particularly muscular upper torso.

In concert with this close attention paid to the massing of a strong figure or building in its upper reaches, Russell's forms almost invariably lose clean articulation in their faces, heads, hands, and feet—in short any extremity that posed a danger of the overall circuit of energy of the figure pooling stagnantly or poorly dissipating. As a result, Russell never accomplished all that much in the realm of portraiture, forever remaining something of an amateur at drawing the human head, hand, or foot (as attested by the highly tentative array of samples in the Morgan Russell Archives at Montclair). As compensation, as well as in noble service to a larger formal ideal, Russell often turns the heads of his models sharply downward, that is, reflexively and dramatically *into* the torso, where they virtually “lose” their necks in the meeting of breastbone with chin, creating as it were a cluster of forms in counterpoint to the figure's hips and thighs, as well as the branching of legs away from a central axis as our gaze skims down them to rather Egyptian, triangular ankles. Similarly, Russell frequently has his models close their hands so that their clenched forms resemble miniconstellations of energy, like bulbs that might illuminate the end of a long circuitry, where they signify the terminus of a current of electricity and its transformation into another format for unfettered dispersal into the surrounding atmosphere.

### *The Dying Slave as Self-Portrait?*

This concept of contained and yet potentially boundless energy lay at the core of Russell's visceral attraction to Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* in the spring of 1909, just as he was seeking a model by which he might transcend the almost stifling examples of Cézanne and Picasso. For all their mastery at evoking the materiality of earth, stone, and sheer mass, both remained lacking in a certain lyrical articulation of rhythm and movement—the inspired stuff of a Beethoven symphony.<sup>73</sup> As Russell has written of his *own* kind of Cubism, form could be “squarish-heavy but must present an inner life, a bursting intensity turning in a confined cubic space, imprisoned but alive...a sort of *condition ramassé* [intensely gathered state] but manifest [in all] its forces.”<sup>74</sup>

As Russell turned to the High Italian Renaissance to reclaim something of that lyrical timbre, he seems to have remained largely incognizant of an equally compelling aspect of an equally compelling aspect of Michelangelo's sculpture. The *Dying Slave* is, on closer analysis, an art historical compendium, its various components signaling at times competing and, at other turns, complementary sources. For instance, the raised position

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<sup>73</sup> Russell and Macdonald-Wright assiduously studied the scores of Beethoven symphonies during their invention of Synchronism; see subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, 4.2.27, January–February, 1914, where Russell refers to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as embodying “superhuman ecstasy and intoxication.”

<sup>74</sup> See subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, 4.2.38, 1915 (late), Morgan Russell Archives.

of the slave's left arm, bent reflexively over his own shoulders to sketch in space a triangle, was in fact borrowed from the mature Classical Greek tradition of the *Dying Niobid*, ca. 450–440 B.C., who desperately, in a last breath of sheer terror, reaches backward with both arms to extract from her rear torso an arrow that has just mortally felled her.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, the position of the *Dying Slave*'s right arm, riding along the bottom edge of his finely etched shirt, has been borrowed from a long tradition of the *Venus pudica*, or "modest Venus," in which the goddess deliberately and blushing draws one arm across her lower bosom.<sup>76</sup> Finally, Michelangelo borrows the facial expression of this smiling, "dying" figure from a recent practice of representing Christ's Passion, namely, the Deposition and subsequent Resurrection, as a state of spiritual ecstasy.<sup>77</sup>

Having cited such august artistic traditions, each one cleverly embedded in this sinuous figure, one would be remiss to overlook or leave unspoken this statue's strange *eroticism*. It is there, in the dense conjunction of etched breast and nipple, uplifted "muscle shirt," and index finger provocatively engaging the strangely vaginal folds of the fabric, which has been inexplicably threaded downward from its otherwise *corseted* arrangement around the upper, muscular torso, not unlike an encircling tether.<sup>78</sup> Havelock Ellis, if not Carpenter and Symonds, would have seen this immediately: the *Dying Slave* is, when all its aesthetic attributes have been duly stated, a thinly veiled *androgynie*, or *hermaphrodite*.

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<sup>75</sup> The raised and bent arm over the shoulder also characterizes male versions of the theme of the *Dying Niobid*, in which the felled figure struggles to support his own weight on one arm in a last attempt to return to his feet. In either instance, the resemblance of the sketched "triangle" in space to the point of an arrow is notable.

<sup>76</sup> Michelangelo could well have been familiar with at least two such sculptural versions of the *Venus pudica* theme, in the Medici Venus, a first-century copy after Cleomenes of Athens, and a rendering of the theme of *Prudence* by Giovanni Pisano, of 1302 (which occupied the cathedral pulpit of Pisa). There is also a notable parallel between the motif of the lifted shirt of this statue with Michelangelo's rendition of the disheveled Christ in his *Florence Pietà*, of ca. 1499, a sculpture that Russell assiduously copied, although the purely realistic, or quotidian quality of the theme in the sacred context had been transformed into a decidedly erotic motif, signaling "nudity," in the *Dying Slave*.

<sup>77</sup> An example of this ecstatic expression could be found already in Michelangelo's *Florence Pietà*, which Russell was fond of copying. There is also a parallel between the motif of the lifted shirt and the shirt on the figure of Christ in the *Florence Pietà*, although the purely realistic quality of dishevelment in the sacred context has been decidedly transformed by Michelangelo into an erotic motif announcing "nudity" in the *Dying Slave*.

<sup>78</sup> In this detail Michelangelo subtly subverted the traditional representation of the *Venus pudica* that has her gracefully slipping her thumb between her exposed breasts as she seeks to cover them with her raised arm and splayed fingers—as demonstrated in Sandro Botticelli's painting *Birth of Venus*, of ca. 1485. That the erotic transformation of this gesture by the substitution of the more active and provocative forefinger for the passive thumb was personally significant to Michelangelo is born out by its appearance in at least two places in the Sistine Ceiling, of 1508–12, in the pose of the nude figure over Jeremiah, and in that of the nude male over the Libyan Sibyl; see Howard Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, M.A.: Harper and Row, 1985). Finally, it is worth noting that Michelangelo executed detailed *écorchés*, or studies of the underlying muscular composition, of the raised arm to the breast, as though to ensure its anatomical and *somatic* integrity; see Hugo Chapman, *Michelangelo Drawings* (as in note 1), 141–44.

Given his own sexually ambivalent self-identity, Russell hardly could have failed to assimilate this visual experience.

If, then, Russell's encounter with the *Dying Slave* represents a complex collision of formal, art historical, and highly personal factors, the advent of Synchronism itself begs to be reconceptualized as a considerably more ambivalent cultural phenomenon than acknowledged to date, one driven simultaneously by plainly evident and occluded forces, and carrying Russell into creative channels engendering deep personal pain as well as creative fulfillment. It is remarkable that just as he brought his Synchronist project to a high state of perfection in the completion of his colossal masterpiece *Synchromy in Orange: To Form*, of 1914—itsself harboring the *Dying Slave* as its underlying schema—Russell suffered eyestrain, as though the resplendence of this prismatic canvas touched off a profound physical and psychological cataract. Smarting in the wake of his own accomplishment, and regrouping his multiple energies by returning to the human figure in the following decades, Russell would thenceforth rediscover in himself a new kind of Renoir, though one more wary of the vagaries of self-identity than could ever be sustained by the French master's exceedingly sanguine mythology.

END

## MORGAN RUSSELL AT THE MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM

### INTRODUCTION

The Montclair Art Museum, in Montclair, New Jersey, is the premier repository for the art and papers of leading American modernist Morgan Russell (1886–1953). Henry M. Reed, a resident of Caldwell, New Jersey, and partner of the Montclair insurance firm Askin, Weber & Reed, Inc., who served on the Museum’s Board and Art Committee from 1985 to 1990, donated this collection in 1985. The Morgan Russell Archives and Collection, which had never been fully inventoried before 2004, consists of more than 3,000 works on paper, 8 oil paintings, 11 watercolors, over 70 artist’s notebooks, thousands of pages of correspondence, and nearly 400 photographs of the artist’s work and other subjects, as well as many other documents. The collection is a unique record of the complexities of Russell’s aesthetic and intellectual adventures, especially his development of Synchronism (meaning “with color”), the first declared American modern art movement from 1912 to 1914.

The Museum’s Morgan Russell holdings range from paintings and finished works on paper to thousands of drawings, sketches, essays in notebooks, and notations on mere scraps of paper—the latter testimony to Russell’s often impoverished circumstances yet prodigious intellect. Sometimes nearly illegible, the numerous notations provide compelling evidence of Russell’s mercurial and obsessive drive to analyze and record the inner workings of his art, as well as art around the world.

Dating from about 1907 to 1946, the more than two hundred paintings, drawings, and watercolors that are identified as individual works of art are preserved within the Museum’s art collections. Among them are several still-life paintings, including the early Synchronist *Still Life with Bananas* (ca. 1912–13), as well as an important study for Russell’s largest painting, *Synchrony in Orange: To Form* (1914, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo). Among the oils on paper, several studies in transparency document Russell’s unrealized plans for constructing kinetic light machines, including the rare light-box construction *Study in Transparency*, ca. 1913–23. Others are color studies and figural studies, many of them based on the sculpture of Michelangelo. A significant group relates directly to the development of Russell’s first abstract Synchronist painting, the seminal *Synchrony in Blue Violet* (1913, Curtis Galleries, Minneapolis).

Russell’s private papers in the Archives, dating from about 1910 to 1946, include a treasure trove of correspondence with a number of leading artists and critics of his day, as well as many lesser-known figures, all of which provide a rare glimpse into the art world at that time. Among the hundreds of documents are letters from the renowned French poet-critics Guillaume Apollinaire and Blaise Cendrars, as well as the critic and pioneering collector of modern art Leo Stein. Other important correspondents were Russell’s former teacher Robert Henri; the leading critic and champion of Synchronism, Willard Huntington Wright; the painter and close friend Mabel Alvarez; and close Russell friend Louis Sol (the first owner of what is now the Archives).

The Russell Archives also contains address books, business papers, personal items (such as passport and marriage certificate), art society membership and museum entry cards, exhibition announcements and catalogs, concert programs, and original music scores. Among the many other documents are maps, travel brochures, and guidebooks; art

periodicals, newspaper and magazine clippings (on Russell's work, art, music, and various other subjects); calling cards, handbills, receipts for art supplies, and book catalogs. A group of photographs dating from about 1908 to 1938 show images of Russell, his family and friends, his work—including an invaluable cache of photographs of Russell's prodigious work in sculpture, much of which is now lost or destroyed—and other subjects.

The Russell Archives and Collection are thus well equipped to offer unique insights into the origins of Synchronism during 1912–1913 in Paris, as well as the artist's preoccupations with music, religion, philosophy, metaphysics, and science. Prevalent subjects explored in the archives include color practice and theory (the search for rhythmic and harmonic bases of color), the sculptural and figural genesis of his work, the synesthetic relation between music and painting (specifically, analogies between musical composition and color organization as the basis for an abstract art), the artist's reverence for the old masters, and the evolution of selected works of art. As such, the Archives and Collection constitute a rare portrait of one of the most complex, contradictory American masters of the early twentieth century, whose ambition to create a new art evoking the rhythms of contemporary life is revealed in numerous documents and artworks.

## PROVENANCE

When Morgan Russell and his second wife, Suzanne Binon, quit France for the United States in May 1946, Russell left behind a large cache of his private papers, notebooks, drawings, and sketches (Russell had already taken the trouble to ship to the United States the majority of his unsold canvases). This diverse body of abandoned artwork and ephemera immediately came into the possession of Russell's close friend and confidant Louis Sol, a printer of fine art reproductions associated with the renowned Paris firm Draeger Frères, who had purchased Russell's house at Aigremont, where Russell had lived since June 1921. For close to two decades this work sat undisturbed in Sol's possession until it was recovered in 1964 by the young art historian William C. Agee, who was scouting France for new acquisitions on behalf of the private American collector Benjamin Garber, an interior decorator and art consultant (Garber was a former dance student of Martha Graham and had studied painting with Amédée Ozenfant). Garber purchased the composite collection from Sol in late 1965, just after Sol had put this material at the disposal of Agee for the exhibition *Synchronism and Color Principles in American Painting, 1910–1930*, at Knoedler & Co., New York. Having been impressed by Russell's work at this exhibition, Henry M. Reed, a partner of the firm Askin, Weber & Reed, Inc. (a Montclair-based corporate accounting and insurance company) and a resident of Caldwell, New Jersey, purchased the bulk of Russell's private papers and drawings from Garber in 1975; three years later Reed donated this material to the Whitney Museum of American Art, under the stewardship of curator Gail Levin. Having subsequently become dissatisfied with the Whitney's handling of the archives and collection, Reed made museum history in 1985 by successfully recalling his gift, under threat of a lawsuit, and redirected it to the Montclair Art Museum, where from 1985 to 1990 Reed served on the Museum Board and Art Committee.

Subsequent additions to the archives and collection (see Appendices for gift inventories or abstracts):

*Gift of Ken Rudo, 2005*

*Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004*

*Gift of Gregg G. Seibert, 2003*

*Gift of Glenn Bassett, 1988*

## HISTORY OF PRESERVATION

### ORIGINAL CONDITION, 1947–1964 (France)

The various materials contained in the archives were found in a neglected state by William Agee at the home of Louis Sol, in Aigremont, France, in the summer of 1964, where they are said to have been “moldering” and “bug-infested” and “covered by vines”—suggesting that this material lay relatively untouched since Russell quit the house in the early summer of 1946 for the United States, in all likelihood having left things behind in an outer building of the “farm” that Russell used as a studio.

### PRIVATE COLLECTIONS, 1965–1978 (USA)

As this material subsequently changed hands from 1965 to 1978, that is, from its discovery at Aigremont through the possession by private collectors Benjamin Garber (1965–75) and Henry M. Reed (1975–78), it remained in general disarray and was accessed only sporadically for historical research and exhibitions.

### WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, 1978–1985 (New York, NY)

During the time it was housed by the Whitney Museum of American Art (1978–85), the material remained relatively unsorted in numerous boxes, although Gail Levin is known to have pulled much material and reclassified it for her use in Whitney curatorial offices for the preparation of exhibitions. Finally in the winter and spring of 1985, the Whitney Museum appointed an archivist to create an organization for the entire archives, which entailed retrieving all of the items that had been pulled by Levin and reintegrating them into the balance of the material. By June 1985 the Whitney had succeeded in classifying all items in general subject folders and archival boxes. The drawings themselves were left in relative disorder, at least as far as can be ascertained at this remove in time. Such was their condition when the Montclair Art Museum acquired the archives and drawings in mid-1985.

## **MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM, 1985–present (Montclair, New Jersey)**

From 1985 to 2004, the Montclair Art Museum generally adhered to the Whitney's organizational format for the archives, while the large cache of drawings and sketches, occupying about sixteen various museum (known as Solander) boxes remained virtually unsorted.

### **INVENTORIES PRIOR TO 2004–2006, Montclair Art Museum**

Over the course of the decade leading up to May 2004, an in-house review of the archives was conducted by Randolph Black, former registrar, and Mary Birmingham, cataloguer, with the assistance of intern Elizabeth Herridge (1999) and volunteer Katharine Brown (2000). They produced an inventory for internal reference purposes. "MRA" numbers appearing on the versos of drawings corresponded to that inventory. These efforts proved fundamental to the preservation and safekeeping of the Morgan Russell Archives and Collection to early 2004, and documents produced in conjunction with them were carefully reviewed for the possibility of preserving their formats and integrating them into a subsequent, more comprehensive guide to the Archives and Collection. Such materials, however, have been superseded by the present *Comprehensive Guide*, which has established a more inclusive and accessible organization as well as a standardized format compatible with comparable collections worldwide.

On the commencement of the *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection Enhancement Project, 2004–2006*, the archives were thus essentially in the limited order given them by the Whitney Museum, whereas the drawings were dispersed at random among sixteen Solander boxes. Further materials occupied plastic binders that had been created to temporarily house materials pulled for exhibitions (1990/1998) and that had never been reintegrated into the archives/collection proper.

Please refer to the *Processing Notes* following the Project Abstract, below, for further information.

### **MORGAN RUSSELL PAPERS, ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART, Smithsonian Institution (New York, N.Y., and Washington, D.C.)**

Many of the Russell papers, including select correspondence (letters and postcards); biographical material; business records; select writings; selections from Russell's unbound notes, sketches, and notebooks; printed material; and photographs, were microfilmed by the *Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution*, in 1991, and may be accessed through the AAA in New York and Washington, D.C., on reels 4524–4542. Consulting that source against materials outlined in the present *Comprehensive Guide* is recommended; see also Appendix IX, below, for an alphabetical list of miscellaneous correspondents as provided by the AAA Finding Aid as of 1991 (no such list was compiled for this *Comprehensive Guide*).

## MORGAN RUSSELL ARCHIVES AND COLLECTION ENHANCEMENT PROJECT, 2004–2006

### *Abstract and Funding*

In May 2004 the Montclair Art Museum received funding from the Henry Luce Foundation for the purpose of conducting a comprehensive inventory and reevaluation of the Morgan Russell Archives and Collection, including the new accessioning of drawings into the collection proper; the creation of a comprehensive guide to the archives and collection; the complete rehousing of the archives and collection; the creation of Web-page publications; and the mounting of a small show of drawings—among other upgrades and improvements expressly conceived for the purpose of facilitating more efficient access to the Museum's entire breadth of Morgan Russell holdings. This material had not received such care since it entered the Museum in 1985. The Museum appointed Gregory Galligan, a scholar of modern American and French art (Ph.D. candidate, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University) to implement and direct the Project, reporting to Chief Curator Gail Stavitsky and coordinating work with other staff and part-time project specialists. Along with consulting archivist Nancy Johnson, Galligan was responsible for researching, organizing, and taking inventory of the entire collection and archives, building upon the foundation of previous efforts.

### *Project Staff*

*A project of this nature and scope naturally draws upon the expertise of dedicated personnel of virtually every department of the museum, many of whom could not be listed here for the sake of brevity. Listed below are thus key personnel who were engaged with the core mission of this project from 2004–2006:*

Gregory Galligan, *Project Director*; Nancy Johnson, *Archivist*; Gail Stavitsky, *Chief Curator*; Renée Powley, *Registrar*; Rosemary Vence, former *Associate Registrar*; Joseph Zadroga, former *Senior Exhibition Designer*; Charles Cobbinah, former *Senior Exhibition Designer*; Mary Fletcher, *Data Manager*; Maryanna Roberts, *Preparator*; Aran Roche, *Grants Manager*, three project interns, Laura Demoreuille (Connecticut College), Caitlin O'Brien (Rutgers University), and Sumia Ibrahim (Rutgers University); periodic consultative assistance was provided by Marilyn S. Kushner, *Curator of Prints and Drawings and Department Chair, Prints, Drawings and Photographs, Brooklyn Museum*, and widely recognized specialist of Morgan Russell studies (Kushner curated the Montclair Art Museum's exhibition *Morgan Russell: A Retrospective*, 1990). A penultimate proofreading and manuscript editing was generously provided by independent editor Lory Frankel (*The Art Bulletin*, College Art Association). Special recognition is extended to Patterson Sims, *Director, Montclair Art Museum*, who provided crucial and enthusiastic support and consultation throughout the entire course of this project.

### *Processing Notes:*

**Organizational Scheme:** The processing staff followed the basic organizational scheme that had been previously determined: grouping the material into series consisting of correspondence, printed materials, loose notes, photographs, drawings, and so on. Additional series were added to facilitate use of the materials. These include biographical material, business and financial records,

and writings. Certain of these series were further divided. A distinction was made between Russell's public writings (intended for lectures or publication) and his private writings, including notebooks, loose notes, and longer texts that he apparently wrote for his own use. Each series was numbered. Subseries were created as logic dictated. In certain groups, sub-subseries numbers were assigned to facilitate finding a particular item and for use in citation. These include individual numbering for each correspondent in Series I; for individual notebooks in Subseries 4.2; and for individual essays on aesthetics in Subseries 4.3, Essays, creative; for speeches in Subseries 5.1; and for Essays, Subseries 5.2.

**Dating** of much of Russell's drawings in the Archives, as well as some works in the Collection, is in keeping with previously published sources or with Russell's actual dating, written in longhand, when available. Russell rarely dated his drawings; thus most remain undated here. The dating of Russell's notebooks has generally followed Russell's inscriptions, even where he apparently added the date to the cover of notebooks retrospectively (that is, taking the risk of following Russell's possible confusion or manipulation of dates to suit his own version of history). Dating determined on the basis of curatorial analysis of style, content, or other distinguishing criteria appears in brackets: [1908].

**Biographies** of correspondents generally have been derived and adapted from common reference sources, such as *Grove Art Online*, various exhibition or institutional membership registers, published obituaries, or other public directories, and are employed here for educational purposes only. *They are provided as convenient "thumbnail" references for those working with the Archives and Collection and are not intended for publication for any purpose.* The biography for Morgan Russell was compiled and written by Gregory Galligan from various standard biographical sources, while taking into consideration various recollections by Stanton Macdonald-Wright as published in *American Art Review* (January–February 1974), the chronology of Russell's life by Marilyn S. Kushner in *Morgan Russell* (Montclair Art Museum, 1990), and firsthand discoveries made in the course of the *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection Enhancement Project*, 2004–2006.

**Translations** from the French—always a difficult matter with Russell given his idiosyncratic "Franglais" and frequently cryptic handwriting—have been provided by Gregory Galligan for the purpose of conveying *general content* of letters, notebooks, annotations, and so on. In translating passages from Russell's notebooks and other sources, Galligan opted for recasting awkward phrasing into idiomatic English in order to convey the spirit of the text over its literal, word-for-word translation. Also, Russell frequently omitted diacritical markings in his French passages; all such markings have been supplied (by Galligan and editor Lory Frankel) here for ease of reading. Where noted, translations and transcriptions of notebooks and various manuscripts are by former Whitney Museum of American Art Fellow Bérénice Reynaud. Unfortunately, many of Reynaud's texts have been lost since their creation at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1985. Where extant, they have been reunited with their corresponding documents and offer the most idiomatic translations of such material to date. Under the category "Loose Notes," subcategories were established according to the most basic gleaning of content from the French; these await a more rigorous and comprehensive sorting, as well as close translation, cataloging, and cross-referencing.

**Groupings** of work or documents apparently determined by Russell have been preserved in all cases, even if such groupings did not perfectly follow or present Russell's actual creative evolution over the course of his career. Some of these idiosyncratic groupings await further study and transcription.

**Inventory counts** of drawings are *general counts*, in that they have been arrived at by counting *sheets of paper*, even where sheets bore drawings or sketches on both the recto and the verso. About 33 percent of the sheets so counted bear inscriptions on both sides; hence, the total count of sheets has been rounded upward by about that percentage to reflect actual counts of self-contained drawings, regardless of their single- or double-sided status.

## COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE

### MORGAN RUSSELL ARCHIVES AND COLLECTION

#### BIOGRAPHY

##### *Abstract*

Morgan Russell was born in New York City, 25 January 1886; after spending nearly his entire artistic career in France (from 1909 to 1946), Russell retired to the United States in 1946. After suffering two successive strokes, Russell died at age sixty-seven in Broomall, Pennsylvania, 29 May 1953. After an early study of architecture, Russell received his formal training in drawing, sculpture, and anatomy, at the Art Students League, New York, from 1906 through 1908. He also studied painting with Robert Henri in late 1907. Despite frequent struggles with inadequate finances and other setbacks, very early in his career Russell could boast the distinction of having gained critical appreciation from many of the most astute observers of the artistic scene in France, among them Guillaume Apollinaire, Willard Huntington Wright, Élie Faure, and Michel Seuphor. He was also the only American, save his collaborator Stanton Macdonald-Wright, who could make a viable claim to having decisively contributed to the advent and subsequent evolution of complete color abstraction on both sides of the Atlantic. From 1910 (only one year after settling in Paris) to 1930, Russell exhibited his work regularly in the major salons of Paris, including the Salon des Indépendants, the Salon d'Automne, and the Salon des Tuileries. He saw critical success as well through a series of important and well-received exhibitions in Europe, among them his debut exhibitions (with Macdonald-Wright) of Synchronism in Munich and Paris in 1913, followed by several solo (as well as group) gallery exhibitions of recent work in Paris in the late 1910s and early 1920s. A comprehensive solo exhibition featuring sixty paintings was mounted at the prestigious Galerie La Licorne, Paris, in May 1923, with a catalog that featured an essay by the renowned art historian Élie Faure. Less than two years later, in January 1925, Russell exhibited recent work in a solo exhibition at the Galerie Marguerite Henri, Paris, organized by the prominent critic Louis Vauxcelles.

In the United States, Russell participated in the historic *Armory Show* of 1913 and made his debut, with Macdonald-Wright, in a two-man exhibition at Carroll Galleries, New York, the following year. In March 1916 Russell took part in the historic *Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters*, at Anderson Galleries. Following Macdonald-Wright's example, in August 1920 Russell showed Synchronist paintings in a "Synchronistic" [*sic*] exhibition with Macdonald-Wright, Thomas Hart Benton, Preston Dickenson, William Yarrow, and others, at the Edouard Antonin Vysekal studio, Los Angeles. He subsequently participated in the *First Exhibition of Group of Independent Artists of Los Angeles*, in 1923. During 1931 and 1932, Russell sojourned in California, teaching, lecturing, and mounting major shows at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, and the Stendahl Art Galleries, Los Angeles. In 1950 Russell was featured in an exhibition of Synchronist and abstract painting with Macdonald-Wright and Patrick Henry Bruce at the Rose Fried Gallery, New York. In addition, Russell would see his *Synchrony in Orange: To Form*, of 1914, included in the exhibition *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1952. Russell was honored posthumously in a memorial exhibition at the Rose Fried Gallery in November 1953.

## *Annotated Chronology*

Little is known, to date, about Russell's childhood. It is notable, however, that Russell's father, Charles Jean Russell, an architect, died of unknown causes in 1895, when Russell was nine. Within three years of Charles Russell's death, Russell's mother, Miner Antoinette Russell, married Charles Otis Morgan, about whom almost nothing is presently known. Russell had no siblings, and, according to Marilyn S. Kushner (*Morgan Russell*, 1990), on remarrying, Miner Antoinette cut off relations with both her own family and the Russell circle, effectively leaving Russell with little sense of extended family. Years later, after Russell had settled in Paris (1909), his stepfather wrote him of his mother's death from pneumonia, but Russell failed to return to America to attend her funeral or settle her domestic affairs. This was the last communication that Russell would receive from his stepfather. Russell doubtless lacked the funds necessary for an emergency trip across the ocean, but it is also possible that he harbored mixed feelings toward his mother, since Russell seems to have been subjected to some kind of psychosexual abuse by her during his childhood—as Russell himself suggests in several semiautobiographical manuscripts of his later years. The true nature or extent of such abuse is almost impossible to determine at this remove in time; nevertheless, we know for a fact that during early adolescence Russell developed a fondness for dressing in petticoats and corsets (he was to indulge in this practice throughout his life), and that this ritual was one that his mother almost certainly forced on him as a young boy. Given such circumstances, it is safe to presume that certainly by his late teens, if not earlier, Russell found himself both psychologically and physically on his own, a condition that resonates with Russell's subsequent leanings toward philosophical idealism, worldly ambition, and—perhaps paradoxically—domestic seclusion.

By his late teens Russell seemed destined for his late father's profession of architecture, although early on he was exposed to sculpture by his friend and roommate Arthur Lee, and through supporting himself by posing for the sculpture classes of James Earle Fraser, at the Art Students League, New York, from about 1904 to 1908. Russell was eventually encouraged to take up painting by his classmate Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, who sponsored his first trip to Europe in the spring and summer of 1906. The trip was an eye-opener; after touring Italy, Russell stayed in Paris long enough to take in the Salon d'Automne, where he copied Paul Gauguin's *Nave Nave Mahana* (1896), before returning to New York and studying sculpture with Fraser, as well as drawing and human anatomy with George B. Bridgman (Bridgman's popular methods would be published under the titles *Constructive Anatomy*, 1920, and *The Human Machine*, 1939). After experimenting with Symbolist and Impressionist methods (in addition to copying Gauguin, Russell was already an admirer of Claude Monet), Russell studied painting with Robert Henri from about 1907 to 1908. He was quickly and forever impressed by his mentor's progressive outlook [see Series 1.1.18, Robert Henri, Biographical Note].

Russell returned to Paris in the spring of 1908, where he promptly met the influential American collectors Leo and Gertrude Stein. The Steins, still fresh from Johns Hopkins University—Leo pursuing a life of art criticism and painting, Gertrude just feeling her way into a fledgling literary career after abandoning higher studies in behavioral psychology—introduced Russell to a circle of prominent avant-garde artists, most notably Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, as well as the poet-critic Guillaume Apollinaire (the latter provided Russell with letters of introduction to various dealers, such as Alfred Stieglitz, of the 291 gallery in New York, and the Paris dealer Paul Guillaume). About

this time Russell also made the acquaintance of Auguste Rodin. After returning to New York and receiving a promise of extended support from Gertrude Whitney, Russell settled in Paris in the spring of 1909, intent on studying painting and sculpture for an extended period. As it turned out, Russell's stay would last nearly a lifetime, as thereafter he would return to the United States only twice during his artistic career: for the month of March 1916, when Russell participated in the *Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters* (Anderson Galleries, New York); and again in 1931, this time for a year's sojourn and hiatus from active painting (during that time Russell taught at a local art school and exhibited in Los Angeles and San Francisco). France would remain Russell's "home front" until he had more or less exhausted his career at the close of World War II, at which time he and his second wife, Suzanne Binon Russell, quit Paris for the Pennsylvania estate of her daughter Denyse Binon Kent (see the *Morgan Russell Genealogy*, below).

Shortly after settling in Paris in early 1909, Russell underwent what was to prove perhaps the most decisive event of his artistic life. Russell hardly needed to travel any further for his creative epiphany; it evolved probably out of one of his earliest visits to the Musée du Louvre, as Russell happened on a sculpture by Michelangelo, the *Dying Slave* (1513). While there is no confession of sudden conversion in Russell's notebooks of the period, the relentless, even obsessive reappearance of the pose of the *Dying Slave* in Russell's work, both on paper and in oils on canvas, as well as subsequent meditations on the work of Michelangelo, signals that this masterpiece of the High Renaissance had become for Russell a creative talisman, something to turn to for endless sustenance and self-discovery. Russell reacted with relative indifference to the work's overt subject; rather, it was the spiritual and psychological elements implied by the *pose* of the *Dying Slave*—its powerful "spiral," whose boundless energies were seemingly held in check by an invisible, opposing principle—that mesmerized the young painter. Russell's appropriation, repetition, and variation of the sculpture's dynamic contours from that date forward are at once impressive and disquieting. It was probably a saving grace that at about this time Russell joined the Académie Matisse, following the example of Sarah Stein (no less likely at the urging of her brother, Leo). Matisse is known to have inscribed several of Russell's photographs of the latter's own plaster sculptures, sketching bold strokes of ink along prominent contours of the figure, as though to accentuate its curves and assist the eye in grasping their powerful arabesques. During this time Russell absorbed lessons in avant-garde color and form from the example of Fauvism, while also copying, at the Steins' apartment at 27, rue de Fleurus, Picasso's *Three Women*, of 1907–8. For their popular weekly salon, the Steins ceremoniously unveiled the most recent work of Picasso and other avant-garde masters was ceremoniously unveiled for all who visited their popular weekly salon (American painter Max Weber later recounted how Gertrude Stein could be found on many Saturday afternoons methodically pulling out drawings and other artworks for whomever showed interest, including greenhorn painters and poets, as well as scores of Paris itinerants from abroad). Russell also borrowed a small Cézanne still life of apples (ca. 1873–77) from Leo Stein, who periodically offered Russell pointed criticism of his artistic progress. (Stein also acquired at least two paintings by Russell in the years preceding World War I, which may have found a place among other canvases on the crowded walls of the Stein salon, although their identification and placement remain undetermined to date.)

In 1911 Russell studied color theory in Paris with the Canadian painter Ernest Percyval Tudor-Hart (1873–1954), who proposed theoretical and experimental analogies between color and various elements of musical composition. Sometime this year, and probably in

Tudor-Hart's class, Russell met the American artist Stanton Macdonald-Wright. While exploring together the various properties of color and light under the influence of various Post-Impressionist, Futurist, and Cubist currents, Russell and Macdonald-Wright ambitiously forged their own abstract mode of painting, which they dubbed Synchronism, meaning "with color." Not unlike many artists in Paris at that moment, Russell and Wright were intent on developing an expressive mode of abstraction that would achieve the status of a "visual music." For Russell, this implied manipulating color on the flat surface of the canvas as though it were a malleable, sculptural medium (this is largely what distinguishes Russell's sensibility from that of Robert Delaunay, the inventor of Simultaneism, or Orphism, the latter term devised by Guillaume Apollinaire for a parallel school of color abstraction then current in Paris). In his notebooks dating from this period, Russell speaks of attempting to coordinate color "triads" and rhythmic color harmonies in the manner of a classical master working with musical tone and meter (Russell and Wright studied the symphonic scores of Beethoven assiduously). He also writes of the need for color forms to unfold at once *across* the flat surface of the canvas and *into* a deep, if fictive space, in the manner of sculpture.

Russell and Wright also began theorizing at this time about the possibility of constructing a light machine that might project moving, abstract color harmonies in real space, thus creating a kinetic, sculptural expression of form by the exclusive manipulation of color and light. Russell wrote extensively on the subject in his notebooks of the time, suggesting that certain light-based projects on a grand scale would represent a historic successor to oil painting, even rendering the latter obsolete. He sketched out plans for a *Synchromy à la lumière*, or "Synchromy in Light," which was never fully realized due to lack of proper funding, although Russell would forge ahead on a considerably smaller scale, constructing a tabletop light box and experimenting with modular, sequential color compositions, or "screens," in gouache on tissue paper (Morgan Russell Archives and Collection, Montclair Art Museum).

Russell and Wright first introduced their Synchronist program to the public in a shared exhibition at the Neue Kunstsalon, Munich (*Ausstellung der Synchromisten, Morgan Russell, S. Macdonald-Wright*), in June 1913, which was generally well received by the public (years later Macdonald-Wright recalled that an unnamed Bavarian "company" had offered to purchase the exhibition in toto). This was followed by a joint show at the prestigious Galerie Bernheim-Jeune (*Les Synchromistes Morgan Russell et S. Macdonald-Wright*), Paris, in late October, which attracted the favorable attention of French critics, among them Guillaume Apollinaire and Louis Vauxcelles.

Russell's work of 1913-14 often seems entirely abstract, as in his two masterpieces *Synchromy in Blue Violet*, of 1913, and his seminal *Synchromy in Orange: To Form*, of 1914. Indeed, it was reported in the March 25, 1914, edition of *Le Matin* that on stopping in front of Russell's *Synchromy in Orange: To Form* at that year's Salon des Artistes Indépendants, newly elected French president Raymond Poincaré sputtered, "Can anybody tell me, gentlemen, what on earth *that* is supposed to represent?" Nevertheless, virtually all of Russell's work of this period was derived from a representational skeleton, namely the human body with arms raised in the manner of Michelangelo's *Dying Slave*, or in another position similarly expressive of an inner current of energy. When this is duly taken into account, Russell's work speaks to his profound appreciation for the underlying, vital energy of the human form, his abstract color wedges (derived in part from the recent work of Picasso) twisting in space in the manner of a spiral current, therein evoking concepts of organic growth and ceaseless self-transformation.

In early March 1914 Russell and Macdonald-Wright reprised their Paris debut in a two-week exhibition at Carroll Galleries, New York, where their work was characterized in the press as a “Cubist or Futurist assault on the optic nerves.” Macdonald-Wright would thereafter make his career in the United States, mostly in California, while Russell would remain situated in France, although within two years he would largely abandon his Synchronist mode of painting for a return to figuration (roughly coinciding with his suffering from an indeterminate form of eyestrain). Although he briefly revived his Synchronist style in the early 1920s in a series of work entitled *Eidos* (meaning “form” in Greek), Russell favored experimenting with various ornate or neo-baroque styles of figurative painting that issued from his study of Mannerist and Baroque old masters, such as Parmigianino and Gian Lorenzo Bernini. One still sees something of Russell’s passion for Renaissance *contrapposto* and Greco-Roman statuary in this body of work, in which Russell explores antique myth, Christian religious narrative, and entirely fantastic scenarios in which gods, giants, and demons seem to be vying for dominance over a troubled planet—hardly an unlikely theme in light of the ever-present “white noise” of nationalistic jingoism and saber rattling during the interwar period. During this time Russell showed landscapes, still lifes, and other genre pictures at Paris galleries and annual Paris-based exhibitions. A high point during this era was Russell’s solo exhibition of May 1923 at the Paris gallery La Licorne, consisting of sixty works and boasting a catalog essay (actually a reprint of an exhibition review that had appeared in the July 1921 issue of *Revue de l’Époque*) by the celebrated art historian Élie Faure. This was followed by a solo exhibition organized by the prominent critic Louis Vaucelles, at the Galerie Marguerite Henri, Paris, in early 1925.

During the early 1920s Russell also exhibited in Los Angeles, first in a small group show featuring his Synchronist painting with Macdonald-Wright and others at the studio-gallery of the Post-Impressionist painter Edouard Antonin Vysekal (1890–1939), which was followed by his participation in the *First Exhibition of Independent Artists of Los Angeles*, in 1923. By the early 1930s, Russell sought a hiatus from painting and hoped to reinvestigate the possibilities of working with color and light in collaboration with Macdonald-Wright. This led to Russell’s visiting Los Angeles from mid-1931 to mid-1932, where he exhibited work with Wright in Los Angeles and San Francisco while teaching at a local art school. At the time Russell was also seeking to develop a new circle of private collectors (in fact Wright had been selling small paintings by Russell—portraits, still lifes, landscapes—to a California clientele since the early 1920s). After a year’s residency in the region, Russell returned to France and his cherished farm at Aigremont, a rural village in Burgundy. His first wife, Emilie Francesconi (married 1918) died in 1938 of cancer; Russell remarried in 1946, shortly before quitting France for the United States, where he would live out the remainder of his days with his second wife, Suzanne Binon, on the estate of her daughter, Denyse Binon Kent, and son-in-law, A. Atwater Kent Jr., at Ardmore, Pennsylvania. Russell continued to paint periodically and experimented with musical composition, drafting various sacred musical compositions for four voices (including a Mass) and assorted piano music, until he suffered a stroke in September 1948, which left him partly paralyzed and without the use of his right arm (his painting limb). In late 1950 Russell’s Synchronist work was featured in *3 American Pioneers of Abstract Art: The Synchronists Morgan Russell and S. Macdonald Wright* [sic]; Patrick Henry Bruce, at the Rose Fried Gallery, New York, and in January of the following year he saw two works, most notable his seminal *Synchromy in Orange: To Form* (1914), included in the exhibition *Abstract Painting and Sculpture in America*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. After a period of declining health, Russell died of a second stroke at Broomall, Pennsylvania, in May 1953.

## ARCHIVES AND COLLECTION OVERVIEW

**Title:**

Morgan Russell Archives and Collection

**Creator:**

Morgan Russell (1886–1953)

**Extent:**

25 document boxes, approximately 12 linear feet (archives)  
19 box binders  
24 Solander boxes

**Dates:**

1884, 1908–1959 (includes undated material)

**Organization and Arrangement:**

The *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection* is organized into ten series. See series lists, below. Arrangement schemes are indicated in the series descriptions.

Series 1–9 constitute the Morgan Russell Archives (including archival drawings); series 10 constitutes works on paper, namely, *drawings or sketches*, belonging to the Morgan Russell Collection, being works of art accessioned into the collection proper of the Montclair Art Museum.

The Archives are accompanied by two document boxes containing closely related primary and secondary documents, printed materials, and other items received by the Montclair Art Museum after the arrival and accessioning of the original archives and collection in 1985.

**Biographical note:**

Morgan Russell (1886–1953). Painter, sculptor, cofounder of Synchronism, born in New York, N.Y.

After visiting Italy and Paris for the first time in 1906, Russell decided to abandon the study of architecture and pursue painting and sculpture. Returning to New York, he studied sculpture with James Earle Fraser and anatomy and drawing with George B. Bridgman at the Art Students League; shortly after, he studied painting with Robert Henri at the New York School of Art. He did his first painting in 1907. During a second trip to Paris in 1908, Russell met Gertrude and Leo Stein and their circle, including Guillaume Apollinaire, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and Auguste Rodin. He settled in Paris in the spring of 1909 and did not return to the United States to live for almost four decades. He studied painting with Matisse (ca. 1909–10) and received a monthly stipend from his friend Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney through the end of 1915. He closely studied work he saw in museums and was particularly influenced by Michelangelo's *Dying Slave*, which he saw at the Musée du Louvre.

In 1911, Russell met Stanton Macdonald-Wright while attending Ernest Percyval Tudor-Hart's classes in color theory. Russell and Macdonald-Wright formed a close friendship and together developed an abstract painting style they called *Synchromism*, meaning "with color"; their Synchromies were exhibited for the first time at galleries in Munich and Paris in the spring and fall of 1913. Synchromism was the most original American contribution to the evolution of nonobjective, color-based abstraction in Europe up until that time. Russell was also avidly interested in the relation of color and light, and he experimented periodically throughout his career (partly in collaboration with Macdonald-Wright) with a light machine and an art of abstract, colored light projection.

In 1918, he married Emilie Francesconi; in 1921, they bought a farm southeast of Paris in Aigremont, Burgundy, where Russell would reside until leaving France. From 1917 to 1919, Russell lived and worked in the south of France in the circle of Amedeo Modigliani and Chaim Soutine. By that time Russell had abandoned Synchromism and returned to a more figurative mode, often using himself as a model. This figurative work dominated Russell's major solo exhibition at Galerie La Licorne, Paris, in 1923.

Russell visited California in the early 1930s and taught painting at the Chouinard School of Art, Los Angeles (1931-32); he also lectured at museums in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Russell married Suzanne Binon in January 1946, eight years after his first wife died of cancer. In May 1946, the Russells quit France and went to live with Suzanne's daughter Denyse (Mrs. A. Atwater Kent Jr.) in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. Russell suffered a paralytic stroke in 1948, which severely compromised his ability to paint. After suffering a second stroke, Morgan Russell died in a nursing home in Broomall, Pennsylvania, in 1953.

#### **Abstract:**

The Morgan Russell Archives and Collection documents the artistic output, personal life, intellectual pursuits, gender identity issues, and financial predicaments of the artist Morgan Russell from his student years in New York and Paris, beginning in 1906, until his move from France to the United States in 1946. Russell was a relentless chronicler in both words and images, evidenced here by large collections of letters, notebooks, notes, and drawings. Of particular significance are the more than three thousand drawings and sketches, ranging from hasty thumbnail doodles to highly finished works on paper made by Russell over several decades, as well as over seventy notebooks kept by the artist in which he recorded his activities and thoughts about himself, his art and the art of others, his finances and life philosophy.

Series 1 consists of correspondence, most of which is addressed to Russell, including significant correspondence with painters Mabel Alvarez, Stanton Macdonald-Wright, and Robert Henri; critic Leo Stein, novelist and poet Blaise Cendrars; and many others. The biographical material in Series 2 includes address books, immigration and marriage papers, exhibitors' and membership cards. The business and financial papers in Series 3 include bank records, bills, and receipts. The private writings that comprise Series 4 include numerous notebooks, notes and sketches made on loose scraps of papers, essays on aesthetic subjects, creative essays on personal subjects (including gender identity), and material relating to his lightbox studies. The writings intended for public use in Series 5 consist of drafts of essays, speeches, and unpublished book manuscripts. Series 6 holds printed material including exhibition catalogs (some with Russell's annotations and sketches); press clippings about Russell and others; images from publications and

postcards (not used as correspondence); and travel-related materials, such as sightseeing information, maps, passenger lists, and menus. Music-related material in Series 7 includes original scores, studies after classical masters, sheet music catalogs, and notes on the relation between music and painting. The photographs in Series 8 are of Russell, family, friends, and associates, and his work in both painting and sculpture. Series 9 holds the Morgan Russell Archives drawings and sketches. Series 10 holds Drawings/Works on Paper that belong to the Morgan Russell Collection (along with oils on canvas, watercolors, and sculpture; for the latter see Appendices VI and VII).

**Repository:**

Montclair Art Museum  
3 South Mountain Avenue  
Montclair, NJ 07042-1747  
(973) 746-5555

## ADMINISTRATIVE NOTES

**Provenance:**

Henry M. Reed, private collector and former member of the Montclair Art Museum *Art Committee* and *Board of Trustees*; subsequent additions came through generous gifts made by the following private collectors: Ken Rudo (2005); Morgan Russell's stepdaughter Simone Joyce (2004); former member of the Board, Gregg G. Seibert (2003); and Museum friend Glenn Bassett, 1988.

**Collection processing:**

The arrangement and description of this collection were done by Gregory Galligan and Nancy Johnson, 2004-2006.

**Restrictions on access:**

By appointment to qualified researchers with permission of the chief curator Gail Stavitsky; four weeks written advance notice.

**Cite as:**

Morgan Russell Archives and Collection, Montclair Art Museum, Montclair, N.J.  
Cite series and folder number.

**Related material:**

Portions of this collection are available on microfilm at the *Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution*, New York, N.Y., and Washington, D.C. At the time of completion of this *Comprehensive Guide*, in April 2006, the Archives of American Art was preparing to digitize its finding aid for posting to its own website, as well as that of the Montclair Art Museum. Researchers are encouraged to consult both websites for the latest notices and additions to the information found here.

## SERIES LIST

### ARCHIVES

1. **Correspondence** (primarily incoming) [Document Boxes 1-5]  
An alphabetical list of all correspondents precedes the following breakdown:
  - 1.1 Russell family, friends, and associates  
(alphabetical by correspondent)
  - 1.2 Binon family (alphabetical by correspondent)
  - 1.3 Miscellaneous, dated
  - 1.4 Miscellaneous, undated
  - 1.5 Postcards, dated
  - 1.6 Postcards, undated
  
2. **Biographical Material** [Document Box 6]
  
3. **Business and Financial Records** [Document Box 6]
  
4. **Writings, Private** [Document Boxes 7-17]
  - 4.1 Loose Notes [Document Boxes 7-10]
    - 4.1.1 Sorted
      - Art – architecture
      - Art – act of creation [Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004]
      - Art – aesthetics, beauty, theories
      - Art – anatomy
      - Art – Lists/Inventories
      - Art – notes on his work
      - Art – general
      - Art – other artists (two folders)
      - Art – other artists, old masters  
[Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004]
      - Art – process
      - Art – sales
      - Art – Synchronies mentioned
      - Art – technique and technical (two folders)
      - Asian
      - Autobiographical
      - Chess
      - Clothing
      - Color (three folders)
      - Contacts
      - Correspondence on the reverse
      - Drafts of letters
      - Financial
      - Fragments
      - Gender issues
      - Household, garden, farm
      - Illegible
      - Landscape – cloud study

- Language study
- Light
- Literary
- Mathematics
- [Music – *See Series 7, below*]
- Medical – health
- Mythological
- Not Morgan Russell
- Personal musings
- Personal vanity
- Philosophy, religion, history
- Photography and film
- Poetry
- Politics, war
- Postcards
- Self-assessment, plans for self
- Sports (boxing)
- Teacher, pedagogy
- Travel, general
- Travel, California
- Travel, Italy
- 4.1.2 Russell groupings:
  - Art of the East
  - Travel
  - Not labeled
  - “Notes antérieurs”
- 4.1.3 Unsorted (ten folders)
- 4.2 Notebooks (72) [Document Boxes 11–15]
  - Dated:* 4.2.1–4.2.67
  - Undated:* 4.2.68–4.2.72
- 4.3 Essays, aesthetics [Document Box 16]
  - 4.3.1 *Cahier I: Untitled* [On the Antique and Its Formal Superlatives]; French
  - 4.3.2 *Cahier II: Untitled* [On the Aims and Methods of Art], c. 1937–38; possibly 1934; French
  - 4.3.3 *Cahier III: Activité ornamentale :La santé parfaite de l’âme* [Ornamental Activity; The Complete Health of the Soul]; c. 1938–39; French
  - 4.3.4 *Cahier IV: L’Histoire de l’art est l’histoire des pratiques techniques créatrices* [On the History of Art and Its Creative and Technical Practices]; 1938; French
  - 4.3.5 *Cahier V: Untitled* [The Concept of *Circuitry* in Art and Reality]; 1936–38; illustrated; French
  - 4.3.6 [Cahier VI]: “*Incomplete–last one*” [The Tableau as “*Doryphore*”]; 1938; illustrated; French and English

- 4.4 Essays, creative [Document Box 16]
  - 4.4.1 *Une sonorité sur 1914–1915* [tone poem, ca. 1915]
  - 4.4.2 Untitled [*Lucien Manuscript*]; undated
  - 4.4.3 *The Clean Slate, or, The Strange Life of Painter X*; undated
  - 4.4.4 Untitled [*On being put into skirts*]; undated
  - 4.4.5 Untitled [*MacIntyre Manuscript*]; undated
- 4.5 Annotated sketches [Document Box 16]
  - Abstract
  - Anatomical studies
  - Asian
  - Doodles
  - Draperies
  - Figures, individual
  - Figures, groups
  - Heads
  - Landscapes, buildings, and trains
  - Religion
  - Still life
- 4.6 Light-box studies [Document Box 17]
  - 4.6.1 Notes and sketches
  - 4.6.2 Color studies and transparencies
  - 4.6.3 Related materials
- 5. **Writings, Public** [Document Box 17]
  - 5.1 Speeches
  - 5.2 Essays (pedagogical or for publication)
  - 5.3 Book manuscripts
- 6. **Printed material** [Document Boxes 18–20]
  - 6.1 Art related
  - 6.2 Images
  - 6.3 Literary
  - 6.4 Travel related
  - 6.5 Clippings, newspapers and periodicals
  - 6.6 Archival supplements, 1985–present
- 7. **Music** [Document Boxes 22–23]
  - 7.1 Printed materials, music related
  - 7.2 Original compositions, *Cahiers*, compositions, loose scores
  - 7.3 Original manuscripts [Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004; see *Appendix II*]
  - 7.4 Studies after classical masters, *cahiers and assorted*
  - 7.5 Notes on music, dated and undated
  - 7.6 Drawings and diagrams
  - 7.7 Curatorial transcriptions, *Whitney Museum of American Art, ca. 1977*
  - 7.8 Original manuscripts, oversize, *primarily sacred music, 1940s*

## 8. Photographs

### People

[Box binder 1]

- *Morgan Russell and studio*
- *Russell family*
- *Friends and associates/Work by Stanton Macdonald-Wright*

### Artworks: Early to ca. 1923

[Box binder 2]

- *Sculpture*
- *Synchromies*
- *Exhibition installations*

### Artworks: ca. 1920s to 1953

[Box binder 3]

- *Still lifes*
- *Landscapes*
- *Interiors*
- *Figurative works*

### Oversize, assorted

[Solander box 1]

- *Morgan and Suzanne Russell Standing before Synchromy in Orange: To Form, Summer 1950 (Photo by Douglas Borgstedt; two prints)*
- *Suzanne Russell and Unidentified Woman Standing Before Synchromy in Orange: To Form, Summer 1950 (Photo by Douglas Borgstedt)*
- *Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney at Work on On the Top, or Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in Her Studio on Macdougall Street, New York, c. 1917/19 (Photo by Jean de Strelecki)*
- *Stanton Macdonald-Wright Standing before Morgan Russell's Piscine of 1933*
- *Two small albums assembled by Russell or family, containing images of Russell and his work late in life*

## 9. Drawings, Morgan Russell Archives

– Note: To access all drawings of a given genre, consult both the binders, as listed here, and the Solander boxes of oversize and large-scale drawings, below (9.14–9.15) –

### 9.1 Abstraction

#### 9.2A Anatomy

- *Torso*
- *Thigh*
- *Lower leg, feet*

#### 9.2B Anatomy

- *Eyes, nose, ears*
- *Shoulder*
- *Arm*
- *Hands*
- *Bones*

- 9.3 Animals
- 9.4 Architecture
- 9.5 Asian
- 9.6A Female figures, assorted
- 9.6B Female figures, “
- 9.6C Female figures, “
- 9.7 Imaginary/Mythological/Religious
  - *Demons*
  - *Giants*
  - *Biblical*
- 9.8 Landscape
  - *Assorted sketches*
  - *Sketchbook of 1927*
- 9.9 Male figures
- 9.10 Old masters ]
  - *Michelangelo studies*
  - *Assorted studies from the Louvre; Italian and other sites/Museums*
- 9.11 Portraiture
  - *Self-Portraits (presumed)*
  - *Assorted*
  - *Manière de 1915*
- 9.12 The Sol Family
- 9.13A Still life
  - *Fabric/Botanical studies*
- 9.13B Still life
  - *Objects and Arrangements*
- 9.14A Oversize, assorted
  - *Abstraction*
  - *Anatomy*
  - *Animals*
  - *Architecture*
  - *Asian*
  - *Female figures*
- 9.14B Oversize, assorted
  - *Imaginary/Mythological/Religious*
  - *Landscape*
  - *Male figures*
  - *Portraits*
  - *Still life*
- 9.14C Oversize, assorted
  - *By Associates or students*
  - *Miscellaneous*
  - *Old masters*
  - *Painting-Specific studies\**

\*These drawings correspond only to various works illustrated in Marilyn S. Kushner, *Morgan Russell: A Retrospective*, exh. cat., Montclair Art Museum, 1990.

- 9.15 Large-scale, assorted
- *Female figures*
  - *Imaginary/Mythological/Religious*
  - *Male figures*

## SERIES LIST

### COLLECTION

– *Note: To access all the drawings of a given genre, consult Assorted, Oversize, and Large-scale categories (10.9–10.11) in addition to genres 10.1–10.8. Also note that in these categories there may be found genres NOT listed in 10.1–10.8, such as “Asian” or “Multiple figures,” among others. –*

#### 10. **Drawings/Works on Paper, Morgan Russell Collection**

- 10.1A Abstraction, drawings
- 10.1B Abstraction, sketches
- 10.1C Abstraction, Synchronism
- 10.2A Anatomy, drawings
- 10.2B Anatomy, sketches  
*[Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004]*
- 10.3A Female figures, assorted
- 10.3B Female figures, assorted
- 10.3C Female figures, assorted
- 10.4A Landscape, assorted vistas
- 10.4B Landscape, flora and fauna studies
- 10.5 Male figures
- 10.6A Old masters, assorted
- 10.6B Old masters, Michelangelo studies
- 10.7A Portraiture, assorted
- 10.7B Portraiture, self studies
- 10.8 Still life
- 10.9 Assorted, unmatted
  - *Abstraction*
  - *Anatomy*
  - *Female figures*
  - *Landscape*
  - *Michelangelo studies*
  - *Multiple figures*
  - *Still life*
  - *Synchrony*
- 10.10A Oversize, unmatted, assorted
  - *Anatomy*
  - *Asian*
  - *Female figures*
  - *Imaginative/Mythological/Religious*
  - *Notes on color*
  - *Portraiture*

- 10.10B Oversize, matted, assorted
- *Drawing after Picasso's "Three Women"*
  - *Synchromy fragment*
- SEE BOX LIST 10.10B for complete contents
- 10.11 Large-scale, matted, assorted
- *Abstract/Cubist*
  - *Abstract/Synchromy*
  - *Female figures*
  - *Male figures*
  - *Old masters*
  - *Old masters* [Gift of Ken Rudo, 2005]

## SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

### SERIES 1: CORRESPONDENCE (primarily incoming)

*Dates:* 1908–59

*Extent:* 5 document boxes; 2 linear feet

*Arrangement:* 6 series

- 1.1 Russell family, friends, and associates, alphabetical by correspondent
- 1.2 Binon family, alphabetical by correspondent
- 1.3 Miscellaneous, dated, chronological
- 1.4 Miscellaneous, undated, alphabetical by correspondent
- 1.5 Postcards, dated, chronological
- 1.6 Postcards, undated

*Location:* Document boxes 1–5

#### *Scope and content:*

Russell was an inveterate letter writer and corresponded with many friends, relatives, and associates throughout his life. Letter writing was an indispensable vehicle for him; he used it to test and share his thoughts and theories, offer advice and receive criticism, ask for financial support and maintain his many friendships. Although the bulk of the correspondence in this series is addressed to Russell, his part of the correspondence can often be inferred from letters addressed to him. There are some letters written by Russell included here; these offer invaluable insight into his opinions, life decisions, and lifestyles, financial situation, and personality. Taken as a group, this material provides windows into Russell's life and career at virtually every stage of his development, with a special emphasis on his years in Paris and Aigremont, France, 1908–46.

The correspondence is divided into six subseries. For more detailed information, see descriptions included below for each group.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF ALL CORRESPONDENTS

Alexander [or Alexandre]Altenburg  
Mabel Alvarez  
Guillaume Apollinaire  
Denyse Binon  
Suzanne Binon [Russell]  
Louis Bouche  
George Carlock  
Blaise Cendrars  
Barnett D. Conlon  
John Dracopoli  
K. N. Dracopoli  
Aimee Evans  
Anne Evans  
Élie Faure  
John Flanagan  
Howard S. Gans  
Yves Hacart  
R. Chalfant Head  
Robert Henri  
Sidney Mtttron Hirsch  
Robert Kennicott  
Michel Kikoïne  
Arthur Lee  
Stanton Macdonald-Wright  
François Mauriac  
Charles Otis Morgan  
Miner Antoinette Russell Morgan  
Violet Organ  
Charles Joseph Rider  
Alexander [or Alexandre] Robinson  
Augusta Rosiere  
Michel Seuphor [or Ferdinand Louis Berckelaers]  
Fred Sexton  
Viola Brothers Shore  
Wilma Shore  
Louis Sol  
Leo Stein  
Eugénie "Nina" Auzias Stein  
Igor Stravinsky  
Blanche Turnbull  
Ruth Turnbull  
Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney [or Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney]  
Willard Huntington Wright

– The following have not been sorted by name; see Appendix IX for a representative list  
as compiled by the Archives of American Art, 1991 –

Miscellaneous correspondence, dated  
Miscellaneous correspondence, undated  
Postcards, dated  
Postcards, undated

## 1.1 Russell correspondence with family, friends, and associates:

*Dates:* 1908–1952, and undated

*Extent:* 2.5 document boxes

*Languages:* English, French

*Location:* Document boxes 1–3, folders 001–087

### *Scope and content:*

The correspondence in this series dates from 1908 to 1952, spanning Morgan Russell's entire artistic career. Most of the letters here are addressed to Russell and were found among his papers; many of the letters written by Russell may be drafts that the artist later recopied before sending. The correspondence follows his career from New York to France and provides great insight into his lifestyle, range of acquaintances and interests, artistic philosophies and practices, and his ongoing financial predicament.

The earliest letters are from sculptor John Flanagan asking Russell to pose for him; from Russell's mother inquiring about his trip abroad; and from his stepfather, informing Russell of his mother's death in 1909. In a 1910 letter, Russell's teacher Robert Henri responds to his student's queries on art movements and the nature of being an artist. Fifteen years later, Russell asks Henri if he should stay in France and comments on his influence as a teacher.

Correspondence from Guillaume Apollinaire and Blaise Cendrars reflects Russell's involvement with the French avant-garde; particularly significant are letters to and from critic Leo Stein, who offered Russell pointed criticism and advice. Russell corresponded with many artists he met in France, including Alexander Altenberg, George Carlock, John Dracopoli, Chalfant Head, Michel Kikoïne, Arthur Lee, and Alexander Robinson. Constant efforts to find financial support are reflected in correspondence with his early patron, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, with artist Louis Bouche, who managed an art gallery in Philadelphia, with Charles Joseph Rider in California, and many others from whom Russell requested funds that were often sent to him.

Russell's interest in poetry is reflected in his extensive correspondence with Barnett D. Conlon, an American would-be poet, with whom Russell exchanged poems and prose pieces. He also corresponded with French art historian Élie Faure, who wrote an essay on Russell for the July 1921 issue of *Revue de l'Époque* (subsequently reprinted for Russell's major show at Galerie La Licorne, Paris, in 1923); with the critic and historian Michel Seuphor, who would come to write a definitive account of the advent of Synchronism for the January 1958 issue of *L'Oeil*; and with Stanton Macdonald-Wright's brother, art critic Willard Huntington Wright, who was one of the earliest and most articulate defenders of Russell and Wright's achievement (*Modern Painting: Its Tendencies and Meaning*, 1915).

Letters from Louis Sol, close friend of Russell and the original beneficiary of these archives, detail arrangements to buy and sell Russell's work; a later letter conveys information from a third party about vision, the rainbow, and light. A note from composer Igor Stravinsky thanks Russell for contacting him in Paris and apologizes for a missed opportunity to meet in person.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s several young American women studied with Russell, as reflected in correspondence with Wilma Shore and Ruth Turnbull. Russell traveled to California with Shore in 1931, and subsequently he corresponded with several artists he had met there, including Mabel Alvarez, Anne Evans, Robert Kennicott, and Fred Sexton. The Alvarez correspondence is especially interesting for her discussion of her work, as well as Russell's; in addition, she suggests ways in which Russell might find financial support. This collection also includes a significant cache of letters *from* Russell.

Although there is virtually nothing in these archives addressed to Russell from his first wife, Emilie Francesconi (they were married for twenty years, from 1918 to 1938, when Emilie died of cancer), these archives preserve gregarious letters from Russell's second wife, Suzanne Binon (married 1946), as well as from Suzanne's son-in-law French artist Yves Hacart. Correspondence between members of the Binon family, and to members of the Binon family from others, is included in Series 1.2.

The correspondence in this series frequently alternates between English and French, sometimes – especially for Russell – shifting back and forth between the two in the same letter. Some letters include notations and passages underlined by Russell, a practice seen frequently in Russell's personal artist's notebooks, where he retrospectively reviewed his own entries the way one might reread a diary at the distance of several years after the event. This suggests that incoming correspondence often possessed a quality of the "instructive bulletin" for Russell, who in relative isolation in the French countryside was often gleaning aesthetic and personal guidance from all sorts of discursive and visual sources.

See descriptions below for letters to and from individual correspondents.

Note: Letters by Russell to important colleagues and associates, some containing extended reflections by Russell on his art and life, are found in complementary archives at the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Especially notable is a recently recatalogued collection of sixteen letters from Russell addressed to the Paris art critic, Jean Gabriel Lemoine (*L'Echo de Paris*), as well as letters written by Russell to his early colleague and patron Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. Many of these materials were undergoing digitization at the time of completion of this *Comprehensive Guide* and may be available online. Consult the catalogue of the Archives of American Art, <http://siris-archives.si.edu>, for further information.

### 1.1.1 Alexander [or Alexandre] Altenburg

*Letters from Altenburg to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1925–40 and undated

*Extent:* 23 dated letters; 4 undated letters; 1 undated postcard; 1 undated fragment

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters and fragments are unarranged

*Language:* most in English; 1 in French

*Location:* Document box 1, folders 001-002

*Biographical note:*

Alexander Altenburg (1884–1940). American painter, lived in Paris. Alexander Altenburg was born in Greenville, New Jersey, and studied painting at the Académie Julian in Paris in 1907 and at the Art Students League in New York in the 1920s. He was a member of the Society of Independent Artists and exhibited at the Whitney Studio Club in 1920–1922. His family owned a piano manufacturing business in Elizabeth, New Jersey.

See also: Catalog for “Alexander Altenburg: Exhibition of French Landscapes,” 57 Fifth Avenue Gallery, New York, 15 to 28 April 1936, included in Series 6.1, Printed Material, Art related, Exhibition catalogs – Other artists.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Alexander Altenburg to Russell, 1925–40 and undated. The letters in this group indicate a friendly acquaintance between Russell and Altenburg and a continuing discussion on their work as painters, the logistics of their lives and selling their work, and personal matters. In the earliest letter (29 October 1925) Altenburg notes he “Was interested to hear that you are still painting synchronys [*sic*], and the relation you hold in it, with regard to your painting. I would almost make the analogy as the relation between musical composition and theory and harmony. To see painting from the view point of synchrony is of importance, as it keeps in mind the fact that art is creative and not pictorially imitative.” In later correspondence, Altenburg addresses Russell as “Chère Maître,” and praises Russell’s work highly, often describing paintings in detail, while disparaging his own work. In a letter dated 20 October 1927, Altenburg calls Russell “the reincarnation of Michaelangelo [*sic*],” saying he has “the great job of superimposing color realization on the form conception that you have brought over from your former existence.” In the same letter, he also comments, “The intellectual speculation on the relation of music and color just complicates the pure art of painting which is a complete thing in itself. Its [*sic*] like putting mustard on a cheese sandwich.”

Altenburg also frequently comments on Russell’s physical appearance, especially the length of Russell’s hair. He writes of managing and trying to sell works by Russell, and tells Russell about how his works are shown by dealers in Paris; he also mentions exhibitions of work by other artists. Several of Altenburg’s letters are written from the United States (return address is his family’s New Jersey piano manufacturing company), and Altenburg offers to help Russell in his dealings in New York. Several times Altenburg mentions Louis Bouche and the Wanamaker’s Gallery (see Bouche correspondence, 1.1.5, below). By the mid-1930s, the correspondence is less frequent, and Altenburg is back in New York, where he apparently runs a gallery. In one of the later letters (16 September 1937), Altenburg tells Russell that he has “consistently adhered to your vision, and your reference to traveling pastwards confirms my impression that you are not deviating from your purpose.” The final letter in this group is from Frances Altenburg, Alexander’s wife, telling Russell of Altenburg’s death on 12 March 1940, of tuberculosis, an illness that Altenburg mentions in a previous letter. Mrs. Altenburg mentions that her husband had sent Russell a check.

In undated correspondence, Altenburg mentions that Russell has been painting the nude, and questions his practice of using himself as a model. In another

undated letter, Altenburg notes that “they tell me you have become more conservative, that is, that you have relaxed from extreme synchronism.”

### 1.1.2 Mabel Alvarez

*Letters from Alvarez to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1932–39 and undated

*Extent:* 43 dated letters; 1 dated postcard; 5 undated letters; 1 undated card; 3 fragments

*Arrangement:* dated correspondence is arranged chronologically; undated correspondence is unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 1, folders 003–006

*Biographical note:*

Mabel Alvarez (1891–1985). American painter. A California painter of portraits, still lifes, and Symbolist works, Mabel Alvarez studied with William V. Cahill in Los Angeles starting in 1915. She exhibited professionally for the first time in 1918 at the San Francisco Art Institute annual show. The following year, she met Stanton Macdonald-Wright, who had founded Synchronism with Russell. Studying with Wright influenced Alvarez intellectually and stylistically; she later took notes and transcribed his lectures at the Los Angeles Art Students League. In 1922, she joined the “Group of Eight” to promote a kind of art that was moving away from the more conservative standards of the California Arts Club. Although she never attempted nonobjective painting, Alvarez experimented, especially with color.

Alvarez first saw Russell’s work in 1927 when he and Macdonald-Wright had a joint exhibition at the Los Angeles Museum, and she befriended him during his visit to California in 1931. Alvarez greatly admired Russell, who advised her to be like a “cork that floats downstream while painting.”<sup>79</sup> In 1934, a painting by Alvarez was selected to represent Los Angeles in *Paintings and Sculpture from Sixteen American Cities* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Following the death of her father in 1937, Alvarez moved from her family home to an apartment. Although financially secure because of an inheritance, she experienced bouts of depression, perhaps due to the end of her long romantic relationship with Robert Kennicott. She visited Hawaii, her birthplace, in 1939, and in 1940 had a one-woman show at the Los Angeles Museum. During World War II, she served as a Red Cross volunteer.

Alvarez adopted a lighter and more decorative palette in the 1950s, painting over some of her earlier canvases. She remained active through her sixties and seventies, exhibiting regularly with the Woman Painter West organization. Mabel Alvarez died in 1985 at the age of ninety-three. A retrospective of her

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<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Will South, *Mabel Alvarez: A Retrospective*, Laband Art Gallery, Los Angeles, and Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, California, 1999, page 8; Russell may have in fact borrowed the epithet of the cork floating downstream from Renoir; see Anne Distel, *Renoir: A Sensuous Vision*, translated by Lory Frankel (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1995). We would like to thank Lory Frankel, manuscript editor of the present *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection: A Comprehensive Guide*, for bringing this to our attention.

work was held in 1999 at the Laband Art Gallery, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, traveling to the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, California, 1999.<sup>80</sup>



Mabel Alvarez, *Self-Portrait*, 1923, oil on canvas, Alvarez Family Collection

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Mabel Alvarez to Russell, 1932–39 and undated. In this significant collection of letters, Alvarez, who apparently met Russell during his trip to California, writes frequent and friendly letters full of news about her own work, art she has seen, and news of friends and acquaintances who might support Russell financially and/or buy his work. She occasionally mentions her gratitude to Russell for what he has taught her.

In the earliest correspondence, written just after Russell’s visit to California, Alvarez reports on her own activities and, “Was your new face accepted & admired??” – a possible reference to Russell having had cosmetic surgery (there is no proof to date that Russell ever actually underwent such surgery). With her letter of 13 May 1933, she sends a clipping (no longer attached to the letter), and asks “Do you approve of him looking like a woman??” A letter dated 20 October 1933, includes three small sketches after El Greco paintings she had just seen.

On the reverse of the final page of her letter of 17 September 1935 is a passage in Russell’s hand (written in French) about wanting to return to Rome. A few weeks later, Alvarez writes that she is “terribly pleased” with Russell’s Italian notes, sending a typed transcription of them with the suggestion that they might be publishable. As time goes on, Russell and Alvarez exchange notes and ideas about these articles, but they are not accepted for publication. On August 18, 1936 Alvarez reports that she has sent Russell a subscription to the *Reader’s Digest* so that he can see the sorts of things published in American magazines.

As of October 1936, and perhaps before, Russell is sending artwork to California for possible sale. Alvarez offers to find contacts and notes that perhaps Bob (Robert Kennicott) can suggest possible buyers. Her letter of 3 October 1936 includes a drawing of a painting she has just done. Responding to Russell’s apparent entreaties to find a market for his work in the United States, Alvarez suggests in a letter of 5 July 1937 that he find a dealer in Paris, noting “No one

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<sup>80</sup> See the catalog from this show, with an essay by Will South, for a detailed consideration of her work.

understands this sort of thing here." In later letters, she transmits checks to Russell, or mentions that he can expect to receive one from one of their friends. During World War II, the two friends lose touch, but letters dated 1945 indicate that they were able to reestablish contact after the war.

In the course of this correspondence, Alvarez mentions many others whose letters are included in this series: Viola Shore, Wilma Shore, Fred Sexton, Anne Evans, Aimee Evans, and Stanton Macdonald-Wright; there are frequent references to her friend "Bob," the physician and painter Robert Kennicott.

*Note: A small portion of these letters may have entered the Morgan Russell Archives at a date subsequent to the group originally found at Aigremont. At this time it is unknown which among these letters might fall under the category of subsequent additions.*

*Letters from Russell to Alvarez:*

*Dates:* 1934–1952

*Extent:* 23 dated letters; 2 dated postcards; 3 envelopes without letters

*Arrangement:* Chronological

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 1, folders 007–008

Letters from Russell to Mabel Alvarez, 1934–1952. These friendly and open letters reveal Russell's fondness and appreciation for Alvarez, whom he apparently met while in California. Alvarez made efforts to sell some of Russell's work, occasionally sending checks for these sales, and Russell clearly valued these efforts. She also ferried checks from "Bob" (Robert Kennicott, see also his correspondence in this series) and others she knew in California who bought Russell's work or were willing to contribute to his financial welfare. Russell writes often to her about financial matters, and sometimes mentions if he is working, and if so what he is working on. He also responds to Alvarez's occasional comments about his penchant for women's clothing.

In a letter dated 21 February [1935] Russell reports that he hasn't been working for some time, but notes that he has "a score of pictures about ripe and ready for somebodies [*sic*] appetite," and notes his "present state of depression." In this same letter, he remarks, "How fortunate it is to be a woman & a beautiful one, with the right to have all the pleasures of adornment & charm that are prohibited for we poor male bruts [*sic*]." Several letters during 1935 discuss efforts to get payments for Russell's work sold during his trip to California, but left unpaid, and to publish an article or series of articles by Russell about Italy. On 26 March 1936, Russell comments that John Huston owes him \$600, "with no news for years!" In a letter written in June 1937, Russell offers sympathy after learning of the death of Alvarez's father, and notes that "I'm working as usual on several big figure compositions, that each summer I get to. The summers are not long enough to do much & during the winters impossible to work here. No light at all." Writing to Alvarez on 3 April 1938, Russell confesses that a year earlier he was "at the end of my rope," and had asked Miss Shore and Mrs. Evans and her husband for "\$15 a month for a couple of years in order to complet [*sic*] my big things under way and which ultimately are my only hope. I got immediate replies from both together with checks and since have been living on the \$30 a month thus received." He also mentions hearing from Stanton Macdonald-Wright after a long silence.

After losing touch during the war, Russell tells Alvarez in a letter of 3 January 1946, "For some years a charming lady has shared my solitude with me here and by her presence and devotion has had a lot to do with these years of fruitful work. We married yesterday – Family matters of hers having become suddenly untangled – Strange you will find it that her *oncle* was a person named Claude Monet!" Writing on 10 November 1948, after a stroke in September, he notes, "Face came back after 10 days. Leg gets me around, even up and down stairs without cane or balustrade but can not be left to itself or it would be like your car if you went to sleep at the wheel when going. The big affair is the right arm and hand. It is now 2 months and still they are useless, although each week seems some force and mobility come back." In September 1950, he writes that a New York gallery is interested in showing his early abstracts [probably the Rose Fried Gallery, where Russell would show with Macdonald-Wright and Patrick Henry Bruce in 1950]. "You see," he comments, "we have become after 40 years a kind of Americana, something valuable because old and mouldy I suppose like a barrel of iron nails of the 1890's!" He also asks Alvarez if she can send his "Pink Lady," making a sketch of the painting. For this letter and several others, Alvarez has made notes on their contents; these notes are filed with the relevant letters. In his final letter, dated 3 November 1950, Russell tells Alvarez to keep "Pink Lady" and notes that "Modern has already taken the oldest and Whitney is deciding it [needs] to acquire one too."

### 1.1.3 Guillaume Apollinaire

*Letters from Apollinaire to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1910, 1913

*Extent:* 2 dated letters

*Arrangement:* chronological

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 1, folder 009

*Biographical note:*

*Apollinaire de Kostrowitzky, Guillaume* Albert Wladimir Alexandre (1880–1918). French poet and writer. From 1903 he took part in literary evenings organized by the magazine *La Plume*, where he became acquainted with the most important new writers, including Alfred Jarry and André Salmon. His magazine *Festin d'Ésope* appeared that year, and he was already working for two other magazines. During the winter of 1903–4, thanks to Jean Mollett, Apollinaire met Pablo Picasso, which led to a long friendship and to his first art criticism. Between 1907 and 1910, Apollinaire established himself as the most experienced writer on art of the new avant-garde; he wrote regularly on art for *L'Intransigeant* (from 1910 onward), also producing a column called "Echos" for *Paris-Journal*, and he collaborated on several other periodicals. His first important articles on Henri Matisse, Picasso and Georges opened discussion on Cubism, which Apollinaire took every opportunity to defend as "new art." In 1912, Apollinaire published his challenging views on the development of art. Francis Picabia and his wife and Marcel Duchamp became his close friends. The Picabias offered Apollinaire financial support for a long-projected book on the new artists. A number of other artists had emerged from the original Cubism of Picasso and Braque and sought fresh paths for the form and content of this new art. In October 1912 Apollinaire gave the inaugural address for the painters of the Section d'Or (Golden Section), which included Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger,

Duchamp, Picabia, and Roger de La Fresnaye, proclaiming a new art invented by Robert Delaunay. He baptized this art “Orphism,” with particular reference to the *Fenêtres* (window pictures) by Delaunay. In November and December 1912, when Apollinaire had his apartment renovated, he sought refuge with the Delaunays, which in the short term resulted in a close collaboration. The Orphism that Apollinaire had launched on the example of the Delaunays’ colorism made an especially strong impact on the Blaue Reiter and Der Sturm circles in Berlin. Through the Delaunays’ Apollinaire met the poet Blaise Cendrars, who made a deep impression on him. His projected book about Robert Delaunay did not materialize; instead, he published an anthology of various articles about the new painters, *Les peintres cubistes: Méditations esthétiques* (Paris, 1913), which presented Delaunay and Orphism as merely an offshoot of “cubisme écartelé” [loosely, “divergent Cubism”].

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Apollinaire to Russell, 1910, 1913. In the letter of 1910, Apollinaire writes of referring Russell to Alfred Stieglitz, director of the 291 gallery in New York.<sup>81</sup> The second of these two letters—each in actuality a cordial note—of 1913 invites Russell to stop by his regular Wednesday salon when Russell is able.

**1.1.4 Suzanne Binon [Russell]**

*Letters from Binon to Morgan Russell*

*Dates:* 1936–37 and undated

*Extent:* 24 letters from 1936, 25 letters from 1937, about 45 undated (missing year or more)

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 1, folders 010–012

***Biographical note:***

Suzanne Binon Russell. (dates presently unknown). Morgan Russell met Suzanne Binon in Rome during the winter of 1934–35. They were married 2 January 1946. She had two daughters from a previous marriage to Georges Binon, Simone Hcart Joyce and Denyse Kent.

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<sup>81</sup> Russell and Apollinaire probably made each other’s acquaintance in the salon of Gertrude and Leo Stein in about 1909 or 1910. Several years later Apollinaire may have referred Russell to Paul Guillaume, the Paris dealer of contemporary art and “l’art nègre” (African sculpture), as in a letter of c. 1914 from Guillaume to Apollinaire (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris), Guillaume speaks of having just had a visit from Russell and thanks Apollinaire for having recommended him. These notes span the time period during which Apollinaire first defended Cubism and subsequently articulated his enthusiasm for Orphism, suggesting that he appreciated Russell’s participation in some of the most important art movements of the era. This was Russell’s most fertile period, as he would paint his *Synchromy in Blue-Violet* in 1913, followed by his seminal *Synchromy in Orange: To Form*, in 1914. Although not indicated here, Russell may have sought Stieglitz’s attention in order to be considered for the latter’s important exhibition *Younger American Painters*, of 1910. That Russell was interested in the 291 gallery is attested by his inscription to himself in a notebook of 1917, where after writing the New York contact information for Leo Stein and Stanton Macdonald-Wright, Russell scribbled, “Stieglitz 291—get in” (see Series 4.2, *Writings, Private: Notebook 4.2.44*).

***Scope and content:***

Letters from Binon to Russell, 1936–37 and undated. These are affectionate and chatty letters written by Binon to Russell in which she recounts her activities while sojourning in Paris and other places; they are filled with expressions of affection and longing for Russell and Aigremont, as well as love for her daughters from her prior marriage, Simone [Hacart Joyce] and Denyse [Kent].

*Letter from Russell to Suzanne Binon [Russell]*

*Date:* 1945

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 1, folder 013

***Scope and content:***

Letter from Russell to Binon. Although he and Suzanne would not quit France for the United States until May 1947, here Russell already ruminates in characteristic fashion on the practical and financial difficulties of such a move, noting that he has only his work to exchange for the funds that would be required for such a decisive relocation.

**1.1.5 Louis Bouche**

*Letters from Bouche to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1923–26

*Extent:* 12 dated letters

*Arrangement:* chronological

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 1, folder 014

***Biographical note:***

Louis Bouche (1896–1969). American painter, muralist, and teacher. The grandson of a Barbizon painter, Bouche was taken to France by his mother when he was twelve, but later returned to the United States. He studied with J. P. Laurens at the Académie Julian, at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, Académie Colarossi, and the École des Beaux-Arts, all in Paris; as well as with Francis V. DuMond, Luis Mora, and Ossip Linde at the Art Students League in New York.

In an interview with Bouche in the Archives of American Art, he notes the following: “while I was in London I got a cable from Ruby Ross Goodenow, who then was in charge of Belle Maison at Wanamaker’s, Belle Maison being the very fashionable decorating part of Wanamaker’s [department store] at that time. And she sent me a telegram asking me if I would be interested in taking over the management of a small picture gallery in the store that she had had the idea for a long time, and was anxious to know whether I would manage this little gallery for Wanamaker’s. I said yes. So when I came back in 1922, instead of being terribly worried about money, I had a job waiting for me.” It was in this capacity that he corresponds with Morgan Russell.

Bouche exhibited widely in the United States, France, and Germany, including exhibitions at the Society of Independent Artists; Worcester Art Museum; Dayton Art Institute; Metropolitan Museum of Art; Philadelphia Art Alliance; and Whitney Museum of American Art. His work is in the collections of the

Metropolitan Museum of Art; Whitney Museum of American Art, and many others.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Louis Bouche to Russell, 1923–26. Responding to a letter from Russell, with which he included a catalog of a recent show, Bouche agrees to consider exhibiting Russell's paintings with the prospect of selling them at Belle Maison, a gallery at the John Wanamaker department store in New York. In a 12 May 1924, letter, Bouche acknowledges receipt of Russell's paintings, reporting that two are missing and saying that he will show them in a group show of modern American work in the fall. By October 1924, Bouche reports that the missing package, containing two paintings, has been found. In 1926, Bouche reports leaving Wanamaker's and starting his own business dealing paintings; on June 21, 1926, he sends Russell \$1500, with the promise of more to come.

**1.1.6 George Carlock**

*Letters from Carlock to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1916 and undated

*Extent:* 1 dated letter; 7 undated letters (1 incomplete); 1 undated postcard

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 1, folders 015–016

*Biographical note:*

George Carlock (dates unknown; contemporary of Morgan Russell; active early twentieth century. American sculptor and painter. Carlock, a friend of Morgan Russell, studied at the Académie Julian in Paris with J. P. Laurens in 1906 and later with Henri Matisse. He lived for ten years in France and Italy. He also studied at the Art Students League in New York. Carlock exhibited at the Society of Independent Artists in 1917.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from George Carlock to Russell, 1916 and undated. In the only dated letter (1916), Carlock discusses advice Russell gave him regarding a "love affair" and reports that he is staying in Russell's room (perhaps at the Hôtel de Grand Saint-Martin, on whose stationery the letter is written). In undated correspondence, Carlock discusses World War I, conditions for artists during the war, and enlisting as an American in Paris. Carlock reports coming across a mutual friend, the American painter Andrew Dasburg, and writes of wanting to sculpt in Paris.

### 1.1.7 Blaise Cendrars

*Letters from Cendrars to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1918–26 and undated

*Extent:* 5 dated letters; 1 dated telegram; 4 dated postcards; 22 undated letters; 4 undated postcards (postmarks indecipherable)

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 1, folders 017–018

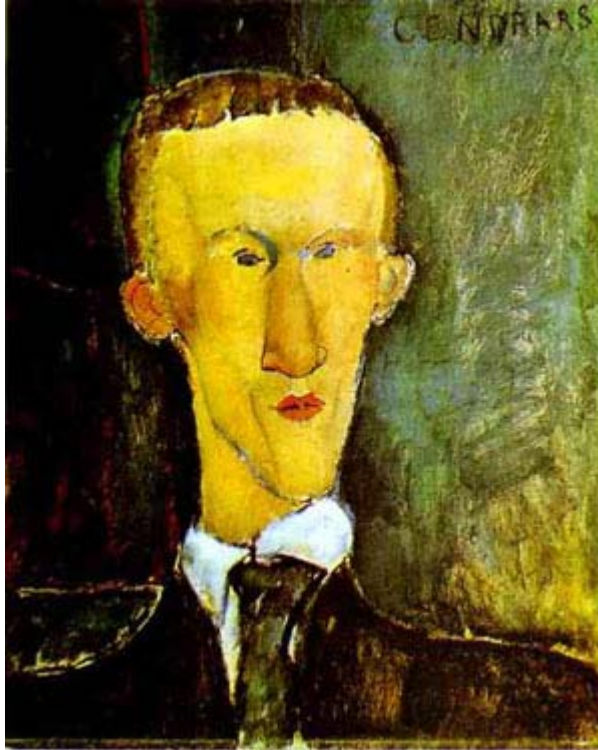
*Biographical note:*

Blaise Cendrars (1887–1961), born Frédéric Louis Sauser. Swiss novelist and poet, active in France. Born in Switzerland, Cendrars went to Paris in 1910, where he met Apollinaire and other members of the Parisian literary and artistic avant-garde, including Marc Chagall, Amedeo Modigliani, Chaim Soutine, Max Jacob, Jean Cocteau, and Sonia and Robert Delaunay. He founded the magazine *Les Hommes Nouveaux*, employing the name also for a publishing house, which made his first long poems available to the public. One of these, *La prose du Transibérien et de la Petite Jeanne de France* (Paris, 1913), described his world travels on a folding sheet of 12 panels 2 meters long, with parallel abstract paintings by Sonia Delaunay, intended to provide verbal and visual contrasts, as well as a fragmentary experience of movement through the modern world.

Cendrars fought with the French Foreign Legion in World War I; after losing his right arm in 1915 he was discharged. He described his service in famous books, *La main coupée* (*The Severed Hand*) and *J'ai tué* (*I Have Killed*). After World War I, Cendrars's activities included poetry, prose, theater, film, ballet, art criticism, and publishing. His most important collaborative projects were his stage scenes for Darius Milhaud's ballet *La création du monde* (1923), for which Fernand Léger also produced designs, and his involvement in Erik Satie's ballet *Relâche* (1924), for which Francis Picabia designed the sets. Morgan Russell hoped to collaborate with Cendrars on a Synchronist ballet in 1925, although this failed to materialize. Cendrars also introduced Russell to the work of filmmaker Abel Gance, whose film *La roue* (1920) Cendrars had worked on.

After World War II, Cendrars published four autobiographical novels and wrote the text for *La banlieue de Paris* (1949), by photographer Robert Doisneau. He was awarded the Paris Grand Prix for literature in 1961. Most of his works have been translated into English, including the long poem "Le Panama ou Les aventures de mes sept oncles," translated by John Dos Passos and published in 1931. He died in Paris in 1961.

See also: Series 9: Drawings, *Portraits*, for drawings of Cendrars by Russell.



Amadeo Modigliani, *Portrait of Blaise Cendrars*, 1918  
(Oil on cardboard, private collection)

*Scope and Content:*

Letters from Cendrars to Russell, 1918–26 and undated. This group of dated and undated letters speaks to the warm friendship that existed between Russell and Cendrars since 1918, if not earlier. In fact, the two may have met through Modigliani, with whom Cendrars was well acquainted and who painted his portrait in 1918 in Nice. Most of this correspondence consists of news from Cendrars regarding attempts to help Russell secure projects for illustrated books with various editors—none seems to have materialized—or Cendrars’s acting as a go-between in Russell’s attempts to sell small pictures to Cendrars’s well-placed contacts, whether in the south of France (Nice) or Paris (Cendrars mentions the name “Aubry” repeatedly in this regard in a series of undated letters).

In other instances, Cendrars relays news (often heard at second hand) of various publishing projects for which he urges Russell to apply in haste as a candidate for book illustration. For instance, writing in 1920 from Nice, Cendrars requests that Russell immediately send a drawing of a locomotive that he had done on the subject of “Whiteman” —presumably Walt Whitman, as Russell had hoped to illustrate a book on Whitman—for a friend who was doing a book on the locomotive (Russell’s involvement never materialized). In a similar instance in 1926, Russell was too late in competing, on Cendrars’s urging, for a position as illustrator for a book entitled *L’or* (author not determined at this date). It is also notable that in a letter of 24 February 1920, Cendrars makes a single cryptic allusion to “votre livre,” which suggests that Russell had a particular book

project in mind (perhaps the Whitman, for which there exists a watercolor “cover” study in the Collection of the Montclair Art Museum).

There is little in this correspondence on the proposed Synchronist ballet that Russell and Cendrars considered doing together in 1925. Apparently the idea, though a grand one, never got much beyond the “brainstorming” stage between the two men. In enthusiastic response to “two letters” that he has received from Russell on the subject of the ballet, Cendrars advises Russell (letter of 10 January 1925) not to concern himself over the “anecdotal” content of the ballet, by which Cendrars means the story line, and proposes that a theme or subject, “perhaps to be indicated by the dancer,” may be determined at the last minute – evidently to suit whatever abstract production Russell might first devise on his own. Cendrars urges Russell to set himself to the task of working on “the Synchronist [set, or background], the construction, the superhuman and the cosmic [elements], and in the course of determining all that, everything will be joined together in your spirit, and one fine day [literally, “beautiful morning”] you will [discover] how to realize all that technically.”

Cendrars’s cheerleading notwithstanding, his letter leaves room to doubt his true intentions; while he urges Russell to get down to work, he puts off further discussion for three months, or until he is able to swing through Aigremont on his way home from extended travel, and he further remarks that, for his own part, he hopes only to have at that time a more tangible proposition to make for the ballet’s actual realization. The writing calls to mind the spirit of an enthused impresario who privately remains uncertain as to the project’s feasibility. Cendrars goes so far, however, as to recommend that Russell contact various acquaintances in Paris (he provides Russell with the actual contact information), with whom Russell should speak on his “synchronism and the colored projections of it in the sky.” The latter portion of that sentence would seem to indicate that Russell intended to put in the ballet his ideas for an art of pure light projection, to which he alludes by the names of “Synchronie Lumineuse,” or a “Synchronie Lumière” (they mean slightly different things to Russell) in his artist’s notebook of c. 1914–15 [4.2.30].<sup>82</sup>

On the larger subject of Russell’s work and career, Cendrars expresses (in an undated letter, probably of the mid- to late 1920s) a dislike of Russell’s “Hercules series,” stating that he much prefers Russell’s more ambitious works (*grand*, but here meaning “large” in both the literal and metaphorical senses of the term). By the mid-1920s Russell was churning out small easel pictures purely for the purpose of increasing his sales, and Cendrars is implying here that he doesn’t fully approve, stating that he himself would prefer “a solid still life” to the kinds of figural pictures that Russell was beginning to produce around this time (partly under the influence of a broad-ranging *new classicism* that permeated the French art world in the aftermath of the World War I). In another undated letter Cendrars thanks Russell for sending him a “beautiful but uneven” painting.

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<sup>82</sup> For discussion of the relationship between Russell and Cendrars, as well as the content of some of these letters, see Gail Levin, “Morgan Russell: The Avant-Garde Dilemma,” in *California: 5 Footnotes to Modern Art History*, ed. Maurice Tuchman, exh. cat., Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1977, 13–31; see also Gail Levin, *Synchronism and American Color Abstraction, 1910–1925* (New York: George Braziller, 1978), esp. 44–47.

Ever on the lookout for opportunities for Russell, Cendrars writes him that Moïse Kisling (1891–1953; Polish “School of Paris” painter in the circle of Modigliani) wants to exhibit his own pictures from Saint Tropez, and Cendrars suggests that Russell join Kisling along with Roger de La Fresnaye. In another undated letter, probably of about 1913–14, Cendrars interrupts his stream of discourse to state with stoic – if ceremonious – brevity, “Apollinaire est mort” (Apollinaire is dead).

### 1.1.8 Barnett D. Conlon

*Letters from Conlon to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1916–1921 and undated

*Extent:* 16 dated letters, 40 undated letters, 18 fragments, assorted manuscripts originally included by Conlon with some letters

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters and fragments are unarranged

*Language:* English with phrases in French

*Location:* Document box 1, folders 019–021; Document box 2, folders 022–023, manuscripts

*Biographical note:*

Barnett D. Conlon (dates unknown, contemporary of Morgan Russell). American friend of Morgan Russell, aspiring poet-writer. Details of his life and career are unknown, except that he was the coauthor with Kwan Kim-Gaul and Émile Bernard of *Kwan Kim-Gaul: Art's Golden Thread from West to East*, published in 1957. Kwan Kim-Gaul was a Chinese artist educated in the United States and France.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Barnett D. Conlon to Morgan Russell, 1916–1921 and undated. In often long, rambling, and at times somewhat incoherent letters, Conlon discusses with Russell matters of art and aesthetics. With several letters, Conlon sends his poems and short stories to Russell (see below).

In the earlier dated letters, Conlon refers several times to “The Cimmerians,” and much of the discourse in his letters explains the relation of various intellectual concepts to this work. In an undated letter [letter starts “I enclose a few pieces”] Conlon explains that this is a poem he feels destined to write, but notes that he has not done so. On 22 January 1917, Conlon writes about his own work and notes, “When this [the project he just described] is done we can begin to turn toward the Cimmerians.” It is not clear if the two men worked together on this project, or if the Conlon poetry manuscripts included here (see description below) were intended for this project.

Favorite subjects for Conlon include the nature of light, immortality, the modern condition, and the Chinese language. Conlon sometimes comments on Russell’s work. In a letter received by Russell on 25 August 1916, Conlon notes that “the Broussilof head pleases me. The head is an example of what you remark – re electricity and light in right lines, that is why I find it modern in tendency.” He goes on to say, “Work as an end in itself or a Religion is I agree the most satisfying credo,” and at the end of this letter he mentions the possibility of helping out Russell financially later that year. Although he does not say so directly, Conlon’s letters sometimes imply that he is selling art.

The letters dated 1920 show a change in tone, becoming businesslike, perhaps implying a tension between them having to do with money. A year later, in a letter dated 5 February, Conlon writes, "I am glad to know you are on the warpath again with pictures and will be glad to see any exhibition you can get going."

The undated letters are similar in content to those that are dated. Conlon expresses his annoyance at having to work at unartistic jobs and discusses the nature of artistic creation and astrology. Some letters have notes on them written by Russell. In a typed letter from rue Hoche Chatillon, Conlon tells Russell that his postcards "require as much deciphering as a Tibetan monument."

The fragments range from incomplete letters (either the start of a letter with no signature, or a signature with no start), to unconnected pages, to mere scraps. It is possible that they may be found to belong with letters in the other folders.

*Manuscripts:* With some of his letters to Russell, Conlon sent manuscripts of poems and prose pieces. These are included here. Where it was possible to determine the letter sent with the manuscript, the manuscript has been placed with that letter. When it was not possible to determine the letter with which a particular manuscript was sent, the manuscripts were placed in folders marked either "Manuscripts sent to Russell – poetry," or "Manuscripts sent to Russell – prose pieces." Several of the sheets in the poetry manuscripts folder contain additions, notes, and even verses that appear to be written in Russell's hand. Additionally, there are several sheets that appear to be written entirely by Russell. In an undated letter headed "Friday," Conlon tells Russell that he would "be glad if you would bring what 'double verse' you have of mine – Blue Jar – etc.," perhaps in reference to the poems in which Russell appears to have rewritten verses of Conlon's. See also description of Conlon letters above.

*Letters from Russell to Conlon:*

*Dates:* 1916, 1917 and undated

*Extent:* 2 dated letters, 1 undated letter

*Arrangement:* chronological

*Language:* English with phrases in French

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 024-025

Letters from Russell to Conlon, 1916–17 and undated. Russell writes in English, switching to French, then back to English. In the 1916 letter, which is a draft or is incomplete, Russell tells Conlon, "Two facts stand out to all of us, to deny which seems nonsense. 1<sup>st</sup>. We are free to build or demolish the material constructions that are the work of our labor – 2<sup>nd</sup>. We are not free in regard to Life & Death, we cannot prolong [*sic*] the former or control our birth." Later in the same letter Russell asks, "Why is it also that we instinctively feel women less important than ourselves – because they are not animated by the desire to construct and manipulate the inorganic." In the 1917 letter, a poor carbon copy of the handwritten original, Russell mentions the possibility of sending some paintings to Conlon. In the undated letter, Russell responds to Conlon's letter "on density" (probably Conlon's letter dated as being received by Russell on 19 July 1916), which Russell comments "has always been the most important thing that I demand of a work & yet it has never been the cause or vitality of work – it is the

necessary background that is needed to throw art into relief and give intensity to the plastic or life quality. The greater the mass the greater the degree of genius needed to make it tremble or wiggle if you like.”

### 1.1.9 John Dracopoli

*Letters to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1918–28 and undated

*Extent:* 3 dated letters; 4 undated letters

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* 6 in English; 1 in French

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 026–027

*Biographical note:*

John Dracopoli (dates unknown; contemporary of Morgan Russell; active early 20<sup>th</sup> century). Sculptor, nationality uncertain (father was Greek, mother was English; lived in England, France, and the United States). John Dracopoli was a good friend of Stanton Macdonald-Wright, who painted a full-length portrait of him in 1912. Macdonald-Wright later cut off the head because “I liked that part of the picture and the other was too big to carry around” (Interview, Archives of American Art).

*Scope and content:*

Letters from John Dracopoli to Russell, 1918–28 and undated. These letters, friendly in tone, speak to a friendship between the two artists, as well as a strain. A 1921 letter refers to a bequest to Russell from “Mrs. White” and the fact that Russell feels he should have been left a greater sum of money. Seven years later, on 10 January 1928, Dracopoli discusses a misunderstanding between Russell and himself regarding the will of Mrs. White, who had been declared insane, and explains the way in which the money was left (to Russell, Dracopoli, and one other) and how it was to be divided. In a 1925 letter, Dracopoli mentions the money Russell has received from Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney and suggests he show her what he has been working on, which includes an unspecified “performance.” Dracopoli often refers to “Wright,” meaning Stanton Macdonald-Wright, who painted a portrait of Dracopoli.

### 1.1.10 K. N. Dracopoli

*Letters from Dracopoli to Russell*

*Dates:* 1918–1928

*Extent:* 4 dated letters

*Arrangement:* chronological

*Language:* English, with a portion of one in French

*Location:* Document box 2, folder 028

*Biographical note:*

K. N. Dracopoli (full name and dates unknown). Occupation unknown. She is the mother of John Dracopoli (see above).

*Scope and content:*

Letters from K. N. Dracopoli to Russell, 1918–28. In this small group of friendly letters, the writer expresses interest in and concern for Russell. In the earliest letter, Dracopoli refers to Mrs. White, also referred to in the John Dracopoli

correspondence, as the source of a bequest to Russell. In a letter dated March 30, 1921, Dracopoli discusses Russell's reaction to the idea of doing farmwork (possibly in Aigremont). In January 1928, she refers to an unspecified misunderstanding between them.

#### **1.1.11 Aimee Evans**

*Letters from Evans to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1937–1938 and undated

*Extent:* 2 dated letters, 9 undated letters, 1 undated fragment

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters and fragment are unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 029–030

*Biographical note:*

Aimee Evans (dates unknown). Occupation unknown. Sister-in-law of Anne Evans (see below), she lived at times in Paris or New York but was from California.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Aimee Evans to Russell, 1937–38, and undated. Evans and Russell had a friendly relationship; Evans and/or her family sent money to Russell and made efforts to help sell his work. In a letter dated March 25, 1937, Evans explains that she has had “several family councils” in response to his request for funds, and that they decided to send Russell fifteen dollars a month for the next year, but that he must not “count on us further than that,” also mentioning the possibility of representation at the Bignou gallery in New York or in California.

In the undated letters Evans frequently writes of Anne Evans (see correspondence in this series, below), indicating her financial troubles, and mentioning artists Mabel Alvarez and Fred Sexton (see their correspondence in this series) and efforts to sell Russell's work. She also discusses art at the New York World's Fair of 1939 and the possibility of exhibiting there, as well as the possibilities of working for the government (probably the Works Progress Administration, or a similar program).

#### **1.1.12 Anne Evans**

*Letters from Anne Evans to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1929–36

*Extent:* 7 dated letters; 2 undated letters; 1 undated Christmas card

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated material is unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 031–032

*Biographical note:*

Anne Evans (dates unknown). Painter and orange farmer. Anne Evans lived in Whittier, California, where she had an orange farm. She was a painter and knew Morgan Russell's California friends and acquaintances, including Mabel Alvarez and Charles Joseph Rider. She is the sister-in-law of Aimee Evans, whose correspondence is also included in this series.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Anne Evans to Russell, 1929–36 and undated. In these often long and chatty letters, Evans details her own work, as well as efforts to promote Russell's work. In the earliest dated letter, Evans reports visiting Mr. Osterkamp in New York, who was showing Russell's paintings, noting that Osterkamp was unavailable and that the gallery did not seem suitable, as the rooms were small and they seemed to deal primarily in small statuettes. She frequently mentions "Mr. Wright," probably Stanton Macdonald-Wright, as well as Mabel Alvarez, Fred Sexton, and Miss Shore (Wilma Shore; see their correspondence in this series). On 9 March 1930, and again on 12 August 1930, she mentions Mr. Rider, (Charles Joseph Rider, a collector; see his correspondence below), indicating her dislike for the man and his methods and regretting that some unnamed relationship, perhaps between Rider and Russell, would never have been a "satisfactory association." Evans mentions several times that she is or will be sending money to Russell, sometimes also noting that her own finances are problematic.

**1.1.13 Élie Faure**

*Letters from Faure to Russell*

*Dates:* 1932–33

*Extent:* 2 dated letters

*Arrangement:* chronological

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 2, folder 033

*Biographical note:*

Élie Faure (1873–37). French medical doctor (he wrote his thesis on *lupus*), art historian/aesthetician, and author. Faure was trained in medicine and practiced at the front in World War I; he subsequently brought his scientific and medical knowledge to bear on his study of art, relating it to the progress of human culture. His best-known work is *L'histoire de l'art [History of Art]* in five volumes, derived from lectures Faure gave in his adult school in Paris in 1905, and published between 1909 and 1921. The English translation (by Walter Pach) was published in 1937. Another important, if more theoretical, work by Faure was *The Spirit of the Forms*, published in 1927. His writings also contributed to the understanding of the social role and function of the cinema (Faure believed that the cinema was supplanting painting in the evolution of art). Faure wrote enthusiastically on Russell for the July 1921 issue of *Revue de l'Époque*, just as the last volume of his *L'histoire* was being published (on the modern era); it was this article that served, in the form of a reprint, as the catalog essay for Russell's momentous exhibition at the Galerie La Licorne, Paris, of May 1923.

See also: Series 6.1, Printed Material, Art related, Exhibition catalogs – Russell, for the catalog containing Faure's essay on Russell.

*Scope and content*

Letters from Élie Faure to Russell, 1932–33. These letters were formerly thought to date from the early 1920s (due to Faure's illegible script), but in both of them Faure clearly refers to his visit to California during his triumphant world tour of 1931, citing his stay in Los Angeles as the "most wonderful memory of my long

and complicated journey.”<sup>83</sup> Faure had arrived in Los Angeles on 10 August 1931, from Mexico, where he had been hosted by Diego Rivera and had enthusiastically studied Aztec ruins, and he was destined for Japan. But it was in Los Angeles that Faure experienced a stardom – he writes to his daughter that he was feted with bonbons, flowers, and fancy cars wherever he ventured – equaled only by Gertrude Stein on the occasion of her triumphant American lecture tour of 1935. In the warm and effusive letter of 1932, responding to a letter from Russell, Faure assures the painter that he treasures their meeting in Los Angeles (Russell was already in California, where he lived from mid-1931 to mid-1932, when Faure arrived) and answers Russell directly in stating, “Yes, Rubens, what [illegible]! The greatest...” and “Yes, Rembrandt!” Then Faure reminds Russell that he has written a long chapter on Rembrandt in the fourth volume of his *History of Art*. He fondly states that he will always remember Russell’s beautiful canvases and enquires of Russell how he might manage to return to California one day.

The second of these two letters, dated 4 August 1933, is more reflective, in which Faure meditates on various aesthetic issues that he and Russell apparently shared an interest in, mentioning pantheism, atomism, spirituality, and the play of art in relation to Platonic ideas. Faure may be alluding here to his *Spirit of the Forms*, of 1927. Faure evidently admired Russell’s work, mentioning once again the pleasure of having participated in events in Los Angeles and San Francisco, where Faure had lectured (as had Russell). For instance, on 13 August 1931, Faure spoke to the California Art Club on “The Trend of Art in the World Today” (see “Elie Faure to Lecture,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 1931, p. 15). It may be that Faure’s plans to visit California in the course of his international tour had inspired Russell to make the trip as well, as he had hoped to do since the early 1920s.

#### 1.1.14 John Flanagan

*Letter from Flanagan to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1908

*Extent:* 1 letter

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folder 034

*Biographical note:*

John Flanagan (1865–1952). American sculptor. Born in Newark, New Jersey, Flanagan studied with Augustus Saint-Gaudens in New York and at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris with Henri Chapu and Alexandre Faiguère. His work includes a monumental clock for the Library of Congress; the War Memorial for the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C.; a large bronze relief, *Antique Education*, at the Free Public Library in Newark; and the E. A. Bulkeley Memorial

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<sup>83</sup> Before his 1931–32 sojourn in Los Angeles, Russell exhibited two works in the 1923 *First Exhibition of Group of Independent Artists of Los Angeles*, and showed work, including still lifes in a two-week “Synchronistic” [sic] group exhibition in late August 1920 at the “[Edouard Antonin] Vysekal studio” (the California Post-Impressionist painter; 1890–1939), along with Macdonald-Wright, Thomas Hart Benton, William Yarrow, Preston Dickenson, and others; see *Los Angeles Times*, August 22, 1920, sec. III, p. 18. The unsigned *LA Times* announcement focuses exclusively on Russell, calling the show “the largest of this celebrated American to be exposed in his own country.”

in bronze and marble for the Aetna Life Insurance Company in Hartford, Connecticut. Flanagan also designed many medals for commemorative and award purposes, as well as the Washington quarter-dollar coin minted from 1932 to 1999.

*Scope and content:*

Letter from John Flanagan to Russell, 1908. Flanagan tells Russell he would like to have him pose for a "panel," because he wants to have "the Library people" come and see the work.<sup>84</sup> The letter includes Russell's notes in pencil on the face and on the reverse. Notes on the face seem to be personal: "Give yourself to me, the thing you are keeping back....till I have all of you I am in hell...." Notes on the back seem unrelated to the notes on the face or to the Flanagan letter.

**1.1.15 Howard S. Gans**

*Letters from Gans to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1917, 1945, and undated

*Extent:* 3 letters

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 035-036

*Biographical note:*

Howard S. Gans (died 12 December 1946, at age 75). Born in New York, Gans graduated in 1892 from Harvard University, where he was a classmate and friend of Leo Stein. Gans and Stein, who apparently remained in close contact throughout their lives, had a family connection in that Leo's cousin Fred Stein was Gans's cousin by marriage. After graduating from New York Law School, Gans worked as an assistant district attorney in New York, in charge of the Appeals Bureau. He was also active in city politics. He later formed the law firm of Gans & Iselin. During World War I, he acted as associate counsel to the United States Shipping Board and served on the Advisory Council of the War Labor Problems Board. Gans had some part in the Zionist representation at the Paris Peace Conference but later withdrew from the Zionist movement. President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Gans to a commission charged with dealing with problems arising from workmen's compensation; Gans served from 1931-1932. He died in late 1946, two years after suffering a heart attack that had left him an invalid. His wife, the former Birdie Stein Sternberger, was president of the Child Study Association of America for many years, and died several years before her husband. A note on the 1917 letter included in this collection indicates that Gans was the "Husband of Leo Stein's cousin (Bird Stein), and his financial advisor."

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Gans to Russell, 1917, 1945, and undated. Gans apparently knew Russell through their mutual friend Leo Stein. In the 1917 letter, Gans tells Russell that he is delighted that Stein gave a Russell still-life painting to his wife and mentions another still life that he and his wife "chose from among the group that you sent over." He also discusses the wartime climate. The 1945 letter purports to enclose a letter from Leo Stein, then living in Italy, but a United

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<sup>84</sup> The project referred to is possibly the *Antique Education* panel for the Free Public Library in Newark.

States censor noted that the enclosed letter was missing. The undated letter refers to Leo Stein as well, and Gans tells Russell that he does not know anyone willing to sit for a portrait, but that Russell might consider a teaching position. Russell has made notes about career-related matters on the back of this letter.

#### 1.1.16 Yves Hacart

*Letters from Hacart to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1939–42 and undated

*Extent:* 5 dated letters; 3 dated postcards; 3 undated letters; 1 undated postcard

*Arrangement:* dated material is arranged chronologically; undated material is unarranged

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 037–038

*Biographical note:*

Yves Hacart (dates unknown; died by 1946). First husband of Morgan Russell's stepdaughter Simone Binon [Joyce]. Hacart was apparently an artist.

*Scope and content:*

Letters and postcards from Yves Hacart to Russell, 1939–42, and undated. This correspondence represents Hacart's end of a dialogue he evidently maintained with Russell for about four years, on technical and aesthetic issues pertaining to painting. Hacart was based during this time in Tunisia, and repeatedly seeks Russell's "counsel" on artistic matters, reporting his progress with landscapes and figure paintings, and discussing matters of anatomy and other specialized disciplines, such as composition, symmetry, proportion, and so on, typical of artists sharing their work and methods with each other. Hacart frequently solicits Russell's critique of his work, in one undated letter ("le 29 Mai") even sketching out (in colored pencils) a half-length portrait of a female bather — notably in the upper-body pose of Michelangelo's *Dying Slave*, which suggests that Russell may have prescribed it to Hacart in the first place.

#### 1.1.17 R. Chalfant Head

*Letters from Head to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1928–30 and undated

*Extent:* 5 dated letters; 17 undated letters

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters are in two groups: from European addresses and from American addresses

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 039–041

*Biographical note:*

R. Chalfant Head (dates unknown; active early 20<sup>th</sup> century). American painter and architect. Friend and student of Morgan Russell and Stanton Macdonald-Wright.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from R. Chalfant Head to Russell, 1928–30 and undated. In long and chatty letters, Head writes about life and art, considering his own situation and Russell's and the world around him, frequently noting his wish to bring Russell

to California. He often praises Russell and comments on letters Russell has written to him. In undated letters written in Europe, apparently earlier than those that are dated, Head writes from various places, discussing his own artwork and studies. Later, back in the United States, he focuses frequently on the art scene in Los Angeles, particularly Stanton Macdonald-Wright's role.

In a letter dated 27 August 1929, Head discusses progress in his efforts to become a registered architect and writes at length about Ryder (Charles Joseph Rider), a "sincere blusterer" who has bought several of Russell's paintings on Macdonald-Wright's recommendation. In the final dated letter (20 March 1930), Head quotes Russell as saying "use the nude as a great pipe organ to play upon," commenting "That is the complete secret, isn't it!!"

The undated correspondence from American addresses is similar in content, including references to Stanton Macdonald-Wright and Charles Joseph Rider as well as much personal news.

The undated correspondence from European addresses includes a letter from Paris dated May 11 in which Head asks Russell to take him on as a student. Other letters detail Head's travels and studies.

#### **1.1.18 Robert Henri**

*Letters from Henri to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1910, 1926

*Extent:* 2 letters

*Arrangement:* chronological

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 042

*Biographical note:*

Robert Henri (1865–1929). American painter and teacher; Morgan Russell studied with Henri in the fall of 1907, at the New York School of Art.

Painter and influential teacher of the Art Students League, the Valtin School, the Ferrar School, the New York School of Art, and ultimately his own Henri School, all in New York. He was the leader of "The Eight" (established 1908), later called the Ashcan School for their gritty portrayal of urban subject matter, who were largely responsible for creating the controversial *International Exhibition of Modern Art*, New York (better known as the *Armory Show*), of 1913.

Henri was the pupil of Thomas Anshutz and Thomas Hovenden at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 1886–88; then of William-Adolphe Bouguereau and [Tony?] Robert-Fleury at the Académie Julian, Paris, 1888–91. Henri also studied at the École des Beaux-Arts, as well as in Spain and Italy. In 1891 he returned to Philadelphia; by 1895 he was back in Europe, studying painting in the manner of Diego Velázquez, Frans Hals, and Édouard Manet.

Henri was a member of the Society of American Artists, 1903; an associate member of the National Academy of Design, 1904, he became a National Academician in 1906. He was also a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters; the Portrait Painters; and the National Arts Club, among numerous

others. Henri exhibited at numerous institutions and international exhibitions, among them the National Academy of Design (1878); the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1892–1929, Gold medal: 1914, 1929); the Salons of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts (1896, 1897, 1899); Pan-American Exposition, Buffalo, 1901; Saint Louis Universal Exposition (1904); Art Institute of Chicago (1905); Boston Art Club (1907, 1908); Corcoran Gallery (1907–28); Art Club of Philadelphia (1909); Buenos Aires Expo (1904); *Armory Show* (1913); *Panama-Pacific International Exposition* (1910); and the Society of Independent Artists (1919–29).

Henri's collection of lectures, published as *The Art Spirit* (1923), greatly influenced the course of American art because he encouraged students to aim for independence and personal expression over academic correctness of execution. He also stressed self-reliance and self-respect. In his paintings Henri employed a slashing, quick attack to record feelings and sensation. In his work, he portrayed His portraits included young woman, children, and foreigners. He painted portraits of Native Americans in San Diego in 1913; he spent the summer of 1916 in Santa Fe, and was followed there by friends and students.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Henri to Russell, 1910, 1926. In these two significant letters, Henri responds to letters from his former student with insightful comments on art movements and the nature of being an artist. In the earlier letter, Henri writes to Russell about his wish to see what is going on in Paris, "not the big salons....but what the searchers are doing." He comments on the "Independent Exhibition" and its success and mentions Alfred Stieglitz. Henri writes about the nature of the avant-garde, stressing the importance of being true to one's own vision. In the later letter, Henri answers Russell's query (see photocopy included here, below) about whether he should work in the United States or in France. On the envelope from this letter, Russell has made notes in French and in English about observation: "...so then with our observation accumulated – we must order it by the mind. That is the *art* of living, painting, music, philosophy, etc."

*Letter from Russell to Henri:*

*Dates:* 1925

*Extent:* 1 photocopy

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folder 43

Letter from Russell to Robert Henri, 1925. Russell discusses his life as an artist in France, asking Henri if he thinks he should return to America. "I'm an outsider here," Russell notes. He also tells Henri that he had a "valuable influence" on him. In a postscript, Russell observes, "I don't consider my synchronisms as paintings nor do I think them a necessary evolution of the art – but rather as a sister art – I have not abandoned them as some think, nor the hope of giving them the necessary extension some day...." The location of the original of this letter is unknown.

See also: Violet Organ correspondence in this series.

### 1.1.19 Sidney Mttron Hirsch

*Letters from Hirsch to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1923–26 and undated

*Extent:* 2 dated letters; 3 undated letters

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 044–045

*Biographical Note:*

Sidney Mttron Hirsch (1883–1962). American writer. Hirsch grew up in Nashville, Tennessee, and attended a variety of colleges but failed to graduate. He served in the navy, becoming heavyweight champion of the Pacific Fleet, and for a few years toured the Far East, where he (a Jew by birth) became interested in Buddhism, Taoism, the occult, and other alternate viewpoints. In a brief visit to Paris, he met Gertrude Stein and picked up extra money by modeling for artists, including Auguste Rodin. From Paris he went to New York, where he continued his modeling career, posing for sculptor Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. He pursued, unsuccessfully, a playwriting career in New York. When he returned to Nashville in 1913 his elaborate play *The Fire Regained* was produced for the city's May festival. The success of this venture brought Hirsch into contact with Stanley Johnson, Donald Davidson, and John Crowe Ransom, and the four met regularly to talk about poetry. As their group grew, Hirsch suggested publishing the work being produced. The group, which became known as "The Fugitives," also included Allan Tate and Robert Penn Warren, who became major poets. He died in Nashville in 1962.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Sidney Mttron Hirsch to Russell, 1923–26 and undated. Hirsch regards Russell as an "old friend"; the nature of their association is not mentioned but perhaps they met while Hirsch was modeling in Paris. The several letters here are short and indicate Hirsch's desire to continue his acquaintance with Russell. On the reverse of one undated letter (on blue paper) are several sketches; on the reverse of an envelope postmarked April 1926 are Russell's notes on "Projects relating to US" and what seems to be notes in French on a bicycle tour.

### 1.1.20 Robert Kennicott

*Letters from Kennicott to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1938–39 and undated

*Extent:* 3 dated letters; 6 undated letters

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 046–047

*Biographical note:*

Robert Helm Kennicott (1892–1983). American physician and painter. Kennicott settled in Los Angeles, California, in the early 1930s and took up painting as a hobby. For nearly a decade he was the constant companion of artist Mabel Alvarez (see her correspondence in this series), who greatly influenced his work. His work includes still lifes, portraits, and figure studies. Kennicott was a

member of the Painters and Sculptors of Los Angeles and other California artists' organizations; he exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1934); the San Diego Art Guild (1936–41), and other West Coast institutions.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Robert Kennicott to Russell, 1938–39 and undated. In this small group of friendly letters, Kennicott communicates his admiration for Russell and mentions his own efforts as an artist; with several, Kennicott encloses checks. The undated letters are longer; in one Kennicott notes that it was Russell who gave him the “impetus” to pursue painting, a process he finds frustrating but rewarding. Kennicott mentions Mabel Alvarez several times, as well as others known to Russell. Financial calculations in Russell’s hand at the bottom of several of Kennicott’s letters may indicate that checks to Russell were included with these letters.

**1.1.21 Michel Kikoïne**

*Letters from Kikoïne to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1923–29 and undated

*Extent:* 2 dated letters; 3 dated postcards; 1 exhibition catalog with letter on back page; 9 undated letters

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 048–049

*Biographical note:*

Michel Kikoïne (1892–1968). Russian émigré painter, “School of Paris” artist associated with Chaim Soutine and his circle. Kikoïne was born in Rechytsa, Belarus. While in his teens, he studied with Soutine, who became his lifelong friend; at Kruger’s School in Drawing in Minsk; and at the Fine Arts School in Vilnius. In 1911, Kikoïne moved to Paris, where he lived with Soutine, and studied at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts alongside Camille Pissarro and Paul Cézanne. Kikoïne married in 1914, and he fought in World War I.

After his first exhibition in Paris in 1919, Kikoïne exhibited regularly at the Salon d’Automne. He also showed with Brummer Galleries, New York (1929), and in California. One of his most notable works, *Passage Cézannien*, was inspired by the work of Paul Cézanne. By 1926, Kikoïne was living in Burgundy, as were Soutine, Balthus, Morgan Russell, and others.

In one of Russell’s artist’s notebooks of 1935 (4.2.58), there is a small printed invitation to the wedding of Kikoïne’s daughter, dated Paris, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1934, on the verso of which Russell subsequently sketched a triangle and made notes on color.

For the duration of the German occupation during World War II, Kikoïne, the grandson of two rabbis, lived in hiding near Toulouse. He spent his later years in Paris and Cannes.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Kikoïne to Russell, 1923–29 and undated. These letters and postcards indicate a friendly and mutually beneficial relationship between two painters who were always on the lookout for ways to handily turn a profit, including trafficking in pictures, or otherwise mutually conspiring to stay afloat and remain true to their calling despite the usual array of quotidian difficulties. Among the latter, they discussed finding a proper place to work or to regularly exhibit their canvases and securing creative tranquility outside the noisy circuit of the Paris art world.

The dated letters from the early 1920s indicate that Kikoïne and Russell may have been searching, together with a third party named Davis for shared studio space in Paris (Russell writes of this in his notebooks as early as the late 1910s), where they found rents prohibitive. Kikoïne also reports the sale of three of Russell's pictures—a nude, a still life, and a Synchrony—to an “American amateur” at the Paris home of mutual friend Louis Sol. Kikoïne similarly reports (in an undated letter) his success at selling a very large canvas by Russell to “Brommer” (probably the New York dealer Joseph Brummer, as Kikoïne had a one-man exhibition at Brummer Galleries, 15 April–11 May 1929); in almost all cases, Kikoïne tells Russell what monies he is mailing Russell for such transactions.

These letters also indicate that from time to time Kikoïne and Russell cooperated to sell an old master canvas or a more recent Impressionist picture, raking off a commission fee for their own efforts, such as was the case with a small Renoir (one of the Impressionist painters Russell most revered; see Gregory Galligan, Curatorial Commentary, “Rediscovering Morgan Russell,” above). Kikoïne otherwise reports on his own progress in exhibiting at the various Paris salons and finer galleries, mentioning by name the Salon d’Automne, the Salon des Tuileries, and his success at placing two of his own pictures with the Bernheim-Jeune galleries. One letter is written on stationery imprinted “Michel Kikoïne, Artiste-Peintre; 7, rue Brézin, Paris (XIV), Métro: Mouton-Duvernet.”

**1.1.22 Arthur Lee**

*Letters from Lee to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1913, 1914, and undated

*Extent:* 2 dated letters; 1 undated fragment

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folders 050–051

*Biographical note:*

Arthur Lee (1881–1961). American sculptor and teacher of Norwegian descent, best known for classically inspired nudes. Lee lived in Paris from 1905–1910, where he became friends with Constantin Brancusi, Pablo Picasso, Morgan Russell, and Max Weber and visited the salon of Gertrude and Leo Stein. From 1903 to 1904, he lived with Russell; Russell often posed as a model for Lee. In 1914, Lee returned to Paris for three years, supported by his patron, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney.

Lee studied at the Art Students League in New York, 1902; with Kenyon Cox at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, 1906, where he also studied Greek sculpture;

and in London and Italy. Lee exhibited at the *Armory Show*, 1913; the Society of Independent Artists, 1924; and at many American museums and galleries. He taught at the Greenwich House and the Art Students League in New York, and in 1938 he founded his own drawing school.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Lee to Russell, 1913, 1914, and undated. In a letter of August 1913, Lee regrets Russell's refusal to participate in an exhibition, apparently in Germany, calling him "one of the strongest of the younger generation"; describes his own meager financial situation and his reluctance to send money to Russell; continues a discussion from previous correspondence with Russell of artists in relation to themselves "leaving out such embarrassing newcomers as Matisse and Picasso"; and describes the time he is currently spending in Sagaponack on Long Island. In the 6 August 1914 letter from Paris, Lee reports having Russell's work safe in his studio or rooms and comments on Michelangelo, saying that the artist's work "makes all cubist farce look weak." In the undated and incomplete letter, Lee comments on the work and beliefs of Wright (probably Stanton Macdonald-Wright).

**1.1.23 François Mauriac**

*Letter from Russell to Mauriac*

*Date:* 1936

*Extent:* 1 dated letter

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 2, folder 052

*Biographical note:*

François Mauriac (1885–1970). French writer. Mauriac, who published his first volume of poetry in 1909, became famous with the publication of *Le baiser aux lépreux* (A Kiss for the Leper) in 1922. He was elected to the Académie Française in 1933 and became its secrétaire perpétuel. Mauriac received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1952.

*Scope and content:*

Letter from Russell to Mauriac, 1936. In this letter dated 16 September 1936, written from Aigremont – and it remains unclear whether this was a draft or was actually sent – Russell uses the pretext of having visited in Mauriac's company (through a mutual invitation by a Monseigneur Fontenelle) the catacombs of St. Priscilla, at Rome, only a year before, as a preamble to inquiring whether Mauriac would be interested in considering for purchase some canvases on evangelical themes. Russell offers to have a selection of these "petites toiles" (small oils) left for Mauriac in Paris for the latter's convenient perusal.

**1.1.24 Charles Otis Morgan**

*Letter from Charles Morgan to Russell*

*Date:* 1909

*Extent:* 1 dated letter

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folder 053

*Biographical note:*

Charles Otis Morgan (dates unknown). Stepfather of Morgan Russell, married Miner Antoinette Russell in 1898, three years after the death of Charles Jean Russell.

*Scope and content:*

Letter from Charles Otis Morgan to Russell, 1909. In this short letter, signed "Your Loving Father," Russell's step-father informs him of the death of his mother from pneumonia, noting that the funeral would be held in four days.

**1.1.25 Miner Antoinette Russell Morgan**

*Letter from Miner Morgan to Russell*

*Date:* undated

*Extent:* 1 undated letter

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folder 054

*Biographical note:*

Miner Antoinette Russell Morgan (died 1909). Mother of Morgan Russell. After the death of her first husband, Charles Jean Russell, in 1895, she married Charles Otis Morgan in 1898. She died in New York of pneumonia in 1909.

*Scope and content:*

Letter from Morgan to Russell, undated. In a rambling letter written after Russell's departure for France, his mother notes that she is happy to hear that he has arrived and had a good journey. She mentions "Charley" several times, presumably Russell's stepfather Charles Otis Morgan (see correspondence 1.1.24 in this series), and reports on the bad weather in New York.

**1.1.26 Violet Organ**

*Letter from Organ to Russell* [Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004]

*Date:* 1952

*Extent:* 1 dated letter

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 2, folder 055

*Biographical note:*

Violet Organ (dates unknown; probably c. 1890–ca.1970). Writer. Organ was the sister of American painter Robert Henri's second wife, Marjorie (they married in 1908), and at the time of this letter was working on a biography of Henri. Her biography remained unpublished, but her work was used by William Innes Homer for his book *Robert Henri and His Circle*, published in 1969. The chapters of that book entitled "The Early Years, 1865–1866" and "Recollections of the Later Years," were drawn largely from Organ's unpublished biography. Between 1914 and 1916, Organ, who was known as Viv, and her sister often appeared as subjects in Henri's work.



Robert Henri, *Viv*  
(Violet Organ), 1915  
Private collection

*Scope and content:*

Letter from Violet Organ to Russell, 1952. In this letter, Organ tells Russell, "Among the letters Robert Henri treasured through the years is one from you written in Paris, 1925." She then quotes from the letter and asks permission to print the quotation in her biography of Henri. The quotation begins, "You are the man who had most to do with the tempers of my character—if indeed it is tempered....From a general point of view the most lasting and valuable influence was yours...."

See also: Robert Henri correspondence in this series.

**1.1.27 Charles Joseph Rider**

*Letters from Rider to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1929–31 and undated

*Extent:* 13 dated letters; 1 undated letter

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 056–057

*Biographical note:*

Charles Joseph Rider (1880–1955). American artist and art collector. Rider was born in Trenton, New Jersey, and was a student of William Merritt Chase and Stanton Macdonald-Wright. During the 1920s, he became a resident of Southern California, based in San Pedro, and worked there as a commercial artist. He helped establish the Art Students League in San Pedro and lived in Newport Beach in the 1930s. During this time, he assembled a collection of art, including many works by Morgan Russell. A landscape painter, Rider had a solo exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1928.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Charles Joseph Rider to Russell, 1929–31 and undated. Rider's letters indicate a friendship between the two men as well as a business arrangement, where Rider bought work by Russell at discounted prices for his own growing art collection. Throughout this correspondence, Rider seeks to impress on Russell his desire to cultivate an appreciation for Russell's art among the people in his Los Angeles-area community, making San Pedro the art center of the Pacific Coast. Rider tells of founding the Art Students League in San

Pedro and of arranging exhibitions of contemporary art, including Russell's, at the local public library, where his wife works. Rider wants to bring Russell to San Pedro as a teacher and/or lecturer. Stanton Macdonald-Wright is mentioned frequently; Rider eventually says that he no longer cares to deal with Wright.

Several times Rider mentions his own finances; he denies rumors, mentioned elsewhere in the correspondence in this collection, that he has inherited a large fortune, saying rather that he goes without things in order to save money (in fact he inherited approximately \$100,000 after the death of his father, Andrew Jackson Rider, founder of Rider Business College in Trenton, New Jersey). He alludes, however, to problems getting funds from his father's estate. The last letter in this group indicates that he and Russell met during Russell's visit to California.

The undated letter to Russell, written on a letter Rider received from a relative (probably his sister), concerns a group of Russell paintings held in New York by a dealer named Osterkamp.

#### **1.1.28 Alexander [or Alexandre] Robinson**

*Letters from Robinson to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1918–32 and undated

*Extent:* 14 dated letters (one dated by context); 4 dated postcards; 1 undated fragment

*Arrangement:* dated correspondence is arranged chronologically

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 058–059

*Biographical note:*

Alexander Robinson (1867–1940). American painter. Alexander (also spelled Alexandre; this French version may have been adopted by Robinson while in Paris) Robinson was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and studied at the Lowell School of Design before going to Paris to study at the Académie Julian with Henri Lucien Doucet and Benjamin Constant. An artist and teacher, he became a specialist in watercolors and was a member of many watercolor societies. He died in Paris in 1940.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Robinson to Russell, 1918–32, and 1 undated fragment. These friendly letters, most signed "Robby," detail Robinson's travails with regard to his health, work, marriage, and, primarily, finances. In the earliest letter, dated 11 March 1918, Robinson begins, "I have been thinking over how I could best help you with the small means at my disposal," and goes on to note that he would buy Russell's work, noting how much he would pay. His letter of 13 October 1926, details his own art collection, including Russell's work, and where it is hung in his house.

On 22 May 1929, Robinson reports having eye troubles. Two days later, he describes conditions at the "Tuileries Salon" and how difficult it is to find paintings. Starting with his letter of 30 May 1929, where Robinson writes of big "bank" losses and remarks, "I fortell a bad time," he recounts his continuing bad fortune in the stock market and in general and comments that he is not in a position to help Russell. After the stock market crash in the fall of 1929, his

letters are increasingly negative, noting on 7 November 1929, that he is “rather despondent.” Robinson mentions the difficulty of getting his work to market, observing that this has also been a problem for Russell. The later letters repeatedly narrate financial woes, perhaps in response to Russell’s requests for assistance. Although he reports having gallery representation and selling his watercolors, Robinson notes that the market during the Great Depression is very bad.

*See also: Series 9.14C, Oversize, assorted, for original examples of seaside sketches by Robinson, probably sent to Russell as keepsakes.*

### 1.1.29 **Augusta Rosiere**

*Letters from Rosiere to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1928, 1933, and undated

*Extent:* 4 dated letters; 4 undated letters

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 060–061

*Biographical note:*

Augusta Rosiere (dates uncertain; active early 20<sup>th</sup> century). Painter and a friend of Morgan Russell.

*Scope and content:*

Personal letters from Rosiere to Russell, 1928, 1933, and undated. Rosiere, a resident of Philadelphia, signs herself “Your old and dear friend” and notes that their common acquaintance is “Andrew Dozburg [probably Dasburg].” Rosiere is a painter and is interested in numerology. In a letter dated 14 September 1933, she offers an assessment of Russell based on his numbers. The letters, personal and chatty, are primarily about her activities. Rosiere obviously admired Russell and at times almost flirts with him.

### 1.1.30 **Michel Seuphor [or Ferdinand Louis Berckelaers]**

*Letter from Seuphor to Russell (Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004)*

*Dates:* June 1952

*Extent:* 1 undated letter [bearing airmail postmark of 30 June 1952]

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 3, folder 062

*Biographical note:*

Michel Seuphor, born Ferdinand Louis Berckelaers (1901–1999). Painter, poet, art historian, and writer. “Seuphor” is actually an anagram for *Orpheus* and a pseudonym for Ferdinand Louis Berckelaers. Seuphor was active in Paris during the interwar period; he was one of the first to help organize the first formal association of abstract artists in Paris, *Cercle et Carré*, 1929. The founder of artistic journals such as *Les Documents Internationaux de l’Esprit Nouveau*; he was later active in the Abstraction-Création artists’ group, Paris, about 1930, which promoted the cause of nonobjective abstraction against the rise of Surrealism. He was a close associate of Tristan Tzara, John Cocteau, Blaise Cendrars, and Piet Mondrian. He wrote chronicles of abstract art, such as *L’art abstrait* (Paris, 1950, published in English as *Dictionary of Abstract Painting*, New York, 1957).

*Scope and content:*

Letter from Michel Seuphor to Morgan Russell, unknown day of June 1952 (letter retrospectively dated on evidence of postmark of 30 June 1952). Seuphor writes (during a sojourn with his wife and daughter in Gassin, near the French coastline) to thank Russell for a gift of a painting dating from 1925 (otherwise unspecified), which Russell had apparently left for Seuphor with the New York gallery owner Rose Fried and which was finally delivered to him in Paris by Hans Richter. Seuphor informs Russell that he is “very happy to have this beautiful piece of yours” and that he has set it behind glass for its protection. Seuphor intends to reproduce the painting in color in his next book with the Hyperion Press, for which he would also like to include an abbreviated biographical notice on Russell. He requests that Russell kindly send him a version of such a biographical note.

See also: subseries 1.2.2, Letters from Stanton Macdonald-Wright to Suzanne Binon [Russell]; and a typed abstract from *La Peinture Abstraite*, by Seuphor, in the papers of the French art critic Jean Gabriel Lemoine, *Archives of American Art*.

### **1.1.31 Fred Sexton**

*Letters from Sexton to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1933–36 and undated

*Extent:* 4 dated letters; 1 dated postcard; 6 undated letters

*Arrangement:* dated correspondence are arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 063–064

*Biographical note:*

Fred Sexton (died on 11 September 1995, at age 88). American painter. Fred Sexton grew up in Los Angeles, where his childhood friends included actor-director John Huston. In the early 1930s he spent several years in Europe, where he probably studied with Morgan Russell. Following his return to California, Sexton had several successful showings of his work, including one at the Stendahl Galleries in Los Angeles in late 1935 (a checklist for this exhibition is included in this collection; see Series 6.1.2, Printed Material, Art related, Exhibition catalogs—Other artists). On 13 June 1932, he married Gwain Harriette Noot; they had a daughter and later divorced. He taught briefly at the Herb Jepson Art School in Los Angeles and executed works for the Federal Art Project.

John Huston asked Sexton to design the black bird statuette used in the film *The Maltese Falcon*. Sexton was a suspect in the notorious “Black Dahlia” case, in which twenty-two-year-old Elizabeth Short was brutally murdered in 1947.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Fred Sexton to Russell, 1933–36 and undated. The letters in this group, some of which are quite lengthy, are friendly in tone, with Sexton moving from a feeling of reverence to equality with Russell, and often discussing abstract matters relating to art. Sexton clearly valued and enjoyed discussing intellectual matters with Russell, although he was sometimes self-deprecating.

In the earliest dated letter (25 November 1933), Sexton mentions wanting to study with Russell, but regrets that he has no money to pay for Russell's services. Later, he plans to visit Russell in Rome. Sexton complains about Wright (Stanton Macdonald-Wright), calling him "old quasi-Machiavelli Stan" (9 January 1936) and other insulting names. In a long letter dated 13 October 1936, Sexton writes from Los Angeles, telling Russell about the art scene under President Franklin B. Roosevelt's New Deal. Sexton notes that great sums of money are being spent on art he considers bad, going to "desecrate" public buildings with "demagogical ideology," which he blames on bad art writers and Communist artists "of which there are many."

In the undated letters, Sexton marvels over the birth of his daughter, pointing out that he has asked Russell to be godfather. He asks Russell if he ever considered publishing an edition of his letters with a preface by Leo Stein (undated letter, Thursday, 17 June) and continues discussions on matters relating to aesthetics and religion. Writing from Los Angeles (21 May, no year) after returning from Europe, Sexton reports on the activities of Russell's admirers there: "Stevens" is living in a shack with Russell paintings stored in the garage; Miss Evans (Anne Evans) is troubled about her debt to Russell but has had a bad crop that year; he also mentions "Wells," John Huston, "dear old Stan" (Stanton Macdonald-Wright); Miss Alvarez (Mabel Alvarez), and others; and again criticizes the work done on WPA projects.

Several of the letters are marked in the margins, apparently by Russell.

### 1.1.32 **Viola Brothers Shore**

*Letters from Viola Shore to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1930–38 and undated

*Extent:* 8 dated letters; 1 dated postcard; 28 undated letters

*Arrangement:* dated correspondence is arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 065–067

*Biographical note:*

Viola Brothers Shore (died 1970, at the age of 79). Writer. Shore began her career in the early 1920s writing stories for the *Saturday Evening Post* and other magazines. These were collected in a volume of her works entitled *The Heritage and Other Stories* (ca. 1921). After moving to Hollywood from New York she wrote titles for silent films and then scripts for sound movies, including the first pictures starring Clara Bow. She contributed lyrics and sketches for the first production of *New Faces* in New York in 1934, wrote a biography of producer John Golden, and taught short-story writing at New York University. Viola Brothers was married three times; her first marriage, to William J. Shore, an electrical engineer, ended in divorce. Their daughter was Wilma Shore Solomon (see correspondence included in this Series, 1.1.33).

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Viola Brothers Shore to Russell, 1930–38 and undated. Shore's letters to Russell are very friendly and warm, with detailed discussions of events in her life and reports about her attempts to assist Russell at selling his work in

California. She willingly offers financial assistance to Russell but also encourages him to take responsibility for his own affairs.

In the dated letters, Shore writes about arrangements for Russell's trip to California with her daughter, Wilma (see letter dated 25 April 1931), which was paid for by Shore, nothing that she and others feel it is "utterly necessary for your mental health and your art at about this time." In her letter dated 2 February 1937, Shore discusses her own writing, contrasting the need to support herself with the desire to do creative work. Of particular interest is a letter dated 3 March 1937 in response to a letter from Russell. Shore notes that although Russell's "plight is certainly desperate," he should not be "offended if I point out to you that you have put me in a somewhat difficult position....you will realize that when a friend writes you and says—If you can't do this for me, I will finish my life—he is putting you in a very uncomfortable position." Shore explains her own financial obligations and limitations, yet offers to help him if and when she can, but is brutally frank: "It distresses me inordinately when a human being merely resigns himself to being crushed by Fate....In fact, to be very frank, although I don't wish to censor you too much when you are stricken, I don't think it is fair for one human being to shirk his responsibility to survive and thereby pass that responsibility on to other shoulders." However, Shore continues to send checks to Russell.

The undated correspondence includes letters written to Russell to make arrangements for Shore's daughter, Wilma, to study with Russell. In several letters, Shore comments, sometimes quite critically, on Russell's work. Ruth Turnbull (see her correspondence in this series) is mentioned in these letters; apparently it was through Shore that Turnbull went to Paris to study with Russell. Stanton Macdonald-Wright, a good friend of Shore's, is mentioned frequently; Mabel Alvarez is mentioned as well. There are several references to John Huston, whom Shore knows, and Russell's efforts to get payment for a painting Huston bought. Shore's comments about her work as a studio contract writer offer insight into the workings of Hollywood during the 1930s and give a picture of her increasing political involvement. Russell has used the reverse of several letters for his own notes.

*Letters to Shore from Russell:*

*Dates:* 1937–47 and undated

*Extent:* 13 dated letters; 3 undated letters

*Arrangement:* dated correspondence is arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* English, one in French

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 068–069

*Scope and content:*

Morgan Russell letters to Viola Brothers Shore, 1937–47 and undated. Russell writes long and involved letters to Shore, whom he clearly values as a great friend, supporter, and artistic peer (Shore is a writer). He writes about financial issues, including the fact that Shore at times supports him by sending checks and buying his artwork, as well as about his work, aesthetics, the creative process, the art scene, and the changing political scene in Europe as World War II approaches.

In a letter dated 14 February 1937, Russell laments his financial situation, saying “I mortgaged my house a long time ago” and noting, “I have one card left. I have never (not since synchromies in 1916) exhibited in N. York & yet am known there. I have hesitated at playing it as it must be played well.” Russell goes on to ask her for \$15 per month, and says he will also ask Mrs. John Evans for the same amount (see Aimee Evans correspondence in this series). In a long letter dated 13 July 1938 Russell writes about his current work, his ideas on beauty, and the life of an artist. On 14 July 1938, he reports on being rejected for a government art project.

In a letter dated 16 December 1938, Russell tells Shore about his first wife’s recent death from cancer, relating how he had learned that she had had a lover only as he reached her deathbed. Russell and Emilie Francesconi [Russell] – born February 27, 1889; died October 22, 1938 – had apparently been estranged for some time by the time of her death, as Russell was summoned to her hospital bedside and only there discovered her lover at her door, Russell thus surmising her situation on the spot. Russell subsequently found himself in the peculiar position of having to soberly comfort Emilie’s distraught lover upon her passing, speaking of this rather matter-of-factly in his letter to Shore. Virtually nothing belonging to Emilie Francesconi survives in the Morgan Russell Archives, although she is surely represented in numerous archival drawings; in addition, the Montclair Art Museum is home to apparently the single surviving plaster facial-sculpture based on her features and dating from about the time of her death, suggesting that Russell conceived it as a kind of death mask (although there is nothing to indicate that he actually cast it from her body). Finally, a rare bronze sculpture by Russell in the collection of the Montclair Art Museum, *Femme à l’opulente chevelure (Woman with Voluminous Hair)*, of 1938 [1986.14], may be based on the figure of Francesconi, as plaster maquettes for this sculpture are visible in photographs dating from when Russell met Francesconi, just before the advent of World War I. They were married in 1918. By the time of Emilie’s death, Russell had already met his second wife-to-be, Suzanne Binon; see Marilyn S. Kushner, *Morgan Russell*, exh. cat., Montclair Art Museum, 1990; see also correspondence in series 1.2 for Suzanne Binon [Russell], Biographical note.

### 1.1.33 Wilma Shore [Soloman]

*Letters from Shore to Russell, 1930-38 and undated*

*Dates:* 1930-1938

*Extent:* 3 dated letters; 1 dated telegram; 11 undated letters; 1 undated letter included on the reverse of an undated letter from Viola Brothers Shore (see above)

*Arrangement:* dated correspondence is arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 070–071

*Biographical note:*

Wilma Shore (born ca. 1914; still living in 1994). Writer. Daughter of Viola Brothers Shore (see above). She married Louis Solomon, a writer and television producer, who died in 1981.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Wilma Shore to Russell, 1930-38 and undated. Wilma Shore's earliest letters to Russell were written just before, after, or during the period she studied with him in France and contain news of art she has seen while traveling, and details of her living arrangements. Later letters contain news about her personal life (the birth and growth of her daughter, Hilary, her divorce, her marriage to Louis Solomon), as well as reflections on art and the world political climate. She frequently mentions her mother, Viola Brothers Shore, and her friend Ruth Turnbull (see correspondence in this series).

In a letter dated 9 June 1935 Shore thanks Russell for a still life he gave her as a wedding present; she also sends two small photo-booth pictures of herself and her new husband, Louis. In one of the later undated letters (typed on yellowing paper), she mentions seeing Amedeo Modigliani's portrait of Russell at the Pierre Matisse Gallery and reports on a conversation about Russell with Matisse, who did not seem too enthused about Russell's current work. She also mentions her newfound devotion to Communism and Russell's opposition to it, pointing out that under Fascism "everything artistic is being systematically stamped out." Shore acknowledges Russell's "pet argument...against anything done on broad lines, such as mass education, was that in raising the mass you lowered the few."

See also: correspondence of Viola Brothers Shore. A note from Wilma Shore is included on the reverse of an undated letter (typed in red) from Viola to Russell.

**1.1.34 Louis Sol**

*Letters from Sol to Russell*

*Dates:* 1927-43 and undated

*Extent:* 8 dated letters; 1 dated postcard; 7 undated letters

*Arrangement:* dated correspondence is arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged.

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 072-073

*Biographical note:*

Louis Sol (life dates presently unknown; contemporary of Russell). French publisher or printer and friend of Morgan Russell. Sol was a publisher or printer associated with the prominent French printing firm Draeger Frères (hereafter DF), which specialized in fine art reproductions, fine-quality *livres d'artiste*, and high-end publicity brochures and other such commercial items. The firm was renowned for its color lithography and innovative typography. DF fully embraced the emerging Art Deco style of the 1920s and was favorably cited in the catalog of the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, Paris, under "Les Imprimeurs" (Printers/Publishers) for its publicity designs and its "inventive fertility and perfect pullings [of prints]" (New York and London, 1977, vol. 7, p. 49). It remains unclear whether Sol was a specialized printer – the firm employed some of the finest in France – or a company executive.

Sol was a friend of Russell since the early 1920s, and possibly as early as 1917. In any event, their friendship dates from the interwar period, by which time Russell had completed his major Synchronies (other than the *Eidos* series of the early 1920s) and had returned to figuration. Sometime about 1920, after executing a

thoughtful series of preliminary portrait studies in pencil (see Series 9.12, "Drawings, Morgan Russell Archives: *The Sol Family*), Russell painted a full-length, oil-on-canvas group portrait of Sol, his wife, and their two young daughters. The painting was bought at auction (Sotheby's Arcade, New York, 1990) by Gregg G. Seibert, a trustee of the Montclair Art Museum, and subsequently donated by Seibert to MAM in December 2003 (see *The Sol Family*, ca. 1917–22, 2003.17). The painting is no mere study; indeed it is fully finished, yet to date there is no evidence that it was ever commissioned by Sol. William Agee (Kushner, 1990) cites that in 1946 Sol purchased Russell's house at Aigremont as a vacation retreat when Russell quit France for the United States along with his second wife, Suzanne Binon. However, Sol may have acquired title to the house much earlier than that date, presumably allowing the Russells to live there for an unspecified period (this would be in keeping with Russell's perpetually impoverished circumstances). It may be that if Sol was instrumental in Russell's acquisition of the house and property (sometimes referred to as a "farm") at Aigremont in 1921 (when Russell is on record as first living and working there), Russell may have painted the portrait as a gift. In any event, Russell was forever in need of money, and he sold the painting in 1923. When it was shown along with three other works by Russell in the 1923 Salon des Indépendants, Paris, the painting was listed in the official catalog as *Portrait de la famille Sol* (no. 3384, p. 189), suggesting that it may have been lent by Sol, even though it was soon purchased by a friend of Russell, painter Alexander [or Alexandre] Robinson (see correspondence for Alexander Robinson), who is considered the picture's first owner.

On Russell's return to the United States in May 1946, Sol acquired along with the house at Aigremont a substantial cache of Russell's drawings and personal papers, which subsequently became the core of the Morgan Russell Archives and Collection at MAM.<sup>85</sup>

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Louis Sol to Russell, 1927–43 and undated. These letters are primarily personal in nature and constitute a body of casual, periodic musings between friends. None of these letters explicates formal business arrangements between Sol and Russell, although two letters indicate that Russell occasionally sent Sol decorative *paravents*, or folding screens, one of which was clearly intended for sale, with Sol acting on Russell's behalf. In another letter by Sol, undated, he apparently enclosed a check for easel pictures that he sold on Russell's behalf—conveying the details of the sale in a sum of prices—including a picture of flowers, as well as a still life (see undated letter bearing the notation "Lundi," on letterhead of Louis Sol, Montrouge). That said, these letters portray a friendship conducted apart from the realm of business—although Russell may well have hoped, if only privately, that Sol might facilitate the publication of color reproductions of Russell's work (if not a *livre d'artiste*) by Draeger Frères, given the firm's renown for its color lithography.

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<sup>85</sup> It may prove productive to consult the archives of the Bibliothèque Forney, Paris, for further information on Sol's career, as the BF acquired material from Draeger Frères when the firm was liquidated in 1981; the BF mounted a related exhibition in 1987 (see John Dreyfus, "A Remarkable Plaquette from Draeger Frères," *Matrix*, no. 14 [Winter 1994]: 91–7).

It should be noted that none of the letters dates from the era of Russell's presumed execution of the Sol family portrait, that is, the late 1910s through the early 1920s.

Of special note: a letter of 1929 in which Sol thanks Russell for sending him a *paravent*, or decorative screen, bearing "flowers of dreams in a parterre of fire"; a letter of 1929 in which Sol informs Russell that the latter will be receiving a copy of Ferdinand Foch's *Principles of War*, which Sol was reading with admiration (Foch, 1851–1929, was a French field marshal and supreme commander of the Allied Forces in World War I, subsequently a controversial figure for his "cult of the offensive"); a letter on hotel stationery imprinted "The Ambassador," dated 13 December 1929 in which Sol conveys his experience of New York (apparently his first visit) after arriving via the Art Deco ocean liner *Île de France* (a postcard from Sol to Russell depicts the ship's gymnasium, featuring a boxing ring). Here Sol echoes typical tourist responses to Manhattan's gigantism, citing the nearly simultaneous construction of the George Washington Bridge (with its immense, record-breaking span), the Chrysler Building, and the Empire State Building (Sol refers to the latter as the "Imperial"). Sol comments on America as "the country of the Radio, the Talkies [les films talkies], the music hall, and ice cream," and he is particularly amazed by the stark contrast in the juxtaposition of such magnificence with rank poverty within a few short blocks. He informs Russell of his difficulties in locating (apparently on Russell's behalf) Stanton Macdonald-Wright's brother Willard Huntington Wright, American writer and art historian, as well as Mitchell Kennerley (director of Anderson Galleries), among others. He typically laments the high cost of living in Manhattan.

In a letter of 14 October 1930 Sol thanks Russell for sending drawings – apparently family portraits and other character studies – and eloquently praises Russell for his ability to capture the essential traits running through a family, thereby casting new light on familiar faces.

In a letter dated 9 November 1943 Sol reports to Russell on the results of a note he delivered, apparently written by Russell to Marcel Boll, a scientist (?) whom Russell apparently wished to consult on matters pertaining to the rainbow, vision, and light. Through Sol, Boll explained that the trajectory of the arc of the rainbow was determined neither by the form of the sun nor the curvature of the earth, but rather by the "sum of rays that our eyes are capable of seeing...." Boll claimed to be able to demonstrate this thesis, up to that time "badly explained in books," by mathematical equations. Boll also informed Russell that he would further query his friends in Marseille and write Russell directly.

In an undated letter of about 1946, Sol informs Russell that M. Tériade [the publisher of *Verve*] will not be able to accompany Sol on "Sunday" due to the current printing of an upcoming issue of *Verve* featuring Matisse's *Jazz* (1947) besides being preoccupied by a book by Pierre Reverdy, illustrated by Pablo Picasso (*Le Chant des morts*, 1948).

In an undated letter likely dating from the mid-1930s or 1940s, Sol comments on Russell's love and longing for Rome. There is also the left half of an envelope with a printed return address of "Wm. Rider & Sons, Ltd," evidently utilized by Sol from Montrouge and later returned to him by Russell from Aigremont, as

both men wrote their return addresses over the envelope fragment. Wm. Rider & Sons was a London-based publisher that apparently specialized in the occult, spiritualism, mysticism, talismanic lore, and divination.

### 1.1.35 Leo Stein

*Letters from Stein to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1910–45 and undated

*Extent:* 6 dated letters; 14 undated letters; 2 undated postcards; 1 undated fragment

*Arrangement:* dated correspondence is arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged.

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 074–075

*Biographical note:*

Leo Stein (1872–1947). Author, art critic, painter of landscapes and nudes, collector. Stein attended Harvard University for several years (BA, 1898); he took a trip around the world with his cousin Fred Stein in 1895 and matriculated to Johns Hopkins University along with his sister Gertrude (neither graduated). Leo and Gertrude came, in a sense, to raise each other after their mother's premature death, and their own fates were linked for several decades. The Steins established housekeeping in Paris in 1903 at 27, rue de Fleurus, by which time Leo became a painter. They spent their early years in Paris acquiring paintings by then little-known artists: Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Paul Cézanne. The Steins held a weekly salon that virtually became the focal point of the Paris art world up to the outbreak of World War I. These years in Paris were busy and fruitful, with Leo pursuing his art and studies of art history on the model of Bernard Berenson and Gertrude her writing. They both fell in love; Leo with Nina Auzias, an artist's model (see correspondence in this series for Eugénie "Nina" Auzias Stein), and Gertrude with Alice B. Toklas, a fellow expatriate from California. These changes in their lives, however, played a role in precipitating their eventual break. Perhaps due to Leo's jealousy over Alice, perhaps due to Gertrude's frustration over Leo's dismissal of her work, in 1913, when the two were on either side of forty, they split their art collection between them and parted for good. Leo took Nina to live with him in Settignano, Italy, while Gertrude remained in Paris on the rue de Fleurus with Alice Toklas. Leo wrote occasionally to Gertrude, usually to clarify matters of their estates (and on at least one occasion expressing a desire to heal their estrangement), but the acrimonious rift would never be healed, and they saw each other only once more, years later, during a chance crossing of paths in a Paris street.

Stein spent several years in North America during World War I, without Nina. He continued to paint and to write critically about art, but his principal interest in these later years was psychoanalysis. He would spend significant amounts of time, money, and energy during the following decades undergoing intense Freudian therapy to undo the burdensome neuroses he described so often in letters to friends (he also suffered throughout his life from stomach problems probably related to his nervous condition). Leo and Nina married in 1921; in the 1920s he sold the bulk of his art collection to Albert Barnes; and in 1927 he published a collection of his critical writings on art, *The A-B-C of Aesthetics*. He continued writing over the next two decades, collecting essays on aesthetics, metaphysics, philosophy, and psychoanalysis in the compilation *Appreciation*:

*Painting, Poetry and Prose* (1947) – published just before his death from cancer (Gertrude had died of cancer in 1946). Leo was survived by his wife, Nina, who lived on in Italy for two years before committing suicide in 1949.

Leo's cousin Fred Stein, along with several friends, gathered a selection of Leo Stein's letters and writings as a tribute, published as *Journey into the Self*, which was published in 1950.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Leo Stein to Russell, 1910–45 and undated. Stein and Russell exchanged letters over a period of more than three decades, Stein acting as teacher and critic, frequently assessing Russell's work and offering aesthetic opinions (often in reaction to letters sent by Russell). Throughout the correspondence Stein discusses the work of other artists, particularly Cézanne, as well as Peter Paul Rubens, Tintoretto, and Michelangelo. At the close of many letters Stein offers observations about his own health and activities, and he occasionally comments about his wife, Nina (with whom Russell had had a brief affair before the Steins were married in 1921 (see correspondence in this series for Eugénie "Nina" Auzias Stein). Some letters contain underlining, presumably by Russell, as well as margin notes, presumably by Russell, both apparently indicative of Russell's intention to learn from Stein certain aesthetic lessons. Various entries in Russell's private artist notebooks also indicate that he may have taken Leo's aesthetic preferences into consideration when targeting Stein as a collector/patron.

In the earliest letters Stein, clearly assuming the position of instructor, writes to Russell about aesthetics and artistic purpose. On 26 June 1910 Stein assesses Russell's previous letter, asserting "nothing is essentially falser than the commonly current statement that nature makes no leaps." He continues, "There is only one way to find out what one can really do and that is to see what one actually accomplishes even when one tries to do something else." The last six words are underlined, apparently by Russell. Stein observes that an artist's basic tendency is something he cannot change – that is, a colorist is always a colorist – and furthermore, the power of the artist's will, a concept apparently introduced by Russell in a former letter to Stein, is not necessarily able to change that. In a 1916 letter, Stein praises work just arrived from Russell and promises to send money. In a 1933 letter, he comments on Russell's lectures, which he has just read.

In the undated correspondence, Stein discusses his own artwork (on a postcard); another undated postcard includes reactions after seeing work by Tintoretto. In these undated letters Stein discusses art and aesthetics and critiques Russell's work, both specifically and in general, and he offers advice and opinions about Russell's intellectual and aesthetic approach to his art. In a letter beginning "I've looked at your pictures carefully....," Stein notes that Russell's "color seems to me sometimes almost inexcusably dirty" and draws a diagram of a portion of a Russell portrait. In another letter (on pale blue paper), Stein tells Russell, "It doesn't look to me as though there is much to be done in this Guggenheim business this year since you are so very much *en retard*," apparently in reference to a query by Russell about applying for a grant.

*Letters from Russell to Stein:*

*Dates:* undated; one likely c. 1927 (in French)  
*Extent :* 2 apparent drafts of letters (one signed)  
*Arrangement:* none  
*Language:* 1 in French (signed); 1 in English  
*Location:* Document box 3, folder 076

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Russell to Leo Stein, undated. It is likely that neither of these particular drafts was ever sent, although cleaned-up versions (especially of the one in French) may have eventually made it into Leo Stein's hands. In the one in French, Russell writes to compliment Stein on his "admirable essay on the Aesthetic," in reference to Stein's 1927 book *The A-B-C of Aesthetics*. Russell is particularly impressed by Stein's chapter "Selves," in which Stein argues for a breakdown in the distinction between "aesthetics, art, and life" – actually a clarion call for a greater degree of integration of the self's constituent psychological components, a subject close to Russell's most visceral yearnings, as is evidenced by his frequent shift from personal to social and universal themes in his many artists' notebooks. Russell calls this chapter "a beautiful *tableau*" and a "utopian vision of intelligence." Russell later boasts that there is probably no other person who understands Stein's book better than he, perhaps a reference to their many aesthetic exchanges over the years.

In the letter written in English, Russell sketched several versions of abstract portraits in miniature, as if to address his interest (following World War I) in synthesizing a Synchronist mode of painting with representational subject matter – notably, not unlike Cubist principles of pictorial construction, although Russell's sketches never approach a Cubist morphology. Russell bemoans personal financial troubles under the guise of philosophizing on how the human race is never truly impartial – in the sense of truly *disinterested*, in contradistinction to *partisan* – toward anything or anyone, and he puts Stein on the spot by baldly stating, "What is *your* [position] vis à vis de moi [where do you stand in regard to me]?" He says that if Stein remains an ally, Russell might borrow money from him to sail to New York and "open my valise before you and through you to others capable of putting a deck under me again – the valise is *bondée*." Russell goes on to exclaim that what he needs most "is a job"; shortly after this, the letter is torn and the remainder has gone missing. Notably, Russell has drawn five long lines across the entire sheet of paper, as if to cancel it out entirely, thus suggesting that this letter was never sent. Annotations by Russell accompany his diminutive sketches.

**1.1.36 Eugénie "Nina" Auzias Stein**

*Dates:* 1920–45 and undated  
*Extent:* 11 dated letters; 1 dated postcard; 13 undated letters; 3 undated postcards; 2 undated fragments  
*Arrangement:* dated correspondence is arranged chronologically; undated letters are unarranged  
*Language:* French  
*Location:* Document box 3, folders 077–078

*Biographical note:*

Eugénie “Nina” Auzias Stein. (married 1921; death by suicide 1949). Wife of Leo Stein. A model and a painter in her own right, Nina Auzias had come to Paris from the provinces in 1901, apparently to study singing; after failing to qualify for the Paris Conservatoire, she supported herself by street singing, occasional prostitution, and posing for various artists, becoming a fixture of Montparnasse who was found frequently inhabiting the Café du Dôme in the company of numerous male admirers.

Nina first set eyes on Leo Stein in 1905. She finally managed to meet him three years later as a guest of a mutual friend at the Steins’ weekly salon. This connection was cemented upon a subsequent visit by Leo to the Café du Dôme; thereafter Nina and Leo would share an on-again, off-again romantic relationship, starting when Nina posed for Leo privately in his Paris studio sometime in late 1908. Shortly after, Nina developed an intimate relationship simultaneously with Morgan Russell and a third, unnamed suitor, making for a complicated romantic triangle. This coincided with the period during which Russell studied at the Académie Matisse and was regularly frequenting the weekly salon of Leo and Gertrude at 27, rue de Fleurus.<sup>86</sup>

Gertrude Stein disapproved of Nina, and it is generally thought that Leo’s continued association with her throughout the early teens is what led in part to the eventual estrangement between sister and brother. After a long and difficult courtship extending from their first liaison in 1908 to 1920, Leo and Nina were married in 1921. Nina would survive Leo by two years; she finally took her own life by poisoning herself with kitchen gas in late August 1949.

Leo had considered his wife a talented artist and supported her work; it is not known at this date what became of her own artistic projects.<sup>87</sup>

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Nina Auzias Stein to Russell, 1920–45 and undated. The range of dated letters represented by this collection bears witness to the fact that Russell and Nina Stein remained friends for life, although few of these letters divulge anything of historical substance beyond a fairly quotidian range of newsy chat concerning travel, recent work habits, and the state of Leo Stein’s health. In three letters of August 1920, Nina, writing from Tuscany, advises Russell at length on his apparent interest in visiting Algiers, covering everything from the high cost of living to how Russell might secure the proper transportation and lodging. She engages to recommend Russell to local contacts, among them her own brother (who remains nameless), in order to assist Russell with his daily needs as well as help him make pocket money while abroad (by teaching art to the children of French colonists). Nina also suggests that Russell might be fortunate enough to

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<sup>86</sup> It was during this time that Russell and cohort Andrew Dasburg borrowed from Leo a small Cézanne still life of apples for close study. Leo had recently befriended Russell, although his letters are often sprinkled with a haughty mix of moral and aesthetic superiority (Leo was known for assuming airs with virtually everyone who came into contact with him).

<sup>87</sup> Adapted from Brenda Wineapple, *Sister Brother: Gertrude and Leo Stein* (New York, 1996).

secure a Tangierian dealer or clientele for his work. Nina relays how the cost of living in Tuscany has recently tripled, with the result that she and Leo – to whom she refers variously as “Stein,” “Steiney,” or “Leo” – are awaiting the outcome of an upcoming sale of a balance of Renoir paintings in order to meet their living expenses. While urging Russell to make the trip to Algiers for artistic purposes, she repeatedly warns him of the region’s high cost of living, in one letter retracting earlier estimates and revising them significantly upward after consulting with her brother. Nina reports on “Stein’s” health, his change of mood, his work habits (at one point she is concerned about his increasingly reclusive, if not antisocial behavior), and the evolution of his aesthetic sensibility, noting “Stein’s” current move away from contemporary masters such as Renoir toward “les primitives et les chinois.” She regularly closes by conveying Leo’s greetings, his unfailing support of Russell’s work, and his promises to write Russell directly in the near future. Nina also regularly sends her salutations to Russell’s wife (at that time, Emilie Francesconi). She also mentions a visit by the painter Maurice Stern and the recent success of Richard Guggenheimer in New York. It is also notable that in occasionally assisting Russell in handling his paintings in Paris (for submission to a salon or for a client’s viewing), Nina mentions the name “Sol” several times, which indicates that she knew Louis Sol (see correspondence for Louis Sol in this series). Russell’s close friend and the eventual buyer of his house at Aigremont. Nina relays news to Russell about other artists and their recent successes, such as Michel Kikoïne (see correspondence for Michel Kikoïne in this series), on whose success with the New York dealer Brummer she comments as an equally promising development for Russell.

### 1.1.37 Igor Stravinsky

*Postcard from Stravinsky to Russell*

*Date:* 2 February 1916

*Extent:* 1 postcard

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 3, folder 079

*Biographical note:*

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971). Russian-American composer. Considered by many the greatest and most versatile composer of the twentieth century.

Stravinsky’s father, an actor and singer in St. Petersburg, had him educated for the law. Music was only an avocation for Stravinsky until his meeting in 1902 with Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov, with whom he studied formally from 1907 to 1908. Stravinsky’s Symphony no. 1 in E-flat Major (1907) is pervaded by the influence of Rimsky-Korsakov’s nationalistic style.

The work of Stravinsky interested the ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev, and Stravinsky’s first strikingly original compositions – *L’oiseau de feu* (*The Firebird*, 1910) and *Petrouchka* (1911) – were written for Diaghilev’s Ballets Russes in Paris. In the ballet *Le sacre du printemps* (*The Rite of Spring*, 1913) he departed radically from musical tradition by using irregular, primitive rhythms and harsh dissonances. The audience at the premiere of the ballet reacted with riotous disfavor. However, in the following year the work was performed by a symphony orchestra, and ever since it has been recognized as a landmark and

masterpiece of modern music. The single postcard to Russell from Stravinsky dates from this period of Stravinsky's life.

At the beginning of World War I, Stravinsky moved to Switzerland, where he composed several works based on Russian themes and embarked on an austere, neoclassical style. In the 1930s, Stravinsky toured throughout Europe and the United States as a pianist and conductor of his own works. He became a French citizen in 1934, but five years later he moved to the United States, becoming an American citizen in 1945. After composing the opera *The Rake's Progress* (1951; inspired by William Hogarth's engravings, with libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman), Stravinsky turned to experiments with serial techniques. (For further information, see the entry for Stravinsky in the *Columbia Encyclopedia*, Sixth Edition, 2001, from which this biography was adapted.)

*Scope and content:*

Postcard from Igor Stravinsky to Russell, 1916. In this single postcard from Stravinsky, the composer apologizes to Russell for not answering his letter sooner, as he was just now opening mail dating from his January Paris sojourn on arriving at his present stop in Switzerland, while he was yet en route to Italy. He states that he was very touched by Russell's letter. Within weeks Russell himself would depart for New York, where he was scheduled to partake in the *Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters* (Anderson Galleries) that March.<sup>88</sup>

See also: portrait drawing of Stravinsky by Russell, Morgan Russell Archives, **Series 9**, which Russell in all likelihood executed from a photograph, and which may have motivated his attempt to meet Stravinsky in person in 1916.

**1.1.38 Blanche Turnbull**

*Letters from Turnbull to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1930–31

*Extent:* 5 dated letters

*Arrangement:* chronological

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folder 080

*Biographical note:*

Blanche Turnbull (née Lasky; died 1932). Writer. Born in San Francisco, she was the sister of Jesse L. Lasky, pioneer film producer and president of the independent Jesse L. Lasky Productions, Inc. Her husband was Hector Turnbull, once head of the Paramount Studio in New York; her daughter was Ruth Turnbull Capps (see correspondence of Ruth Turnbull included in this series).

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<sup>88</sup> Russell admired Stravinsky for forging a new music beyond the bounds of traditional tonality and clearly saw him as a fellow progressive "abstract" artist; in a notebook dating from about May 1915 [4.2.35], Russell comments on how Stravinsky dispensed with "subject" for the sake of working with pure elements of sonority, thereby "laying down...the new archaic beginnings of a new musical evolution." Russell contrasted this approach with that of Claude Debussy and others who treated traditional representational subjects "to the last degree of complexity and interpretation," in so doing constructing an analogy between the Cubists and Futurists to Debussy, in contradistinction to his own more progressive status, which paralleled that of Stravinsky.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Blanche Turnbull to Russell, 1930-1931. Writing from Hollywood, California, in the earliest letter, Mrs. Turnbull makes arrangements for her daughter, Ruth, to “work whenever you can see her. We hope you will be able to make the same arrangement with her that you have with Wilma Shore,” noting that Mrs. Shore (see correspondence of Viola Brothers Shore in this series) and Stanton Macdonald-Wright have written to Russell with details. In 1931, Blanche comments that Ruth is returning to Paris to study again with Russell. Turnbull mentions Vi and Wilma (Viola Brothers Shore and Wilma Shore) several times; perhaps this mutual friendship is how she has connected with Russell.

**1.1.39 Ruth Turnbull**

*Letters from Turnbull to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1931–39 and undated

*Extent:* 4 dated letters; 6 undated letters; 1 dated telegram; 1 undated postcard

*Arrangement:* dated correspondence is arranged chronologically; undated correspondence is unarranged

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 081–082

*Biographical note:*

Ruth Turnbull (born 1912). American sculptor. Ruth Turnbull was a member of the National Sculpture Society in New York and exhibited at the Society in a 1929 exhibition entitled *Contemporary American Sculpture*. She went to Paris in the early 1930s to study with Morgan Russell. She is the daughter of Blanche Turnbull (see correspondence in this series), and married McClure (“Mac”) Capps in the early 1930s.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Ruth Turnbull to Russell, 1931–39 and undated. Ruth Turnbull makes arrangements to study with Russell and later reports on her activities after leaving Paris. The letters are chatty and full of news about her life and mutual friends, including Viola Brothers Shore and Wilma Shore (see correspondence for both in this series).

By 1934, Turnbull is married with a baby and living in New Haven, Connecticut, while her husband, Mac, attends school, and she writes to Russell with news of mutual friends, including Wilma Shore. She notes having no money to send him in 1934, but in 1937 she sends a check for two small canvases she has bought through Mabel Alvarez. In 1939, despite her own financial problems, she says she will buy another painting and sends another check. Apparently responding to Russell’s inquiries about John Huston, who owes him money, Turnbull replies that she has never met him.

**1.1.40 Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney [or Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney]**

*Letters to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1915–16 and undated

*Extent:* 1 dated letter; 1 dated photocopy; 1 undated letter

*Arrangement:* dated correspondence is arranged chronologically

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 083–084

*Biographical note:*

Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942). American sculptor and patron of the arts. Born into one of America's wealthiest families, Gertrude Vanderbilt married Harry Payne Whitney in 1896. In 1900 she began to study sculpture with Hendrik C. Anderson; Daniel Chester French and Augustus Saint-Gaudens refused to take her as a student. At the Art Students League in New York she studied with James Earle Fraser.

In 1907, Whitney set up a studio in MacDougal Alley in Greenwich Village in New York, offering housing to artists in adjacent quarters. She also provided these artists with gallery space for exhibiting their work and stipends for living expenses and to travel abroad. Morgan Russell benefited from her generosity, receiving allowances from the winter of 1909 through December 1915; these funds allowed him to go to Paris and pursue his work full-time.

From the landmark exhibition of "The Eight" at the Macbeth Gallery in 1908, Whitney purchased four paintings; she later contributed funds in support of the 1913 *Armory Show*, which introduced modernism to the American public. Her financial support of the Society of Independent Artists, founded in 1917, encouraged artists to rebel against Academic art.

She formed the Whitney Studio Club in 1918 as a space where artists could socialize, draw from models, and show their work. Whitney purchased more than five hundred paintings from exhibitions there, which she offered to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. When the collection was refused, she decided to open her own museum; the Whitney Museum of American Art, located on Eighth Street in Greenwich Village, was founded in 1931.

As a sculptor, Whitney was influenced by Auguste Rodin, who privately critiqued her work. She exhibited first under an assumed name, but after one of her marbles was shown at the National Academy of Design in 1910, she used her real name. She is best known for monumental sculptures, such as the *Titanic Memorial* (1914, Potomac Park, Washington, D.C.).

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney to Russell, 1915–16 and undated. In the earlier letter (19 September 1915), which is set up like a form letter, Mrs. Whitney informs Russell that the "monthly allowance" that he has been receiving from her for "some years" will terminate as of 1 January 1916 (Russell had been receiving stipends from her since the winter of 1909). A photocopied letter dated 7 January 1916 (location of original is unknown), from Mrs. Whitney's secretary, tells Russell that Mrs. Whitney will be pleased to accept a gift from him, and that she expects to be coming to France soon. In the undated

letter, Mrs. Whitney wishes Russell success with an exhibition. (Russell subsequently gave Whitney, in addition to the painting discussed below, a plaster maquette of a truncated male torso of 1910, done loosely on the example of Auguste Rodin's *Torso of a Young Woman*, 1909; see Marilyn S. Kushner, *Morgan Russell*, exh. cat., Montclair Art Museum, 1990, pp.46-48, plate 16, and figure 6; the present location of this plaster, if it is extant, is unknown.)

*Letters from Russell:*

*Dates:* 1913 and undated

*Extent:* 1 dated letter; 1 undated letter with draft

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folders 085-086

*Scope and content:*

Letters to Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney from Russell, 1913 and undated. In the 1913 letter, Russell offers Whitney a painting, telling her that she has made it possible for him "to arrive at a personal vision." He comments that "Although the most common feeling of self-respect counsels me to decline further aid from you, such a course would be artistic suicide." Russell tells his patron that he worries about how she feels about him and is concerned that she no longer likes his work. In the undated letter, a draft of which was written on two invitation cards for Russell's exhibition with Macdonald-Wright at the Galeries Bernheim Jeune (1913), he explains "why the big picture was a synchronie to light – that is, what made me quote from Genesis. The reason is simple – as is often the case this idea of what the subject really was came long after the pictorial conception. In my effort to organize a rhythmic ensemble with the simplest elements of light I could not help but have as a result an artistic synthese [*sic*] of the emotion experienced by the first eye that opened on this world of varied color and light that we all are so familiar with and which has...as basis, the spectrum, and not the yellow white disk of the sun." He goes on observe, "If modern painting is to express anything greater than a few apples or portraits it can only be something of this sort...."

See also: Notebook 4.2.16, July 1912, No. 6, for notes on a letter to Mrs. Whitney on a new vision in painting.

**1.1.41 Willard Huntington Wright**

*Letter to Russell:*

*Dates:* 1916

*Extent:* 1 letter, dated from envelope; 1 fragment of Wright's stationery

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 3, folder 087

*Biographical note:*

Willard Huntington Wright (1888-1939). Art critic and writer, brother of Stanton Macdonald-Wright. An early, articulate, and confrontational advocate of modern art, Wright was the chief organizer in 1916 of the *Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters*, held at the Anderson Galleries in New York. He is the author or coauthor of several important early writings on modernist art, including *Modern Painting: Its Tendencies and Meaning* (1915), *The Creative Will: Studies in the Philosophy and Syntax of Aesthetics* (1916), and *The Future of Painting* (1923). He also wrote influential articles in art journals.

Wright published a very successful series of detective novels under the pseudonym S. S. Van Dine between 1924 and his death in 1939. It is worth noting that Russell seems to have once tried his hand at the detective novel himself, perhaps after the example of Wright; see subseries 4.4, *Essays, creative*, 4.4.5, *Untitled [MacIntyre Manuscript]*, undated.

*Scope and content:*

Letter from Willard Huntington Wright to Russell, 1916. Writing from New York, Wright reports on a recent exhibition (perhaps the *Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters*, held at the Anderson Galleries in New York) that “closed uneventfully with very few pictures sold” and then explains a very complicated arrangement for sales. Alfred Stieglitz has bought one of Russell’s “archaic” pictures, and Andrew Dasburg says that Russell had promised him the other “as a present in addition to the one he bought.” Wright also reports that he has bought a drawing, in part to settle a debt owed him by Russell, and further notes that Stanton Macdonald-Wright claims a share of the sales on Russell’s work. At the end of the letter, Wright mentions that Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney had arranged to see the show but never appeared.

## 1.2 **Binon family correspondence**

*Dates:* 1914–59

*Extent:* 0.5 document box

*Arrangement:* alphabetical by correspondent, then chronological if dated

*Location:* Document box 4, folders 088–095

*Scope and content:*

The correspondence in this group does not involve Morgan Russell directly, but rather is to, from, or between members of the Binon family, including Morgan Russell’s second wife, Suzanne Binon, her first husband, Georges Binon, and their daughter Denyse. Suzanne’s correspondence also includes letters from Stanton Macdonald-Wright, Michel Seuphor, and Mabel Alvarez.

See also: Series 1.1, Russell correspondence, for letters to Russell from Suzanne Binon and Yves Hacart; for letters to Russell from Michel Seuphor; and for letters exchanged between Russell and Mabel Alvarez.

### 1.2.1 **Denyse Binon [Kent]**

*Letters from [Friedrich Joseph] “Fritz” Berber*

*Dates:* 1938 and undated

*Extent:* 3 dated letters; 1 undated letter; 1 card

*Arrangement:* dated letters are arranged chronologically; the undated letter and card are unarranged

*Language:* English and French

*Location:* Document box 4, folders 088–089

*Biographical note:*

Denyse Binon (dates unknown; possibly died early February 1958 (see correspondence in this series, Suzanne Binon [Russell], *Letters from Stanton Macdonald-Wright to Suzanne Binon [Russell]*, below, where in a letter to Suzanne Binon Russell of 1958 Wright consoles her on the death of a child). Morgan Russell’s stepdaughter. She was the daughter of Suzanne Binon, Morgan

Russell's second wife, and Georges Binon. She married A. Atwater Kent Jr., son of the wealthy Pennsylvania industrialist of radio manufacture, in July 1941; they lived in Ardmore, Pennsylvania. Morgan Russell and Suzanne, after coming to the United States shortly after their marriage in 1946, lived with Denyse and A. Atwater Kent Jr., in Ardmore.

[Friedrich Joseph] "Fritz" Berber (1898-?). German university professor living in Berlin. At the time he wrote the undated letter included here, Berber was the director of the Deutsches Institut für Aussenpolitische Forschung.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from "Fritz" Berber to Denyse Binon, 1938 and undated. Berber tells Binon of his great affection for her, hoping it will be returned. He comments on his own illness and tries to make plans to see her. In the undated letter, he notes that he is delighted that she will soon come to Berlin.

### 1.2.2 Suzanne Binon [Russell]

*Biographical note:*

Suzanne Binon Russell (dates presently unknown). Morgan Russell's second wife. Morgan and Suzanne met in 1935 in Rome and married in early January 1946, just months prior to quitting France together for the United States. Suzanne was the niece of Claude Monet by marriage (her maternal aunt was Monet's second wife).

*Letter from Mabel Alvarez to Suzanne Binon Russell*

*Date:* 1953

*Extent:* 1 dated letter

*Language:* English

*Location:* Document box 4, folder 090

*Biographical note:*

Mabel Alvarez. See correspondence in Series 1.1, Mabel Alvarez, for biographical note.

*Scope and content:*

Letter from Mabel Alvarez to Suzanne Binon Russell, 1953. In this letter, written just after Morgan Russell's death, Alvarez offers her sympathies to Suzanne, recounts Morgan's influence on her life, and speculates that "perhaps he is happier – and we are glad that he does not have to suffer any more pain here."

*Letters from [Friedrich Joseph] "Fritz" Berber to Suzanne Binon*

*Dates:* 1940–43

*Extent:* 3 letters

*Arrangement:* chronological

*Language:* French; German

*Location:* Document box 4, folder 091

*Biographical note:*

See correspondence in this series for [Friedrich Joseph] "Fritz" Berber for biographical note.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Fritz Berber (in Berlin) to Suzanne Binon (at Aigremont), 1940–43. In the first letter of 3 October 1940 Berber apologizes for not being able to answer Suzanne's letter of 13 July in which she had expressed some sort of anxious concern in regard to her two daughters [Denyse and, as Berber writes, "Simonette," or Simone]. Berber has been traveling, but he has already written to Denyse (he specifies having sent the letter via air) and will try to pass along Suzanne's letter to her daughter Simone, who is apparently somewhere in or near Berlin. Apparently not unlike the letters of 1914 from Suzanne to her then-husband Georges, who was stationed at the front, this letter may indicate Suzanne's concern for her daughters' welfare during a world war in full swing. The remaining two letters are in German and largely escape translation at this juncture, although they are brief and seem to concern the possibility of meeting up during planned sojourns in Paris, as well as expressing interest in Morgan Russell's work.

***Letters from Suzanne Binon to Georges Binon***

*Dates:* 1914 (ca. 9 July –21 October) and undated

*Extent:* 25 dated letters, 2 undated postcards that seem to have accompanied two of these letters

*Arrangement:* chronological, with postcards kept with appropriate letter

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 4, folder 092

*Biographical note:*

Georges Binon (dates unknown). Suzanne Binon Russell's first husband.

*Scope and content:*

Letters from Suzanne Binon to Georges Binon, 1914. These letters constitute a cache of war correspondence written almost daily by Suzanne for some stretches during the month of July, with nearly a full month's silence starting in early September, and then suddenly picking up again almost daily (sometimes even twice daily) throughout the month of October. The lacuna in September suggests that an entire batch of these letters has gone missing; given the care taken with the extant group, it is reasonable to assume that a batch may have been inadvertently destroyed due to Georges's change of position along the front and loss of personal effects along the way. Almost all of the letters, each averaging about two typical full-size sheets folded once to create eight pages, and often supplemented by a ninth half-size page, are accompanied by their matching envelopes – pointing to their sentimental value at one time to Georges – and bear as return address "sent by Mme G. B. chez Mme Ratier, Caylus, Caru et garonne" ("dispatch from Madame G[eorges] B[inon], care of Madame Ratier [perhaps Suzanne's mother] at Caylus, [prefecture of] Caru-et-Garonne [in the French Pyrenées]. They are addressed to Georges, who was apparently stationed at the front as part of a heavy artillery regiment; the designation of regiment may indicate that Georges was a footsoldier in the trenches or, at times, a member of a heavily fortified regiment who surely saw fierce action in the field.

These letters chronicle the typical exchanges of sentiment and news between a husband and wife separated by war, replete with professions of love and longing, patriotic jingoism toward god, family, and country, as well as self-heroism and faith in a final deliverance from catastrophe. In the last full-length

letter of the group, Suzanne celebrates the news that George is about to be discharged – we know not on what basis – which brings to a close this intimate treasury.

***Letters from Stanton Macdonald-Wright to Suzanne Binon Russell***

*Date:* 1953–59 and undated

*Extent:* 10 dated letters; 17 undated letters; 1 undated Russell obituary written by Wright; 1 letter from Henry A. Clausen, an out-of-print book dealer based in Colorado Springs, dated 1971

*Arrangement:* 2 folders: 1 of dated and undated letters beginning in 1953 (with the death of Russell) and extending to 1959; the other consists of the Russell obituary by Wright and a balance of undated letters, all apparently post-1953 and received as a group as part of the *Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004*, and hence preserved here as such (all marked to that effect on their versos); the gift by Joyce contained the stray letter by Clausen of 1971.

*Language:* French; two in English

*Location:* Document box 4, folders 093–094

*Biographical note:*

Stanton Macdonald-Wright (1890–1973). American painter. He was raised in Santa Monica, California, and first studied art from 1904 to 1905 at the Art Students League, New York, under Warren T. Hedges (1883–1910). In 1907 he went to Paris and enrolled at the Sorbonne (1908–12), also studying briefly at the École des Beaux-Arts, Académie Colarossi, and Académie Julian. He exhibited for the first time at the Salon d'Automne of 1910.

In 1911 Macdonald-Wright and Morgan Russell met while studying together under Ernest Percyval Tudor-Hart (1873–1954), a Canadian painter who expounded a color theory equating color – and various combinations thereof – with musical harmonies. Wright and Russell collaborated on developing their own theory of color abstraction, which they called Synchronism [meaning “with color”]. Macdonald-Wright first exhibited his Synchronist works with Russell at the Neue Kunstsalon, Munich, in 1913, and then at Bernheim-Jeune, Paris; they exhibited in New York at the Carroll Galleries in 1914. From 1916 to 1919 Wright worked in New York, contributing to the landmark *Forum Exhibition of Modern American Painters* (1916), and he had his first solo exhibition at Alfred Stieglitz’s gallery 291, in 1917.

In 1919 Macdonald-Wright returned to California, remaining based in Los Angeles for the rest of his life. From 1922 he directed the Art Students League of Los Angeles. By that time Macdonald-Wright’s work, paralleling that of Russell, was evolving away from Cubism toward a more representational idiom, although he never lost his preference for heroic figures, prismatic hues, and crystalline planes. From 1935 to 1937 he directed the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project (WPA/FAP) for the Southern California region and later served as technical adviser for the Western region of the FAP. In the latter position he was influential in encouraging the revival of mosaic murals in Southern California, particularly the invention of new, inexpensive mural techniques such as petrachrome; this new mosaic process used tinted concrete as opposed to pieces of glass embedded in concrete, as in the ancient *opus sectile*

method. He also received several mural commissions, including one for thirty-eight panels on the theme "Invention and Imagination" for the Santa Monica Public Library (1934–35; on deposit at the National Museum of American Art, Washington, D.C.).

Macdonald-Wright became increasingly involved with Zen Buddhism and Asian art (as would Russell by the late 1910s), in which he found a source for creating a more serene and transcendent vision. By the 1930s his themes were inspired by Asian legends and philosophies. He first visited Japan in 1937, and from 1956 he began spending five months each year at a Zen monastery in Kyoto. In the 1940s he painted Synthetic Cubist works, but following Russell's death in 1953 he returned to painting in a Synchronist idiom. From 1942 he taught "oriental" philosophy as well as art history at the University of California at Los Angeles. His last significant work was the *Haigo* folio, a series of twenty wood-block prints illustrating haiku poems (1965–66; unpublished). – *Adapted from* Ilene Susan Fort, "Stanton Macdonald-Wright," *Grove Art Online*. Oxford University Press, [22 November 2005], <http://www.groveart.com>

#### *Scope and content*

Letters from Stanton Macdonald-Wright to Suzanne Binon Russell, 1953–59 and undated; Wright obituary of Russell; stray letter from book dealer Henry Clausen, 1971. Taken as a group, this batch of letters begins with the death of Russell, when Wright writes to Suzanne expressing his profound grief over Russell's passing; this letter is apparently followed closely by Wright's obituary of Russell, which he states he sent to the *Times* (without specifying the city) and that it appeared in print "last Sunday." The obituary is typewritten with the title, various edits, and the note regarding its recent publication written in blue ink in longhand. It is not formally signed; "Stanton" appears as a signature for the note to Suzanne running along the left margin (Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004). There is also an important, undated letter from Stanton informing Suzanne and Simone of "a story that will surprise you." Wright proceeds to tell them that a little over fourteen years ago (that is, about 1939 or earlier), "when Morgan was still in France and hard-up and had nothing to eat and [was without hope], he began sending me small oils that I sold, and from which I expediently sent to him the monies collected." Wright continues to outline how an agreeable gentleman – "I found him intelligent and amusing and became his friend" – by the name of Stevens was among the buyers. Over time Russell entrusted Stevens with the safekeeping of a crate of paintings that had been shown at the Anderson Galleries in 1916; over the years, as Russell became more stable in his residence at Aigremont, he solicited the help of Wright for the paintings' recovery, but Stevens proved unwilling to cooperate. After Stevens's death (apparently not long before this letter was written), Wright had contacted his wife, who brusquely told him that she had sold the house and disinterred the paintings, which had been buried by Stevens (perhaps as a means of hiding them from Russell) and had since come to fall into complete rot and ruin. Stevens's surviving family had nothing to offer for their loss. Wright details how he was subsequently contacted by a young man who was renting the house from its current owner and who claimed to have paintings that he wanted Wright to examine. After following through with that lead, Wright outlines for Suzanne the paintings' deplorable state – "one synchrony of approximately 8 ft. x 12 ft., of which 50% of the painting has been reduced to dust," and he suggests this was similarly true of others. Wright comments that only *he* is capable of restoring them, and that

while the works remain Suzanne's property – they had never been purchased by Stevens – he requests that she come to California to counsel him on what to do with them in cooperation with a dealer (this is a bit unclear). Other undated letters concern the sale of various pictures and monies exchanged between Wright and the Binon-Russell family in regard to them; news of Wright's travels to Japan; glimpses of Suzanne's complaints over "hippies, crime, and [widespread] fraud" in the United States (to which Wright replies it is the same in Japan); news pertaining to works in deplorable condition that Suzanne wishes to restore and sell for needed funds; news of Wright's purchase of Russell paintings in England, including a self-portrait. A single letter in English among the *Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004*, details how the "hippie" who had contacted Wright regarding the buried pictures was threatening a lawsuit to hold onto them (apparently he had hoped Wright would merely authenticate them for sale).

Of the dated letters that were part of the original Archives as it arrived from France, there is a letter of 30 May 1953 (the day after Russell died in Broomall, Pennsylvania), in which Wright sends his condolences, expressing that while one must hope that all is for the best, in the end he, himself, continued to find it difficult to acquire such faith; Wright calls Russell a great painter and a great man, implying his own qualifications for stating this after knowing him for forty years. In a letter of 22 June 1956 Wright relates that during a recent return to Paris he made the acquaintance of Michel Seuphor (see Series 1.1.30, Michel Seuphor), who was "now a true friend," and he indicates that Seuphor was planning an article on Russell for an upcoming issue of *L'Oeil*, probably of April or May 1957, which would contain two full pages of color reproductions, one for Wright and one for Russell. Wright asks Suzanne to come up with a Synchrony from "la époque héroïque" ("the heroic era," Seuphor's designation for the period of about 1913–14), and he tells her that he has already provided Seuphor with a catalog of 1913, asking her to send directly to *L'Oeil*, in turn, a color reproduction for the intended article. Subsequent dated letters continue the discussion of what to send, trials and tribulations concerning lost items in the mail, negotiations with *L'Oeil* over what to reproduce (for example, it could not be something that had already been reproduced on the cover of *Art News*), discussion over possible exhibitions, the provision of a color reproduction by the dealer [Joseph] Duveen of *Synchronie Cosmique*. A letter of 7 August 1957 relates how Wright was recently suffering from a psychological breakdown of sorts; also, the article by Seuphor had yet to appear and might be slated for November. A letter of 10 February 1958 expresses Wright's profound sorrow over the death of one of Suzanne's children (perhaps Denyse Binon Kent). Wright relates that the article by Seuphor has been cut by the editors from eight to three pages; he alludes to January 1958 as a possible publication date. In an undated letter in English, Wright precedes his salutation "As ever" with the exclamation, "I miss you, you god-damned lousy, wise-cracking, hard boiled but sweet, tender, bighearted and sympathetic girl." (The article by Seuphor finally appeared in the January 1958 issue of *L'Oeil*, titled "Synchronies." It ran for six full pages and carried, among other images, a full-page color reproduction of Macdonald-Wright's *Synchronie*, 1914, with no color reproductions of Russell's work. It is notable that the article features Wright over Russell; the latter is overshadowed by Wright throughout the article, and Russell's work does not appear in reproduction until the last two pages, with three works reproduced and one portrait of Russell by Amedeo Modigliani, of 1918; see Michel Seuphor, "Synchronies," *L'Oeil*, no. 37 [January 1958]: 56–61).

*Letter from Michel Seuphor to Suzanne Binon Russell*

*Date:* 2 August 1953

*Extent:* 1 dated letter

*Language:* French

*Location:* Document box 4, folder 095

*Biographical note:*

Michel Seuphor, born Ferdinand Louis Berckelaers (1901–1999). Painter, poet, art historian, and writer. For biography, see Series 1.1 Correspondence entry for Michel Seuphor.

*Scope and content:*

Letter from Michel Seuphor to Suzanne Binon Russell, 1953. Seuphor writes the recently widowed Suzanne, expressing his regret over the passing of Russell, and assuring her that Russell's work nevertheless endures as a testament to his genius. He informs her that he has the intention of writing a definitive study of Synchronism for a Paris-based review, and that he would deeply appreciate Suzanne's sending him any supporting materials for his research, such as printed matter, reproductions of Russell's work, or other photographic documentation. Seuphor eventually returned to this project in 1956, after meeting Stanton Macdonald-Wright in Paris (see Series 1.2, Correspondence entry for Suzanne Binon [Russell], *Letters from Stanton Macdonald-Wright to Suzanne Binon Russell*), at which time Seuphor received a commitment from the journal *L'Oeil* for such an article, although Seuphor's original plans for a grand feature – he completed eight pages of text and reproductions, according to Wright – was cut back, finally appearing in the January 1958 issue of *L'Oeil* numbering six pages.

### **1.3 Miscellaneous correspondence, dated**

*Dates:* 1914–57

*Extent:* 17 folders

*Arrangement:* chronological

*Language:* most in French; some in English; some in German

*Location:* Document box 4, folders 096–112

*Scope and content:*

The correspondence in this series includes letters written primarily to Russell regarding business and personal affairs; several of the letters have notes from Russell on the reverse. Also included are letters addressed to members of Russell's family.

Russell's constant need of money is evident throughout these letters; many mention the sending of funds or inform Russell of the limits of an individual's ability to continue such support. Letters apparently from fellow artists discuss their participation in exhibitions, including the Salon d'Automne, Société des Artistes Indépendants, and others.

Correspondence with art dealers includes letters from N. E. Montross, New York (1918); Pro Arte, Paris (1930); and Étienne Bignou, Paris (1935). During 1931 and 1932, there are many letters addressed to Russell during his stay in California, including letters from representatives of the California Arts Club, California Palace of the Legion of Honor; Paramount Publix Corporation (regarding a

possible film); Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art; the office of actress Mary Pickford; and John Huston, who bought a painting by Russell. Letters in 1934 from Walter Huston indicate that Russell was trying to contact John Huston for financial support.

Correspondence starting in 1937 and going through the World War II years include letters from the United States Embassy as well as French and Swiss authorities regarding Russell's immigration status and ability to travel. The latest letters are addressed to Russell in Pennsylvania, where he lived out his last years.

See also: Series 1.4, Miscellaneous correspondence, undated, which contains undated letters from many of the same correspondents; see also Appendix IX for an alphabetical list of miscellaneous correspondents provided by the finding aid for the *Morgan Russell Papers*, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

#### **1.4 Miscellaneous correspondence, undated**

*Dates:* undated [ca. 1908–1940s]

*Extent:* 7 folders

*Arrangement:* letters from Russell; then alphabetical by correspondent; then unidentified

*Language:* Most in French; some in English; some in Italian

*Location:* Document box 5, folders 113–119

*Scope and content:*

The correspondence in this group is primarily addressed to Russell and concerns both personal and professional matters. Many of the same correspondents appear as in series 1.3, Miscellaneous correspondence, dated. One folder contains drafts of letters written by Russell to various correspondents.

Letters from art dealers include correspondence from Harriet Bryant, Carroll Art Galleries (New York). A letter from Miriam Sutro Price to Mr. McGuire introduces Russell as a painter “who seems to have a very interesting idea,” and recommends that he “see some manufacturers of motion pictures.” This group is not as extensive as the “Miscellaneous, dated” correspondence and should be looked at in conjunction with that series.

See also: Miscellaneous correspondence, dated, Series 1.3, above, which contains dated letters from many of the same correspondents; see also Appendix IX for an alphabetical list of miscellaneous correspondents provided by the finding aid to the *Morgan Russell Papers*, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

**1.5 Postcards, dated**

*Dates:* 1910–45

*Extent:* 4 folders

*Arrangement:* chronological

*Language:* most in French; some in English

*Location:* Document box 5, folders 120–123

*Scope and content:*

Postcards included here are addressed to Morgan Russell; his first wife, Emilie Francesconi; his second wife, Suzanne Binon; and his stepdaughter Denyse Binon. Many are picture postcards sent by friends during trips; some include images of artwork; many are quite illegible. Content appears to be primarily social.

**1.6 Postcards, undated**

*Dates:* undated

*Extent:* 1 folder

*Arrangement:* none

*Language:* most in French; some in English

*Location:* Document box 5, folder 124

*Scope and content:*

Postcards included here are addressed primarily to Russell and his wife. Like the dated postcards, they tend to be from traveling friends. Content appears to be primarily social.

**SERIES 2: BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL**

*Dates:* 1925–41 and undated

*Extent:* 0.5 document box

*Arrangement:* alphabetical by folder title

*Location:* Document box 6, folders 125–142

*Scope and content:*

Included here are miscellaneous personal items, including two undated address books (one containing notes as well as addresses); material documenting Russell's marriage to Emilie Francesconi (1918); health-related documents, including prescriptions for eye medications for Russell and the bill for Emilie Russell's funeral in 1938; immigration papers; a passport issued in 1931; a library card; postal receipts; entry cards for museums in France and Italy; a French driver's license; exhibitor's cards for the Le Salon de Tuileries, 1929-30; 2 membership cards for the Society des Artistes Indépendants, 1939-41; calling cards, including Russell's own; and a ring bearing a 50 centavos coin from Paraguay.

### **SERIES 3: BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL RECORDS**

*Dates:* 1911–46

*Extent:* 0.5 document box

*Arrangement:* alphabetical by folder title

*Location:* Document box 6, folders 143–150

*Scope and content:*

This group comprises a rather random mix of bank records; receipts and bills for expenses while traveling, including train fare, restaurant and hotel bills; household expenses, such as having a piano moved; studio expenses, including a paint catalog and bills for a frame and for a cast made in 1910 (on the reverse of which are color theory notes).

See also: Series 4.1, Loose notes. Russell often used the reverse side of receipts and other business and financial documents for his notes.

### **SERIES 4: WRITINGS, Private**

*Dates:* ca. 1906–53

*Extent:* 11 document boxes; 5 linear feet

*Arrangement:* 6 subseries, as follows:

- 4.1 Loose notes
- 4.2 Notebooks
- 4.3 Essays, aesthetics
- 4.4 Essays, creative
- 4.5 Annotated sketches
- 4.6 Light-box studies

*Language:* English and French

*Location:* Document boxes 7–17, folders 151–327

*Scope and content:*

This series consists of writings and sketches in various formats made by Morgan Russell primarily for his private use, rather than for publication or sharing with others. It includes the thousands of scraps of paper on which the artist made notes to himself; notebooks in which he jotted his thoughts on a wide variety of subjects; manuscripts for essays on aesthetic subjects; creative essays that were part fiction, part autobiographical; and quick sketches. See subseries descriptions below for more detail.

#### **4.1 Loose notes**

*Dates:* most undated, ca. early 1910s–early 1940s

*Extent:* 4 document boxes, 2 linear feet

*Arrangement:* 3 sub-series:

- Sorted
- Russell groupings
- Unsorted

*Language:* English and French

*Location:* Document boxes 7–10, folders 151–229

*Scope and content:*

This group consists of notes written by Morgan Russell for his use on a wide variety of subjects; some include rough sketches as well. Russell scavenged paper wherever he could find it – letters, opened envelopes, receipts, advertisements, bank notices, blank stationery taken from various places and organizations – to use for these notes to himself and to make small sketches (see subseries 4.5 for sketches). Russell must have been writing constantly, and he went over the same issues and the same conversations with himself again and again. Most of the material here is undated; based on subject matter, themes, and the paper on which the notes are written, it would seem that the notes range in date over a period of several decades, roughly between the 1910s and early 1940s. Although some sketches are included in this group, they are primarily notes. Sheets that were determined to be primarily sketches are located in subseries 4.5, *Annotated sketches*.

These notes are organized in three groups as indicated below.

#### **4.1.1 Sorted**

The notes in this group have been organized loosely by subject during processing. The reader should be aware that many of these notes touch on more than one subject; filing was done based on a quick reading. Many of the notes are difficult to read, due either to Russell's cryptic handwriting or to the condition of the paper. Determination of subject often was made by what was most legible. Little of this material is dated.

The subject groups are as follows:

**Art – architecture:**

A small group of notes and small sketches of architectural details; see also "Travel," this series, below.

**Art – aesthetics, beauty, theories**

Russell's notes and musings on the nature of art and beauty, philosophical musings about art, the relation between art and reality, and the like.

**Art – act of creation:** [Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004]

Two-page statement, possibly in Suzanne Binon Russell's hand, beginning "Figurative arts follow two tendencies always...."

**Art – anatomy**

A small group of notes and sketches on anatomical subjects.

**Art – general**

This group includes notes on subjects relating to art that do not have a particular focus.

**Art – lists/inventories**

This group comprises various lists and inventories compiled by Russell pertaining to his art studies.

**Art – notes on his work**

This sizable group contains notes Russell made to himself concerning work he had already done or work he planned to do. Some notes include sketches for contemplated work; some are notes on subject matter or on his approach to a particular genre.

**Art – other artists (two folders)**

This large group consists of writings by Russell in which he observes, critiques, appreciates, and ruminates on the work of other artists, especially Michelangelo and other old masters, and Paul Cézanne and other contemporary French artists.

**Art – other artists, old masters (Gift of Simone Joyce, 2004)**

The three items in this group are an old master drawing; a photograph of a Michelangelo *Pietà*, and a photograph of a detail of Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling, all with notes on the reverse written by Russell.

**Art – process**

The notes in this group relate to the actual artistic process involved in making a painting. They include Russell's notes to himself as well as more formalized explanations of his methods, or methods he thinks would be useful.

**Art – sales**

A small group of notes relating to painting sales, including lists with prices.

**Art – Synchronies mentioned**

The notes in this group are similar to those in other art-related categories, except that they specifically mention his synchronist work

**Art – technique and technical (two folders)**

This sizeable group pertains to notes on technical matters relating to Russell's painting, including techniques to achieve certain shapes or effects, ways of layering paint, light and shade effects, and so on.

**Asian**

A small group of notes relating to Russell's interest in Asian art and calligraphy.

**Autobiographical**

This group is comprised of notes and more formalized writings in which Russell recounts and reflects on his life and career as an artist.

**Chess**

Notes reflecting Russell's interest in chess, including diagrams of moves.

**Clothing**

Notes relating to clothing choices, fabrics, and detailing, including sketches of dresses and dress parts.

**Color (three folders)**

This very large group holds Russell's notes about and theories on color, its uses, its character, and its application to painting. Also included is the cover of a notebook, on the inside of which are small dabs of paint with notes by Russell.

**Contacts**

A collection of small paper scraps on which Russell wrote the names, addresses, and/or phone numbers of people he had met or wanted to contact.

**Correspondence on the reverse**

This group consists of notes written by Russell on the reverse of incoming letters, including letters from correspondents included in Series 1.1.

**Drafts of letters**

Notes for letters and drafts; the addressee is not always apparent.

**Financial**

Ranging from tiny scraps to longer sheets, this group includes financial calculations, shopping lists, and other notes relating to Russell's finances.

**Fragments**

This group brings together papers, ranging in size from tiny shards to larger sheets, all with some sort of marking, that appear to have been part of something larger and have now lost their context.

**Gender issues**

This large group includes notes relating to Russell's thoughts on gender in general, and on his own penchant for dressing in women's clothing. See also: Clothing, above; and two essays by Russell in subseries 4.2, *Notebooks*, 4.2.39, 1915, "A Woman and Her Clothes" and "High Heels."

**Household, Garden, Farm**

Included here are notes about household issues and chores, about Russell's garden, and about farming.

**Illegible**

This folder holds notes that the processors of this collection were unable to decipher.

**Landscape – cloud study**

A small group relating exclusively to the study of clouds.

**Language study**

Several pages of notes, including French vocabulary words and Italian conjugations.

**Light**

Notes relating to scientific and artistic properties of light.

**Literary**

Notes focused on literary subjects.

**Mathematics**

Several scraps of paper on which Russell worked out mathematical problems.

**Medical – health**

This group contains notes on health issues, remedies, and schedules. Some of this material may relate to Emilie Francesconi [Russell].

**Music**

*See Series 7*

**Mythological**

Several notes relating to mythological subjects.

**Not Morgan Russell**

Notes found among the Russell papers that do not appear to have been written by Russell.

**Personal musings**

This group contains many notes Russell wrote to himself about himself, his art, his life plans, and life in general.

**Personal vanity**

This small group is composed of notes on beauty treatments, hair care, and other personal care topics.

**Philosophy – Religion – History**

This sizable collection incorporates Russell's musings on God, references to biblical verses, commentary on other religions, philosophical ruminations, and notes on history.

**Photography and film**

Russell's notes on taking photographs, including lighting, exposure, and other issues.

**Poetry**

Verses written by Russell, many of which seem to be incomplete.

**Politics – war**

Includes "What Democracy Has Done for Art," a short treatise.

**Postcards**

A group of postcards with notes written primarily by Russell.

**Self-assessment – Plans for Self**

A large collection of notes relating to Russell's plans for new regimes, new ways to market his work, new ways of painting or living. Also included are self-critical writings.

**Sports**

A single note about boxing.

**Teacher, pedagogy**

Papers relating to Russell's work as a teacher and his plans for teaching.

**Travel – general****Travel – California****Travel – Italy**

Notes regarding Russell's travels, including costs and train schedules, and on art and architecture seen in his travels.

**4.1.2 Russell groupings:**

Some of the material included in the category of Loose Notes was found in groups organized and labeled by Russell; the groups are chronological, thematic, or unlabeled:

**Art of the East**

Chronological:

Winter 1924-25, Paris

Winter 1929-30, Paris

Summer 1934

**Travel**

Belgium and Holland

Italy

Italy – St. Peter's, Rome

Italy – Siena, Pisa, Rome

**Not labeled:** 9 groups

**"Notes antérieurs"****4.1.3 Unsorted** (10 folders; 220-229)

The material in this group was left unsorted at the end of the *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection Enhancement Project, 2004-2006*. The notes in these folders, when sorted, will fall into the same or similar categories as those in Series 4.1.1.

## 4.2 Notebooks

*Dates:* 1906–39 and undated

*Extent:* 72 total; 67 dated (some by context); 5 undated; 2.25 linear feet

*Arrangement:* Chronological, followed by undated (unarranged)

*Language:* English and French, or often Franglais

*Location:* Document boxes 11–15, folders 230–301

### *Scope and content:*

Morgan Russell kept notebooks regularly throughout his professional life, especially during his productive French years between 1909 and 1939. Russell utilized these notebooks, which range in size from shirt-pocket formats to full-size student *cahiers* (roughly 9 by 7 inches), for recording his creative and personal thoughts; the conceptual development of his aesthetic theories; working sketches and diagrams; notetaking of lessons and maxims gleaned from mentors (such as Henri Matisse and Ernest Percyval Tudor-Hart); drafting lectures or essays for publication (see Series 5, *Writings, public*); planning travel itineraries and lifestyle goals (for example, hygiene, exercise, personal relationship ideals); among other uses. The range of material found in these notebooks is extraordinary and constitutes a rich panorama of Russell's mind in its many manifestations, from his most personal musings on a life of rural seclusion with his first wife, Emilie (in which Russell lays out a hierarchy of subjugation, placing Emilie at the top of a chain of domination over him and his artwork), to some of his most carefully articulated thoughts on the mechanical and philosophical underpinnings of his artistic enterprise. In other words, the notebooks are indispensable for recovering Russell's otherwise hermetic thought and creative preoccupations; they inform virtually every other aspect of the Archives and Collection.

### *Dating:*

A good number of these notebooks bear dates in Russell's own hand, albeit apparently logged in retrospect as, perhaps late in life, Russell—cognizant of his historic importance—attempted to organize them some years after their creation. This is suggested by the uniformity of script or writing medium of some of the dates scribbled across the recto, verso, or inside cover(s) of the notebook, such as, for instance, yellow crayon over black synthetic cover of a number of “pocket” notebooks dating from the 1910s and 1920s. Others left undated by Russell have been closely examined for stylistic or conceptual relation to dated copies; where appropriate, a date has been assigned them, notated here in brackets. In such instances the notebook was placed within the chronological arrangement established by Russell's own system. *It should also be noted that on occasion the sequence of dated notebooks will depart from strict chronological order due to varying factors, such as the occurrence of overlapping dates among several notebooks, or conflicting numbers or dates assigned to certain notebooks by Russell himself.*

### *Processing note:*

It should be noted that a good number of these notebooks were found with loose sheets of notes or sketches stuffed into them in rather haphazard order, although often they reflect the themes within the notebooks so as to suggest that Russell attempted to collate disparate materials late in his life. The commentary for each notebook provided here focuses on the contents of the notebooks themselves; unless otherwise noted, loose materials found with a particular notebook have been kept together with that notebook, although they have been housed in a

separate glassine envelope in the file. Descriptions of this loose material follow appropriate notebook descriptions in italics.

## DATED NOTEBOOKS

### 4.2.1 [ca. 1906–1910]; mostly in English; some French; illustrated.

This folder consists of two components, one small pocket-size notebook and a cache of loose papers found among them. The notebook suggests Russell's earliest years in Paris; it documents architecture around the city, famous sites, bridges, and so on, and contains what appear to be notes regarding upcoming tours of the Eiffel Tower, the Trocadero, and other Parisian monuments. Both this and the following notebook [4.2.2] contain relatively similar topics of interest, as well as fairly raw illustrations bringing to mind a young Russell touring the city and feverishly recording every interesting and serendipitous perspective.

### 4.2.2 [ca. 1909]; in English; slender notebook with many pages missing.

Contains aesthetic notes that allude to Russell's familiarity with Henri Matisse's aesthetic theories, although they are tentative compared to later versions, which have the feel of Matisse's own pronouncements and maxims.

### 4.2.3 1909–10; mostly in English, some in French; lightly illustrated; dated by the artist on the cover; also labeled by the artist "Rationale of Verse of Poe and for page on [*illegible*] of working....Matisse lessons....On Napoleon's campaigns."

This notebook apparently predates, or is contemporary with, three closely related notebooks of the years 1909–10 (see 4.2.4 for I and II, and 4.2.5 for III), in which Russell records various studies, among them writings on Italian Renaissance art by Bernard Berenson; the poetic philosophy of Edgar Allan Poe; instruction by Henri Matisse; as well as his own aesthetic ruminations. Pages seem to alternate between notes taken from books by Berenson on Italian painting (*The Study and Criticism of Italian Art*, three series, 1901–1915) and those jotted in studio classes with Matisse; these are followed by notes on Poe's philosophy of poetry and composition. The notebook ends with notes on traditional poetic forms and meters.

This notebook is accompanied by a cache of 14 loose sketches of the male body, apparently (based on comparative knowledge) culled from at least several different periods of Russell's career, including male figures seemingly done from life and others imaginative (such as Hercules); also found among these are some muscular arm studies.

### 4.2.4 [1909–10]; dated on basis of numbering by Russell, as well as continuity with above notebook no. 4.2.3; in English; labeled "École Publique, Cahier-Journal."

Numbered I by Russell, in which he writes at length on "Napoleon's Campaigns." See also notebook 4.2.6 and 4.2.7, for continuation of this theme and its relevance to Russell's artistic practice.

- 4.2.5 [1909–10] ; “École Publique, Cahier-Journal,” apparently labeled by Russell “II, Berenson, Matisse-Crits [Critiques],” in English.

Continuation of themes of notebook 4.2.4, above; begins with notes apparently on Sigmund Freud or other psychology, “Science of characterology-Things women say about themselves have been suggested by men-They repeat the discoveries more or less real that men have made about them; W into courtesan mother-differentiated by their preoccupation with the sexual act (main & in ultimate sense sole interest of W) first as end in itself 2<sup>nd</sup> as process result in [illegible] of child”; continues with notes on abnormal “type of hysterical woman; development of empirical knowledge and sexual complexity,” then indicates Russell is taking notes on “Chap.I-Male & female.” Shifts to notes apparently on Matisse, comments on Cézanne and Greco, Egyptian art, “canvas filled with moving volumes and objects....emotional oneness of spirit....the power and force of Cézanne lies in his truth....” the rendering and relation of volumes, and so on.

- 4.2.6 Early 1909–10; labeled by Russell “Berenson and form early 1909–10, rules on arts”; in English.

This notebook was radically emptied of its contents, but it retains notes on aesthetics apparently taken at the Académie Matisse, on color, harmony, balance, rhythm, light, and so on. Here it becomes clear what Russell meant when he noted on the cover of notebook I, “On Napoleon’s Campaigns,” as he writes, “Art is very much like Napoleon’s campaigns as they are all a wonderful lesson – no division of forces – no scuttering of interests until main object attended to.” Important comments included here pertain to Russell’s study of Paul Cézanne, namely on Cézanne’s rhythm, light, and form; further military metaphors are employed, perhaps relating to Napoleon, where Russell writes:

*Operations about to open should be considered by one or the other commanding general not as two sets of movements opposed to each other but as a single operation for which there are two generals ready to direct but as in all life so in war the one with the greatest will & determination & clear ideas as what is about to be done can assume the direction of affairs while the other one is still wondering or waiting & not sure if he is capable of entire responsibility.*

*This notebook completes the series of three from 1909–1910 [4.2.3, 4.2.4, and 4.2.5].*

- 4.2.7 [ca. 1910; “For Stein....”]; in English; marked with an X on cover; 120-page cahier.

Color notes, under the heading “Most Important and Most Usual Harmonies or Zones,” followed by a list of 1 to 12 color combinations: possibly color notes from Russell’s study with Ernest Percyval Tudor-Hart; aesthetic notes to self; sketch of apples with notes recording “Tramway and big wall subject....gray day....” followed by “What is the great want of modern art... Think for a minute and you will answer Heroic or religious subject matter....” “Elements of success in war...” seems to be a continuation of earlier Napoleonic analogies, drawing parallels between art and the “surprise” attack; “New technique for the expression of visible things....”; “Genius-intense absorption – big attitude....audacious-masterly-powerful and easy.” Page of backward writing (in manner of Leonardo?); notes to self on old masters; notes “For [Leo] Stein....very intense tiny still lifes simple economic displays of sheer genius....color realization....” and further comments on concept of “zones.” Continues “So For Stein several

tiny intense works"; notes on the public, depicting houses as rooted in landscape, for example as "vegetable growths" or "mushrooms"; notes on "Life program" and the importance of doing big work by age thirty-five, and so on.

**4.2.8** [ca. 1910]; in English, some in French; lightly illustrated.

Apparently working notes; creative philosophy; brief French phrases suggest some notes taken in Henri Matisse's classes; the "new" in art; exaggeration, deformation, the "illustrative"; "only spiritual effect of the imagination to see and order the visual element can be of use...."; liberty of color and shape; the "ecstatic" subject; "no slavish copying after nature"; "Recapitulation on fruits—on rendering fruit & objects in space; painting by big canvases with long brushes; arabesques; art reflections; notes to self on incorporating neither "texture cubist" nor "Matisse" but a decided originality of intention; notes on form; "affranchisement" (that is, to become free and independent); "result of your total nature aroused to intensity"; notes to self reminding him to "think of the works of M[atissse?] especially his big bathers & his sculpture/the latest of C[ézanne]." Writes of Matisse and Pablo Picasso as the "Botticellis of our day" (apparently in admiration for all three masters' "modern" powers of stylization and anti-academicism); notes on creating "new cells in the brains of the foremost brains of the day"; and the creation of "a great plastic poetry."

**4.2.9** 1910-11; in English, small sketchbook, unbound with sheets from various sources, some of varying dimensions, late 1910 forward, variously dated as such by Russell; highly illustrated.

Notes on use of anatomy, proportion, color, light, composition, mass, organization of volumes, space (drawing "into" the canvas), the subject ("it is not a yellow object you are painting but light and the appearance of a yellow"), and so on. Notes are copiously illustrated by sketches of the body, sculpture, architecture, still life (several seemingly directly after Paul Cézanne), and other subjects, such as sculpture after Michelangelo; notes were probably made during studies with Henri Matisse, as many statements resemble pedagogical, or "how to" maxims and bear a close resemblance to those found in Matisse's *Notes of a Painter* (1908), for example: "The constant consciousness of totality. The resultant [?] to the detail of being inseparable part of the whole, a change in which would result in a change in every part"; allusions to music, the composing of a whole, a "melodie," or "a symphonic morceau that holds together"; comments on the importance of modulating color and moving away "from Denis" (that is, Maurice Denis's prescribing a "flat" application of color); the employment of line only in drawing and not painting; notes on how to avoid the academic and the eclectic by seeking self-pleasure as a means of assimilating experience; painting as "massive rhythmic light"; sketches of apples and notes on "massing the light"; merits of a *presentative* not representative art; architectural sketches; some sketches bearing heavy, reinforced lines along the hips or torso of a female figure, which mimic the manner in which Matisse marked photographs taken by Russell of his own plaster sculpture (see Series 8, Box Binder 1, *Photography*, subcategory Sculpture).

This folder includes loose sheets that also seem to issue from classes with Matisse, marked "On Cézanne." Another, labeled, "Summer 1910," contains philosophical musings on recovering from "a great sadness." At the end of this notebook is what appears to be a roster of artists to study: Delacroix, Millet, "Poullauolo," Assyrian reliefs, "Get [illegible] Madonna Raphael!"

- 4.2.10 [Summer 1910–December 11];** in English; assorted loose papers and sketches transcribed by Bérénice Reynaud (transcriptions accompany papers), collected together under cover of a “Mogador” notebook (or possibly sketchbook). The dating of these papers remains unclear, but one small sheet of notebook paper found among the batch is dated in Russell’s own hand to 15 August 1911.

Architectural sketches; figural sketches; ruminations on Paul Cézanne; still-life sketch with mention of Georges Braque; sculpture and rhythmic posing of volumes; painting and sculpture; drawing with “the powerful lines of a Hokusai or even interest or vast view of a Hiroshige”; relations of volumes; a singleness of attitude; assimilation, unity of attitude of seeing and thinking; references to Christ; canticlelike verse “to accomplish with greater and greater speed thy glory”; Braque as “the world of form and color”; notes on light, reflected light; color; old masters: “Remember the visit to the Lux. This morning....The Manet....the intense Monets esp water – pure color, The Renoir – intense and not....Rodin’s heads....his profuse and wonderful forms”; notes on line; art as a “distinct state of energy and efficiency”; notes on Paul Cézanne (quite extensive, starting on page 36); Auguste Renoir; mural painting as “a quiet refuge to the eye.” Accompanying loose sheets contain ink sketches of seated and standing figures; some bent-arm studies.

- 4.2.11 1911, June–August;** in English; transcriptions provided by Bérénice Reynaud; illustrated with drawings of figures, still life, studies from Cézanne bathers, woman with hat, apples.

Aesthetic notes on color, elements of painting, stimulation and the work of the mind, intensity of expression, drawing, drawing nature, the necessity of composing the whole, with complete consciousness of all the parts, the plastic whole, pulling away from the academic, possessing a keen vision not “tension,” music and Wagner, the living organic unit of chromatic light, rhythm, composition, forms of light and color organized “at expense of representation”; establishing the living field of color and lending it form; picture as a “composition of formal color....a movement of color”; teaching “as one would talk to self.”

- 4.2.12 [1911–12];** in English, some in French; dated on the basis of the cover bearing in Russell’s own hand the title “Color Theory of Tudor Hart” and the fact that Russell studied with Ernest Percyval Tudor-Hart in late 1911; lightly illustrated.

This notebook contains a large batch of loose sheets related to color studies, as well as a cardboard box cover from oil paints (Lefranc & Cie) bearing notes by Russell on the underside; notes include a list of books presumably “to read,” including James (not clear whether Henry or William), Fechner, Bergson, Ibsen, Petrarch, Dante, and others; color mixture recipes; colored varnishes; the relation of light and tone to color.

- 4.2.13 ca. 1911–12;** in English, some in French; illustrated. The cover bears a color reproduction of “Reception d’Horace Vernet.”

Notation by Russell of “Various” content; “Le Delicat”; fragments of notebook or two notebooks; aesthetic reflections on color and space, Russell writing on feeling surrounded by a sphere of color, as a diver plunging into water or a sailor surrounded on all sides by water; works capturing different aspects of this but sharing the same common quality; citing of Auguste Renoir for such fullness and filling of space; notes on the art of drawing, illustrated; notes on color,

composition, artistic expression as necessarily containing an element of pathos; difficulty of drawing a chair or an apple on a par with drawing the human figure; painting; the way painting acts on our senses; plasticity in art composition; books to read, including “complete works of Poe, Rationale of Verse”; mentioning Berenson, Baudelaire’s criticism, Nietzsche, Apollinaire, Metzinger and Marinetti “on Cubism and Futurism (Jean Metzinger and Albert Gleizes published *Du Cubisme* in 1912); Russell goes on to mention “Angelo, Leonardo, Rubens, Delacroix, Ingres, Courbet, Renoir, Cézanne, Beethoven....Indian and Ceylon art especially for the reproductions.... Ruskin’s works on art and architecture”; comments on how Wilde’s writings where allusion to art made are probably fresh and at least not *bourgeois*....”; notes that “Chinese drawings [were] pursued by Stein once.”

Notes on landscapes of Cézanne containing “coldness everywhere and warmth in lesser degree everywhere....ground on first grey cold reddish....”; observations on Renoir; brief allusions to darkness and “the silence at a musical audition”; composition as a “question of place and illuminated regions....”; notes pertaining to the development of a color machine, or board; discussion of lamps and what they accomplish; luminosity and composition in large formal divisions or “rhythms of space and time and luminosity.”

- 4.2.14 April 1912; #3;** in English, some French; transcriptions/translations provided by Bérénice Reynaud. (This notebook begins a series numbered 3–17 by Russell, probably retrospectively. Numbers 1 and 2 are currently missing or lacking such markings. The extant notebooks of this series run from notebook 4.2.14 through 4.2.29.)

Heavily illustrated with figures in which Russell is exploring broad arcs and curves of the body; notes refer to “sketches of movements”; notes on handling of color; need for a “generating force” behind the tableau that determines the forms and colors; uses analogy of throwing a plate on the floor and the force expended versus force of resistance of the floor, etc.; harmony growing naturally out of the initial movement or gesture (i.e. not from some abstract quality of being “right”); simplification of color; contrasts Maillol’s “rubbery bloated forms” with Cézanne’s organism and “absolute ensemble”; an “order in the chaos of form sensations”; life and vitality emanating from organization; reflections on being of one’s own time.

- 4.2.15 May 1912; #4;** in English; illustrated with watercolor of a tree, what one might call a *proto-Synchromy*, as it were; other pages missing; notes dated from April 1912 forward.

Russell is copying Cézanne bathers (a famous crouching one, as in Paul Cézanne’s small *Trois baigneuses*, purchased by Matisse in 1899); apples and geranium leaves; notes on color overinscribed with the word “false”; color and light; the study of movement; notes on Cubism that begin “The cubist method of means of keeping of firm tight grasp of the organization as a whole—the parts being strongly and intimately held together in this whole and never an isolated representative detail. Instance in Metzinger tableau”; notes on color harmony; the “*témoignage énergétique*” as making for the fate (“*fatalité*”) of a genre; looking at Auguste Renoir and finding a lack of an easily grasped rhythm or “melodie of the ensemble....this is terribly significant”; page dated April 1912 contains a kind of mock musical staff pertaining to scales and color; page of May 14, 1912,

"Impressionism at D. Ruel's house...." followed by notes on pictures seen: by Paul Cézanne, a still life, a man seated, and a landscape, "very vigorously painted and colored but the plastic expression or ensemble as color"; sketch of Cézanne apple; Renoir still lifes convey "great vision of man, totality and principle expression of color" ; also sees "Danse à la Compagne"; Renoir is "drawing with color"; observation on Claude Monet and the intelligent rendering of things, and light seen chromatically; Russell remarks on contrasting still lifes by Cézanne and notes color and composition, perhaps significantly, notes "red, yellow and green, orange and b. violet."

- 4.2.16 June 1912; #5;** in English and French; closely related in theme and character to 4.2.14; moderately illustrated.

Notes on color; light; angle of reflection of the light; the necessity of the organization of sensations; the study of colored light and the means by which it undergoes modifications according to matter and the object; Cézannesque sketches of landscape; tonality or key in painting; zones of color in landscape; comparisons/contrasts to sculpture; the "counterpoint side" of direction into shadow; sketches of arabesques; there are only volumes revealed via light, these volumes have a particular influence on the color of the light; lights of cold and hot; more sketches of Cézanne bathers, townscapes, geranium leaves; notes on the *fond*, or background, and the way it reflects luminosity, "Blue v[iolet] for shadows"; very important page of sketches for *Study for Synchromy*, ca. 1913 (Montclair Art Museum; 1988.114.recto); reflections on forces "*concentrique*" and "*excentrique*"; color as a subjective phenomenon or interpretation of an object.

- 4.2.17 July 1912; #6;** in French; translations provided by Bérénice Reynaud; closely related to former two notebooks; illustrated with 18 pencil sketches and 3 crayon sketches.

"The Basis of a New School of Painting"; physiological analysis of vision, color and depth perception; mention of Paul Cézanne, understanding that "our visual colored sensations first based on light like clearness and translated as color"; work of art is translation of emotions produced by the forms and colors of reality"; need to *express* not *represent* this emotion; notes on a letter to be written to Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney on a new vision in painting.

- 4.2.18 August 1912; #7;** in French; translations/transcriptions provided by Bérénice Reynaud; illustrated.

Closely related to preceding notebook (4.2.16); the basis of a new art; colored sensations and their effect on human emotions; an art deploying itself simultaneously in time and space; "Go at it exactly as you make a slight drawing after Cézanne: "commence in middle putting [it] on its feet progressively....there....is always an order around a center"; notes on teaching by example over instruction; notes on personal hygiene and health. One loose sketch included with colorful crayon abstraction (color study).

**4.2.19 September 1912; #8;** in English and French; illustrated.

Sketches after Michelangelo's Medici Tomb; series of sketches of human figures that demonstrate how Russell abstracts from the figure a Synchronist substructure (the reinforced lines sometimes recall Henri Matisse's calligraphic "corrections" of Russell's photographs of his own sculpture); list of topics to tackle in painting, such as "of vision or ease of drawing in artistic manner, as if whole canvas was one object" or "the sensation of solid forms and hollows—of projection and retreat"; double (facing) page of sketches of spirals and arabesques carrying the notation "tension of pulsation or a force trying to break out from something dead or negative---to the undulation or rhythmic character of this *effort*"; "color is not the basis of painting, or rather it is not the cause of color sensation in us but the cause in light and dark simply"; notes on painting and music and dividing the canvas in the sense of movement of light; to render the painting capable of moving people the way music does; notes dated 5 November 1912; it is the business of an artist "to create in powerful, beautiful life---not to make us feel the drama of human life and condition but by rhythmical and contrast mean to move us. The drama of point of view is secondary"; Russell reminding himself of remarks by Matisse to the effect of trying to capture "a sentiment of certain things" over any particular perfection of line or other formal device; notes of 9 October 1912 record Russell's impressions of works by Paul Cézanne "at [Auguste] Pellerin," such as "Gray aspect of canvas as a whole...."

**4.2.20 October 1912; #9;** in English and French; only lightly illustrated, including a sketch of a Cézannesque still life on the inside back cover; translations provided by Bérénice Reynaud.

Equality of color and form; drawing as significant as form; very articulate and almost poetic thoughts on form, color, spatial harmony, the power of color over our emotions, light, and so on, are expressed here.

**4.2.21 December 1912; January–February 1913; #10;** in English; transcriptions provided by Bérénice Reynaud.

One of Russell's richest, densest, and most technical notebooks from a critically important stretch in the evolution of his art: meditations on the formal qualities of art; color, light, reflection, mixtures of colors; this notebook demonstrates Russell's intensive study of color, as well as his training in the color theory of Ernest Percyval Tudor-Hart (commenced in 1911).

The notebook is accompanied by three loose sheets discussing the physiological basis of the perception of light and color; for related themes, see notebooks 4.2.7, 4.2.11, 4.2.12, and 4.2.22, among others.

**4.2.22 March 1913; #11;** in English; fragmentary transcriptions by Bérénice Reynaud; lightly illustrated.

This notebook dates from the period just prior to the debut of Russell's and Stanton Macdonald-Wright's Synchronist exhibition in Munich (June 1913) and in Paris (early October). Russell speaks of color now in terms analogous with music, employing musical terms such as scale, harmony, octave, tonic, and

discusses (loosely translated) “orchestration of color in progressive values” and the “convergence and dispersion of rays and the colored quality that results from it.” Russell reflects on matters of dissonance and “the simple manner in which a part, discordant or awkward of form, in itself is resolved by relating it to something else, this relation being simply something else that with this discordant element strikes a relation or adjustment.”

**4.2.23 April 1913; #12;** in English; lightly illustrated.

A motley and arcane group of notes on color and its application in relation to musical concepts; color charts, law of harmony, and other related topics, all in extension of the themes presented more lucidly in the prior notebook of March 1913.

**4.2.24 April- May 1913; #13;** in English; moderately illustrated; transcriptions provided by Bérénice Reynaud.

Some striking figural ink sketches; notes on color; whites, blacks, and grays, and their interaction with color; notes on light, shadow, tonality, warm vs. cool colors, blue-violet.

**4.2.25 August 1913; #14;** in English and French; transcriptions/translations provided by Bérénice Reynaud.

Color theory, music; thoughts on perspective and creating depth in a canvas; excerpts from Genesis; “how-to” reflections on artistic advancement of culture and Synchronist aesthetic; “Will beauty be able to save the world?”; toward the “awakening of a religious conscience and....toward the path of Beauty.”

**4.2.26 1914-15; #15;** in English and French; translations provided by Bérénice Reynaud; illustrated; generally dating from fall 1914 but catalogued here to correspond to Russell’s numbering (#5).

A very diverse notebook generally dating from the fall of 1914. It begins with reflections on the German techniques of warfare, some echoing the theory of the offensive expounded by Ferdinand Foch. Russell had written of such battle theories in relation to painting in about 1909-10 during his study with Henri Matisse and in relation to Napoleon (see notebooks no. 4.2.3, 4.2.4, 4.2.6, and 4.2.7); notes on formal aspects of his work, such as the need to gradate color so it is not flat; claims to have done his best at avoiding shapes, lines, and so on, and remaining true to the “architectural,” as well as his “innate sense of beauty and fitness and grandeur in architecture and music”; color rhythm; color notes; “a monumental art of color on flat surfaces”; some “notes on harmoniques” of color; modeling the canvas and not the figure; “sculpting only”; list of books, including Ruskin’s *Modern Painter* and *Stones of Venice*, as well as *Seven Lamps*; reflections on study with [Matisse], such as “the result not the theory,” and “fill canvas first then....go to something else....”; recalls analogy (provided by Matisse) of a well-placed black re-uniting areas “like the appearance of a strong man in a crowd that is scattered in small groups....he ‘pulls them together’ contrast”; importance of the spiral form “of the organic animal or human figure” making things “appear alive and plastic”; notes on the old masters and “that by their supreme excellence became fixed forms”; then goes on to list much Asian art seen at the

Musée Guimet [Reynaud inadvertently transcribes it as “Gerniet”]: seated Buddha, Egyptian Gods and Goddesses, Medieval Marys, Dancing Siva, Dancing Thibetan [*sic*] God, Greek Archaic; mentions “Drawings in America,” and certain ones “with Stein”; more reflections on the war approaching, its likely duration and outcome; list of books and art reproductions “at N.Y. Library”; old masters listed.

**4.2.27 January–February 1914; #16;** in English and French; translations provided by Bérénice Reynaud; illustrated.

Russell writes on the cover of this notebook that it covers “J-F 1914,” but it also contains a sketch boldly dated “Mars 7. 1914”; notations for the narrative subjects of paintings and their corresponding museum locations, for example “Prométhée enchainé, Aldenbourg Musée”; sketches for Synchronies; color notations; notes on composition; aesthetic notations, such as “The color doesn’t turn – only the lines – and they turn in flat planes – no cubicity feel to the turn”; notes of February 1914 on the tendency in painting that Henri Matisse introduced, away from reality “even as found in Rubens” and toward “the great conceptions such as the Assyrian Kings....Egyptian Gods – the Greek [synthesis] of the body....This isolation of the deeper and larger human significance as well as the plastic at the expense of more intuitive detail is the sign of all art that impresses itself on the human consciousness in the long run....”; extensive notes to self regarding the formal elements of his art, such as “Painting is the art of relations in advance and retreat – the illusion of this sort of starting out and falling back is the equivalent in painting of the sensations of moving found in sculpture”; March 1914, dated notes discussing the effect of “Greek word of light use it as would Greek word of painter, sculptor, etc. – and in painting – sculpture of movement, Greek word [for] spiral....Greek word [for] nature – energy....Greek word [for] harmony....Beauty of the universal life energy....The force that turns the planets....that turns matter into being form....On spiritual emotions of joy....consciousness of self force....Eternal renewing of the energy of enthusiasm and ambition....color, sound, form, beauty as happy manifestations of proportion and measure....Love....Richness, plenitude and voluptuous....Energy of War, of work, of speed that gives the illusion of ambition and effort at work and succeeding [evil]”; continues with pantheistic meditation on nature and the universe; the last movement of [Beethoven’s] Ninth Symphony as containing the secret of “superhuman ecstasy and intoxication”; notes to self on health and lifestyle, including “summer stay in some constant sunny land...mirrors in house not only to study your attitudes and gestures but for purposes of *voluptuousness* ceiling especially”; diagram of color diamond with interior “gray sphere”; February 1914, “Is it not just possible that the great man Beethoven at least in a good part of his first work does no more than present better than anyone else the state at which he finds his art without worrying to give birth to new sensations entirely unknown?”

**4.2.28 February–/March 1914; #17;** in English and French; illustrated.

Notes on composition; notes on the necessity of studying harmony in modern music and the movement of color; sketches for Synchronies; importance of unity and the “grasp of the cohesion of all the parts working together toward the realization of a single aim”; the relation of sculpture and painting, as in “Remember the simple impression of seeing a house instead of [aligning] en face”; notes on various kinds of center in a canvas, kinds of light, scale of warm and cold shadow.

**4.2.29 April–May 1914; #18;** in English and French; original transcriptions by Bérénice Reynaud missing; lightly illustrated.

Notes on the attractive qualities of new clothes (Russell likens their sensuous effect to that of fresh flowers); intellect versus mental emotion; parallels in nature and character between the soldier of war, the aviator, and the artist; the necessity of bringing to light the emotional value of the subject; drawing as producing and coordinating “a subtle, plastic, and organic whole, having a full and rich but tight cohesion between all the parts”; sketches of spirals; notes on musical solfège, analogies made between chords of music and color; “the sweetest accords are those that are made up of colors of a single tendency or nature, thus cold green, blue, violets and purples with if wish whitened and grayed Y[Yellow?], O[Orange?] and Reds”; notes on originality versus “only invention”; a tonality is described as a color around which others are organized; sketches of potential color relations (orbs possibly related to Orphism?); name and address noted of Lucien Helle; music staff and notes.

**4.2.30 ca. 1914–15;** unnumbered; school *cahier*; cover carrying inscriptions by Russell, “À la Forme; Synchronie in Orange; Synchronie à la Lumière, Ideas for [illegible] Blue,” along with three square doodles, presumably of planned paintings with polka dot-like designs within them; lightly illustrated.

Russell discusses various issues pertaining to the development of a light-box Synchronie, its mechanics, functions, color elements, and so on, which was a preoccupation of about 1914–16, as his interest in painting was temporarily waning. Russell seems to have had in mind a kind of “financial collaboration” for the development of such a project, perhaps along the lines of large corporations, such as was once the norm with certain transatlantic shipping companies that staged dioramas for the World’s Fairs. Indeed, he talks about such a financial collaboration to underwrite the expense implied in staging such a Synchrony “in the principle [*sic*] cities of Europe and America.” Russell also writes, “Mention about the Camera Cinema [indecipherable] a apparatus motors and electric lamps-colors-the two etc. travel-etc.... Explain clearly about the aim which will give birth to a new art but at same time renew and deepen our enjoyment of the old.” He mentions its significance as poetry, “that is its illustrative significance...Architecture of color scales much as the big symphonies are great groups of scales.” These are essentially production notes for Russell’s ambitions in developing a moving, sculptural, and yet time-bound art of colored light; notes follow on Greco, Michelangelo, Rubens, Greek Sculpture, Giotto, Goya, and finally “Own Drawing.” Russell writes of seeking “quick and rich effects of a high artistic order,” thus suggesting his interest in creating a time-bound art based partly in theatrical performance, partly in the

cinema, partly in classical music, and partly in painting and sculpture. Above all, he speaks of a grand scale, a kind of production outside of the art world bridging the gap between the artist and the public; a production that “is to take the place of religion as the intuitive and mystical face of mankind.” Russell proposes a play of black medium done on the backside of a white transparent screen, camouflaging the artist’s arm – this suggests that Russell may have seen something of an Indonesian *Wayang Kulit* puppet performance or display in the Musée Guimet – performing “flickering passages of color spectrums” with “sudden breaks or shocks.” This is followed by a Synchronist-like sketch of a fictive painting; and a reflective philosophical rumination on an art of color and light in relation to organic, “living” matter, and Russell states how Synchronism “has its principle [*sic*] base in the intense [indecipherable] and conscious life it assigns to color in the construction of a picture, whereas hitherto with the old master it was a simple [indecipherable] element or at most a choice of colors in the objects and clothing of the personages in keeping with the dramatic spirit. The Impressionists extended its use for a truer realism to a more naturalistic rendering of light. With synchronism it is raised to a plane where the inherent and subjective states excited by a color are welded to objective conditions most in common with them....” Notes follow on the conception of a picture on a flat surface as simultaneously a “melody in surface” and “a harmonic melody in depth.” An inventory of paintings follows with corresponding prices for each.

**4.2.31 ca. 1914–15;** *cahier* unnumbered by Russell; primarily in English.

This *cahier* complements notebook 4.2.30 in that it contains scattered notes for a kind of *Synchromie lumineuse*, by which Russell seems to refer to a kind of performance of colored lights, possibly even one – unlike his plans for the *Synchromie lumière* – taking place in the round, that is, in which Russell’s audience would be engulfed by the performance; as Russell writes, “Human figure alone for form – three intermissions – arrange mechanisme. Audience in centre of a nebulae [*sic*].” In some places he calls for a “slow turning while music or poetry keeps attention....light climbing slow up spirally as they turn around”; in other places Russell refers to a performance more in keeping with his *Synchromie lumière*, in that Russell is conceiving of an act of painting with light across a “translucide screen lighted in front and self lighted up a bit from all sides so as to kill darks and also [the performer] dressed in white – tools also.” He writes of painting colors on film “and the cinema” and coordinating such elements with “suites of chords,” as well as employing a magic lantern to complement such techniques and various components. On other subjects, Russell refers to possibly “incrusting” [*sic*] nudes in *Synchromies*, apparently to have *Synchromies* and representational subjects – nudes, still lifes, landscapes, heads, and others – mutually complement or accommodate each other, which Russell refers to as a kind of “Pindaric expression,” in reference to the work of the ancient Greek lyric poet Pindar (or Pindarus, 522 BC–443 BC).

**4.2.32 [ca. 1915–21];** in English and French; Italian “Quaderno” notebook (comparable to the French *cahiers* in this series); translations provided by Bérénice Reynaud.

This notebook was tentatively dated by Reynaud to about 1921, although a date closer to the completion of the *Synchromy in Orange: To Form*, of 1913–14, seems more appropriate, as it contains notes pertaining to that painting. In two places Russell apparently added, retrospectively, dates pertaining to 1913 and 1914.

This notebook is rich in reflection, evincing Russell's more mature thoughts on the formal and aesthetic bases of his work; Russell comments on form, "deforming the natural coloring of thing for the sake of color composition of a thing"; certain passages have been crossed out, suggesting a reflective Russell looking back on not only his own work but also his own aesthetic evolution and justifying or excising certain portions of former theory from a more mature perspective.

- 4.2.33 ca. January 1915;** labeled "1915" by Russell; "Quaderno" notebook\*; in English and French; illustrated.

Reflections on "the empty space of the universe"; definition of mass; notes on the subject of Edgar Allan Poe and *Eureka*; comments on Auguste Renoir and his ability to "produce a double effect of great massiveness and a corresponding feeling of spatial freedom or 'airyness'" – Russell also refers to this as "spatial transparency and dense nearness"; notes on "balance"; notes on music and color relations; the back inside cover bears a biographical time line by Russell of his life in shorthand from 1895 to 1923, suggesting he was combing through his notebooks at that time and organizing them for future use and pedagogical purposes; this explains Russell's frequent crossings out of earlier thoughts on various subjects that no longer held for him.

\* *Quaderno* in this instance refers to the adhesive bookplate that Russell affixed to the cover of a common student notebook, on which he wrote the date of the enclosed material *retrospectively*, that is, probably eight to ten years after the material had been first entered.

- 4.2.34 Early 1915;** may extend into 1916; dates of April and May 1915 appear within on certain pages; *cahier* with "L'Esthétique" written on cover.

Notes on painting and its formal elements (deriving the composition and color arrangement from natural experience of the color of underlying subject); notes on light; much material has been crossed out or otherwise "corrected" by Russell with later annotations.

- 4.2.35 [ca. May 1915];** *cahier*; mostly in English; illustrated.

Apparently Russell was looking back on the development of his Synchronies and critically evaluating his own evolution; he begins by chiding himself for constructing paintings from about 1911 to 1913 artificially on the "S scheme," by having just "put it there instead of letting it grow out of many composed *luminous assertions* of varying [trait?] built on an axe [axis] that would give a *feel of the S* as a net result"; notes on his art and life as an attempt to create a kind of trilogy of arts on the example of Richard Wagner, "a dionysian orgie [*sic*] of sound, color, form and words that will be an organic evocation of the forces of nature as our being, body and mind vibrating as one perceives them..."; Russell sees self as a successor to Auguste Renoir, in that he is to take up the "serious possibilities of modern painting since Renoir"; he writes, "express the world and things by pigment ecstasies [*sic*] and shape beauties"; notes of 19 May 1915, on music and analogies with dividing the canvas into parts; Russell writes "good things" on the recto of a page where he speaks of the future of the arts as lying in

“the extreme possibilities of sensual and physical ecstasy produced in sculpture and painting by directions and colors, and in music by sonorities and rhythm”; notes on “classic paintings” and an essence inherent in them that is missed by most “cultured people”; notes on art and the evolution of humanity; lists Rubens, Greco, Giotto, Massaccio.

- 4.2.36** [ca. May 1915]; in English; *cahier*, “Le chameau et les baton flottants” on cover with art reproduction; only slightly illustrated.

Notes on the “working elements of sculpture, painting, and drawing” as purely “quantitative considerations”; much is crossed out here; the reasons for the dominance of warm positive colors; Michelangelo and Peter Paul Rubens and “the latter offering reaction by locking that geometric effect that the nature of sculpture and of the habit of architecture [developed] in the forms [?]”; the constitution of “direction” in color; notes of May 5, 1915, marked “Eureka!” stating “the one and dominant direction of color is the great upward diminution of reds as less and less material for reflecting light exists – until finally the end is in the blue [illegible] of the sky overhead.... The surging up as it were becoming less and less powerful as it becomes more distant from the earth....”; notes on Igor Stravinsky as working without a “subject” for the sake of working with the pure element of sonority and thereby “laying down.... the new archaic beginnings of a new musical evolution”; Russell contrasts this with Claude Debussy and others who are complicating their subject “to the last degree of complexity and interpretation,” and draws parallels with painting, likening the Cubists and Futurists to Debussy and implying that his own status lay more with Stravinsky.

- 4.2.37** June–July 1915; labeled by Russell 1915; notebook carries the imprint “Omnium” on the cover; in English and French; illustrated; recto bears Russell’s date of “1915” with the notation, “Some notes on pure colors and grouped ones.”

Notes on drawing, composition, movement; notes on color, some labeled “Experiments in Natural Philosophy”; various operations of warm and cold colors; notes on Paul Cézanne’s inferiority to the late Auguste Renoir, as Cézanne failed to “orchestrate” his [subjects] “with a sufficient appropriateness to their massivity – too many sharpnesses – too many ‘holes’ or their detail especially in color and shadows much like the [illegible] charming of a Pollaiuolo”; criticizes Cézanne for failing to make the “large synthesis” and therein lacking a sense of “the ensemble in the pure sense” and having “too many lines – sketch lines shadows on volumes etc.”; more on Cézanne and Renoir on a loose sheet where Russell attributes to Renoir the “greatest, most complete and most eternal work, whereas the Cézanne seems to be an intense study and meditation of a fragmentary kind”; Russell states that “one must never lose sight of the fact that unity, complete and final unity in results is what is the *last word*”; modern search for the grand style; harmony as “melody in three dimensions”; color movement in painting.

- 4.2.38** 1915, late (“Fin 1915” in Russell’s hand); *cahier*; in English; illustrated; the cover bears the notation by Russell “On the Statue and Lights,” in reference to Michelangelo’s *Dying Slave*.

Includes a fine set of ink sketches of Russell's analysis of the lower portions of Michelangelo's *Dying Slave*, indicating how Russell draws from the figure its principal lines, hollows, contours, and proportions, and arrives at its "essential modification"; apparently references this sculpture for its "certain male beauty in the heavy mass of this figure, a suggestion of cut and stone, but for such there must be either a cubic sensation aroused, a turning in all over into a rectangular mass, or else an élan aroused by the proportions contrasts in, *small head, long neck, spread out shoulder in back*....A fascination to the head and arms back, a fascination to the loins....right hip and front'; Russell writes most informatively, "The form's size can be squarish—heavy but must present an inner life, a bursting intensity turning in a confined cubic space, imprisoned but alive. A sort of *condition ramassé* [intensely gathered state] but manifest in [all its] force"; Russell goes on to comment how every component, fat or thin, has its grace, "that is to say its appropriate [*propre*] beauty for its volume"; then comments on sculpture as a quantitative art of proportion and agreement progressing outward from a center and cites the *Dying Slave's* perfect presentation of each component within the whole construction. He reminds himself, "Present straightforwardly the emotion or experience you wish to provoke in the audience without worrying about minor things....What is this experience?" Here Russell comes full circle to his earliest lessons with Henri Matisse.

- 4.2.39** 1915; Russell writes "1915, Some Good Things," probably retrospectively in the early 1920s; in English; this *cahier* contains only one illustration, captioned "Ring and the sphere," consisting of a nautiluslike form pierced by a bolt (on another scale, a fist grasping a pencil).

The *cahier* contains four short meditations: 1) "A Woman and Her Clothes," a reflection on female clothing as an "inseparable part of the woman, a part of her body and being," and outer skin, as it were, which in the act of undressing rapidly presents to the senses a succession of different arrangements of form, color, and texture; the state of nudity as perceived as a kind of penetration into the woman's very body; the body "is the interior layer of the fact woman"; high heels lend independence from pull of gravity; 2) "Rhythm in Art," an essay that Russell has crossed out, originally a meditation on how rhythm is no simple "rocking cradle" theory, as commonly thought, but rather a complex of "several variously measured undulations that are momentarily handled in such a way that they work together as an organism"; 3) "High Heels," a plea for humanity to regard woman *visually*, that is, not as a potential wife (woman's utilitarian role) but as a visual manifestation of life and a force to attract life"; and 4) "Totalisme," a paragraph on Russell's ideal of achieving a kind of holistic condition of complete integration of the self and the earth.

See also: Series 4.3, Essays, aesthetics.

- 4.2.40** 1915–16; Russell writes on the cover "End 1915/Debut 1916"; in English and French; illustrated.

This notebook generally concerns Russell's aesthetics, such as the creation of a work of art as a "presenting of classic works otherwise than by their illustrative end"; art as a making manifest a complete experience of reality; unity due to "an organic process of expression in relation to the art used"; notes on pedagogy; the current stage of the evolution of humanity as a "creating of a psychic mechanism

that is as well adapted and [illegible] with the terrestrial or cosmic condition as the body is"; on psychic unity; notebook includes loose periodical clippings, including a reproduction from *Art News* of a bust of Mitchell Kennerley, president of the Anderson Galleries, and a newspaper essay by Frank Crane, in which Russell marks passages having to do with Crane's desire to quiet his inner turmoil; notes on formal elements of art, for example, the unifying element as *atmosphere*; painting as "color on light bulges"; the inside cover of the last page contains a sketch of a seated figure and various abstractions derived from from it, as though Russell were doodling and casually devising compositions for potential paintings.

**4.2.41 1915–early 1916;** in English and French; lightly illustrated.

Notes on ideals of painting, that is, strong color, simplicity, both a dynamism—grand and simple rhythm—and a sense of balance; mention of Henri Matisse, Paul Gauguin, primitivism, and an "architectural tendency in inspiration both as to color and line"; a "consequent deformation of objects and colors"; inspiration "sucked from Primitives, Orientals and Africans, examples of sensitive architectural art"; Russell writes how this is a reaction against the smallness of sensations represented by Impressionism; Russell runs through recent art history—Impressionism, Cubism, Futurism, and now the arrival of *themes* instead of *objects* for subject; the need for "a new art given by a new instrument"; Simultanéisme as "a pretty or Bernardian utilization and vulgarization of all the foregoing except last [Modernism?] and first [Primitivism?] with a technical addition of disks as an interpretation of light action in place of Impressionistic manner of multiple spots"; runs through recent evolution of sculpture from Auguste Rodin to Aristide Maillol to Matisse, ending with the "architectural"; on a page facing a pencil portrait of Gauguin (like a commemorative portrait) lists Cézanne, early/late; Renoir, early Renoir, and Monet; Matisse; Gauguin; Picasso; Van Dongen; Lautrec; Manguin; Degas; Rodin; classes with Robert Henri; ink wash of a Renaissance-like profile portrait; notes on the artist as representative of his epoch; notes postal address of a "G. de Kostrowitzky" [apparently Guillaume Apollinaire's enlisted address in the French army]; lists books "seen and desired," among them *Don Juan de Mozart*; Henri Poincaré; sketch of Notre Dame.

**4.2.42 1915–16;** Russell (presumably) placed a question mark after "1915–16"; *cahier*; mostly in English, some French; lightly illustrated.

Reflections on "early reactions" to the Paris art world; notes on the artist's "mental attitude" as a factor that "pierces" the art; working and socializing without preconceptions; painting in the manner of other masters for fun and virtuosity's sake; notes on Pablo Picasso's *Cubisme* as a "pushing to an extreme the Cézanne mentality as to form, not as to color, but as to graded light. His early work of the Renoir mentality in drawing sense"; Auguste Renoir as achieving a modern mentality then reverting later in life to the "object mentality"; speaks of style as "a question of where the *finishing souci* is put, whether it is on the "reality" or in the "arabesque" or "chord" (essentially Russell's distinction between representationalism and stylization, and his opting for the latter in the manner of Matisse and Renoir); compares Renoir and Paul Cézanne again, saying that in the work of Renoir and Peter Paul Rubens we get the object "right off" but in Cézanne only afterward (Russell is echoing Matisse's

valorization of the immediate *effet*, or effect, over a more analytically derived result, the latter a popular criticism of Cubism about 1915); Russell lists books and essays of interest, among them works by Edgar Allan Poe (*Tales of Mystery and Imagination; Eureka; Poems and Politics* [?]; *Poetic Principle; Philosophy of Composition–Raven*); others include Old English Poetry, cryptography, Thomas Hardy, Charles Baudelaire (all written on back of page from a catalog of casts at the Musée du Louvre); notes on chess and its qualities of surface manipulation, its standing for “something else” and the executive procedures of strategic placement; directions, proportions, colors – chess as “different natured elements in relation” – with parallels to painting; Russell cheers himself on: “Let it rip...Be intense and trust to genius, not to precautions. Michelangelo’s power is due to a high sense of form.”

- 4.2.43 mid–end 1916**, small pocket notebook, primarily in English; some in French; translations by Bérénice Reynaud are missing; illustrated; Russell dates this to the “middle and end of 1916, #28.”

Here Russell writes notes to himself on formal matters in his work and strategic concerns regarding his career; the need for an absolute sense of *calme* before commencing a painting; sketches of a teacup and saucer, a male figure; notes on organizing the *quantitative* and the *qualitative* elements of a painting; drawings consisting of “an orgie of line melodies and incisive technique and noble proportions”; drawing not the *thing* but the *shape*, the “beautiful spacings or measures”; the necessity of delaying the painting of a subject at least a day after inventing it, so as to avoid preconceptions; keeping alert to “pretty, fascinating varied tint relations” with no side preoccupations of solidity or light [as concepts]; records admiration for Auguste Renoir and “surprises” of red in a particular instance; “value in cubism, order in form, classic geometry, then value in synchronism, order in color, classic color[ing]”; notes on how Paul Cézanne, “by giving rather strong contrasts to things far off – mountains against sky, etc. – brings these things nearer and thereby flattens the picture”; the blue that predominates presents the sense of “farness”; rendering the air “as material,” having it reflect light and color so as to lend further definition to objects.

- 4.2.44 1917**; in English; inside text dated “6 Fev. 1917.”

Reflections on form and Synchronies; Russell writes, “By rigorous will you can *make yours* any quality you feel deeply ...Paint the bulges...”; further on Russell warns himself that a “tendency toward [the] lesser seductions of painting has always been your tendency....” and then he reminds himself of the “degenerate tendency” implied in paying too much attention to “excessive refinements”; he coaches himself, “Follow the practical manner in which things actually take place in nature, take an object or light out of a work, add another and then make the changes that these modifications of content arouse, just as doing so in nature does”; writing on “touches,” Russell prescribes for himself a method of making the brushstroke consistent in regard to “shape and tint,” or he may do away with it altogether and embrace an “anti-technique” of “a réalisme whose intensity arouses the very *variety* of *material* sensations in the spectator....A *trompe l’oeil* [to deceive, or trick, the eye] of the highest sensitive melodic character”; Russell then launches into a short essay on the nature and importance of form as consisting of the following:

[Form is] the visible expression of the invisible movement and activity of the world's forces, and in the present biological and physiological state of mankind it will remain a most important visible fact. Anything also that arouses in us the feeling of being exceedingly compact and dense effects us really as the force of gravity does. Recognizing an object to be solid is not of much value to us physiologically as far as feeling goes. But the physical pull of gravity is....The "lesser" seductions of reality must not be excluded dogmatically. A tendency away from them but not their absolute suppression must be the rule. They can be present there where your fantasy places or perceives them provided they be harmless. Some day the future may teach us that an aspect today considered secondary is really one of the organic [basis] of the world, and a classic art has a little of everything....in this way it dies not—as Rubens having color is alive today, though contrary to what most say, his real genius was in moving values to full forms. In this way an art will run very little chance of becoming absolutely without interest for any future generation of men.

Russell also seems to be referring to a painting aphorism in writing "*Three magnificent wagons in a very big quarry!!*," and then describes a road leading into a flat cleared place, where the wagons "*are centers of color harmonies or zones*"; this is followed by two pages of vigorous sketches of the same horseless hay wagon as illustration of this organizational color principle; the wagon metaphor also seems to stand for the variety of sizes and proportions, as well as techniques, in a given work; remarks on Auguste Renoir and his confusion of background (and foreground); Russell then apparently realizes his aphorism by sketching a plate of fruit on a table à la Cézanne. *Note: Russell likely wrote most of the entries in this notebook in Cannes during the winter of 1917 (where he began to move in the circle of Amadeo Modigliani, Chaim Soutine, and Michel Kikoïne).*

**4.2.45** [1917-18]; in English and French; illustrated; Russell wrote "Nice Cannes" across the back cover, indicating that this notebook dates from 1917-18, when Russell was in the south of France.

A very dense, intimate collection of notes and diminutive, often "thumbnail" sketches, documenting Russell's aesthetic, philosophical, and more quotidian concerns of the period; a page on *Réalisme héroïque* concerning the nude and reminding himself to compare salon nudes against a photograph of an archaic torso, as well as the nude in nature (later he exhorts himself, "copy photos of nudes—art and nature"); notes on how to work and live; "Excite self to keen criticism of self" and "Simplify life and aims in it—Be an adult"; notes on "What you desire to do in life," indicating Russell fancied the idea of living for an extended period in China; Russell's study of Chinese characters is documented here in calligraphic practice pages, as it were, in ink wash; notes on the "solidarity" of the thought of man with the [laws] of nature; notes on old masters, such as Rubens ("unfailing plasticity"), Greco ("his color of a high class"), [Michel] Angelo ("His supreme sense of form"), Giotto and Masaccio ("Interest you in many ways and tremendously, their painterliness in certain matters"), the Greek, "Egypte," "Assyrie"; Renoir/Goya ("two modern painters who interest me often and a lot"); Leonardo (illegible); "In sum, those who

interest you most are those with great fecundity success in the world"; begins contemplating heroic subjects (such as Hercules); newspaper clipping from an unidentified source in which the writer remarks on the War and cautions his readers not to forget "*le principe napoléonien* [the Napoleonic principle]"; notes on the elements of a picture; sketches of parfait cups or teacups, spoons, and saucers; a list of paintings sold; sketches of legs and arms; a Renoiresque nude at a vanity; sketches of train yards, studies of locomotives (Russell generally considered the locomotive a fantastic beast of sorts, representative of the modern spirit, probably on the example of Walt Whitman); notes on the light box or kinetic light machine (?) occur on the inside back cover.

- 4.2.46** [ca. 1917–18]; "Le nouveau classicisme" is written along the spine of the inside back cover; in French; many sheets removed.

Landscape sketches (probably of Cannes region); sketch of glassware; sketch of a house for an oil painting.

- 4.2.47** [1918]; in English; partial palm-sized notebook; back cover labeled "Nice" by Russell.

Aesthetic notes; notes on "Chinese" values in painting; list of books to read, including authors such as Raphael Petrucci, W. G. Gulland ("2 vol. on Chinese porcelain"), Coomaraswamy (on Asian/Indian), Ernest F. Fenollosa (*Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*); notes on solving the "originality problem" by *intensity*, by which Russell means "a perfect unity *d'esprit* from your amalgam of influences, one note in one work, another in another but always *your work's natural mode of intensity*"; Russell counsels self, "Just work and work as a pleasure, as an intense pastime. Get more and more to your ideal of the grandiose, the symmetric, the color [illegible], the genius-like execution..."; cites Giotto for "*proportioned design* in contrast to later painters as Rubens, etc."; on old masters writes, "Assimilate Oriental [illegible] proportion and design to change from Greco-Roman to Michelangelean one"; writes of *deformation* as a principle of originality; writes, "Form one of solid (massive) design of a haunting symmetry, but when circularity is dynamic, a toy sense or deformation of form and colors is necessary for above. A rich attitude toward an epoch's sights; an anti-Greco-Roman design and proportion and esprit, a rich though colored light effect"; continuing on the topic "form," Russell writes, "Form and proportion deformation not alone for character but especially grandiose beauty see in each thing as a characteristic of it"; Russell writes paradoxically and repeatedly at this time of the need to work intensively, to find a steady source of income, and also to establish a way of gaining money, youth, and solitude; he strongly desires (to the point of its becoming "an obsession with me") to take three years off from his career and any obligation to work.

Nine loose sheets of notes, including a strip of paper with color samples painted on it, were found with this notebook and have been kept with it. Several sheets of notes speak to a world-weariness that Russell was apparently suffering at this time, in that he writes of seeking a new sense of youthful morale, an end to war, a new "détente and happiness" with "Lili" (Emilie Francesconi, whom Russell would marry in 1918), and a new sense of élan in his work – notably by establishing a certain repose from it.

- 4.2.48 **1918 (or possibly 1915)**; there remains some question as to whether this notebook dates from 1918, since when Russell writes the numeral 8, he does not close it up completely, so that it sometimes resembles the numeral 5; dated in blue colored pencil, after the fact, by Russell, along with the titles "Will and Contemplation, Ease and Awkwardness"; in English and French; unillustrated.

Notes on the working process and the intention to derive his work from a complete "power" or undivided effort; the need to appreciate risk and its outcome, such as "The habit of jolts – of a reaction in the idea that this has been done by a lukewarm energy and not by the complete power... The judicious *invitation* of hazard and *an eye* for its suggestions and effects"; the need to cultivate a "liaison" between will and wisdom derived from meditation; personal unity; personality and impersonality, "the one continually tinged with the other and balanced by it, not necessarily in each act but as reacts"; uses metaphor of two blacksmiths striking each from a different side; activity and religion, "the latter has been the counterweight"; the pursuit of unity in one's work as a kind of cohesion of the self; "what constitutes thought is a mix of visual images of things and written words..."; "The representation of the mind's activity as it rolls along is what must become the *subject matter* of art."

This notebook is accompanied by two close-up drawings of flowers and two sketches of the voluminous skirt of a seated woman. There are visual analogies apparent in the grouping of these drawings, as though Russell were drawing an analogy between the unfurling petals of the flower and the twisting folds of the skirt. The model for the drawings of the seated woman may well have been Emilie Francesconi, as Russell married Francesconi in 1918.

- 4.2.49 **[1918]**; dated on the basis of notes pertaining to a sunset observed by Russell at Nice, dated 4 December 1918 toward the end of the notebook; cover labeled "Geometrie-Algebre," as if this were a student *cahier* (perhaps Russell's own); in English and French.

"Intéressant" is written in the bottom right corner; "Fauvettes" [warblers?] written at center, perhaps in reference to the notes inside being on the order of random birdsong; the first page bears notes on "devils" and "dancers" and "laughers," suggesting mythical-cosmic and semiapocalyptic themes that Russell was contemplating at this time (see subseries 9.7, *Drawings*, "Imaginary/Mythical/Religious"); notes on "Practice and Theory," mentioning "visual photography or imagination and direct making of its objects by painting this latter insures clean execution. The former the unity of the image and a feeling guide to its making"; notes on "Illustration done under the inspiration of the five 'esprits' in work of all kinds and subjects: Impressive, Mysterious, Funny, Dance, Terrible"; a drastic excision of multiple pages follows; notes on subject matter, style, execution of work; "Mon Esthétique Théorie," essay in French referring to matters of art and inspiration, composition and execution, the logic of composition; form; on the conception of spatial imagination, technique, color; more notes on devils, dancers; notes on the observation of skies, beginning 1 December 1918, then 4 December; notes on the history of India.

Loose notes accompany this notebook, some in reference to Asian interests; one dated 22 March 1918 on more formal matters, such as the elements of the artwork or aesthetic ideology; a scrap of paper bears a sketch after Degas's *Portrait of*

*Philippe Burty* and Russell's own full-length self-portrait with palette. Burty was strongly associated with Japonisme, which may explain Russell's compositional format, including a diagram of the directional lines in the Degas portrait, as well as the flat quality of the space depicted in the self-portrait.

- 4.2.50** [1920]; date based on entry for *Illustrated London News*, May 15, 1920; in English and French.

According to Marilyn S. Kushner (*Morgan Russell*, exh. cat., Montclair Art Museum, 1990), Russell exhibited paintings of Paris cityscapes in September 1920 at the Galerie Cheron, Paris—such as what might have been based on the various sketches in this notebook: the Sacré Coeur; the Bateau Lavoire; Notre Dame; a view from a window; various views of hotels, rooftops, and church steeples; among others.

This notebook is accompanied by a single loose sheet, actually a partial envelope splayed open up for writing, on which Russell has scribbled, “La ville. 4 Photosynchromies...only, in order to begin, the great and simple natural visions that present themselves to our eye and to our senses like effects of colors...a dominant color for each thing, sunset, dusk, night...” Here Russell is reflecting on not photography, or a photographic vision, but rather *light*, and the way a scene impresses itself upon the observer's visual faculties with an immediate effect, principally by way of a dominant tonality, before the accompanying (that is, more graphic) details register in consciousness. Thus *photosynchromies*, or “light Synchronies,” which is a synonym for a kind of landscape or cityscape painting that aims to capture this moment of visual cognition.

- 4.2.51** [ca. 1920]; date based on Russell's inscription on the cover, “Last Desnouettes,” which apparently refers to his last street address in Paris, when he lived on the rue Desnouettes before moving to Aigremont, “last” in this case referring most likely to the last notebook of this period, which would place it to about late 1920 or early 1921; in French; illustrated.

The sketches here apparently relate to Russell's search at this time for smaller subjects to paint for the purpose of easy sales, such as landscapes, cityscapes, still lifes, and copies after Asian antiquities. Russell exhibited painted landscapes at the Galerie Cheron, Paris, in September 1920.

Loose sheets on related themes accompany this notebook.

- ❖ Note: As found during the *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection Enhancement Project, 2004–2006*, there is a notable break between the series of notebooks ending in about 1920 and those following, that is, beginning about eight years later, for which there is no present explanation. Russell moved from Paris to Aigremont in July 1921, perhaps precipitating a break in his usual practices, although that explanation hardly suffices to cover an eight-year lacuna in his keeping of such notebooks. It would also not explain why, after an eight-year period, Russell's notetaking would resume in roughly the same format of the earlier cache running up to about 1920–21. Thus, it would be only reasonable to suspect that a group of notebooks dating from the early to mid-1920s has gone missing, if it was not in fact retained by Russell and

traveled with him when he quit Aigremont in May 1946 en route to the United States (this would indeed explain why they were not part of the Archives as it originated at Aigremont as Russell's friend, Louis Sol, took possession of the house and its contents upon Russell and Suzanne Binon Russell's departure).

See also: Undated Cahier A, below, which may date from 1924 to 1928.

- 4.2.52** [1928–29]; in English and French; leaf of a *cahier* and a small pocket notebook; very lightly illustrated.

One *cahier* size notebook leaf bearing notes by Russell to himself on the subject of his preferred lifestyle, such as: "If ever go to US do so through [Macdonald] Wright and make it short and profitable" (Russell would finally make the trip in 1931–32), continuing with references to the expense of living in the United States and Russell's desire to stay in France and "live comfortably....getting living more and more by mail or visitors here" and pertaining to going to Paris with "Lili" (Emilie Francesconi, Russell's first wife) "as woman." Russell continues with a life philosophy, referred to as a "mental attitude," which entails living alone in the country with Lili and their acting out a ritual of female domination, that is, Lili's exercising power and authority over Russell, as he wields dominance over his "playing," by which Russell means art making (as a musician "plays" an instrument). Russell states, "never criticize her, [never] preach seriously, [never] show off your physical or mental strength, never appear superior or ironical nor authoritative – Don't resist – [don't] outcry and appear unhappy – talk sweetly – and as a rule do [all this without drawing attention to it], the things she'd prevent at first sight." Russell finally seems to take comfort in that when he works well, his work will outlive him and become a "monument" to him. It is worth noting that in assuming this "mental attitude," Russell may have been internalizing maxims and gendered role-playing prescribed to him by his mother in early childhood.

Also included in this folder is a mini-pocket notebook containing diminutive notes written by Russell on personal matters of hygiene, dress, travel, and so on.

For related, possibly semiconfessional writings on the intimate themes contained in this single leaf and notebook, see also Russell's Untitled [Lucien Manuscript] and the essay, "The Clean Slate," both in subseries 4.4, *Essays, creative*.

- 4.2.53** **Early 1933;** Russell has noted on the cover "fin Fev. et suite" and on the first page "Fin Fev. et après–1933," indicating that this notebook dates from his Italian trip in the winter of 1933; in French; illustrated; this notebook may actually be two that have been combined and partially mutilated, as two back covers accompany two fairly separately bound portions of paper.

A very instructive notebook as to Russell's interests and itinerary, as he writes and sketches on a wide range of topics, from painting to sculpture to architecture; much has been crossed out with orange crayon in retrospect; numerous sketches of architectural details, niches, cornices, portals, nude sculpture, facades of Roman and Venetian buildings, equestrian sculpture, sculpture of the *Venus pudica* type (some recalling Russell's drawing manner under Henri Matisse).

- 4.2.54** **Mid-1933**; dated on the cover by Russell “été 1933, Aigremont retour de Rome,” indicating that the notebook, a student-sized *Quaderno*, dates from Russell’s return to Burgundy from Rome in the early summer of 1933; mostly French, some English; lightly illustrated; many pages missing.

Russell begins by constructing a sort of conceptual order by which a work of art comes into being, or is to be perceived by a beholder, citing the steps by which the eye takes in form and makes complete sense of it; he covers issues of form perception, color perception, perspective, and so on; once again, his emphasis is on *beauty*, interestingly suggesting that Russell is very much on the cusp of an imminent evolution in aesthetics from centering around concepts and debates over beauty to a discourse more grounded in the physiological bases of perception; comments regarding the nature and significance of architecture and drawing; a full page of wiry sketches of the female body, whole and in parts; reflections on the “synchronie instrument,” or Russell’s concept of the light machine containing “as many lamps as possible and the means of manipulating it,” commenting that it is “a formal instrument for direct improvising of forms on the instrument,” and that it “would be a very complicated machine, a scheme of moving planes and curved surfaces and places of same, and a scheme of lighting of same is necessary”; Russell questions himself on his ambition; notes follow on places visited in Italy and their principal artistic attractions.

- 4.2.55** [1933–35]; undated, but content relates to Russell’s Italian travels of this period; a “homemade” notebook, Russell took a number of sheets of paper and folded them in half to create it; in English and French; illustrated with a good number of thumbnail sketches.

Notes on the formal properties of artworks and the realization of form, proper; observations on the arts of Italy (Roman), and analyses of various architectural and artistic subjects, their composition, effect, and other qualities; observations on antique art and symmetry; sketches of the body (which Russell likely took from sculpture); quick notes and sketches of paintings and other artworks copied; copies of sculptures or paintings of the Enthroned Virgin (possibly by Piero della Francesca or other?); sketches of cartouches, portals, such as the Porto Maggiore (which may relate to the drawing “Fronton à César derrière,” Montclair Art Museum, 1985.172.221).

- 4.2.56** [ca. 1933–36]; in English, only lightly illustrated.

Names, dates, schools, and other notes on the subject of Italian art history; containing sketches of an interior scheme of Italian religious decoration; a rose; possibly a kind of study guide, self constructed, for Russell’s trips to Italy from 1933 to 1935.

- 4.2.57** [1934]–35; in English and French; illustrated.

Russell failed to date the first half of this notebook, but it continues themes found in the former [4.2.55], suggesting observations made at Pisa at the start, and then halfway through, Russell notated a page with the date “Paris 28/10 35,” indicating 28 October 1935; although many of the themes of the former notebook are continued here, Russell spends perhaps as much time on anatomy studies and the human body here as he does on artworks, sculpture, and architecture.

- 4.2.58** 1934–36; “Block Notes” cover; Russell marked it “Rome, 1934–36”; in English and French (mostly the latter).

The inside front cover contains the address of the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation and Russell’s note to himself to send for application forms; post-visitation notes on the Vatican, titled “After a visit the 12 December to the Vatican, in front of a portrait of cardinal de ?”; notes on Michelangelo, form, color, and so on, and other Italian masters; notes on the Pantheon, the Palais Borghese; thoughts on the formal qualities of art; notes on thought and sin; loose notes on Titian and Tintoretto; a newspaper clipping on Titian and Venice.

- 4.2.59** 1935; “Mogador” notebook; Russell inscribed the cover “Été 35, Oct à Paris”; this would indicate that Russell made these notes during his first trip back to Paris since 1931, after returning from several trips to Italy; in English and French; very lightly illustrated.

Notes on the formal qualities and creative processes of art and the materials of art; notes on the foreshortening (“raccourcir”) of sections of the nude; notes on Russell’s drawings of Rome; notes on “color scales”; notes on color and form made on the verso of a small invitation to the wedding of painter Michel Kikoïne’s daughter, Paris, 4 August 1934.

- 4.2.60** 1935–38; Russell dated the cover “1935–6–7–8”; in French.

Notes on color and form, mostly pertaining to the formal qualities of art and the creation of art.

This notebook is accompanied by a large cache of loose notes and sketches, which have been kept intact until they may receive a thorough sorting.

- 4.2.61** [ca. 1935–38]; Russell labeled the cover of this notebook “Idée Roman, Le Beau, Paysage,” with the latter category scratched out; undated; in French; transcriptions and translations provided by Bérénice Reynaud under designation “Paper D”; virtually unillustrated.

Russell focuses on Rome as a prime example of a principle of masterful self-integration in art, that is, in which the “detail” and the “whole” are mutually informing as to aesthetic significance and supportive in regard to construction. Russell meditates on the derivation of all Europe from Rome and a Roman heritage, as well as the need to preserve that heritage against decadence; a certain celebration of Anglo-Saxon beauty is clearly implied, a “Beauté de proportions...”; the masculine and the feminine body; a certain aspect of decadence implicit in the “art for art’s sake” doctrine; beauty as an essence of the real, of the world, and visible in nature; reality and the beautiful as indivisible in antiquity; the relation of God with the beautiful and with reality; beauty and ugliness; why beauty naturally pleases us; beauty as corresponding to man’s original essence, striking a chord of fundamental recognition in the individual; the relation of art history and the beautiful; academicism of the Third Republic, or “art bourgeois,” as “the most lamentable decadence of art of all time”; antique art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as constituting a golden age, a “terrestrial paradise”; the need for the physiological perfection of humanity; reflections on an ideal concept of Fascism (paralleling a host of European intellectuals at that moment); biblical themes are explored on the inside back cover of the notebook, such as Saint Luke and Saint John.

- 4.2.62** 1937; not a notebook proper, but a notebook cover that Russell used to gather a diverse assortment of loose notes and sketches, each apparently dating from different times in Russell's career to that date, and collated by Russell for presently unknown reasons; in English and French.

Most of these notes pertain to the formal qualities of art and art making; widely divergent scraps of paper, each heavily annotated; includes notes on the creation of *Piscine*, nos. 1 and 2; anatomical sketches; a note on Paul Cézanne stating "In sum, Cézanne had [unintelligible], cone, cylinder, etc. but he had to know how to paint [render] [unintelligible] cylinders etc. before being able to *sing* the form in this elevated language"; although it is unlikely that all the loose notes contained here date from 1937, the cache as assembled by Russell perhaps speaks to some overriding concerns of the time, as well his preparation for teaching or the creation of an artist's method book.

- 4.2.63** 1937–38; Russell labeled this *cahier* "oraisons, 37–38" (Orations 1937–38) and "fin 37, debut 38," then crossed out the latter notation; inside first page is labeled "Sept. '37 meditations spirituelles"; in French; transcriptions provided by Bérénice Reynaud, under designation "Papers E."

Notes and reflections on the "chosen," the beatification of the chosen, the reception of talent, God and the soul, God favoring the Christian soul; Russell seems to be contrasting a God of souls with an otherwise mechanical logic; meditation as a means of self-realization, religion.

This notebook contains a loose sheet bearing a sketch for an installation of tableaux depicting "La Vie de l'Esprit": separate canvases entitled "Immortality," "Reason," "Imagination," "Exaltation," "Terror," "Torture," and so on, as though Russell were interested in portraying the full range of human spiritual, emotional, and physical experience. The inside cover of the recto bears a pencil study for his *Woman in Purple*, ca. 1938, which is a thinly veiled portrait of Suzanne Binon [Russell]; notably, Russell executed that painting the same year of the death, from cancer, of his first wife, Emilie Francesconi (if the date is to be fully trusted).

- 4.2.64** [ca. 1937–38]; Russell labeled the inside cover, "Culture Physique; Danse; Danse de Salon," along with the notation "D. S. Binon: 242 Bd. Raspail" (probably the address of Suzanne Binon's daughter Denyse); in French; unillustrated.

Most of this notebook—a small, pocket-style book with perforated pages numbered two to the sheet, like ticket stubs—is empty, but for notations toward the end regarding a number of paintings that Russell lists by title and two sculptures (both in the collections of the Montclair Art Museum)—the latter two *Femme à l'opulente chevelure* [Woman with Voluminous Hair] and *Masque de Mme. M.R.* [Visage of Madame Morgan Russell]. Both titles were restored to their respective artworks upon their rediscovery during the course of the *Morgan Russell Archives and Collection Enhancement Project, 2004–2006*; see Appendix VII.

\*\*\*The following three notebooks [4.2.65, 66, and 67] and their respective, accompanying loose notes and sketches seem rather closely related in format, in that Russell seems to have had a reason behind bringing together diverse scraps of paper under the designation of a certain year as a kind of illustration of his artistic or aesthetic concerns at that time. Each of these composite “notebooks” might well benefit from an eventual reconstruction and close analysis for their implied themes, which can only be rather obliquely grasped at present.\*\*\*

- 4.2.65** [1938]; dating based on Russell’s notation of a page “Au Louvre Dec.-38”; slightly larger than a palm-size *cahier*.

This notebook was presumably for note taking at the Louvre, as well as the study of art history, as Russell writes notes on various old masters and/or their work, such as Murillo, Rubens, Rembrandt (portraits), Allegorie-Religion-Rubens, Correggio, Vincent [Van Gogh?], Veronese, Titian; Russell seems to be retroactively annotating his own observations with a kind of maxim regarding tight organization, in the form of the word “bouquet,” which he has inscribed in the margins of a good number of these pages as though to remind himself of the way the painter has accomplished a “conception of a solid object, of a character, and of a given material....”

- 4.2.66** 1938; the date has been written by Russell on the cover of a “Mogador” notebook; in English and French; illustrated.

Russell wrote on the cover “À partir mi-Août 1938, intéressant [brossées],” indicating that the material in some way dates from the middle of August 1938 and constitutes a kind of compendium of things Russell found interesting, as though they were “dabs” of thought or sensibility circulating in Russell’s mind at a given point in time. The grouping consists of an extremely disparate jumble of news clippings, loose sheets of notes written on all sorts of papers and scraps; individual sheets of paper of widely varying dimensions, recycled for use here, etc., seem culled from a very wide range of Russell’s life, as if he salvaged them from numerous places; includes working sketches and other material, perhaps assembled by Russell according to an underlying thematic.

*Processing note:*

The gathering of this material is very reflexive and self-conscious; Russell has culled all sorts of excerpts from other contexts as though to enter them into a scrapbook. So much of this material was folded or otherwise unreadable that Gregory Galligan decided to take this as a test case to see if the collection might be reconstructed to encourage a more integrated reading and appreciation of the thought that may have gone into its compilation; every scrap of paper was entered in a mylar sleeve while preserving its found order (the papers seem not to have been so sorted prior to this date); these sleeves were then entered into an archival binder for further study. Included here are disparate notes, some illustrated; newspaper clippings pertaining to the “fourth dimension” and the atom; scenic postcards from Europe and New York City (some postmarked and others never employed for utilitarian purposes); the notebook includes postcards of various artworks (never used for correspondence); and a small tourist’s catalog from Orvieto, Italy.







































































































