



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Agnes Rindge Claflin Papers Concerning Alexander Calder, 1936- circa 1970s, in the Archives of American Art

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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

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Agnes Rindge Claflin papers concerning Alexander Calder
Date:	1936-circa 1970s
Identifier:	AAA.clafagne
Creator:	Claflin, Agnes Rindge, 1900-1977
Extent:	0.2 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of arts administrator, collector, and educator Agnes Rindge Claflin concerning Alexander Calder measure 0.2 linear feet and date from 1936-circa 1970s. Included are five letters, two of which are illustrated, and one postcard from Alexander Calder to Claflin; two handwritten manuscripts by Calder, one untitled and "A Propos of Measuring a Mobile," 1943; an invitation to a Calder exhibition at Galerie Maeght, Paris, 1952; and 14 photographs of Calder, of Calder and Claflin in Calder's studio, of Calder's art work, and of a Calder exhibition installation at Vassar Art Gallery, 1942. Transcriptions of three of the letters and both manuscripts are also included.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The collection was donated in 1981 by Philip W. Claflin, widower of Agnes Rindge Claflin.

Related Material

The Archives of American Art holds several collections related to the Agnes Rindge Claflin papers concerning Alexander Calder, including the Alexander Calder papers which have been fully digitized; Alexander Calder letters and photographs microfilmed on reel 4781; Alexander Calder letter microfilmed on reel 2787, frames 963-970; and an oral history interview with Alexander Calder, October 26, 1971, available as a transcript online.

Alternative Forms Available

This site provides access to the papers of **Agnes Rindge Claflin** concerning Alexander Calder in the Archives of American Art that were digitized in 2010, and total 71 images.

Processing Information

The collection was microfilmed upon receipt on reel 2520. It was fully processed and described by Margaret J. Hughes in 2010.

Preferred Citation

Agnes Rindge Claflin papers concerning Alexander Calder, 1936-circa 1970s. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment.

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Biographical Note

Agnes Rindge Claflin (1900-1977) was an arts administrator, collector, and educator who spent the majority of her career at Vassar College as a professor and serving as director of its art gallery for 28 years.

Claflin was born Agnes Millicent Rindge in Grand Rapids, Michigan on May 19, 1900. She graduated from the Madeira School in 1917, attended Mount Holyoke College for two years, and graduated magna cum laude from Radcliffe College. Afterwards, Claflin briefly taught at Vassar College before returning to Radcliffe and earning her M.A. and Ph.D. She rejoined the Vassar College faculty in 1928 and served as the director of the Vassar Art Gallery from 1934-1962. Claflin published *Sculpture* in 1929 and in the 1930s she began writing articles for several different publications. At the request of Alfred Barr, she joined the Advisory Committee for the Museum of Modern Art in 1941 and became the Assistant Executive Vice President from 1943-1944. Claflin held a number of other positions in art organizations such as the Commission on Arts of the American Association of Colleges (1939), Art in America (1940-1943), Art Division of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (1941-1942), American Federation of Arts (1944-1945), and Committee on Fellowships of the College Art Association (1945-1948). She married Philip W. Claflin, a captain in the U.S. Army, in 1945. Throughout her career, Claflin lectured at organizations and universities across the United States, including the Chicago Art Institute, Columbia University, New York University, Yale University, and many others. Agnes Claflin died on June 12, 1977.

Claflin and Calder were colleagues and friends. In 1942, the Vassar Art Gallery hosted a Calder exhibition installation. The following year, Claflin wrote and narrated a short film, "Alexander Calder: Sculpture and Constructions," which was presented with the Museum of Modern Art's Calder exhibition of the same year.

Scope and Content Note

The papers of arts administrator, collector, and educator Agnes Rindge Claflin concerning Alexander Calder measure 0.2 linear feet and date from 1936-circa 1970s. Included are five letters and one postcard from Alexander Calder to Claflin, two of which are illustrated; two handwritten manuscripts by Calder, one untitled and "A Propos of Measuring a Mobile," 1943; an invitation to a Calder exhibition at Galerie Maeght, Paris, 1952; and 14 photographs of Calder, of Calder and Claflin in Calder's studio, of Calder's art work, and of a Calder exhibition installation at Vassar Art Gallery, 1942. One photograph depicting an event is possibly the opening of the Calder exhibition at Vassar Art Gallery, 1942. Also included are two polaroid photographs most likely from the 1970s. Transcriptions of three of the letters and both manuscripts are also included.

Arrangement

Due to the small size of the collection, items are organized into one series of 23 folders:

Missing Title:

- Series 1: Agnes Rindge Claflin Papers Concerning Alexander Calder, 1936-circa 1970s (Box 1; 23 folders)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art -- Collectors and collecting
- Mobiles (Sculpture)
- Women arts administrators
- Women educators

Types of Materials:

- Illustrated letters
- Manuscripts
- Photographs
- Postcards

Names:

- Calder, Alexander, 1898-1976
- Vassar College

Occupations:

- Arts administrators -- New York (State)
- Collectors -- New York (State) -- Poughkeepsie
- Educators -- New York (State)

Container Listing

Series 1: Agnes Rindge Claflin Papers Concerning Alexander Calder, 1936-circa 1970s

23 Folders (Box 1)

Available This collection has been scanned in its entirety.

Formats:

Arrangement: If a document has a transcription, it can be found in the same folder as the original document.

Box 1, Folder 1	Letter, circa 1930s-1950s
Box 1, Folder 2	Letter, 1936, June 6
Box 1, Folder 3	Letter, 1942, March 30
Box 1, Folder 4	Letter, 1942, May 7
Box 1, Folder 5	Letter, 1945, March 13
Box 1, Folder 6	Letter, 1954, December 23
Box 1, Folder 7	Manuscript about Sculpture, undated
Box 1, Folder 8	"A Propos of Measuring a Mobile" Manuscript, 1943
Box 1, Folder 9	Exhibition Invitation, Galerie Maeght, 1952
Box 1, Folder 10	Photograph of Event, 1942
Box 1, Folder 11	Photograph of Calder/Miro Exhibition at Vassar Art Gallery, 1942
Box 1, Folder 12	Photograph of Calder/Miro Exhibition at Vassar Art Gallery, 1942
Box 1, Folder 13	Photograph of Calder/Miro Exhibition at Vassar Art Gallery, 1942
Box 1, Folder 14	Photograph of Calder/Miro Exhibition at Vassar Art Gallery, 1942
Box 1, Folder 15	Photograph of Calder/Miro Exhibition at Vassar Art Gallery, 1942
Box 1, Folder 16	Photograph of Mobile Sculpture, circa 1942
Box 1, Folder 17	Photograph of Calder's Studio, circa 1942
Box 1, Folder 18	Photograph of Calder & Claflin, circa 1942

Box 1, Folder 19 [Photograph of Calder & Claflin in Calder's Studio, circa 1942](#)

Box 1, Folder 20 [Photograph of Calder & Claflin in Calder's Studio, circa 1942](#)

Box 1, Folder 21 [Photograph of Calder & Claflin, circa 1942](#)

Box 1, Folder 22 [Polaroid Photograph of Sculpture, circa 1970s](#)

Box 1, Folder 23 [Polaroid Photograph of Package, circa 1970s](#)

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