

Eric Gill Illustrations Collection
MSS Collection #231
.5 linear feet

Scope & Content

The collection consists of drawings, prints, and monographs that are illustrated by British sculptor and engraver Eric Gill. The collection primarily consists of illustrations made for books, with special interest in illustrations done for Golden Cockerel Press books.

Dates

1930-1939

Creator

St. Lawrence Special Collections and Archives Librarian Paul Doty

Availability

The collection is open for research.

Biographical Note

Eric Gill (1882-1940) art encompassed sculpture, drawing, engraving, and type design. One of the most celebrated British artists of the twentieth century, the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* describes Gill as "the greatest artist-craftsman of the twentieth century: a letter-cutter and type designer of genius." Gill's work on type design and illustrations for books began in earnest in 1925 when Gill met Robert Gibbings who was owner of Golden Cockerel Press. Working in collaboration with Gibbings Gill designed type for and illustrated what were to become Golden Cockerel's most famous books and some of the most famous examples of Fine Press printing. Writing of Gill's work for Golden Cockerel in a 1989 biography, Fiona MacCarthy wrote:

But it was the book and later on the typeface designed for [Gibbings] that made the reputation of the Golden Cockerel. They have a forcefulness and clarity which still excites one...For a while the Golden Cockerel was Eric Gill.

St Lawrence's collection is focused on Gill the illustrator.

See also: MacCarthy, Fiona. *Eric Gill*. London, Faber & Faber, 1989.
Gill, Eric. *Autobiography*. London: Lund Humphries, 1992.

Extent

1 box, .5 linear feet.

Language of the Materials

English

Arrangement

- Monographs, drawing, & print.

Provenance

The pieces in this collection were purchased from bookdealers in the United States commencing the fall of 2024.

Processing Information

Processed by the St. Lawrence University Libraries Special Collections staff.

Repository Details

Part of the St. Lawrence University Libraries manuscript collections.

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Collection Organization

Drawings

Pen and ink drawing for an unrealized manuscript, 4 inches long by 3 inches high. It appears to be a religious scene, an angel appearing before a man chained to the floor (?). The paper appears to be salvaged from an old envelope.

Prints

Gill made six wood engravings to illustrate Shakespeare's *King Henry VIII* which were published by the Limited Editions Club in 1939 in an edition of 1950 copies. The print is a version of the title page, 12 and 6/16th high by 7 ½ inches long, depicts Henry on his knees next to a standing smiling woman. Signed. **On display in the Reading Room.**

Books

Clay, Enid. *The Constant Mistress*. London: Golden Cockerel Press, 1934.

The book is number 64 in a run of 300 copies. The first book Gill illustrated for Golden Cockerel press. Our volume is signed by both Clay and Gill.

Engraved Bookplates of Eric Gill. Compiled by Christopher Skelton. San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1986.

The book is one of six hundred copies. The bookplates in the edition are reproductions of those in the collections of the University of California Los Angeles, San Francisco University, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Related Collections: MSS #175 Rockwell Kent Collection