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Anthony Gardner Collection

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THE ANTHONY GARDNER COLLECTION

Anthony Gardner (1887-1973) was born in Essex, England in 1887. Little information is known about his early life. However, in 1953 following his retirement as Chief Structural Engineer in the Ministry of Works, he turned his attention to bookbinding, which he had begun as a hobby in 1937. He now began to operate his own one man bookbinding and restoration firm. Gardner approached this craft with his own unique style. Every job presented a distinct challenge and as Gardner saw it, "each book was an individual, almost as a character with a soul of its own". In order to share his love of bookbinding, he offered classes at the West Surrey College of Art and the King Edwards School. In addition, he was a self-taught engraver and calligrapher. It was the distinctive style of calligraphy employed by Gardner which was yet another aspect of his unusual artistic talents. Gardner became well known for his ability at incorporating his creative calligraphy into his bookbinding designs. It is for these reasons that he was notable among the craftsmen of his time.

The Gardner Collection contains 74 letters of correspondence between Gardner at Chiddingfold, Surrey and Elizabeth Van der Hoek of Pomfret, Connecticut. These letters reveal the personal side of the artist ranging from views on twentieth century America to his abhorrence of contemporary technology i.e. airplanes and television. Additionally, some of Gardner's artistic talents are on display since the letters are written in an elegant calligraphic hand employing coloured inks and occasional drawings.

Series I: Background

Series II: Letters to Elizabeth Van der Hoek from Anthony Gardner

A. Part 1 (1956-1957)

March 25, 1956

May 4, 1956

December 25, 1956-small drawing included in letter

February 7, 1957

April 28, 1957

June 29, 1957

July 18, 1957

December 15, 1957-small drawing included in letter

B. Part 2 (1958-1961)

October 26, 1958-coloured inks used (2pp)

December 28, 1958-small drawing included in letter

May 18, 1959

May 21, 1959

January 24, 1960

December 23, 1960-elaborate heading in letter in coloured inks

April 5, 1961-coloured inks used in letter

C. Part 3 (1963-1964)

January 8, 1963-elaborate heading in coloured inks

February 17, 1963-coloured inks used throughout letter

postdated February 24, 1963-coloured inks throughout letter

March 11, 1963-letter includes calligraphic numbers

April 5, 1963-coloured inks used

September 8, 1963

January 9, 1963-elaborate, bold lettering and coloured inks included

April 6, 1964-coloured inks used

June 1, 1964-coloured inks used

August 19, 1964-small picture included

postdated September 15, 1964-single line of text in coloured inks

October 7, 1964-includes calligraphic numbers

D. Part 4 (1965-1966)

postdated January 9, 1965-elaborate, bold lettering in coloured inks
April 10, 1965-coloured inks used
postdated October 3, 1965
November, 1965-letter written on Gardner's office stationary
postdated November 14, 1965
December 25, 1965-bold lettering in coloured inks
April 31, 1966-single lines of coloured inks used
Postcard dated September 11, 1966
Postcard dated September 16, 1966
Postcard dated September 22, 1966
December 25, 1966-elegant, circular drawing in coloured inks

E. Part 5 (1967-1968)

postdated May 15, 1967
July 27, 1967-letter in coloured ink and in columnar format
October 3, 1967-coloured inks used
October 30, 1967-written on Gardner's office stationary
February 11, 1967-Gardner writes in alternating lines between comments of Mary Parker (a personal friend). Letter written in coloured inks.
December 31, 1967
April 18, 1968
December 27, 1968-letter includes an elaborate spiral shaped heading and ending in coloured inks

F. Part 6 (1969-1970)

July 13, 1970-letter from Mary Parker to Elizabeth Van der Hoek
August 11, 1970-elaborate spiral heading
postdated September 15, 1970-small drawing, Gardner's initials in calligraphic lettering, coloured inks, and spiral designs included
October 15, 1970-elaborate spiral designs included

G. Part 7 (1971)

January 4, 1971-letter includes spiral heading (+ envelope)
January 15, 1971-letter includes spiral heading (+ envelope)
March 17, 1971-letter includes spiral heading (+ envelope)
June 4, 1971-letter includes spiral heading (+ envelope)
September 1, 1971-letter includes spiral heading
postdated November 6, 1971-written on formal stationary, includes a sticker, spiral heading (+ envelope)
December 3, 1971-letter includes a sticker
postdated December 6, 1971-envelope addressed to Ms. Van der Hoek

H. Part 8 (1972)

January 10, 1972-letter includes spiral heading, sticker, (+ envelope)
January 16, 1972-brief note from Gardner included in letter written by Mary Parker, spiral heading included
February 12, 1972-recipe and small drawing included (+ envelope)
March 8, 1972-coloured inks included in letter (+ envelope)
April 19, 1972-spiral heading in letter (+ envelope)
May 12, 1972-brief note from Gardner included in letter wrtten by Mary Parker, spiral heading included
May 24, 1972-spiral heading in letter (+ envelope)
June 7, 1972-spiral heading in letter (+ envelope)
May 24, 1972-spiral heading in letter (+ envelope)

Tonya S. Anderson, Student Assistant, March, 1992
Prepared for electronic publication by Michael J. Breen '99, July 1999.

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