

AMON CARTER MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART ARCHIVES COLLECTION GUIDE

Collection Summary

Title: Porter Family Collection of Eliot Porter Papers

Date: 1953–1988

Creator(s): Porter, Eliot (1901–1990)

Extent: .4 linear feet

Code: PFP

Repository: Amon Carter Museum of American Art Archives

Abstract: Eliot Porter (1901–1990) set the standard for contemporary color nature photography. These papers are copies of those held by individual family members, many, but not all, of which have subsequently been donated to the museum. They illustrate Porter's diverse projects and publications, notably including letters written in the field offering observations on his work.

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 Porter Family 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

Porter Family 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
Patrick E. Porter Collection of 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 Stephen Porter, 2000.

Processed By

Jonathan Frembling

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.

Scope and Content Note

The Porter Family Collection of Eliot Porter Papers is comprised of copies of materials donated by individual family members to enrich Eliot Porter's original bequest. Many of the originals of these copies have subsequently been donated to the museum. The Collection is divided into series by addressee of the correspondence.

Inventory

Series I. Aline Porter

Box 1, Folder 1: Correspondence, 1964–1966

1. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, July 8, 1964. To Aline.
2. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, on board Cristobel Carrier, February 19, 1966. To Aline.
3. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, February 25, 1966. To Aline.
4. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, February 28, 1966. To Aline.
5. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, [Galapagos, Ecuador], April 24, 1966. To Aline.

Series II. Jonathan Porter

Box 1, Folder 2: Correspondence, 1954–1958

1. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Homestead, Florida, February 14, 1954. To Jonathan.
2. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Homestead, Florida, February 28, 1954. To Jonathan.
3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Okeechobee, Florida, May 3, 1954. To Jonathan.
4. Eliot Porter. 1 p, October 28, 1954. To Jonathan.
5. Eliot Porter. 1 p, January 16, 1955. To Jonathan.

6. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Alamos, Sonora, Mexico, December 6, 1955. To Jonathan.
 7. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Guadalajara, Mexico, December 12, 1955. To Jonathan.
 8. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Mexico City, January 14, 1956. To Jonathan.
 9. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Chiapas, Mexico, February 13, 1956. To Jonathan.
 10. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Merida, Mexico, February 2, 1956. To Jonathan.
 11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, November 27, 1956. To Jonathan.
 12. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Tamworth Inn, New Hampshire, May 5, 1957. To Jonathan.
 13. Eliot Porter. 1 p, September 18, [1957]. To Jonathan.
 14. Eliot Porter. 1 p, October 13, 1957. To Jonathan.
 15. Eliot Porter. 1 p, October 28, 1957. To Jonathan.
 16. Eliot Porter. 1 p, January 11, 1958. To Jonathan.
 17. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 17, 1958. To Jonathan.
 18. Eliot Porter. 1 p, September 25, 1958. To Jonathan.
 19. Eliot Porter. 1p, October 7, 1958. To Jonathan.
 20. Eliot Porter. 1 p, October 12, 1958. To Jonathan.
 21. Eliot Porter. 1 p, October 21, 1958. To Jonathan.
- Box 1, Folder 3: Correspondence, 1959–1967
1. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, January 9, 1959. To Jonathan.
 2. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, February 10, 1959. To Jonathan.
 3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, February 23, 1959. To Jonathan.
 4. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, July 24, 1959. To Zoe and Jonathan.
 5. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 16, 1960. To Pat, Steve, and Jonathan.
 6. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, May 1, 1963. To Jonathan.

7. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, August 13, 1963. To Jonathan.
8. Eliot Porter. 1 p, December 18, 1963. To Zoe and Jonathan.
9. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Sant Fe, New Mexico, March 11, 1965. To Jonathan.
10. Eliot Porter. 1 p, November 7, 1965. To Jonathan.
11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 19, 1965. To Jonathan.
12. Eliot Porter. 1 p, February 5, 1965. To Jonathan.
13. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, March 29, 1966.
14. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 3, 1967. To Jonathan.
15. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, September 1, 1967. To Jonathan and Zoe.
16. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, November 22, 1967. To Jonathan.

Box 1, Folder 4: Correspondence, 1968–1970

1. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, March 13, 1968. To Jonathan.
2. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, May 12, 1968. To Jonathan and Zoe.
3. Eliot Porter. 2 pp. June 2, 1968. To Jonathan and Zoe.
4. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Great Spruce Head Island, Maine, July 13, 1968. To Jonathan.
5. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, August 31, 1968. To Jonathan.
6. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, October 14, 1968. To Jonathan and Zoe.
7. Eliot Porter. 1 pp, February 16, 1969. To Jonathan and Zoe.
8. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, April 2, 1969. To Jonathan.
9. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Nairobi, Kenya, [indecipherable], 1970. To Jonathan.
10. Eliot Porter. Nairobi, Kenya, October 15, 1970. To Jonathan and Zoe.

Series III. Patrick Porter

Box 1, Folder 5: Correspondence, 1953–1960

1. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, June 17, 1953. To Patrick.

2. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, November 30, 1953. To Patrick.
3. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Tamworth, New Hampshire, April 30, [1957]. To Patrick.
4. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Tamworth, New Hampshire, May 1, 1957. To Patrick.
5. Eliot Porter. 1 p, September 30, [1957]. To Patrick.
6. Eliot Porter. 1 p, October 13, 1957. To Patrick.
7. Eliot Porter. 1 p, November 5, 1957. To Patrick.
8. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 9, 1958. To Patrick.
9. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, April 14, 1958. To Patrick.
10. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, April 15, 1958. To Patrick.
11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, May 8, 1958. To Patrick.
12. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Tucson, Arizona, May 18, 1958. To Patrick.
13. Eliot Porter. 1 p, May 26, 1958. To Patrick.
14. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Portal, Arizona, May 21, 1959. To Patrick.
15. Eliot Porter. 1 p, August 10, 1959. To Patrick.
16. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Jackson, Michigan, June 14, 1960. To Patrick.
17. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 16, 1960. To Pat, Steve, and Jonathan.
18. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 14, 1960. To Patrick.

Box 1, Folder 6: Correspondence, 1961–1966.

1. Eliot Porter. 1 p, January 27, 1961. To Patrick.
2. Eliot Porter. 1 p, February 8, 1961. To Patrick.
3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, March 12, 1961. To Patrick.
4. Eliot Porter. 1 p, April 11, 1961. To Patrick.
5. Eliot Porter. 1 p, September 30, 1961. To Patrick and Steve.

6. Eliot Porter. 1 p, October 22, 1961. To Patrick.
 7. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, November 12, 1961. To Patrick.
 8. Eliot Porter. 1 p, December 9, 1961. To Patrick.
 9. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, February 15, 1962. To Patrick.
 10. Eliot Porter. 1 p, February 23, 1962. To Patrick.
 11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, July 12, 1963. To Patrick.
 12. Eliot Porter. 4 p, Santa Rosalia, March 3, 1964. To Aline and Patrick.
 13. Eliot Porter. 1 p, June 9, 1964. To Patrick and Steve.
 14. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 14, 1965. To Patrick.
 15. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 21, 1965. To Patrick.
 16. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 19, 1965. To Patrick.
 17. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Quito, Ecuador, February 19, 1966. To Patrick.
 18. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, March 16, 1966. To Patrick.
 19. Eliot Porter. 5 pp, Isla Santa Cruz, Galapagos, Ecuador, May 16, 1966. To Patrick.
- Box 1, Folder 7: Correspondence, 1967–1971.
1. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Rome, Italy, March 6, 1967. To Patrick.
 2. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Athens, Greece, April 1, 1967. To Patrick.
 3. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, April 19, 1967. To Patrick.
 4. Eliot Porter. 6 pp, Athens, Greece, April 29, 1967. To Patrick.
 5. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Gatlinburg, Tennessee, October 10, 1967. To Patrick.
 6. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Great Spruce Head Island, Maine, May 19, 1968. To Patrick.
 7. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, May 31, 1968. To Patrick.
 8. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Sunset, Maine, June 18, 1968. To Patrick.

9. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Sunset, Maine, July 14, 1968. To Patrick.
10. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Nairobi, Kenya, February 17, 1970. To Patrick.
11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Utica, New York, June 11, 1971. To Patrick.
12. Eliot Porter. Santa Fe, New Mexico, July 1, 1971. To Patrick.

Box 1, Folder 8: Correspondence, 1972–1973.

1. Eliot Porter. 8 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, July 3, 1972. To Patrick.
2. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, July 14, 1972. To Patrick.
3. Eliot Porter. 9 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, July 16, 1972. To Patrick.
4. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, July 31, 1972. To Patrick.
5. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, August 2, 1972. To Patrick.
6. Eliot Porter. 4 pp, Reykjavik, Iceland, August 12, 1972. To Patrick.
7. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Sunset, Maine, July 9, 1973. To Patrick.

Series IV. Stephen Porter

Box 1, Folder 9: Correspondence, 1956–1965

1. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Merida, Mexico, February 2, 1956. To Stephen and Jonathan.
2. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, San Cristobel Los Casa, Chiapas, Mexico, February 13, 1956. To Jonathan and Stephen.
3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, October 18, 1958. To Stephen.
4. Eliot Porter. 1 p, October 29, 1958. To Stephen.
5. Eliot Porter. 1 p, November 29, 1958. To Stephen.
6. Eliot Porter. 1 p, January 9, 1959. To Stephen.
7. Eliot Porter. 1 p, January 16, 1959. To Stephen.
8. Eliot Porter. 3 pp, January 27, 1959. To Stephen.
9. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, February 3, 1959. To Stephen.

10. Eliot Porter. 1 p, February 10, 1959. To Stephen.
11. Eliot Porter. 1 p, March 5, 1959. To Stephen.
12. Eliot Porter. 1 p, April 14, 1959. To Stephen.
13. Eliot Porter. 1 p, April 23, 1959. To Stephen.
14. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Portal, Arizona, May 8, 1959. To Stephen.
15. Eliot Porter. 1 p, September 21, 1959. To Stephen.
16. Eliot Porter. 1 p, September 27, 1960. To Stephen.
17. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 16, 1960. To Pat, Stephen, and Jonathan.
18. Eliot Porter. 1 p, December 1, 1960. To Stephen.
19. Eliot Porter. 1 p, January 21, 1961. To Stephen.
20. Eliot Porter. 1 p, April 11, 1961. To Stephen.
21. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Jackson, Michigan, June 2, 1961. To Stephen.
22. Eliot Porter. 1 p, September 30, 1961. To Pat and Stephen.
23. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, June 4, 1964. To Stephen and Kathy.
24. Eliot Porter. 1 p, June 9, 1964. To Stephen and Pat.
25. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, April 30, 1965. To Stephen and Kathy.
26. Eliot Porter. 1 p, June 11, 1965. To Stephen and Kathy.
27. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Great Spruce Head Island, Sunset, Maine, July 21, 1965. To Stephen.

Box 1, Folder 10: Correspondence, 1966–1988

1. Eliot Porter. 1 p, September 6, 1966. To Stephen.
2. Eliot Porter. 1 p, November 26, 1966. To Stephen.
3. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 9, 1967. To Stephen.

4. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 21, 1967. To Stephen.
5. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 10, 1968. To Stephen.
6. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, March 12, 1968. To Stephen.
7. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Nairobi, Kenya, October 2, 1970. To Stephen.
8. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Nairobi, Kenya, October 15, 1970. To Stephen.
9. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 11, 1971. To Marcie and Stephen.
10. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, October 30, 1974. To Stephen.
11. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, New Zealand, November 30, 1975. To Stephen.
12. Eliot Porter. 6 pp, Port Angeles, Washington, July 22, 1975. To Stephen.
13. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, September 30, 1976. To Stephen.
14. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 17, 1977. To Marcie and Stephen.
15. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 4, 1979. To Stephen.
16. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 12, 1981. To Stephen.
17. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 23, 1982. To Stephen and Marcie.
18. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 9, 1984. To Stephen.
19. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, November 27, 1984. To Stephen and Marcie.
20. Eliot Porter. 2 pp, Santa Fe, New Mexico, June 18, 1985. To Stephen.
21. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, August 4, 1985. To Stephen.
22. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, December 28, 1987. To Marcie, Stephen, Matthew, Willy, and Bonnie.
23. Eliot Porter. 1 p, Santa Fe, New Mexico, April 23, 1988. To Stephen.