



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Belle Krasne
Ribicoff Papers, 1942-circa 2010, bulk
1945-2004, in the Archives of American Art

Joy Weiner

May 04, 2011

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:	Belle Krasne Ribicoff papers
Identifier:	AAA.krasbell2
Date:	1942-circa 2010 (bulk 1945-2004)
Extent:	1.6 linear feet
Creator:	Ribicoff, Belle Krasne, 1924-
Language:	Multiple languages Some records are in French and Italian. French; Italian
Summary:	The papers of Belle Krasne Ribicoff measure 1.6 linear feet and date from 1942-circa 2010, with the bulk of the collection dating from 1945-2004. Papers include biographical materials; correspondence with artists, art historians, writers, museum directors, and others; individual files relating to Belle and Irving Ribicoff's art collection and the Friends of Abe Ribicoff's campaign for the United States Senate; artwork; printed material, e.g., clippings, announcements, exhibition catalogues, brochures; and photographs. The collection documents Ribicoff's career as an arts editor, critic, and her involvement in civic and arts organizations for the State of Connecticut.

Administrative Information

Provenance

The collection was donated by Belle Krasne Ribicoff to the Archives of American Art in 2008.

Related Material

Also found at the Archives of American Art is Belle Krasne's letter to Philip Pavia, May 14, 1954 on microfilm reel 3470.

Processing Information

The collection was processed by Joy Weiner in 2011.

Preferred Citation

Belle Krasne Ribicoff papers, 1942-circa 2010 bulk 1945-2004. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions on Access

Use of original material requires an appointment.

Letters from Jean Bazaine to Belle Krasne Ribicoff and sketches of Sarai Ribicoff by William Bailey are access restricted. Their use requires written permission.

Ownership and Literary Rights

The Belle Krasne Ribicoff papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical Note

Belle Krasne Ribicoff (b. 1924) lives in Hartford, Connecticut and has served as an arts editor, critic, and university administrator.

Ribicoff was born and raised in New York City. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa with a degree in art history from Vassar College in 1945. After a brief stint with an advertising agency in New York, Ribicoff became Assistant Editor at *Magazine of Art* (1946-1947), where she developed an interest in contemporary art. She served as editor for such publications as *Art News* (1948-1949), *Art Digest* (1949-1954), and *Craft Horizons* (1954-1955).

In 1955, she married Irving S. Ribicoff (1915-1994), an attorney and moved to Hartford, Connecticut. The Ribicoffs' had two daughters, Dara (b. 1956) and Sarai (1957-1980).

Ribicoff has held various positions at the University of Hartford: Development Director at the Hartford School of Art (1980-1981), Development Liaison to the Office of President (1982-1988), and Associate Vice President for Public Affairs (1980-1983). Belle Krasne Ribicoff has served as a professional volunteer for educational and cultural organizations in Connecticut; she has been involved in efforts to make the arts a part of the school curriculum. She was Vice-President of the Hartford Board of Education (1961-1967; 1965-1971) and was Chairman of the State of Connecticut's Commission on the Arts (1965-1971). Ribicoff is a Life Director at the Hartford Stage Company and a Life Regent at the University of Hartford. She is a Sterling Fellow at Yale University and sits on the President's Advisory Committee at Vassar College.

Belle Krasne Ribicoff has received recognition for her professional and public service contributions by a number of institutions. In 1954, she received the Frank Jewett Mather Award for critical writing from the College Art Association. Other honors have included: Charter Oak Leadership Medal for Distinguished Service (1968), the University of Hartford Medal for Distinguished Service (1995), and the Spirit of Vassar award for outstanding commitment and service to Vassar or another community (2005).

Scope and Content Note

The papers of Belle Krasne Ribicoff measure 1.6 linear feet and date from 1942-circa 2010, with the bulk of the collection dating from 1945-2004. Papers include biographical materials; correspondence with artists, art historians, writers, museum directors, and others; individual files relating to Belle and Irving Ribicoff's art collection and the Friends of Abe Ribicoff's campaign for the United States Senate; artwork; printed material, e.g., clippings, announcements, exhibition catalogues, brochures; and photographs.

The collection documents Ribicoff's career as an arts editor, critic, and her involvement in civic and arts organizations for the State of Connecticut.

Biographical materials include documentation of the Bittenweiser Prize awarded to Belle Krasne by the Art History Departmental Honors at Vassar College in 1945 and curriculum vitae.

Correspondence, primarily incoming letters consists of letters, postcards, draft versions, and copies of e-mails. Belle Krasne Ribicoff was friends with many artists; their letters focus on daily activities, work, and the art world. Among the correspondents are Oscar and Eleanor Chelminsky, Joseph Cornell, Piero and Virginia Dorazio, John and Rae Ferren, Helen Frankenthaler, James Fitzsimmons, Adolph Gottlieb, John Graham, Ellsworth Kelly, Frank Modell, George L.K. Morris, Philip Pearlstein, Eero Saarinen, David Smith, and Adja Yunkers. There is substantial correspondence from Ben Benn, Sidney Geist, Leon Hartley, Ralph Rosenberg, and Theodore Roszak. Also found are love letters to Belle Krasne Ribicoff from Jean Bazaine. Many of the artists' letters are illustrated. Of note, are a letter from Carl Holty to J.B. Neumann and an artist's statement written by Adolph Gottlieb.

Ribicoff had a professional and personal relationship with a number of prominent writers, actors, and other individuals known for their work in the arts, such as Edward Albee, Claire Bloom, Peter DeVries, Horton Foote, Elia Kazan, Mark Lamos, Estelle Parsons, Karl Shapiro, Cornelia Otis Skinner, and P.L. Travers. There are letters from museum directors, art historians, and other well-known cultural figures, such as Dore Ashton, Clement Greenberg, Balcomb Greene, Rene d'Harnoncourt, Pierre Matisse, E. P. Richardson, Andrew C. Ritchie, Harry Salpeter, Curt Valentin, and Mark Van Doren. Also found are files of holiday cards, many original artwork; letters to Ribicoff upon her departure from *Art Digest*; letters from representatives at Storm King Art Center Museum and the Wadsworth Atheneum; and letters from unidentified correspondents.

The Ribicoff collection relates to the personal art collection of Belle and Irving Ribicoff; materials document the purchase and sale of artwork and the lending of artwork for exhibitions. There is a file of petition letters sponsored by the Friends of Abe Ribicoff campaign for the United States Senate.

Original artwork includes prints by Jean Arp and Adja Yunkers and pencil sketches of Sarai Ribicoff by William Bailey. Printed material consists of news clippings; a periodical; exhibition announcements; brochures; an offprint of an article by Cleve Gray; and miscellaneous printed material.

Photographs contain black and white photographs of Belle Krasne Ribicoff, Ben and Velida Benn, Richard Krautheimer, and of the jurors attending the Carnegie International exhibition (circa 1954), including Jean Bazaine, Rico Lebrun, Eric Newton, and James Thrall Soby.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into 7 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1945, circa 2010 (Box 1; 1 folder)
- Series 2: Belle Krasne Ribicoff Correspondence, 1942-2007 (Boxes 1, 3; 1.0 linear feet)
- Series 3: The Ribicoff Collection, 1949-1988 (Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)
- Series 4: Friends of Abe Ribicoff Campaign, 1968 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 5: Artwork, circa 1950s-1978 (Box 1, OV 4; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 6: Printed Material, 1948-2000 (Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)
- Series 7: Photographs, 1945-circa 2007 (Boxes 1-2; 0.1 linear feet)

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
- Art critics
- Art, American
- Editors

Types of Materials:

- Christmas cards
- Drafts (documents)
- Illustrated letters
- Photographs
- Postcards
- Prints
- Sketches

Names:

- Albee, Edward, 1928-
- Arp, Jean, 1887-1966
- Ashton, Dore
- Bailey, William, 1930-
- Bazaine, Jean, 1904-2001
- Benn, Ben, 1884-
- Bloom, Claire, 1931-
- Chelimsky, Oscar
- Cornell, Joseph
- D'Hamoncourt, Rene, 1901-1968
- De Vries, Peter, 1910-1993
- Dorazio, Piero, 1927-
- Dorazio, Virginia Dortch
- Ferren, John, 1905-1970
- Fitzsimmons, James, 1919-1985
- Foote, Horton
- Frankenthaler, Helen, 1928-2011
- Geist, Sidney
- Gottlieb, Adolph, 1903-1974
- Graham, John, 1887-1961
- Greenberg, Clement, 1909-1994
- Greene, Balcomb, 1904-1990
- Holty, Carl, 1900-1973
- Kazan, Elia
- Kelly, Ellsworth, 1923-
- Krautheimer, Richard, 1897-
- Lamos, Mark
- Lebrun, Rico, 1900-1964
- Matisse, Pierre, 1900-1989
- Morris, George L. K., 1905-1975

Parsons, Estelle
Pearlstein, Philip, 1924-
Ribicoff, Abraham, 1910-1998
Richardson, Edgar Preston, 1902-1985
Ritchie, Andrew Carnduff
Rosenborg, Ralph M., 1913-1992
Roszak, Theodore, 1907-1981
Saarinen, Eero, 1910-1961
Salpeter, Harry
Shapiro, Karl Jay, 1913-
Skinner, Cornelia Otis, 1901-
Smith, David, 1906-1965
Soby, James Thrall, 1906-1979
Storm King Art Center
Travers, P. L.(Pamela Lyndon), 1899-1996
Valentin, Curt, 1902-1954
Van Doren, Mark, 1894-1972
Wadsworth Atheneum
Yunkers, Adja, 1900-1983

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1945, circa 2010

(Box 1; 1 folder)

This series contains documentation for the Buttonweiser Prize awarded to Belle Krasne Ribicoff by the Art History Department at Vassar College and curriculum vitae.

Box 1, Folder 1 Buttonweiser Prize and Curriculum Vitae, 1945, circa 2010

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Series 2: Belle Krasne Ribicoff Correspondence, 1942-2007

(Boxes 1, 3; 1.0 linear feet)

Correspondence spans over sixty years, with the bulk dating from 1949-2007. Belle Krasne Ribicoff's correspondence, mostly incoming letters, consists of letters, drafts, postcards, and copies of e-mails. Some letters are illustrated; a few contain original artwork. Many letters have attachments, such as invoices, price lists, notes, sketches, printed material, clippings, exhibition catalogues, invitations, and photographs.

Ribicoff was friends with many artists. Their letters to her concern daily activities, work, and the art world. Among the correspondents were Charles Burchfield, Oscar and Eleanor Chelminsky, Joseph Cornell, Piero and Virginia Dorazio, John and Rae Ferren, Helen Frankenthaler, Alberto Giacometti, John Graham, Russell Lynes, Frank Modell, George L.K. Morris, Philip Pearlstein, David Smith, John Von Wicht, Adja Yunkers, among others. There are individual artists' files for Ben Benn, Sidney Geist, Leon Hartley, Arnold Newman, Ralph Rosenborg, and Theodore Roszak. Two items of interest: Carl Holty's letter to J.B. Neumann discusses the use of realism in his work and an artist's statement by Adolph Gottlieb. Marcel Duchamp correspondence consists of two black and white photographs of the artist: a print by Victor Obatz inscribed to Belle Krasne Ribicoff and a print by Naomi Savage, and a reproduction of an artwork.

Ribicoff's friends and colleagues included writers, actors, and other well-known individuals associated with theatre and film, such as Edward Albee, Claire Bloom, Horton Foote, Elia Kazan, Peter De Vries, Mark Lamos, Estelle Parsons, Cornelia Otis Skinner, and P.T. Travers. Also found are letters from art historians, museum directors, gallery dealers, such as Dore Ashton, S. Lane Faison, Balcomb Greene, Rene d'Harnoncourt, Pierre Matisse, Andrew C. Ritchie, Harry Salpeter, Curt Valentin and others. Files also contain letters to Belle Krasne Ribicoff from friends and colleagues relating to her departure from *Art Digest*; letters between Ribicoff and representatives of the Storm King Art Center Museum pertaining to her donation of unpublished letters by David Smith to the museum; and correspondence with the Wadsworth Atheneum. Included is a small file of unidentified correspondents.

Correspondence, including files with individuals where there is substantive correspondence is arranged alphabetically; letters within the folders are filled in chronological order.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 2 | A, 1948-2007, undated |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addams, Charles • Albee, Edward • Ashton, Dore and Adja Yunkers • Arthur Lénars and Cie |
| Box 1, Folder 3 | B-C, 1950-1997 |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloom, Claire • Blumenthal, Charles • Burchfield, Charles • Carnegie Institute • Chelminsky, Oscar and Eleanor • Cisneros, Henry G. • College Art Association • Cornell, Joseph |
| Box 1, Folder 4 | D-E, 1954-1981, undated |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D'Harnoncourt, Rene • De Vries, Peter • Dorazio, Piero and Virginia • Edelman, Maurice |

- Ernst, Jimmy
 - Evergood, Philip
- Box 1, Folder 5 F, 1950-1999
- Ferren, John and Rae
 - Fitzsimmons, James
 - Foote, Horton
 - Frankenthaler, Helen
- Box 1, Folder 6 G, 1950-1990
- Gottlieb, Adolph
 - Glamer, Fritz
 - Graham, John
 - Grasso, Ella
 - Greenberg, Clement
 - Greene, Balcomb
- Box 1, Folder 7 H-L, 1950-1997, undated
- Hagenbech, Marguerite
 - Holmes, Willard
 - Holty, Carl
 - Horowitz, Glenn
 - J. D. Smith Inter-Ocean, Inc.
 - Kappel, Philip
 - Katz, Leslie
 - Kelly, Ellsworth
 - Lamos, Mark
 - Lynes, Russell
- Box 1, Folder 8 M-P, 1942-2004, undated
- Marca-Relli, Conrad
 - Matisse, Pierre
 - Modell, Frank
 - Morris, George, L. K.
 - Nesbit, Alexander
 - Parsons, Estelle
 - Pearlstein, Philip
 - Pittman, Hobson
- Box 1, Folder 9 R-S, 1946-2001, undated
- - Richardson, E. P.
 - Ritchie, Andrew C. (The Museum of Modern Art, New York)
 - Robinson, Frank
 - Rowland, Governor John C.
 - Ryan, Anne
 - Saarinen, Eero
 - Salpeter, Harry
 - Schlesinger, Arthur, Jr.
 - Shapiro, Karl
 - Shikler, Aaron
 - Skinner, Cornelia Otis

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smith, David• Steinberg, Leo
Box 1, Folder 10	T-Y, 1946-1959, undated <ul style="list-style-type: none">•• Toscano, Anonimo• Travers, P. L.• Valentin, Curt• Von Wicht, John• Yunkers, Adja
Box 1, Folder 11	Bazaine, Jean, 1953-1973 (See Box 3)
Box 1, Folder 12-15	Benn, Ben, 1954-1988, undated (4 folders)
Box 1, Folder 16	Duchamp, Marcel, 1951, undated
Box 1, Folder 17-20	Geist, Sidney, 1953-2005 (4 folders)
Box 1, Folder 21-23	Hartley, Leon, 1955-1964, undated (3 folders)
Box 1, Folder 24	Kazan, Elia, 1967
Box 1, Folder 25	Newman, Arnold, 1956-2003
Box 1, Folder 26-28	Rosenborg, Ralph, 1955-1992 (3 folders)
Box 1, Folder 29-30	Roszak, Theodore, 1951-1962 (2 folders)
Box 1, Folder 31	Van Doren, Mark, 1967-1971
Box 1, Folder 32	Holiday Cards, including Original Artwork, 1950-1989
Box 1, Folder 33	Letters relating to Belle Krasne Ribicoff's Departure from <i>Art Digest</i> , 1954
Box 3, Folder 1-11	Bazaine, Jean, 1953-1973 (11 folders)

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Series 3: The Ribicoff Collection, 1949-1988

(Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)

The Ribicoff Collection consists of records maintained by Belle Krasne Ribicoff on the Ribicoffs' personal art collection. Files document works that were sold or donated and the lending of artwork for exhibitions, mainly to university museums, including the Hopkins Center Art Galleries at Dartmouth College, Trinity College, Vassar College, and Williams College.

Materials include: correspondence with individuals at museums, galleries, publishers, and framers; loan agreements, exhibition forms, delivery receipts, and an insurance endorsement; receipts and invoices for frames and photographic prints of artwork; receipts for purchase of artwork; and consignment receipt, sales confirmation notice, post sales advice, and remittance advices for sale of artwork; and photographs of artwork.

Box 1, Folder 38-39	Correspondence, 1954-1982 (2 folders)
Box 1, Folder 40	Loan Agreements, Exhibition Forms, Receipts, and Insurance Endorsement, 1964
Box 1, Folder 41	Receipts and Invoices for Frames and Photographic Prints of Artwork, 1955-1977, undated
Box 1, Folder 42	Receipts for Purchase of Artwork, 1949-1951, undated
Box 1, Folder 43	Consignment Receipt, Sales Confirmation Notice, Post Sales Advice, and Remittance Advices for Sale of Artwork, 1988
Box 1, Folder 44	Lists, 1959-1991, undated
Box 1, Folder 45	Various Printed Materials, 1971-1986, undated
Box 1, Folder 46-47	Photographs of Artwork, 1988, undated (2 folders)

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Series 4: Friends of Abe Ribicoff Campaign, 1968

(Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)

Files include petition letters for Abraham Ribicoff's reelection to the United States Senate for the State of Connecticut and a clipping of the campaign advertisement sponsored by the Friends of Abe Ribicoff that appeared in the *New York Times* featuring the list of signatories to the petition.

Scattered notes include individuals who had expressed interest in supporting Ribicoff's nomination.

Box 1, Folder 48 Letters in Support of Abe Ribicoff's Reelection to the United States Senate, 1968

Box 1, Folder 49 Notes, Loose Envelopes, and Clipping, 1968

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Series 5: Artwork, circa 1950s-1978,*(Boxes 1, OV 4; 0.1 linear feet)*

Artwork includes a color print of a figure by Jean Arp and cover art for *Art Digest* by Adja Yunkers. There are two pencil sketches of Sarai Ribicoff by William Bailey.

Box 1, Folder 50	Print by Jean Arp, undated
Box 1, Folder 51	Cover Art for <i>Art Digest</i> by Adja Yunkers, circa 1950s <i>(Oversized material housed in Box 2)</i>
Box 1, Folder 52	Miscellaneous Sketch, undated
Box 1, Folder 53	Sketches of Sarai Ribicoff by William Bailey, 1978 <i>(See OV 4)</i>
Box 2, Folder	Oversized Cover Art by Adja Yunkers, circa 1950s <i>(Oversized material from Box 1, Folder 51)</i>
Box OV 4, Folder	Oversized Sketches of Sarai Ribicoff by William Bailey, 1978

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Series 6: Printed Material, 1948-2000

(Box 1; 0.1 linear feet)

Printed material houses clippings, mostly reviews of art exhibitions, announcements, exhibition catalogues, and an offprint of an article by Cleve Gray. Included are brochures for the elementary arts education program, Project CREATE directed by Belle Krasne Ribicoff.

Materials are arranged in chronological order.

Box 1, Folder 54	Clippings, 1979-2000, undated
Box 1, Folder 55	Announcements, 1967-1991, 2004
Box 1, Folder 56	Exhibition Catalogues, 1948-1954, 1979
Box 1, Folder 57	Brochures, circa 1969
Box 1, Folder 58	Offprint, <i>Narcissus in Chaos, Contemporary American Art</i> by Cleve Gray, 1959
Box 1, Folder 59	Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1951, 2000-2004, undated

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Series 7: Photographs, 1945-circa 2007

(Boxes, 1-2; 0.1 linear feet)

This series contains black and white prints of Belle Krasne Ribicoff, Ben and Velida Benn, Richard Krautheimer and the Carnegie International jury featuring Jean Bazaine, Rico Lebrun, Eric Newton, and James Thrall Soby.

Also included are black and white snapshots of Belle Krasne Ribicoff at Vassar College and color snapshots of Ribicoff with unidentified colleagues and friends.

Box 1, Folder 60	Belle Krasne Ribicoff, 1945, undated
Box 1, Folder 61	Belle Krasne Ribicoff with Colleagues and Friends, 1940s-circa 2007
Box 1, Folder 62	Ben and Velida Benn and Richard Krautheimer, 1963, undated
Box 1, Folder 63-64	Carnegie International Jury, circa 1954 <i>(2 folders; Oversized material housed in Box 2)</i>
Box 2, Folder	Carnegie International Jury, circa 1954 <i>(Oversized material from Box 1, Folder 63)</i>

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