Finding Aid

Papers of William Henry Rinehart (1825-1874)

Dates: 1860-1892

Extent: 1 lin. ft.

Scope and Content: Correspondence, journals, account books, sketchbooks, and estate papers.

Biography:

William Henry Rinehart (1825-1874) was the fifth of eight sons of Israel Rinehart, a prosperous Carroll County, Maryland farmer. When his son showed little enthusiasm for schooling (and even less for farming), the elder Rinehart put him to work in the marble quarry located on the family property in Union Bridge. William turned out marble door sills, tombstones and mantelpieces with some enthusiasm. He borrowed books on drawing and design and recorded his own motifs in their margins. William left home for Baltimore in 1846, enrolled in the Maryland Institute and landed a job at Baughman and Beven, the city's largest marble dealer and stone cutting firm.

His emergence as an artist coincided with the opening of the Maryland Institute's new building in 1851 when he exhibited his bas relief modeled on The Smokers, a painting by Teniers. Rinehart's work caught the eye of Severn Teackle Wallis, the chairman of the exhibition committee. Rinehart was awarded a gold medal for his work.

The gifted young sculptor came to the attention of William T. Walters when Rinehart was sent to repair a mantelpiece in the Walters home. Walters developed a deep friendship with Rinehart and became his principal patron.

Rinehart sailed for Italy in 1855 and established a studio in Florence. It was there that he created Morning, Night, Winter and Spring. These striking bas reliefs were the first examples of the artist's mature works.

In 1858 he took up residence in Rome and his studio became a regular stopping place for visiting wealthy aristocrats and tourists on their European grand tours. Rinehart complained bitterly about the constant round of visiting and "dressing for parties, dinners and all such things," but reaped commission after commission for his trouble. During this period he completed his first major work, the bronze doors for the House of Representatives portico of the Capitol in Washington.

In the years that followed, Rinehart produced a series of masterworks: the beautiful Hero in the Arthur Friedheim Library at the Peabody Conservatory of Music; Love Reconciled With Death for William T. Walters; the heroic seated bronze Chief Justice Roger Taney for the grounds of the State House in Annapolis; Antigone and Apollo and Diana at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and his most important work, the sublime Clytie, the first work acquired for the Peabody Institute's Gallery of Art in 1873 (now on deposit at the Baltimore Museum of Art).
In 1872 William Henry Rinehart bequeathed his estate to the Peabody Institute: "Being desirous of aiding the promotion of a more highly cultivated taste for art among the people of my native State, and of assisting Young Men in the Study of the Art of Sculpture who may desire to make it a Profession, but having at the present time no definite plan in view for the accomplishment of these objects....the whole residue of my Estate or the proceeds thereof shall be devoted."

Rinehart lived and worked in Rome until his death in the autumn of 1874 when he was travelling in Switzerland. The objects in his studio were carefully packed and shipped to the Peabody Institute.

His estate established the Rinehart Fund and Rinehart School for Sculptors at the Peabody Institute (in the late 1960s the school became a part the Maryland Institute College of Art, the Peabody's sister institution). The Rinehart Fund provided scholarships for gifted young artists to study in Paris and at the newly formed American Academy in Rome. The Rinehart School of Sculpture was established in 1896 (1891?) as a school for instruction in the art of drawing, modeling and sculpture. It operated at the Maryland Institute under the auspices of the Peabody Institute.

The Peabody Institute and the Walters Art Gallery sponsor a major exhibition of the works of William Henry Rinehart in 1948 and, the Rinehart 75th Anniversary Exhibition was sponsored jointly by the Peabody Institute and the Maryland Institute College of Art in 1971.

**Biographical Chronology:**

1825  born in Carroll County, MD

1844  Came to Baltimore

1853  Won medal at the Maryland Institute

1855  Went to Florence

1856  Exhibited at Maryland Historical Society; still residing in Florence. In London from July 1st to about September 26th. Returned to Florence around November 1st.

1857  Active in Baltimore and Washington: studio in Baltimore

1859  In Rome continuously during summer and fall

1860  Frank Frick and George Lucas visited Rinehart's Roman studio. In Rome all summer.


1863  September: in Paris; in frequent association with Lucas, Walters, Boughton, Barye, Mayer.


1868  In Rome until July, when he went north, possibly including a trip to England at this time.

1870  Rome July 2nd until summer. Paris in summer with Herrimans

1871  Won medal at Naples Exhibition. In Rome during winter


1873  In Baltimore in winter. Left for Europe from New York in March. In Rome during summer.

1874  In Rome until June 18th. In summer travelled to north. Returned to Rome in October. He writes to Walters on Oct 21 that he has "been ill all summer - but now that I am home again I hope to improve." He tells Walters that "I shall be confined to my room at least a week or so, and shall not be able to work for at least one year." Died October 28th.

1875  Auction of contents of studio and apartments

1879  Casts sent to Peabody Institute by executors.

Related Collections:

Peabody Institute Record Groups:

II.D.6 – Gallery of Art (contains Rinehart correspondence)

II.D.10 – Committee on the Rinehart Fund

III - Office of the Provost (contains letterpress books related to the Rinehart Fund)

IV - Office of the Executive Secretary (contains correspondence concerning the Rinehart School of Sculpture)

References: