



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Riva Helfond papers, 1934-1983, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

Processing of this collection received support from  
the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

2023/04/18

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical .....	2
Scope and Contents .....	2
Arrangement .....	2
Names and Subjects .....	
Container Listing .....	
Series 1: Riva Helfond Papers, 1934-1983 .....	3

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Riva Helfond papers
<b>Date:</b>	1934-1983
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.helfriva
<b>Creator:</b>	Helfond, Riva, 1910-2002
<b>Extent:</b>	1.2 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of printmaker Riva Helfond measure 1.2 linear feet and date from 1934 to 1983. The papers concern Helfond's professional career and participation in the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Found are biographical materials, correspondence, a notebook, personal business records, photographs, printed material, a clippings scrapbook, and three sketchbooks.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 1983 by Riva Helfond.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2023 with support from the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

### Preferred Citation

Riva Helfond papers, 1934-1983. 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

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 / Historical

New Jersey painter, printmaker, and educator Riva Helfond (1910-2002) was known for her social realist studies of working people and their lives. She was employed by the the Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project (WPA FAP) and taught printmaking at New York University and elsewhere.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Helfond studied at the School of Industrial Art and the Art Students League and worked for the FAP at the Harlem Community Art Center with Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden. She subsequently worked in the FAP's Graphic Arts Division with Louis Lozowick and Jacob Kainen, and in the silk- screen division where she was supervised by Anthony Velonis. In 1964 she taught printmaking at New York University and after 1980 was on the faculty of Union College in Cranford, New Jersey.

Helfond was married to sculptor Will Barrett and her circle of friends included Abstract Expressionist artists and critics such as Willem de Kooning, Arshile Gorky, Franz Kline, and Harold Rosenberg. Her work can be found in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Brooklyn Museum, and many other institutions.

Helfond died in New Jersey in 2002.

---

## Scope and Contents

The papers of printmaker Riva Helfond measure 1.2 linear feet and date from 1934 to 1983. The papers concern Helfond's professional career and participation in the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Found are biographical materials, correspondence, a notebook, personal business records, photographs, printed material, a clippings scrapbook, and three sketchbooks.

---

## 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
- Women printmakers

### Types of Materials:

- Scrapbooks
- Sketchbooks

### Occupations:

- Educators -- New Jersey
- Painters -- New Jersey
- Printmakers -- New Jersey

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Riva Helfond Papers, 1934-1983

#### 1.2 Linear feet (Box 1, OVs 2-3)

Scope and Contents: Biographical materials include awards, autobiographical sketches, and a membership card for Will Barrett to the Artists Union. Correspondence is largely professional and includes letters from museums and institutions regarding the inclusion of Helfond's prints in shows. A notebook includes personal and art-related writings. Personal business records include pricelists and receipts. Photographs are of Helfond, Will Barrett, and works of art. Printed materials include a published book of writings from the *First American Artists Congress*, clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, and a poster. Also found are additional clippings in a scrapbook concerning Helfond's career. Three sketchbooks contain pencil and pen drawings of portraits and figures. Some sketchbooks also contain writings.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Material, 1934-1970
Box 1, Folder 2	<a href="#">Correspondence, 1943-1979</a>
Box 1, Folder 3	Notebook, 1967
Box 1, Folder 4	Personal Business Records, 1948-1972
Box 1, Folder 5	<a href="#">Photographs, circa 1935-1970</a>
Box 1, Folder 6	Photographs, Works of Art, 1940s-1960s
Box 1, Folder 7	Printed Material, Book, 1936
Box 1, Folder 8	Printed Material, Clippings, 1947-1968
Box 1, Folder 9	Printed Material, Exhibition Announcements, 1958-1975
Box 1, Folder 10-15	Printed Material, Exhibition Catalogs, 1939-1983
Oversize 3	Printed Material, Poster, circa 1960
Oversize 2	Scrapbook, Clippings, 1950s-1970
Box 1, Folder 16-17	Sketchbooks, 1940s-1960

[Return to Table of Contents](#)