



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Bernice West Beyers Papers, 1912-1987, in the Archives of American Art

Jean Fitzgerald

November, 2005

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	
Administrative Information	1
Biographical Note	2
Scope and Content Note	2
Arrangement	2
Names and Subjects	
Container Listing	
Series 1: Biographical Material, 1923-1935, undated	4
Series 2: Correspondence, 1928-1974, undated	5
Series 3: Business Records, 1923-1960, undated	6
Series 4: Notes and Writings, 1925-1967, undated	7
Series 5: Art Work, undated	8
Series 6: Printed Material, 1912-1987, undated	9
Series 7: Photographs, 1937-1956, undated	10

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Bernice West Beyers papers
Date:	1912-1987
Identifier:	AAA.beyebern
Creator:	Beyers, Bernice West, 1906-1987
Extent:	1.7 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of sculptor Bernice West Beyers measure 1.7 linear feet and date from 1912-1987. Found within the papers are biographical material; letters that discuss sculpture commissions and exhibitions; scattered business and financial records; notes and writings; a sketchbook; printed material, including 3 scrapbooks of clippings; and photographs of Beyers and photograph albums of her art work.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The Bernice West Beyers papers were donated in 1988 by Robert West Beyers, the artist's son.

Processing Information

The papers were processed in November 2005 by Jean Fitzgerald.

Preferred Citation

Bernice West Beyers papers, 1912-1987. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

Terms of Use

The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning such rights and restrictions and it is the user's responsibility to determine whether rights or restrictions exist and to obtain any necessary permission to access, use, reproduce and publish the collections. Please refer to the [Smithsonian's Terms of Use](#) for additional information.

Biographical Note

Berenice West Byers (1906-1987) worked as a sculptor in the New York and New England area. Later in life, she became a patron of the arts in Dallas, Texas.

Bernice Delemar West was born on April 26, 1906 in New York City, the daughter of Abigail Palmer and E. Lovette West, an engineer. In 1925 she graduated from the Bennett School in Millbrook, New York, where she took diplomas in both drama and fine arts. After a summer trip to Europe with classmates, she spent the next year studying drama with Winifred Lenihan at the Theatre Guild. In the summer of 1926, she did summer stock in Binghamton as a member of Actors Equity. In 1927 she began to pursue a career in sculpture and pottery.

She first worked in the studio of Lu Duple, her former teacher at the Bennett School. From 1927 to 1929, she also studied under Alexander Archipenko, Edmond R. Amateis, and Winold Reiss. In the fall of 1929, West began studies at the Art Students League under William Zorach.

Beginning in 1934, she exhibited primarily in New England and Florida. She was later influenced by the Haitian and Mayan art work she encountered while on a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1937-1938.

West was married in March 1940 to Robert Arthur Beyers, and their family moved permanently to Dallas, Texas, where they were primarily patrons of the arts.

Bernice West Beyers died in 1987.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of sculptor Bernice West Beyers measure 1.7 linear feet and date from 1912-1987. Found within the papers are biographical material; letters that discuss sculpture commissions and exhibitions; scattered business and financial records; notes and writings; a sketchbook; printed material, including 3 scrapbooks of clippings; and photographs of Beyers and photograph albums of her art work.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 7 series. All series are arranged chronologically. All oversized material has been housed in Box 3 (sol) and is referenced in the folder headings of the Series Description/Container Listing.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1923-1935, undated (Box 1; 2 folders)
 - Series 2: Correspondence, 1928-1974, undated (Box 1; 16 folders)
 - Series 3: Business Records, 1923-1960, undated (Box 1; 11 folders)
 - Series 4: Notes and Writings, 1925-1967, undated (Box 1, 3; 10 folders)
 - Series 5: Art Work, undated (Box 1; 2 folders)
 - Series 6: Printed Material, 1912-1987, undated (Box 1, 3; 33 folders)
 - Series 7: Photographs, 1937-1956, undated (Box 1, 2, 3; 29 folders)
-

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Sculpture, Modern -- 20th century
Women artists

Women sculptors
Works of art

Types of Materials:

Photographs
Sketchbooks

Occupations:

Actors -- New York (State) -- New York
Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1923-1935, undated

2 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material consists of report cards from the Bennett School of Liberal and Applied Arts, membership certificates including an Actors' Equity card, and an award certificate.

Box 1, Folder 1 Report Cards, 1923-1924

Box 1, Folder 2 Membership Certificates and Award Certificate, 1926-1935, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Correspondence, 1928-1974, undated

16 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence consists of letters exchanged between Beyers, members of her family, and colleagues. Many letters discuss commissions and exhibitions of her sculpture. There is one letter, 1951, signed by Alexander Archipenko.

Box 1, Folder 3-18	Correspondence, 1928-1974, undated
--------------------	------------------------------------

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Business Records, 1923-1960, undated

11 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Business records primarily consist of miscellaneous receipts, price lists, and patent records relating to Beyers' designs for an ashtray and for an automobile hood ornament.

Box 1, Folder 19-27	Miscellaneous Receipts, 1923-1960, undated
---------------------	--

Box 1, Folder 28	Patent Records, 1928-1929
------------------	---------------------------

Box 1, Folder 29	Price Lists, 1933, undated
------------------	----------------------------

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Notes and Writings, 1925-1967, undated

10 Folders (Box 1, 3)

Scope and Contents: Notes include a notebook listing information about miscellaneous art work, transcripts of radio interviews, and miscellaneous notes. Writings consist of miscellaneous typescripts written by Beyers.

Box 1, Folder 30	Notebook Concerning Art Work, 1931-1939
Box 1, Folder 31-32	Transcript of Radio Interviews, undated
Box 1, Folder 33	Notes on Etching, undated
Box 1, Folder 34	Caption Cards for Art Work, 1967, undated
Box 1, Folder 35	Miscellaneous Notes, 1925-1933, undated (See Also Box 3)
Box 1, Folder 36-38	Miscellaneous Typescripts, 1933-1941, undated
Box 3	Oversized Blueprint of Portrait Plaque of Fred H. Albee, 1925
Box 3	Oversized Blueprint of a Wooden Easel, 1933

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Art Work, undated

2 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Art work consists of a sketchbook containing geometric designs, and an abstract pencil drawing.

Box 1, Folder 39	Sketchbook, undated
------------------	---------------------

Box 1, Folder 40	Drawing, undated
------------------	------------------

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Printed Material, 1912-1987, undated

33 Folders (Box 1, 3)

Scope and Contents: Printed material consists of clippings, scrapbooks of clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, programs primarily from Beyers' plays and readings, brochures including one from the General Bronze Corporation, and miscellaneous printed material.

Box 1, Folder 41-52	Clippings, 1912-1966, undated (See Also Box 3)
Box 1, Folder 53-58	Scrapbook 1, 1921-1927 (See Box 3 for Scrapbook 2)
Box 1, Folder 59	Scrapbook 3, 1938-1939
Box 1, Folder 60-66	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1933-1987, undated
Box 1, Folder 67-68	Programs, 1917-1926, undated
Box 1, Folder 69	Brochures, 1932, undated
Box 1, Folder 70	Reproductions of Art Work by Others, undated
Box 1, Folder 71	Picture Postcards, undated
Box 3	Oversized Clippings, 1931
Box 3	Scrapbook 2, 1934-1946

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 7: Photographs, 1937-1956, undated

29 Folders (Box 1-3)

Scope and Contents: This series consists primarily of photographs of art works, both unbound and in albums. There are also photographs of Beyers and her exhibitions.

Box 1, Folder 72	Photographs of Bernice West Beyers, 1937, undated
Box 1, Folder 73	Photographs of Art Exhibitions, 1941, undated
Box 1, Folder 74-77	Photograph Album 1, undated (See Also Box 3)
Box 1, Folder 78-80	Photograph Album 2, undated
Box 2, Folder 1-2	Photograph Album 3, undated
Box 2, Folder 3-4	Photograph Album 4, undated
Box 2, Folder 5	Photograph Album 5, undated
Box 2, Folder 6-18	Photographs of Art Work by Beyers, 1956, undated
Box 2, Folder 19	Photographs of Art Work by others, undated
Box 3	Oversized Cover for Photograph Album 1, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)