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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives of American Art
Title: Jack Levine papers
Identifier: AAA.levijack
Date: 1923-1999
Extent: 3.2 Linear feet
Creator: Levine, Jack, 1915-2010
Language: English
Summary: The papers of New York social realist painter and printmaker Jack Levine date from 1923-1999, and measure 3.2 linear feet. Levine’s career is documented through biographical material, scattered letters, notes and a speech, writings, student drawings, three scrapbooks, printed material and nearly one linear foot of photographs of Levine, his family, and his colleagues.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Available Formats
The bulk of the collection was digitized in 2015 and is available on the Archives of American Art's website.

Materials which have not been scanned include some photographs with copyright restrictions; some photos of works of art; duplicates; blank versos of photographs; exhibition catalogs of other artists; and some publications. In some cases exhibition catalogs and other publications have had their covers, title pages, and relevant pages scanned.

Processing Information
Accessions were minimally processed upon receipt and portions were microfilmed on reels 4873-4874. Previously microfilmed and unmicrofilmed portions were merged, arranged, and described by Jean Fitzgerald in August 2008.

The collection was prepared for digitization, and the finding aid was updated, by Stephanie Ashley in June 2014 with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation
Restrictions
Use of original papers requires an appointment and limited to the Washington, D.C. Reference Center.

Conditions Governing Use
The Jack Levine 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 / Historical
Jack Levine (1915-2010) was born in Boston, Massachusetts and worked as painter and printmaker primarily in New York City. Levine was one of the leading painters and advocates of the Social Realism School of the late 1930s.

Jack Levine was the youngest of the eight children of Lithuanian Jewish parents, Mary Grinker and Samuel Levine. After the family moved from the South End of Boston to Roxbury in 1923, Levine began to study drawing under Harold Zimmerman at the School of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. By 1929, Levine was studying painting under Denman Ross of the Fogg Art Museum.

From 1935-1940, Levine received U.S. government support from the federal Works Progress Administration. His first exhibition of paintings in New York City was at the Museum of Modern Art. In 1937, he painted The Feast of Pure Reason, a satire of Boston political power. Together with Ben Shahn, Levine became a leading exponent of the Social Realism School of the late 1930s. His first one-man show was held at the Downtown Gallery in New York City in 1938.

After serving in the U.S. Army during World War II, Levine was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1945, and a grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters the following year. Also in 1946, Levine married painter Ruth Gikow and moved to New York City. Between 1950 and 1951, he was a Fulbright Fellow working in Rome where he was inspired by Old Master paintings. In the 1960s Levine's interest in printmaking intensified and he was instructed in creating intaglio prints by Emiliano Sorini, and was introduced to Abe Lublin who was associated with the New York Graphic Society.

Levine taught at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the American Art School in New York, and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. His work is in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Fogg Art Museum. He was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters from 1956 on.

The D.C. Moore Gallery in New York City currently represents the Estate of Jack Levine.

Scope and Contents
The papers of New York social realist painter and printmaker Jack Levine date from 1923-1999, and measure 3.2 linear feet. Levine's career is documented through biographical material, scattered letters, notes and a speech, writings, student drawings, three scrapbooks, printed material and nearly one linear foot of photographs of Levine, his family, and his colleagues.
Found within the papers are two driver's licenses and several biographical accounts, and scattered letters from colleagues including one each from John Taylor Arms, Hyman Bloom, Leonard Bocour, René d'Harnoncourt, Lloyd Goodrich, Jacob Lawrence, and Homer Saint-Gaudens discussing various art-related events. There is only one carbon copy of a letter written by Levine. The correspondence includes oversized photographs of the members of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Additional photographs of the members are found in the Photograph series.

Notes and writings are primarily typescripts about Jack Levine written by others. There is also a transcript of one speech, "Jack Levine Speaks Regarding the Donation of 108 of his Drawings to the Archives" delivered by Levine at the Fogg Art Museum.

Artwork consists entirely of Levine's student drawings including anatomical studies, neighborhood genre scenes, copies of Old Masters, and a series of images of symphony musicians. Some of the drawings display themes that are reflected in his later paintings.

Three scrapbooks contain clippings that document Levine's career and reflect his political interests. Additional printed material consists of a comprehensive collection of clippings and exhibition announcements and catalogs. There is also an announcement for a lecture by Levine, press releases, calendars of events, reproductions of artwork, programs, brochures including one for Facing East, a portfolio of Levine's prints, and three books.

Photographs include numerous photographs of Levine throughout his artistic career, including images of his wife, painter Ruth Gikow, their daughter Susanna, and colleagues including Hyman Bloom, Leonard Bocour, Alexander Dobkin, Joachim Probst, and Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenkov. Especially notable is a series of photographs of Levine printmaking with Emiliano Sorini and Ruth Gikow.

There are photographs of Levine serving on art juries and panels with Eleanor Coen, Joseph Hirsch, Gabor Peterdi, Studs Terkel, and Max Weber, and attending events with Lawrence Fleischman, Betty Friedan, Edith Halpert, Mauricio Lasansky, Gypsy Rose Lee, Pope Paul VI, and Raphael Soyer. A small album contains photographs of Levine and various buildings in Boston. There are also photographs of miscellaneous exhibition installations including Levine's retrospective at the Jewish Museum, and of artwork by Levine and others.

Group photographs of the members of the American Academy of Arts and Letters are found here, and include Will Barnet, Paul Cadmus, Chuck Close, David Levine, George Tooker, and John Updike. Additional group photographs of the members that were originally enclosed with letters are found in the correspondence series.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 7 series:

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1953-1955 (Box 1; 1 folder)
- Series 2: Letters, 1946-1996 (Boxes 1, 5; 12 folders)
- Series 3: Notes and Writings, 1961-1974 (Box 1; 6 folders)
- Series 4: Artwork, 1923-1931 (Boxes 1, 5, OV 6; 11 folders)
- Series 5: Scrapbooks, 1936-1962 (Boxes 1, 5; 16 folders)
- Series 6: Printed Material, 1938-1999 (Boxes 1-3, 5, OV 6; 1.9 linear feet)
- Series 7: Photographs, 1940-1998 (Boxes 3-5, OV 6; 52 folders)
Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:
- Jewish artists
- Painters -- Massachusetts -- Boston
- Painters -- New York (State) -- New York
- Painting, American
- Painting, Modern -- 20th century -- United States
- Printmakers -- New York (State) -- New York
- Social realism

Types of Materials:
- Drawings
- Photographs
- Scrapbooks
- Student drawings

Names:
- American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters
- Arms, John Taylor, 1887-1953
- Barnet, Will, 1911-2012
- Bloom, Hyman, 1913-
- Bocour, Leonard, 1910-1993
- Cadmus, Paul, 1904-1999
- Close, Chuck, 1940-
- Coen, Eleanor, 1916-
- D'Harnoncourt, Rene, 1901-1968
- Dobkin, Alexander, 1908-
- Fleischman, Lawrence A. (Lawrence Arthur), 1925-1997
- Friedan, Betty
- Gikow, Ruth, 1915-1982
- Goodrich, Lloyd, 1897-1987
- Halpert, Edith Gregor, 1900-1970
- Jewish Museum (New York, N.Y.)
- Lasansky, Mauricio, 1914-
- Lawrence, Jacob, 1917-2000
- Lee, Gypsy Rose, 1914-1970
- Levine, David, 1926-2009
- Paul VI, Pope, 1897-1978
- Peterdi, Gabor
- Probst, Joachim
- Saint-Gaudens, Homer, b. 1880
- Simon, Sidney, 1917-
- Sorini, Emiliano
- Soyer, Raphael, 1899-1987
- Terkel, Studs, 1912-2008
- Tooker, George
- Updike, John
- Weber, Max, 1881-1961
Yevtushenko, Yevgeny Aleksandrovich, 1933-
Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1953-1955

1 Folder (Box 1)
Biographical material consists of two driver's licenses and several brief biographical accounts.
Series is scanned in entirety.

Box 1, Folder 1 Biographical Material, 1953-1955, undated
Image(s)
Series 2: Letters, 1946-1996

12 Folders (Boxes 1 and 5)

Scattered letters are primarily from colleagues including John Taylor Arms, Hyman Bloom, Leonard Bocour, René d'Harnoncourt, Lloyd Goodrich, Jacob Lawrence, and Homer Saint-Gaudens.

Series is scanned in entirety.

Box 1, Folder 2  Letters, undated
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 3  Letters, 1946-1958
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 4  Letters, 1960
Image(s)
Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 5  Letters, 1965-1968
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 6  Letters, 1970-1974
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 7  Letters, 1975-1977
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 8  Letters, 1978-1979
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 9  Letters, 1980-1985
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 10 Letters, 1990
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 11 Letters, 1992-1994
Image(s)
Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 1

Box 1, Folder 12 Letters, 1996
Image(s)
Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 1

Box 5, Folder 1 Oversized Letters scanned with Box 1, Folder 4
Series 3: Notes and Writings, 1961-1974

6 Folders (Box 1)

Notes and writings primarily consist of typescript theses about Jack Levine. There is also a transcript of a speech given by Levine at the Fogg Art Museum, and miscellaneous notes and writings.

Series is scanned in entirety.

Box 1, Folder 13  Miscellaneous, 1961-1962, undated
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 14  Typescript of Speech at Fogg Art Museum: "Jack Levine Speaks Regarding the Donation of 108 of his Drawings to the Archives," undated
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 15  Thesis Typescript "The WPA Paintings of Jack Levine" by Henry Arnold Freedman, 1967
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 16  Typescript "Jack Levine and the Aesthetics of Discontent" by Aaron Miller, 1967
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 17  Thesis Typescript "Jack Levine: Career of an American Artist" by Patricia Allen Robbins, 1969
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 18  Dissertation Typescript "Jack Levine: Painter and Protester" by Henry Freedman, 1974
Image(s)
**Series 4: Artwork, 1923-1931**

*11 Folders (Boxes 1, 5, OV 6)*

Artwork consists of Levine’s student drawings including anatomical studies, neighborhood genre scenes, and copies of Old Masters.

Series is scanned in entirety.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 19</th>
<th>Drawings, undated</th>
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<th>Drawings, 1923</th>
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<th>Drawings, 1924</th>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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<th>Box 1, Folder 23</th>
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<th>Box 1, Folder 24</th>
<th>Drawings, 1928-1929</th>
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<th>Box 1, Folder 27</th>
<th>Drawings of Symphony Musicians, 1930-1931</th>
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<td>Image(s)</td>
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| Box 5, Folder 2  | Oversized Drawings scanned with Box 1, Folder 19 |

| Box 5, Folder 2  | Oversized Drawings scanned with Box 1, Folder 20 |
Box 5, Folder 2  Oversized Drawings scanned with Box 1, Folder 22
Box 5, Folder 2  Oversized Drawings scanned with Box 1, Folder 23
Box 5, Folder 2  Oversized Drawings scanned with Box 1, Folder 24
Box 5, Folder 3  Oversized Drawings scanned with Box 1, Folder 25
Box 5, Folder 3  Oversized Drawings scanned with Box 1, Folder 26
Box 5, Folder 3  Oversized Drawings of Symphony Musicians scanned with Box 1, Folder 27
Box OV 6  Oversized Drawing scanned with Box 1, Folder 24

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Series 5: Scrapbooks, 1936-1962

16 Folders (Boxes 1, 5)

Three scrapbooks include clippings that document Levine’s career and reflect his political interests, as well as photographs of Levine and photographs of artwork, exhibitions and announcements.

Scrapbooks have been scanned in entirety.

Box 1, Folder 28-33 Scrapbook 1, 1936-1949

- Image(s)
- Image(s)
- Image(s)
- Image(s)
- Image(s)
- Image(s)
- Image(s)

Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 4

Box 1, Folder 34-38 Scrapbook 2, 1950-1960

- Image(s)
- Image(s)
- Image(s)
- Image(s)
- Image(s)
- Image(s)

Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 5

Box 1, Folder 39-40 Scrapbook 3, 1960-1962

- Image(s)
- Image(s)

Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 6

Box 5, Folder 4 Oversized Pages from Scrapbook 1 scanned with Box 1, Folders 28-33

Box 5, Folder 5 Oversized Pages from Scrapbook 2 scanned with Box 1, Folders 34-38

Box 5, Folder 6 Oversized Pages from Scrapbook 3 scanned with Box 1, Folders 39-40

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Series 6: Printed Material, 1938-1999

1.9 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3, 5)

Printed material includes clippings, primarily of articles about Levine, exhibition announcements and catalogs, an announcement for a lecture by Levine, press releases, calendars of events, reproductions of artwork, programs, brochures, and books.

The bulk of this series has been scanned. For most publications and exhibition catalogs of artists other than Levine, only the covers, title pages, and relevant pages have been scanned.

Box 1, Folder 41  Clippings, undated  
Image(s)  
Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 7

Box 1, Folder 42  Clippings, 1938-1941  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 43  Clippings, 1943-1945  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 44  Clippings, 1946  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 45-46  Clippings, 1947  
Image(s)  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 47  Clippings, 1948-1949  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 48  Clippings, 1950-1953  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 49  Clippings, 1954-1955  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 50  Clippings, 1956  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 51  Clippings, 1957-1958  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 52  Clippings, 1959  
Image(s)

Box 1, Folder 53  Clippings, 1960 January-May
Box 1, Folder 54  Clippings, 1960 July
Box 1, Folder 55  Clippings, 1990 September-December
Box 1, Folder 56  Clippings, 1961
Box 1, Folder 57  Clippings, 1962
Box 1, Folder 58  Clippings, 1963
Box 1, Folder 59-60  Clippings, 1964
Box 1, Folder 61  Clippings, 1965
Box 1, Folder 62  Clippings, 1966
Box 1, Folder 63  Clippings, 1967
Box 1, Folder 64-66  Clippings, 1968
Box 1, Folder 67-68  Clippings, 1969
Box 1, Folder 69  Clippings, 1970
Box 1, Folder 70  Clippings, 1971-1972
Box 1, Folder 71  Clippings, 1972
Box 1, Folder 72 Clippings, 1973-1976
Box 1, Folder 73 Clippings, 1977
Box 1, Folder 74 Clippings, 1978
Box 1, Folder 75-76 Clippings, 1979
Box 2, Folder 1 Clippings, 1980-1985
Box 2, Folder 2-3 Clippings, 1986
Box 2, Folder 4-5 Clippings, 1987
Box 2, Folder 6 Clippings, 1988-1989
Box 2, Folder 7 Clippings, 1990-1994
Box 2, Folder 8 Clippings, 1995-1996
Box 2, Folder 9 Clippings, 1997-1998
Box 2, Folder 10 Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, undated
Box 2, Folder 11 Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1939
Box 2, Folder 12 Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1945

Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 7
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<th>Description</th>
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<td>Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1947</td>
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<td>14-15</td>
<td>Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1948</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1949</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td>Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1950</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1951-1952</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-22</td>
<td>Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1955</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>25-26</td>
<td>Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1959</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1962</td>
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<td>29-30</td>
<td>Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1963</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-32</td>
<td>Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1964</td>
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Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 33  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1965
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 34  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1966
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 35-36  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1967
Image(s)
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 37-38  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1968
Image(s)
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 39  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1969
Image(s)

Box 2, Folder 40  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1972
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 1  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1977-1979
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 2  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1983-1987
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 3  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1990-1992
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 4  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1993
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 5  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1995-1998
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 6  Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs for Others, 1960-1980
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 7  Lecture Announcement, 1962
Image(s)
Oversized material housed in OV 6

Box 3, Folder 8  Press Releases, 1960-1979
Box 3, Folder 9  Calendars of Events, 1968-1999

Box 3, Folder 10  Reproductions of Artwork, undated

Box 3, Folder 11  Programs, 1966-1999

Box 3, Folder 12  Brochures for *Facing East* Portfolio of Levine's Prints, 1972

Box 3, Folder 13-14  Miscellaneous Brochures, 1959-1972, undated

Box 3, Folder 15  Book *Americans 1942* Published by the Museum of Modern Art, 1942

Box 3, Folder 16  Book *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art*, 1942

Box 3, Folder 17  Book *The Jew: Quest 2*, 1964

Box 5, Folder 7  Oversized Clippings scanned with Box 1, Folder 41

Box 5, Folder 7  Oversized Clippings scanned with Box 2, Folder 3

Box 5, Folder 8  Oversized Reproductions of Artwork scanned with Box 3, Folder 10

Box 5, Folder 8  Oversized Brochure for *Facing East* Portfolio of Levine's Prints scanned with Box 3, Folder 12

Box OV 6  Oversized Announcement for Lecture by Levine scanned with Box 3, Folder 7

*Return to Table of Contents*
Series 7: Photographs, 1940-1998

52 Folders (Boxes 3-5, OV 6)

Photographs are of Levine, his wife Ruth Gikow, their daughter Susanna, and colleagues and friends including Hyman Bloom, Leonard Bocour, Eleanor Coen, Alexander Dobkin, Lawrence Fleischman, Betty Friedan, Edith Halpert, Joseph Hirsch, Mauricio Lasansky, Gypsy Rose Lee, Gabor Peterdi, Pope Paul VI, Joachim Probst, Sidney Simon, Raphael Soyer, Studs Terkel, John Updike, and Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko. There is a series of photographs of Levine printmaking with Emiliano Sorini and Ruth Gikow. Photographs of members of the American Academy of Arts and Letters include Will Barnet, Paul Cadmus, Chuck Close, David Levine, and George Tooker. Additional group photographs of the members that were originally enclosed with letters are found in the correspondence series. An album contains photographs of Levine and various buildings in Boston. There are also photographs of exhibition installations and of artwork by Levine and others.

The bulk of this series has been scanned. Items which have not been scanned include photographs with copyright restrictions; blank versos of photos; some photos of works of art; and duplicates.

Box 3, Folder 18
Photographs of Jack Levine, circa 1940-1947, undated
Image(s)
Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 9

Box 3, Folder 19
Photographs of Jack Levine, circa 1948-1949, undated
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 20
Photographs of Jack Levine, circa 1950-1952, undated
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 21
Photographs of Jack Levine, circa 1953
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 22
Photographs of Jack Levine, circa 1958
Image(s)
Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 9

Box 3, Folder 23
Photographs of Jack Levine, circa 1959
Image(s)

Box 3, Folder 24
Photographs of Jack Levine, circa 1960-1967
Image(s)
Oversized material housed in Box 5, Folder 9

Box 4, Folder 1
Photographs of Jack Levine, 1968-1969
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 2
Photographs of Jack Levine, 1971
Image(s)

Box 4, Folder 3
Photographs of Jack Levine, circa 1972-1979
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 4, Folder 4</th>
<th>Photographs of Jack Levine, 1982</th>
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<td>Box 4, Folder 7</td>
<td>Photograph Album, circa 1986</td>
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<td>Box 4, Folder 8-9</td>
<td>Photographs of Family Members, 1955-1982, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 10</td>
<td>Photographs of Ruth Gikow, circa 1940-1966</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 4</td>
<td>Photographs with Colleagues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 11</td>
<td>Hyman Bloom and Stella Bloom, circa 1970s</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 12</td>
<td>Alexander Dobkin, circa 1940s</td>
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<td>Box 4, Folder 13</td>
<td>Joachim Probst, 1966</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 14-17</td>
<td>Levine Printmaking with Emiliano Sorini, circa 1960s</td>
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<td>Box 4, Folder 18</td>
<td>Yevgeny Yevtushenko, undated</td>
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<td>Box 4, Folder 19</td>
<td>Levine on a Panel with Studs Turkel, Max Kahn, and Eleanor Coen, circa 1980s</td>
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<td>Box 4, Folder 20</td>
<td>Levine on Miscellaneous Art Juries, circa 1950s-circa 1960s</td>
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<th>Box 4, Folder 21</th>
<th>Seminar <em>The Influence of Spiritual Inspiration in American Art</em> Sponsored by the Vatican Museums and the Smithsonian Institution, 1977</th>
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<th>Filming of <em>Jack Levine: Feast of Pure Reason</em> by David Sutherland, 1985</th>
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