



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Avis Berman Research Material on Juliana Force, 1857-circa 2010, in the Archives of American Art

Sarah Mundy

2023/01/24

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Avis Berman research material on Juliana Force
Date:	1857-circa 2010
Identifier:	AAA.bermavis4
Creator:	Berman, Avis
Extent:	11.8 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	<p>The Avis Berman research material on Juliana Force, inaugural director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, measures 11.8 linear feet and dates from 1857 to circa 2010. The collection is comprised of Berman's research and writing files in preparation for her book, <i>Rebels on Eighth Street: Juliana Force and the Whitney Museum of American Art</i>, published in 1990. Included are manuscript drafts, correspondence, photographs, photocopies of archival material, notes, printed material, and thirty-seven recordings of interviews with numerous artists, as well as a few unidentified recordings. Berman's manuscript is also contained in digital format on twenty-three electronic disks. Research topics include Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, the Whitney Museum, Whitney Studio Galleries and Club, MacDougal Alley, Force and the Rieser family, and historical events of the early 1900s.</p>

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 2020 and 2021 by Avis Berman.

Related Materials

Also in the Archives are the Avis Berman research material on Katharine Kuh, 1939-2006, research material on art and artists, 1976-1994, research material on Elie Nadelman, 2001, and an interview of Reuben Nakian conducted by Berman for the Archives Oral History Program, June 1981.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Sarah Mundy in 2023.

Preferred Citation

Avis Berman research material on Juliana Force, 1857-circa 2010. 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.

Terms of Use

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Conditions Governing Use

The donor has retained all intellectual property rights, including copyright, that they may own in the following material: all writings by Avis Berman.

Biographical / Historical

Avis Berman (1949-) is a writer, curator, and historian of American art, architecture and culture based in New York, N.Y. She holds a bachelor's degree from Bucknell University and an master's degree from Rutgers Univerisy, both in English literature. She is the author of numerous books including *Rebels on Eighth Street: Juliana Force and the Whitney Museum of American Art*; *James McNeill Whistler*; and *Edward Hopper's New York*. She was also co-author and editor of Katharine Kuh's memoir, *My Love Affair with Modern Art: Behind the Scenes with a Legendary Curator*.

Berman has written numerous articles on subjects including painting, sculpture, photography, illustration, design, architecture, and the social history of the visual arts for a broad range of publications including *The New York Times*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Washington Post*, *Smithsonian*, *Saturday Review*, *The Boston Book Review*, *American Art*, *ARTnews*, *The San Francisco Examiner*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *Art in America*, *Art & Antiques*, *House & Garden*, and *Architectural Digest*. Throughout the 1980s 1990s and 2000s Avis served as a consultant for the Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C., in her capacity as interviewer for the oral history project for which she has researched and interviewed countless artists, collectors, and other figures in the art world in Europe and the United States.

Scope and Contents

The Avis Berman research material on Juliana Force, inaugural director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, measures 11.8 linear feet and dates from 1857 to circa 2010. The collection is comprised of Berman's research and writing files in preparation for her book, *Rebels on Eighth Street: Juliana Force and the Whitney Museum of American Art*, published in 1990. Included are manuscript drafts, correspondence, photographs, photocopies of archival material, notes, printed material, and theirty-seven recordings of interviews with numerous artists, as well as a few unidentified recordings. Berman's manuscript is also contained in digital format on twenty-three electronic disks. Research topics include Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, the Whitney Museum, Whitney Studio Galleries and Club, MacDougal Alley, Force and the Rieser family, and historical events of the early 1900s.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as two series.

- Series 1: Writing Project Files, circa 1980s (1.6 linear feet; Boxes 1-2)
- Series 2: Research and Subject Files, 1857-circa 2010 (10.2 linear feet; Boxes 2-13, OVs 14-15)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Women art dealers
- Women art historians

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings
- Video recordings

Names:

- Force, Juliana, 1876-1948
- Whitney Museum of American Art
- Whitney, Gertrude Vanderbilt, 1875-1942

Occupations:

- Art historians -- New York (State) -- New York
- Authors -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Writing Project Files, circa 1980s

1.6 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: The series includes manuscript drafts, chapter edit drafts, photograph caption drafts, photo lists, an alphabetical card file containing contact information, and correspondence with publishers and contacts regarding permissions for Berman's book *Rebels on Eighth Street: Juliana Force and the Whitney Museum of American Art* (1990). Drafts of the manuscript are also contained on twenty-three floppy disks and may be duplicates of the analog versions.

Box 1, Folder 1	Administrative Records, 1980s
Box 1, Folder 2	Bibliography, circa 1990
Box 1, Folder 3	Card File, Contacts A-L, circa 1980s
Box 1, Folder 4	Card File, Contacts M-W, circa 1980s
Box 1, Folder 5-12	Copy Edited Manuscript, circa 1985
Box 1, Folder 13	Correspondence Regarding Permissions, 1985-1989
Box 1, Folder 14	Epilogue, circa 1985
Box 1, Folder 15	Manuscript, circa 1990 23 Floppy discs
Box 1, Folder 16-17	Manuscript Chapter Revisions, 1-5, circa 1990
Box 2, Folder 1-6	Manuscript Chapter Revisions, 5-12, circa 1990
Box 2, Folder 7	Manuscript Chapter Revisions, 12 and Epilogue, circa 1990
Box 2, Folder 8-11	Manuscript Draft, circa 1990
Box 2, Folder 12	Photographs, Regarding, circa 1988
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Series 2: Research and Subject Files

10.2 Linear feet (Boxes 2-13, OVs 14-15)

Arrangement: The series begins with files organized by year, then organized alphabetically thereafter.

Scope and Contents: The series consists of Berman's research files on Force's biographical information, her family, friends and acquaintances, colleagues, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, the Whitney Museum's administrative files, Whitney Studio and Club files, files regarding the merger between the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Whitney Museum, and topics relating to historical events of the early 1900s. The files contain photocopies of archival records, printed materials, Berman's notes, letters from Berman to Force's acquaintances requesting recollections of Force, and photographs and other records on MacDougal Alley, Barley Sheaf Farm, and Force's English cottage referred to as Coweb Cottage. Additionally, the series contains 34 sound recordings, 3 video recordings, and 4 electronic discs of interviews, along with a few unidentified recordings.

Also included are files for a few projects dating after Berman completed her book, but are related to her research topics in the rest of the series. These projects are an unpublished typescript by Berman on Coweb Cottage, entries on Force and Lloyd Goodrich for *American National Biography* encyclopedias, and material on women in folk art for Berman's contribution to the exhibition catalog *A Shared Legacy: Folk Art in America* (2014).

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Box 2, Folder 15	1914 Exhibition and WWI Diaries, Notes, circa 1985
Box 2, Folder 16-21	1915-1919 Exhibitions and Events, circa 1985
Box 2, Folder 22-25	1920-1924 Exhibitions and Events, circa 1985
Box 3, Folder 1-7	1925-1932 Exhibitions and Events, circa 1980s
Box 3, Folder 8	1932 Exhibition of Provincial Paintings, circa 1980s
Box 3, Folder 9	1933-1934 Exhibition Attendance at Guggenheim Museum, circa 1980s
Box 3, Folder 10	1934 Exhibition in Vermont, circa 1980s
Box 2, Folder 11	1935 Exhibition, "Abstract Painters Show", circa 1980s
Box 3, Folder 12	1936 Exhibitions and Events, circa 1980s
Box 3, Folder 13	1935-1936 Letters, 1935-1936
Box 3, Folder 14	1937 Exhibitions and Events, circa 1980s
Box 3, Folder 15	1937 Letters, 1937
Box 3, Folder 16	1938 Exhibitions and Events, circa 1980s

Box 3, Folder 17	1938-1939 Letters, 1938-1939
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Box 3, Folder 19	1940 Letters, circa 1980s
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2 Sound cassettes

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