



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Vera Klement papers, 1950- circa 2016, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

Processing of this collection received federal support from the Collections  
Care Initiative Fund, administered by the Smithsonian American  
Women's History Initiative and the National Collections Program

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## Collection Overview

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Repository:</b> | Archives of American Art  |
| <b>Title:</b>      | Vera Klement papers   |
| <b>Date:</b>       | 1950-circa 2016   |
| <b>Identifier:</b> | AAA.klemvera  |
| <b>Creator:</b>    | Klement, Vera, 1929-  |
| <b>Extent:</b>     | 3.3 Linear feet<br>1.36 Gigabytes   |
| <b>Language:</b>   | English .   |
| <b>Summary:</b>    | The papers of painter and educator Vera Klement measure 3.3 linear feet and 1.36 GB and date from 1950 to circa 2016. The papers include scattered correspondence with Franz Schulze and others, writings and notes including digital copies of a memoir, an interview, and a film, personal business records, printed and digital material, fourteen sketchbooks and other works of art, and photographs, including a photo of the MacDowell Colony in 1957. |

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Vera Klement donated her papers to the Archives of American Art in several installments in 1986, 2004, and 2017.

### Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art are two oral history interviews with Vera Klement conducted for the Archives of American Art's Chicago Art and Artists: Oral History Project. The interviews were conducted by Lanny Silverman, 2015 June 12 and 14, and by Jason Stieber, 2016 May 25.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2020. Born-digital materials were processed by Kirsi Ritosalmi-Kisner in 2021 with funding provided by Smithsonian Collection Care and Preservation Fund.

### Preferred Citation

Vera Klement papers, 1950-circa 2016. 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. Researchers interested in accessing born-digital records or audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact Reference Services for more information.

## Conditions Governing Use

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## Biographical / Historical

Vera Klement (1929-) is a painter and educator in Chicago, Illinois. She is a founding member of "The FIVE."

Vera Klement was born in Danzig, Germany (now Gdańsk, Poland). She came to the United States in 1938 to escape the Nazi regime and settled in New York City. Klement studied at the Cooper Union School of Art and Architecture, graduating in 1950. After moving to Chicago in 1965, she taught at the University of Chicago from 1969 to 1995 and is a Professor Emerita. She became a founding member of "The FIVE," a group of artists, who protested what they saw as a regionalist bent in Chicago art during the early 1970s.

Klement continues to live and work in Chicago, Illinois.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of painter and educator Vera Klement measure 3.3 linear feet and 1.36 GB and date from 1950 to circa 2016. The papers include scattered correspondence with Franz Schulze and others, writings and notes including digital copies of a memoir, an interview, and a film, personal business records, printed and digital material, fourteen sketchbooks and other works of art, and photographs, including a photo of the MacDowell Colony in 1957.

Of note is *Blunt Edge*, an unpublished memoir by Klement in born-digital format; a born-digital recording of an oral history by Linda Kramer and Sandra Binion (2010); a born-digital copy of a film entitled *Vera Klement: Blunt Edge*, by Wonjung Bae; a bound volume, *Disorder and Early Sorrow: a Meditation on War and Death in Homage to Picasso's Guernica 1937*, by Vera Klement; and a poetry project compiled by Klement entitled *Born of Silence*.

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## Arrangement

Due to its small size the collection is arranged as one series.

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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Painting, Modern -- 20th century -- United States
- Women artists
- Women educators
- Women painters

Types of Materials:

Drawings  
Interviews  
Sketchbooks

Names:

MacDowell Colony  
Schulze, Franz, 1927-2019

Occupations:

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

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Vera Klement Papers, 1950-circa 2016

#### 3.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1-4)

##### 1.36 Gigabytes (ER01-ER03)

**Scope and Contents:** Scattered correspondence is between Klement and various artists, critics, and institutions, including: Altedena Gallery, Dore Ashton, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Jim McGarrell, Gerald Nordland, The Print Club, Franz Schulze, Clara Diament Sujo, Terra Museum of American Art, and the University of Chicago. Also found are 7 folders of greeting and holiday cards.

Writings by Klement include *Blunt Edge: A Memoir* in born-digital form, artists statements, notes about art and teaching, poetry, and a eulogy for Harold Rosenberg. Notebooks consist of guest comment notebooks from a 1999 exhibition at the Chicago Cultural Center and a notebook compiled while at the MacDowell Colony.

Oral histories consist of a transcript conducted by John Himmelfarb (1985) and a born-digital audio recording by Linda Kramer and Sandra Binion. A born-digital video by Wonjung Bae is entitled *Vera Klement: Blunt Edge* (2010). A project file contains Klement's *Born of Silence*, a compilation of poetry by eight poets.

Personal business records contain material relating to the donation and sale of Klement's works to various institutions and museums. Printed material includes exhibition materials and clippings related to Klement's work and career.

Works of art include fourteen sketchbooks, loose drawing, and etchings. Also found is a bound volume, *Disorder and Early Sorrow: a Meditation on War and Death in Homage to Picasso's Guernica 1937* (2010), a book of collages, drawings, and diptychs.

Photographs depict Klement, and Klement with her artwork and in her studio, 1964-1980. Also found is a 1957 group photograph of the MacDowell Colony.

**Arrangement:** Records are arranged by type of material.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Box 1, Folder 1-6  | Correspondence, General, 1950-2013  |
| Box 1, Folder 7-13 | Correspondence, Greeting and Holiday Cards, 1950s-2000s   |
| Folder ER01        | Blunt Edge: A Memoir, by Vera Klement, Digital Photographs and Documents, 2016<br>0.101 Gigabytes (53 computer files) |
| Box 1, Folder 15   | Writings, Artist Statements, 1987   |
| Box 1, Folder 16   | Writings, on Art, circa 1950-circa 1980   |
| Box 1, Folder 17   | Vera Klement, The Recent Paintings, by Gerald Nordland, circa 2000  |
| Box 1, Folder 18   | Interview, by John Himmelfarb with Vera Klement, 1985   |

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Folder ER02         | Interview, Vera Klement in Conversation, by Linda Kramer and Sandra Binion (2010 September 3), Digital Audio Recording, 2010<br>0.752 Gigabytes (One computer file) |
| Folder ER03         | Vera Klement: Blunt Edge, a film by Wonjung Bae (2010), Digital Video Recording, 2010<br>0.508 Gigabytes (One computer file)  |
| Box 1, Folder 21    | Notebook, Compiled, 1952-1982   |
| Box 1, Folder 22    | Notebook, Notes on New Works, 1958 April  |
| Box 1, Folder 23    | Notebook, MacDowell Colony, 1958 August   |
| Box 1, Folder 24    | Guest Books, Chicago Cultural Center Exhibition, 1999 May-June  |
| Box 1, Folder 25-26 | Project File, Born of Silence, 1995   |
| Box 1, Folder 27    | Personal Business Records, 1960, 1980-2015  |
| Box 1, Folder 28    | Printed Material, American Sublime, by Vera Klement, 2011   |
| Box 2, Folder 1-3   | Printed Material, Clippings, 1950-2000s   |
| Box 2, Folder 4-16  | Printed Material, Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1950-2000s   |
| Box 2, Folder 17    | Photographs, of Vera Klement and of Art, 1957-1980  |
| Box 4, Folder 1     | Disorder and Early Sorrow: a Meditation on War and Death in Homage to Picasso's Guernica 1937, by Vera Klement, 2010  |
| Box 2, Folder 18    | Sketches, Pen and Ink, circa 1950-circa 1990  |
| Box 2, Folder 19    | Sketches, Pencil, circa 1950-circa 1990   |
| Box 2, Folder 20    | Sketches, Painted Sketches and Prints, circa 1950-circa 1990  |
| Box 2, Folder 21    | Sketchbook, Pthalcoyanine [sic], 1968-1969  |
| Box 3, Folder 1     | Sketchbook, 1970-1972   |
| Box 3, Folder 2     | Sketchbook, 1977 June   |
| Box 3, Folder 3     | Sketchbook, 1980  |
| Box 3, Folder 4     | Sketchbook, 1982  |
| Box 3, Folder 5     | Sketchbook, 1983 November   |

|                  |                            |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Box 3, Folder 6  | Sketchbook, 1986 October   |
| Box 3, Folder 7  | Sketchbook, 1989 May       |
| Box 3, Folder 8  | Sketchbook, 1991           |
| Box 3, Folder 9  | Sketchbook, 1994 December  |
| Box 3, Folder 10 | Sketchbook, 1997 September |
| Box 3, Folder 11 | Sketchbook, 2000-2001      |
| Box 3, Folder 12 | Sketchbook, 2001           |
| Box 3, Folder 13 | Sketchbook, 2003           |

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