



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the David Berger Papers, circa
1939-1986, in the Archives of American Art

Erin Kinhart

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Archives of American Art
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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Collection Overview

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|--------------------|--|
| Repository: | Archives of American Art |
| Title: | David Berger papers |
| Identifier: | AAA.bergdavi |
| Date: | circa 1939-1986 |
| Extent: | 3.8 Linear feet |
| Creator: | Berger, David, 1920-1966 |
| Language: | English . |
| Summary: | The papers of Massachusetts painter, sculptor, and educator David Berger measure 3.8 linear feet and date from circa 1939 to 1986. His career as an artist and professor are documented through biographical material, personal business records, scattered correspondence, gallery files, exhibition catalogs, news clippings, and other printed material, as well as nine sketchbooks and photographs depicting Berger, his family, and artwork. |

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 2010 by Ellen Berger Rainville, David Berger's daughter.

Processing Information

The collection was processed in 2012 by Erin Kinhart.

Preferred Citation

David Berger papers, circa 1939-1986. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

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Biographical Note

David Berger (1920-1966) was a painter, sculptor, and educator in Boston, Massachusetts. Berger was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts, and earned a B.S. in education from the Massachusetts College of Art in 1946. In 1950 he received a master of fine arts degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art. He was a professor of art at Framingham State College from 1946 to 1957, and a professor of painting and illustration at Massachusetts College of Art from 1957 until his death on November 15, 1966.

Berger had numerous gallery exhibitions and won several awards in juried shows. He was represented in New York by the Cober Gallery, and in 1967 DeCordova Museum held a memorial exhibition of his work. In 1956 he was selected as one of the "100 Outstanding New Talents in U.S.A." by *Art in America*.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Massachusetts painter, sculptor, and educator David Berger measure 3.8 linear feet and date from circa 1939 to 1986. His career as an artist and professor are documented through biographical material, personal business records, scattered correspondence, gallery files, exhibition catalogs, news clippings, and other printed material, as well as nine sketchbooks and photographs depicting Berger, his family, and artwork.

Biographical material consists of Veterans Administration records, interview transcripts, student records, diplomas, and documents from the memorial service held for Berger in 1966. Personal business records include his employment records, scattered financial documents, and files documenting his submissions for juried art exhibitions. Also found here are inventory and sales records for Berger's artwork and documentation on the construction of Berger's house and studio in the late 1950s, designed by architect Marvin E. Goody.

Correspondence is with art galleries, professional organizations, publishers, Cranbrook Academy of Art, and individuals who purchased works by Berger. These letters primarily concern the sale and exhibition of David Berger's artwork as well as his education and teaching career. Gallery files include correspondence, price lists, artwork sales and loan records, exhibition planning documents, notes, and gallery publications.

Printed material consists of news clippings documenting David Berger's career, catalogs and announcements for exhibitions of works by Berger and others, as well as publications from Massachusetts College of Art and Cranbrook Academy of Art. One children's book includes illustrations by David Berger. Photographs depict Berger at art exhibitions and with his wife and daughters at home and in his studio. Also found are numerous photographs of his artwork. Nine sketchbooks contain various figure studies in pencil, ink, pastel, and charcoal.

Many of these files in this collection were maintained by Berger's wife, Ruth, after his death in 1966 and include her correspondence and notes.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 7 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1939-1966 (Box 1, 5; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 2: Personal Business Records, 1941-1981 (Box 1, OV 6; 0.6 linear feet)
- Series 3: Correspondence, 1945-1986 (Box 1-2; 0.3 linear feet)

- Series 4: Gallery Files, 1953-1985 (Box 2; 0.6 linear feet)
- Series 5: Printed Material, 1943-1975 (Box 2-3, 5; 1.1 linear feet)
- Series 6: Photographs, circa 1949-1960s (Box 3-5; 0.6 linear feet)
- Series 7: Sketchbooks, circa 1956-1960s (Box 4-5; 0.3 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Educators -- Massachusetts -- Boston
Painters -- Massachusetts -- Boston
Sculptors -- Massachusetts -- Boston

Types of Materials:

Interviews
Photographs
Sketchbooks
Transcripts

Names:

Cranbrook Academy of Art

Functions:

Artists' studios -- Massachusetts

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1939-1966

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1, 5)

Biographical material consists of Veterans Administration records, student transcripts, enrollment correspondence, diplomas from Massachusetts School of Art and Cranbrook Academy of Art, and other student records. Also found are obituaries and documents from the memorial service held for Berger in 1966. Also of note are a transcript of an interview with Berger and a script for a video on Boston printmakers which features Berger.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 1 | Diplomas, 1946, 1950 Oversized item housed in box 5, folder 6 |
| Box 1, Folder 2 | Interview Transcript, circa 1960s |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | Medal, Richard Mitton Memorial Award, 1955 |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | Medical Records, 1957-1958 |
| Box 1, Folder 5 | Memorial Service Documents, 1966 |
| Box 1, Folder 6 | Obituaries, 1966 |
| Box 1, Folder 7 | Script, "Museum Open House: Boston Printmakers", 1965 |
| Box 1, Folder 8 | Student Assignments, circa 1946 |
| Box 1, Folder 9-10 | Student Records, circa 1939-1951 <i>2 Folders</i> |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | Veterans Administration, 1949-1960 |
| Box 5, Folder 6 | Oversize Diploma, 1950 Oversized item from in box 1, folder 1 |

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Series 2: Personal Business Records, 1941-1981

0.6 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 6)

Personal business records consist of Berger's employment records for his teaching positions, as well as scattered financial documents such as bills, receipts, and royalty statements for book illustrations. Also found are files documenting his submissions for juried art exhibitions, including letters notifying of awards and rejections. Inventory and sales records consist of lists of works, price lists, and documents regarding works sold by galleries. Also included is a separate sales notebook. These records were maintained by Berger's wife, Ruth, after his death. Additional records document the construction of Berger's house and studio in the late 1950s, designed by architect Marvin E. Goody.

Files are arranged alphabetically. Items within each folder are arranged in rough chronological order.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 12 | Banking Records, 1956-1958 |
| Box 1, Folder 13 | Bills, circa 1960s |
| Box 1, Folder 14-17 | Documentation on Berger House, 1955-1958, 1980, 1965-1972 <i>4 Folders</i> Oversized items housed in OV 6 |
| Box 1, Folder 18-20 | Employment Records, 1945-1966, 1941 <i>3 Folders</i> |
| Box 1, Folder 21 | Furniture Orders, 1951-1953 |
| Box 1, Folder 22-25 | Inventory and Sales Records, 1955-1981 <i>4 Folders</i> |
| Box 1, Folder 26 | Letters of Recommendation, 1966 |
| Box 1, Folder 27 | Notes and Writings, circa 1954-1967 |
| Box 1, Folder 28-30 | Receipts, 1954-1956 <i>3 Folders</i> |
| Box 1, Folder 31 | Royalty Payments, 1966, 1958-1962 |
| Box 1, Folder 32 | Sales Notebook, 1954-1978 |
| Box 1, Folder 33 | Scholarship Fund, circa 1966-1976 |
| Box 1, Folder 34-41 | Submissions for Juried Exhibitions, 1945-1966 <i>8 Folders</i> |
| Box 1, Folder 42 | Taxes and Insurance Records, 1964-1966 |

Box OV 6

Oversize Documentation on Berger House, 1956, 1965
Oversized items from box 1, folders 14-17

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Series 3: Correspondence, 1945-1986

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Correspondence primarily concerns the sale and exhibition of David Berger's artwork. Early correspondence also concerns his education and teaching career. Correspondence after Berger's death in November, 1966 is addressed to his wife Ruth. Letters are from art galleries, professional organizations, publishers, Cranbrook Academy of Art, and individuals who purchased works by Berger. Also found are a few greeting cards which he designed. Researchers should note that additional correspondence can be found within the gallery files in Series 4 and among the personal business records in Series 2.

Correspondence is arranged chronologically.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 43-47 | Correspondence, 1945-1965 <i>5 Folders</i> |
| Box 2, Folder 1-4 | Correspondence, 1966-1986 <i>4 Folders</i> |
| Box 2, Folder 5 | Undated Correspondence, circa 1950s-1970s |
| Box 2, Folder 6 | Cards Designed by David Berger, circa 1950s-1960s |

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Series 4: Gallery Files, 1953-1985

0.6 Linear feet (Box 2)

Gallery files include correspondence, price lists, artwork sales and loan records, exhibition planning documents, notes, and gallery publications. After Berger's death in 1966, files were maintained by his wife Ruth and include her notes and correspondence with galleries.

Files are arranged alphabetically by gallery name. Documents are arranged in rough chronological order within each folder.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Box 2, Folder 7 | Art for Industry, circa 1963-1965 |
| Box 2, Folder 8 | Casdin Gallery, 1965-1966 |
| Box 2, Folder 9-13 | Cober Gallery, 1959-1969 <i>5 Folders</i> |
| Box 2, Folder 14 | Daniel Frishman Gallery of Art, 1975 |
| Box 2, Folder 15 | De Cordova Museum, 1955-1956, 1967-1971 |
| Box 2, Folder 16 | Galerie Irla Kert, 1962-1963 |
| Box 2, Folder 17 | Harold Ernst Gallery, 1974-1977 |
| Box 2, Folder 18 | Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for Aged, 1964-1966 |
| Box 2, Folder 19-22 | Horizon Gallery, 1963-1971 <i>4 Folders</i> |
| Box 2, Folder 23 | I. F. A. Galleries, 1962-1966 |
| Box 2, Folder 24 | Impressions Graphic Workshop, 1962-1963 |
| Box 2, Folder 25-26 | The Little Studio, 1953-1958 <i>2 Folders</i> |
| Box 2, Folder 27 | North Truro Art Gallery, 1961-1967 |
| Box 2, Folder 28 | Pace Gallery, 1961-1964, 1981 |
| Box 2, Folder 29 | Temple Beth Am, 1965-1973 |
| Box 2, Folder 30-31 | Weeden Gallery, 1963-1967 |

2 Folders

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Box 2, Folder 32 | Wenniger Graphics, 1976-1985 |
| Box 2, Folder 33 | Witte Memorial Museum, 1967 |
| Box 2, Folder 34 | Wright Designs and Associates, 1964-1972 |

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Series 5: Printed Material, 1943-1975

1.1 Linear feet (Box 2-3, 5)

Printed material consists of magazines, newsletters, and news clippings documenting David Berger's career, as well as catalogs and announcements for exhibitions of works by Berger and other artists. Also found are newsletters, handbooks, programs, and other publications from Massachusetts College of Art and Cranbrook Academy of Art. One children's book includes illustrations by David Berger.

Material is arranged by type. Items are arranged in rough chronological order within each folder.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Box 2, Folder 35-37 | Boston Arts Festival Programs, 1953-1964 <i>3 Folders</i> |
| Box 2, Folder 38 | Children's Book, <i>Swing Me Swing Tree</i> , Illustrated by David Berger, 1959 |
| Box 2, Folder 39-40 | Cranbrook Academy of Art Publications, 1947-1973 <i>2 Folders</i> |
| Box 2, Folder 41 | Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, 1945-1949 |
| Box 3, Folder 1-17 | Exhibition Catalogs and Announcements, 1975, 1950-1968 <i>17 Folders</i> |
| Box 3, Folder 18 | Magazines, 1962-1969 Oversized items housed in box 5, folder 7 |
| Box 3, Folder 19-20 | Massachusetts College of Art Publications, 1943, 1948, 1961-1967 <i>2 Folders</i> Oversized items housed in box 5, folder 8 |
| Box 3, Folder 21-24 | News Clippings, 1960-1967, 1950s <i>4 Folders</i> |
| Box 3, Folder 25 | Newsletters, 1964-1968 |
| Box 3, Folder 26-27 | Miscellaneous Printed Material, circa 1950s-1960s <i>2 Folders</i> |
| Box 5, Folder 7 | Oversize Magazines, 1962-1963 Oversized items from box 3, folder 18 |
| Box 5, Folder 8 | Oversize Massachusetts School of Art Publications, 1966 Oversized items from box 3, folder 19 |

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Series 6: Photographs, circa 1949-1960s

0.6 Linear feet (Box 3-5)

Photographs depict David Berger at art exhibitions and with his wife and daughters at home and in his studio. Also found are numerous photographs of his artwork.

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|---------------------|--|
| Box 3, Folder 28-30 | Photographs of David Berger and Family, circa 1950s-1960s <i>3 Folders</i> Oversized items housed in box 5, folder 9 |
| Box 3, Folder 31-32 | Photographs of Artwork, circa 1950s-1960s <i>2 Folders</i> |
| Box 4, Folder 1-3 | Photographs of Artwork, circa 1950s-1960s <i>3 Folders</i> |
| Box 4, Folder 4 | Negatives, circa 1950s-1960s |
| Box 4, Folder 5 | Slides, circa 1949-1960s |
| Box 5, Folder 9 | Oversize Photographs of David Berger and Family, 1960s Oversized items from box 3, folders 28-30 |

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Series 7: Sketchbooks, circa 1956-1960s

0.3 Linear feet (Box 4-5)

Nine sketchbooks contain various figure studies in pencil, ink, pastel, and charcoal.

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|-----------------|------------------------|
| Box 4, Folder 6 | Sketchbook, circa 1956 |
| Box 4, Folder 7 | Sketchbook, 1959-1960 |
| Box 4, Folder 8 | Sketchbook, 1961 |
| Box 4, Folder 9 | Sketchbook, 1960s |
| Box 5, Folder 1 | Sketchbook, 1960s |
| Box 5, Folder 2 | Sketchbook, 1960s |
| Box 5, Folder 3 | Sketchbook, 1960s |
| Box 5, Folder 4 | Sketchbook, 1960 |
| Box 5, Folder 5 | Sketchbook, 1961 |

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