

# **Prendergast Exhibition Files**

**Finding aid prepared by Eric Shannon**

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

WCMA\_Repository

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository</b>	WCMA_Repository
<b>Title</b>	Prendergast Exhibition Files
<b>Date [inclusive]</b>	1895-1926
<b>Extent</b>	1.0 Linear feet
<b>Location note</b>	Prendergast Archive and Study Center: CA Archive 6
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Abstract</b>	Maurice and Charles Prendergast exhibition related catalogs and brochures

### Preferred Citation note

[Cite the item (as appropriate)], Prendergast Exhibition Files, Williams College Museum of Art Institutional Records, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts.

## Biographical note

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The brothers Maurice Prendergast (1858–1924) and Charles Prendergast (1863–1948) were born in St. John's, Newfoundland. The Prendergasts moved to Boston to be near their mother's family after their father's business closed in 1868. After completing the required eight years of public school, Maurice pursued a path in commercial art and Charles went to work at Doll and Richards art gallery in Boston. They both went to Paris in 1891 to study art, but only Maurice stayed to establish himself as a fine artist, returning to Boston in 1894. Charles began his career as a framemaker at this time. As painter and framemaker respectively, Maurice and Charles were active in avant-garde circles in Boston and New York in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Maurice Prendergast participated in seminal groups and exhibitions such as *The Eight* (1908) and the *Armory Show* (1913). An admirer of Cézanne and Matisse, he helped introduce their innovations into American art and is recognized as one of the first American modernists. Maurice painted in a variety of locations throughout New England and Europe including New York, Maine, Massachusetts, France, and Italy. Attuned to the American labor movement's quest for more leisure time for the American worker, he often painted beaches, parks, and people engaged in leisure activities. He worked in many media including oils, watercolors, sketches, and monotypes. Never married, he and Charles lived and worked together until he died in 1924.

Charles Prendergast was steeped in the Arts and Crafts culture of Boston as a young man and produced highly prized, hand-carved frames for the greatest artists of his day, including John Singer Sargent. He devised a method of painting on carved and incised panels that was influential in American primitive and folk art of the first half of the twentieth century. He turned to pictorial fine art in 1912, bringing non-Western and pre-Renaissance styles into his carved panels. In 1927, Charles married Eugénie Van Kemmel. By 1940, he turned to American folk art and subjects. His search for innocence—the aesthetics of pure forms and child-like vision—was the product both of his time and of his unique personality.

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## Scope and Contents note

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This collection consists of copies of Prendergast exhibition catalogs ranging in date from 1895 through 1926.

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## Administrative Information

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## **Publication Information**

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## **Controlled Access Headings**

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### **Personal Name(s)**

- Prendergast, Charles, 1863-1948
- Prendergast, Maurice, 1858-1924

## Collection Inventory

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Prendergast Exhibition Binder 1895-1914

Prendergast Exhibition Binder 1915-1926