



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Ruth Van Sickle Ford Papers, circa 1920-1986, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

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Women's History Initiative and the National Collections Program

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Ruth Van Sickle Ford papers
Date:	circa 1920-1986
Identifier:	AAA.fordruth
Creator:	Ford, Ruth Van Sickle, 1897-1989
Extent:	1.7 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of painter and educator Ruth Van Sickle Ford (1897-1989) measure 1.7 linear feet and date from circa 1920 to 1986. Found are biographical materials, correspondence, writings, printed materials, three scrapbooks, and photographs.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Barbara Turner donated her mother's papers to the Archives of American Art in 1987.

Separated Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds microfilm of material lent for microfilming (Reel 3956, frames 187-316) including 55 handmade Christmas cards, news clippings, a booklet, photographs, and one sketch by Claude Buck. Originals are in the possession of Barbara Turner. Loaned materials were returned to the donor and are not described in the collection container inventory.

Available Formats

Portions of the collection are available on 35mm microfilm reels 3955-3956 available at Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

Processing Information

The collection received a preliminary level of arrangement after donation and was partially microfilmed on reels 3955-3956. The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2020.

Preferred Citation

Ruth Van Sickle Ford papers, circa 1920-1986. 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.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Ruth Van Sickle Ford (1897-1986) was a painter and educator active in Chicago, Illinois. She was president and owner of the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts from 1936 to 1960.

Ford was born in Aurora, Illinois. She enrolled at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, where she studied under Carl Newland Wertz, and graduated in 1918. Over the course of her career her works were exhibited throughout the United States. In addition to her painting, Ford returned to the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts to teach watercolor and oil painting, and ultimately purchased the school and served as both president and director.

In 1918, Ruth married Arthur Ford and together they had a daughter, Barbara. Ruth Van Sickle Ford died in 1989 in Aurora, Illinois.

Scope and Contents

The papers of painter and educator Ruth Van Sickle Ford (1897-1989) measure 1.7 linear feet and date from circa 1920 to 1986. Found are biographical materials, correspondence, writings, printed materials, three scrapbooks, and photographs.

Arrangement

Due to the small size of this collection the papers are arranged as one series.

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 painters

Types of Materials:

- Scrapbooks

Names:

- Chicago Academy of Fine Arts

Occupations:

Educators -- Illinois -- Chicago
Painters -- Illinois -- Chicago

Container Listing

Series 1: Ruth Van Sickle Ford papers, circa 1920-1986

1.7 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3)

Scope and Contents: Biographical materials consist of awards and resumes. Letters are from friends and art organizations including Aurora University, Art Instruction Associates, Rockport Art Association, and Mrs. V. Walworth. Also found is a xerox copy of a letter from Henry Fonda. Twenty-six letters (1982) are from young students at the Allen School in Aurora, Illinois, thanking Ford for her visit.

Writings include four notebooks containing information and photographs concerning specific works of art by Ford. Also found is a bound book of class outlines from the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts from 1940 to 1941.

Printed materials include clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, reproductions of works of art, and school publications. Two clippings scrapbooks and one mixed-media scrapbook focus on Ford's painting and teaching careers. Photographs depict Ford, her family and friends, homes and architecture, and works of art.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Material, Awards, 1952-1977
Box 1, Folder 2	Biographical Material, Sketches and Resumes, circa 1950
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, 1967-1982
Box 1, Folder 4-7	Writings, Notebooks, on Ford's Watercolors, circa 1949
Box 1, Folder 8	Writings, Class Outlines, Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, 1940-1941
Box 1, Folder 9-10	Printed Material, Clippings, 1950-1986
Box 1, Folder 11-14	Printed Material, Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1945-1986
Box 1, Folder 15-16	Printed Material, Reproductions of Works of Art, 1945-1986
Box 1, Folder 17	Printed Material, School Publications, 1960s-1970s
Box 2, Folder 1-2	Scrapbook, Clippings, 1941
Box 3, Folder 3	Scrapbook, Mixed Media (Oversized), 1941-1960
Box 2, Folder 3-4	Photographs, Portraits and Personal Snapshots, circa 1920-1975
Box 3, Folder 1	Photographs, Portrait (Oversized), circa 1930
Box 2, Folder 5-6	Photographs, Homes and Architecture, 1950-1970s
Box 2, Folder 7-8	Photographs, Works of Art, 1965-1970

Box 3, Folder 2 Photographs, Works of Art (Oversized), circa 1960

Box 2, Folder 9 Photographs, Negatives, circa 1960

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