



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Vera Berdich Papers, circa 1912-1990, bulk 1947-1989, in the Archives of American Art

Sabine Lipten

The processing of this collection received Federal support from the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund, administered by the National Collections Program and the Smithsonian Collections Advisory Committee.

2023 February 3

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Vera Berdich papers
Date:	circa 1912-1990 (bulk 1947-1989)
Identifier:	AAA.berdvera
Creator:	Berdich, Vera, 1915-2003
Extent:	3 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of Vera Berdich measure 3 linear feet and date from circa 1912-1990, with the bulk from 1947-1989. The papers document Berdich's career through biographical material; correspondence with friends, family, artists, universities, and galleries; writings which include sabattical notes and statements on printmaking; exhibition and professional files; financial records; printed materials, artwork; photographs and slides.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated 1992 by Vera Berdich.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Sabine Lipten in 2023.

Preferred Citation

Vera Berdich Papers, circa 1912-1990, bulk 1947-1989. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Researchers interested in accessing born-digital records or audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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Biographical / Historical

Vera Berdich (1915–2003) was a printmaker and educator from Chicago, Illinois. Growing up, Berdich and her family moved frequently, often settling down in areas with a close proximity to nature which would go on to inspire Berdich's work. Following grammar school Berdich went on to study at the School of the Art Institute (SAIC) graduating with a BA in 1946. A year later Berdich was hired by SAIC, where she founded the printmaking department and continued teaching until she retired in 1979. As a professor, Berdich formed important relationships with fellow professors Kathleen Blackshear and Whitney Halstead.

Over the course of her career Berdich exhibited at galleries and museums throughout the United States and in Europe, such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1979 SAIC held a retrospective exhibition of her work. Her prints can be found in the collections of a number of institutions including the Library of Congress, the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco and the Art Institute of Chicago.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Vera Berdich measure 3 linear feet and date from circa 1912-1990, with the bulk from 1947-1989. The papers document Berdich's career as a printmaker and educator through biographical material such as resumes; personal correspondence consisting of letters, some of which are illustrated, from friends, colleagues, and family, including Barbara Aubin, Kathleen Blackshear, Whitney Halstead, Thomas Kapsalis, Kathryn Kucera, Denis Loy, Ethel Spears, Lynn Webster and Berdich's sisters and cousins; professional correspondence from galleries and museums including the Art Institute of Chicago, the George Binet Gallery (N.Y.C.), the Yamada Gallery (Japan), the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Illinois Arts Council. Writings include notes from her sabbatical in San Francisco and on various pieces of her artwork for an unnamed book project. Other writings by Berdich include statements on the printmaking techniques photo etching, clichés verres, and gum printing and a syllabus for an etching class. Writings by others include a transcript of a radio review of one of Berdich's exhibitions. Also found are exhibition files, professional files that document Berdich's involvement at different art institutions and organizations such as the Art Institute of Chicago and its affiliated college and personal business records. The papers also include printed material such as exhibition catalogs and newspaper clippings related to Berdich's exhibitions as well as select galleries, exhibitions and topics of interest such as women in the arts; four sketchbooks; and photographs of Berdich, her friends, family, other artists and works of art. A majority of the photographs are annotated on the back. Additionally, the series contains slides of Berdich's artwork over the years.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as nine series

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1942-1983 (0.1 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1947-1989 (1.4 Linear feet: Box 1-2)
- Series 3: Writings, 1960-1985 (0.1 Linear feet: Box 2)
- Series 4: Exhibition Files, 1963-1982 (0.1 Linear feet: Box 2)
- Series 5: Professional Files, 1946-1989 (0.2 Linear feet: Box 2)
- Series 6: Personal Business, circa 1950-1990 (0.1 Linear feet: Box 2)
- Series 7: Printed Material, 1943-1989 (0.7 Linear feet: Box 2-3)
- Series 8: Artwork, 1957-1965 (0.1 Linear feet: Box 3)
- Series 9: Photographic Material, circa 1912-1989 (0.4 Linear feet: Box 3)

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Women artists
- Women educators
- Women printmakers

Types of Materials:

- Sketchbooks

Names:

- Art Institute of Chicago
- Art Institute of Chicago. School

Occupations:

- Art teachers -- Illinois -- Chicago
- Educators -- Illinois -- Chicago
- Printmakers -- Illinois -- Chicago

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1942-1983

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material includes resumes and biographical summaries as well as forms related to rent stabilization and employment Berdich held during the 1940s.

Box 1, Folder 1 Resumes and Biographical Summaries, circa 1979

Box 1, Folder 2 Awards and Certificates, 1976-1983

Box 1, Folder 3 Tenant Rent Stabilization Forms, 1942, 1952

Box 1, Folder 4 War Agency Employment Forms, 1942, 1944

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1947-1989

1.4 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents: The series is arranged as 2 subseries:

- 2.1: Personal Correspondence, 1947-1989
- 2.2: Professional Correspondence, 1947-1989

The series has been arranged in chronological order.

Subseries 2.1: Personal Correspondence, 1947-1989

Scope and Contents: Vera Berdich's personal correspondence consists of letters, some of which are illustrated, from friends, colleagues, and family, including Barbara Aubin, Kathleen Blackshear, Whitney Halstead, Thomas Kapsalis, Kathryn Kucera, Denis Loy, Ethel Spears, Lynn Webster and Berdich's sisters and cousins.

Box 1, Folder 5 Personal Correspondence, 1947-1949

Box 1, Folder 6 Personal Correspondence, 1950-1952

Box 1, Folder 7 Personal Correspondence, 1953

Box 1, Folder 8 Personal Correspondence, 1954

Box 1, Folder 9 Personal Correspondence, 1955

Box 1, Folder 10 Personal Correspondence, 1956-1957

Box 1, Folder 11 Personal Correspondence, 1958-1959

Box 1, Folder 12 Personal Correspondence, 1960-1961

Box 1, Folder 13 Personal Correspondence, 1962

Box 1, Folder 14 Personal Correspondence, 1963-1964

Box 1, Folder 15 Personal Correspondence, 1965

Box 1, Folder 16 Personal Correspondence, 1966-1967

Box 1, Folder 17 Personal Correspondence, 1968-1969

Box 1, Folder 18 Personal Correspondence, 1970-1971

Box 1, Folder 19 Personal Correspondence, 1972-1973

Box 1, Folder 20 Personal Correspondence, 1974-1975

Box 1, Folder 21	Personal Correspondence, 1976
Box 1, Folder 22	Personal Correspondence, 1977
Box 1, Folder 23	Personal Correspondence, 1978
Box 1, Folder 24	Personal Correspondence, 1979-1982
Box 1, Folder 25	Personal Correspondence, 1983-1984
Box 1, Folder 26	Personal Correspondence, 1985-1986
Box 1, Folder 27	Personal Correspondence, 1987-1989

Subseries 2.2: Professional Correspondence, 1947-1989

Scope and Contents: Professional correspondences are comprised of letters from galleries and museums including the Art Institute of Chicago, the George Binet Gallery (N.Y.C.), the Yamada Gallery (Japan), the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Illinois Arts Council. Topics include invitations to exhibit art, academic appointments and scheduling, artwork loans and commissions. Also found in this series are juried exhibition artwork acceptance and rejection notification cards.

Box 1, Folder 28	Professional Correspondence, 1947-1953
Box 1, Folder 29	Professional Correspondence, 1954-1957
Box 1, Folder 30	Professional Correspondence, 1958-1960
Box 1, Folder 31	Professional Correspondence, 1961-1962
Box 1, Folder 32	Professional Correspondence, 1963-1964
Box 2, Folder 1	Professional Correspondence, 1965-1969
Box 2, Folder 2	Professional Correspondence, 1970-1972
Box 2, Folder 3	Professional Correspondence, 1973-1974
Box 2, Folder 4	Professional Correspondence, 1975-1978
Box 2, Folder 5	Professional Correspondence, 1979
Box 2, Folder 6	Professional Correspondence, 1980-1982
Box 2, Folder 7	Professional Correspondence, 1983-1985
Box 2, Folder 8	Professional Correspondence, 1986-1987

Box 2, Folder 9	Professional Correspondence, 1988-1989
Box 2, Folder 10	Jury Exhibition Artwork Acceptance Cards, circa 1947-1977

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Series 3: Writings, 1960-1985

0.1 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Writings by Berdich include notes from her sabbatical in San Francisco and on various pieces of her artwork for an unnamed book project. Other writings by Berdich include statements on the printmaking techniques photo etching, clichés verres, and gum printing and a syllabus for an etching class. Writings by others include a transcript of a radio review of one of Berdich's exhibitions.

Box 2, Folder 11	San Francisco Sabbatical Notes, 1965
Box 2, Folder 12	Book Planning Artwork Notes, circa 1973
Box 2, Folder 13	Statements on Printmaking Techniques, circa 1985
Box 2, Folder 14	Etching Class Syllabus, circa 1960-1979
Box 2, Folder 15	Transcript of Review of Vera Berdich Exhibition by Harry Bouras on WFMT/FM Chicago, 1983

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Series 4: Exhibition Files, 1963-1982

0.1 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Exhibition Files include lists of artwork and corresponding gallery placements, correspondence with galleries, artwork loan documentation, an exhibition checklist of participating artists and a detached gallery signature book.

Box 2, Folder 16 Hyde Park Art Center Retrospective Groupe Exhibition (Feb. - Apr. 1976), 1976

Box 2, Folder 17 As I look Back, Vera Berdich in Retrospect (1982), School of The Art Institute of Chicago, 1982

Box 2, Folder 18 Prints by Vera Berdich (Jan. - Feb. 1963), San Francisco Museum of Art, 1963

Box 2, Folder 19 Color Etchings by Vera Berdich (1973), Kennedy Galleries, 1972-1974

Box 2, Folder 20 Miscellaneous Exhibition Documents, 1946, 1963, 1976

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Series 5: Professional Files, 1946-1989

0.2 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Professional files document Berdich's involvement at different art institutions and organizations such as the Art Institute of Chicago and its affiliated college. Included are correspondence, loan agreements, exhibition documents, academic schedules, membership lists and a photograph reproduction agreement form.

Box 2, Folder 21	School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1950-1989
Box 2, Folder 22	The Art Institute of Chicago, 1950-1987
Box 2, Folder 23	Chicago Society of Artists Membership List, 1954
Box 2, Folder 24	Beverly Art Center Art Competitions, 1977-1987
Box 2, Folder 25	Chicago Art Review Photograph Reproduction Agreement Form, 1988

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Series 6: Personal Business, circa 1950-1990

0.1 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Personal business records include sale, consignment and loan receipts, shipping records, gallery correspondence and other documents related to the commission, loan and sale of Berdich's work such as artwork price lists and description forms.

Box 2, Folder 26	Sales Records, circa 1950-1986
Box 2, Folder 27	Price Lists, circa 1950-1969
Box 2, Folder 28	Shipping, Loan and Insurance Records, 1950-1990

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Series 7: Printed Material, 1943-1989

0.7 Linear feet (Box 2-3)

Scope and Contents: Printed material includes exhibition catalogs and newspaper clippings related to Berdich's exhibitions as well as select galleries, exhibitions and topics of interest such as women in the arts. Also found are exhibition announcements, flyers and posters, along with publications featuring illustrations by Berdich.

Box 2, Folder 29-34	Exhibition Catalogs, Vera Berdich, circa 1950-1989
Box 2, Folder 35	Exhibition Catalogs, Other Artists, 1951
Box 3, Folder 1	The Arts Club of Chicago Annual Artist Member Exhibition, 1981-1985
Box 3, Folder 2	Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Annual Watercolors, Prints and Drawings Exhibition Catalogs, 1950-1965
Box 3, Folder 3	Library of Congress Annual National Exhibition of Prints Catalogs, 1943-1957
Box 3, Folder 4	The Summer School of Painting Course Catalog, 1954
Box 3, Folder 5-6	Publications Featuring Illustrations by Vera Berdich, 1960-1967, 1981
Box 3, Folder 7	Press Releases, circa 1967-1982
Box 3, Folder 8-9	Exhibition Announcements, Vera Berdich, circa 1960-1989
Box 3, Folder 10	Exhibition Announcements and Flyers, Other Artists, 1963-1985
Box 3, Folder 11	Exhibition Posters, circa 1960-1976
Box 3, Folder 12	Women In The Arts, 1972-1987
Box 3, Folder 13	Printworks LTD Gallery, 1983-1988
Box 3, Folder 14	Artist Institute of Chicago, 1946-1986
Box 3, Folder 15	Boston Printmakers Annual Exhibitions, 1954
Box 3, Folder 16	Boston Public Library Print Department, 1951-1954
Box 3, Folder 17	Newspaper Clippings, circa 1954-1987

Box 3, Folder 18

Miscellaneous Printed Materials, circa 1956-1983

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Series 8: Artwork, 1957-1965

.1 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: The artwork series is comprised of four sketchbooks containing pencil, pen and ink sketches of various subjects.

Box 3, Folder 19-20	Sketchbooks, 1957-1965
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Series 9: Photographic Material, circa 1912-1989

.4 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Photographic Material consists of photographs of the artists teaching and in her studio; with friends and family, various members of Berdich's immediate and extended family and other artists. Also found are photographs of an exhibition reception for Berdich at Printwork LTD Galleries and of a trip to Stratford Ontario. A majority of the photographs are annotated on the back. Additionally, the series contains slides of Verdich's artwork over the years.

Box 3, Folder 21	Vera Berdich Teaching, 1948, circa 1960's
Box 3, Folder 22	Vera Berdich in Studio and With Artwork, circa 1975-1977
Box 3, Folder 23	Print Works Gallery Exhibition Reception, 1983
Box 3, Folder 24-25	Vera Berdich, Family, and Pet Cats, circa 1912-1989
Box 3, Folder 26	Friends, Artists and Collectors, circa 1979-1989
Box 3, Folder 27	Trip to Stratford Ontario, 1988
Box 3, Folder 28-29	Slides of Artwork, 1940-1989

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