

AMON CARTER MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART ARCHIVES COLLECTION GUIDE

Collection Summary

Title: Patrick E. Porter Collection of Eliot Porter Papers

Date: 1953–1975, n.d.

Creator(s): Porter, Eliot (1901–1990)

Extent: .21 linear feet

Code: PEP

Repository: Amon Carter Museum of American Art Archives

Abstract: Eliot Porter (1901–1990) set the standard for contemporary color nature photography. The Patrick E. Porter Collection of Eliot Porter Papers span the years from 1853 to 1975. Patrick E. Porter donated these personal letters from his father, Eliot Porter, to the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in 1997 and 2003.

This guide describes only the materials from Porter's archives housed in the Amon Carter Museum of American Art Archives. Other materials are in the Photography Collection and the Library.

Information for Researchers

Access Restrictions

This collection is restricted. The collection is open to qualified researchers by special request only.

Use Restrictions

The Patrick E. Porter Collection of Eliot Porter Papers is the physical property of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art. The Amon Carter Museum of American Art acquired copyright to Porter's materials; however, rights to materials produced by others were not acquired. The Amon Carter Museum of American Art assumes no responsibility for infringement of literary property rights or copyrights or for liability to any person for defamation or invasion of privacy.

Preferred Citation

Patrick E. Porter Collection of Eliot Porter Papers, [series information], [item identification], Amon Carter Museum of American Art Archives.

Related Collections in the Amon Carter Museum of American Art Archives

Dr. W. Powell Cottrille Collection of Eliot Porter Papers
Eliot Porter/Ansel Adams Correspondence
Eliot Porter Papers
Stephen Porter Collection of Eliot Porter Papers.

Related Collections in the Amon Carter Museum of American Art

Over 10,000 prints and 88,000 transparencies and negatives in the Photography Collection.

Contact the museum archivist at archivist@cartermuseum.org or 817.989.5077 for additional information.

Administrative Information

Acquisition and Custody Information

Gift of Patrick E. Porter, 1997 and 2003.

Processed By

Paula Stewart

Biographical Note

Eliot Porter (1901–1990) set the standard for contemporary color nature photography. In 1939, he forsook a burgeoning career in biochemistry to turn full-time to artistic photography, spurred on by a successful one-person exhibition of his work at Alfred Stieglitz's renowned An American Place gallery. Initially, Porter concentrated mainly on photographing birds in close-up, seeking to improve by example the quality of ornithological photography. When his highly regarded bird photographs were turned down for publication because they were not in color, making the birds sometimes difficult to distinguish, he taught himself the new dye transfer color printing process, becoming one of the first artist photographers to devote himself full time to color. Quickly, he gained two Guggenheim Foundation grants in support of that pioneering work.

Through the 1940s and 1950s, Porter was best known as a bird photographer. However, he had never given up his interest in depicting his broader surroundings, and by the mid-fifties he was focusing increasingly on nature's colorful details, taking advantage of the dye transfer process's exceptional color control to explore the nuance and emotional resonance of the natural world. That work came to fruition in 1962 with the Sierra Club's publication of his immensely successful book, *In Wildness Is the Preservation of the World*. Porter astutely built on that success, going on to publish a book of his photographs almost every year through the rest of his life. Many of these books, comprised of Porter's finely printed images intermixed with texts by Porter himself or his associates, provided ecologically informed portraits of threatened places.

Late in his career Porter increasingly focused on broader issues of human history and culture through studies of Greece, Iceland, Africa, and China.

His work also has been published in numerous portfolios and a retrospective catalogue, *Eliot Porter*, published by the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in 1987.

Patrick E. Porter (b. 1946) is the son of Eliot and Aline Porter.

Scope and Content Note

The Patrick E. Porter Collection of Eliot Porter Papers contains 127 letters written by Eliot Porter to his son Patrick between 1953 and 1975 (bulk 1960s). Series I [A1997.031] was donated in 1997; Series II [A2003.077] was donated in 2003. While most of these letters were written from Santa Fe, New Mexico, several were written during Porter's travels to Great Spruce Head Island, Maine; towns in Arizona, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, and New York; Ecuador; Greece; and Mexico. These personal letters, which focus on Porter's relationship with his son, also often offer insight into his work.

Inventory

Series I. [A1977.031]

Box 1, Folder 1: 1953–1957

1. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, June 17, 1953. To Pat Porter.
2. Eliot Porter. 1 p, November 20, 1955. To Pat Porter.
3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, November 30, 1955. To Pat Porter.
4. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Tamworth, New Hampshire, April 30, 1957. To Pat Porter.
5. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Tamworth, New Hampshire, May 1, 1957. To Pat Porter.
6. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tamworth, New Hampshire, May 6, 1957. To Pat Porter.
7. Eliot Porter. 1 p, New York, New York, May 17, 1957. To Pat Porter.
8. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 18, 1957. To Pat Porter.
9. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 30, 1957. To Pat Porter.
10. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 13, 1957. To Pat Porter.
11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 27, 1957. To Pat Porter.
12. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 5, 1957. To Pat Porter.

13. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 10, 1957. To Pat Porter.

14. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 3, 1957. To Pat Porter.

Box 1, Folder 2: 1958–1959

1. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 14, 1958. To Pat Porter.

2. Eliot Porter. 1 p, New York, New York, January 26, 1958. To Pat Porter.

3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, New York, New York, February 2, 1958. To Pat Porter.

4. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Cambridge, Massachusetts, February 20, 1958. To Pat Porter.

5. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, New York, New York, February 25, 1958. To Pat Porter.

6. Eliot Porter. 1 p, New York, New York, February 28, 1958. To Pat Porter.

7. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 9, 1958. To Pat Porter.

8. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, April 14, 1958. To Pat Porter.

9. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, April 15, 1958. To Pat Porter.

10. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, April 27, 1958. To Pat Porter.

11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, May 8, 1958. To Pat Porter.

12. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, May 18, 1958. To Pat Porter.

13. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, May 26, 1958. To Pat Porter.

14. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, San Francisco, California, January 27, 1959. To Pat Porter.

15. Eliot Porter. 1 p, May 12, 1959. To Pat Porter.

16. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Portal, Arizona, May 21, 1959. To Pat Porter.

17. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 3, 1959. To Pat Porter.

18. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 10, 1959. To Pat Porter.

Box 1, Folder 3: 1960–1961

1. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Jackson, Michigan, June 14, 1960. To Pat Porter.

2. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 20, 1960. To Pat Porter.

3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 25, 1960. To Pat Porter.
 4. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 16, 1960. To Pat Porter.
 5. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 14, 1960. To Pat Porter.
 6. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 2, 1960. To Pat Porter.
 7. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 16, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 8. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 27, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 9. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, February 8, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 10. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Santa Fe, New Mexico, February 15, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 12, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 12. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, April 11, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 13. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tamworth, New Hampshire, May 7, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 14. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 15, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 15. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 30, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 16. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 22, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 17. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 12, 1961. To Pat Porter.
 18. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 9, 1961. To Pat Porter.
- Box 1, Folder 4: 1962–1964
1. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 30, 1962. To Pat Porter.
 2. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, February 15, 1962. To Pat Porter.
 3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, February 23, 1962. To Pat Porter.
 4. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 18, 1962. To Pat Porter.
 5. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, April 4, 1962. To Pat Porter.
 6. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, May 13, 1962. To Pat Porter.

7. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, July 12, 1963. To Pat Porter.
8. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 6, 1963. To Pat Porter.
9. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Santa Rosalia, [Baja California, Mexico], March 3, 1964. To Pat Porter.
10. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, La Paz, Baja California, Mexico, March 12, 1964. To Pat Porter.
11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, May 23, 1964. To Pat Porter.
12. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, June 4, 1964. To Pat Porter.
13. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, June 9, 1964. To Pat Porter.
14. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, June 29, 1964. To Pat Porter.
15. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 26, 1964. To Pat Porter.
16. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 1964. To Pat Porter.
17. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 5, 1964. To Pat Porter.

Box 1, Folder 5: 1965

1. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 6, 1965. To Pat Porter.
2. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 9, 1965. To Pat Porter.
3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, February 25, 1965. To Pat Porter.
4. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 17, 1965. To Pat Porter.
5. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Pittsburg, New Hampshire, June 16, 1965. To Pat Porter.
6. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 14, 1965. To Pat Porter.
7. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 21, 1965. To Pat Porter.
8. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 5, 1965. To Pat Porter.
9. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 11, 1965. To Pat Porter.
10. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 19, 1965. To Pat Porter.
11. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 24, 1965. To Pat Porter.

Box 1, Folder 6: 1966

1. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Quito, Ecuador, February 1966. To Pat Porter.
2. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Quito, Ecuador, February 19, 1966. To Pat Porter.
3. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Cristobal Carrier, February 19–21, 1966. To Pat Porter.
4. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, February 25, 1966. To Pat Porter.
5. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, February 28, 1966. To Pat Porter.
6. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, March 16, 1966. To Pat Porter.
7. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, March 29, 1966. To Pat Porter.
8. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, April 24, 1966. To Pat Porter.
9. Eliot Porter. 5 pp, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, May 16, 1966. To Pat Porter.

Box 1, Folder 7: 1967–1971

1. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Athens, Greece, April 1, 1967. To Pat Porter.
2. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Delphi, Greece, May 3, 1967. To Pat Porter.
3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, October 10, 1967. To Pat Porter.
4. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, April 21, 1968. To Pat Porter.
5. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, May 19, 1968. To Pat Porter.
6. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, May 31, 1968. To Pat Porter.
7. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, June 10, 1968. To Pat Porter.
8. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, June 18, 1968. To Pat Porter.
9. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, July 10, 1968. To Pat Porter.
10. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, July 14, 1968. To Pat Porter.
11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, June 10, 1969. To Pat Porter.
12. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, June 16, 1969. To Pat Porter.
13. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, June 25, 1969. To Pat Porter.

14. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, July 11, 1969. To Pat Porter.
15. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, June 22, 1971. To Pat Porter.

Series II. [A2003.077]

Box 1, Folder 8: 1966–1975

1. “Forever Wild,” *Democrat Chronicle*, March 3, 1967. Clipping.
2. Eliot Porter. Typed envelope, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, 1966. To Patrick E. Porter. [empty]
3. Eliot Porter. Autograph envelope, Athens, Greece, 1967. To Pat Porter. [empty]
4. Eliot Porter. Autograph envelope, Rome, Italy, 1967. To Pat Porter. [empty]
5. Eliot Porter. Autograph envelope, Quito, Ecuador, [date indiscernible]. To Pat Porter. [empty]
6. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 2 pp, Athens, Greece, March 31, 1970. To Pat Porter.
7. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 2 pp, Athens, Greece, April 14, 1970. To Pat Porter.
8. Eliot Porter. TLS and envelope, 1 p, Utica, New York, June 11, 1971. To Pat Porter.
9. Eliot Porter. TLS and envelope, 1 p, Sunset, Maine, July 1, 1971. To Pat Porter.
10. Aline Porter. ALS, 2 pp, Sunset, Maine, July 12, [1971]. To Pat Porter. [in envelope with Eliot Porter letter of July 13]
11. Eliot Porter. TLS and envelope, 1 p, Sunset, Maine, July 13, 1971. To Pat Porter.
12. Eliot Porter. ALS, 2 pp, Sunset, Maine, June 5, 1972. To Pat Porter. [in envelope with Eliot Porter letter of June 14]
14. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 1 p, Sunset, Maine, June 14, 1972. To Pat Porter.
15. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 2 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, June 16, 1972. To Aline Porter.
16. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 4 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, June 17, 1972. To Aline Porter.
17. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 2 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, June 20, 1972. To Aline Porter.
18. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 2 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, June 24, 1972. To Aline Porter.
19. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 8 pp, Kirkjubæjarklaustur, Iceland, July 3, 1972. To Aline Porter.

20. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 8 pp, Kirkjubæjarklaustur, Iceland, July 3, 1972. To Pat Porter.
21. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 6 pp, Varmaland, Iceland, July 9, 1972. To Aline Porter.
22. Eliot Porter. ALS, 4 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, July 14, 1972. To Pat Porter.
23. Eliot Porter. ALS, 9 pp, Hunavellir, Iceland, July 16, 1972. To Pat Porter. [in envelope with Eliot Porter letter of July 31, 1972]
24. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 4 pp, Hornafirdi, Iceland, July 31, 1972. To Pat Porter.
25. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 4 pp, Hornafirdi, Iceland, August 2, 1972. To Pat Porter.
26. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 4 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, August 12, 1972. To Pat Porter.
27. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 2 pp, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, August 26, 1972. To Pat Porter.
28. Eliot Porter. TLS, 1 p, Jackson, Michigan, June 5, 1973. To Pat Porter.
29. Eliot Porter. TLS and envelope, 2 pp, Michigan, June 28, 1973. To Pat Porter.
30. Eliot Porter. TL, 1 p, Sunset, Maine, July 9, 1973. To Pat Porter.
31. Eliot Porter. ALS and envelope, 2 pp, New Zealand, November 22, 1975. To Pat Porter.