



# Smithsonian

## *Archives of American Art*

### A Finding Aid to the Gerda Meyer Bernstein Papers, 1973-2015, in the Archives of American Art

Jayna M. Josefson

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

2022/11/30

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## Collection Overview

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Repository:</b> | Archives of American Art  |
| <b>Title:</b>      | Gerda Meyer Bernstein papers  |
| <b>Date:</b>       | 1973-2015   |
| <b>Identifier:</b> | AAA.meyegerd  |
| <b>Creator:</b>    | Meyer Bernstein, Gerda (1923-2024)  |
| <b>Extent:</b>     | 1.2 Linear feet   |
| <b>Language:</b>   | English .   |
| <b>Summary:</b>    | The papers of installation artist Gerda Meyer Bernstein measure 1.2 linear feet and date from 1973 to 2015. Included are biographical materials, correspondence, ten notebooks, scattered general project files, printed material, digital recordings of interviews, and a video recording concerning Meyer Bernstein's installation <i>Chicago Crossings: Bridges and Boundaries</i> . |

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 2015 by Gerda Meyer Bernstein.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2022 with support from the Smithsonian American Women's History Initiative.

### Preferred Citation

Gerda Meyer Bernstein papers, 1973-2015. 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

Gerda Meyer Bernstein (1923-2024) was a Chicago, Illinois installation artist whose works comment on global issues and crises and include a number of installations dedicated to Holocaust remembrance. She used non-traditional materials including discarded objects.

Born in Westphalia, Meyer Bernstein escaped Nazi Germany on one of the last Kindertransports of 1940. She studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the early 1950s and worked there as a teaching assistant before graduating with an M.F.A. in 1978. Meyer Bernstein was a founding member of the Artists in Residence Gallery and her work has been shown in the Art Institute's *Chicago & Vicinity* annual exhibition three times.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of installation artist Gerda Meyer Bernstein measure 1.2 linear feet and date from 1973 to 2015. Included are biographical materials, correspondence, ten notebooks, scattered general project files, printed material, digital recordings of interviews, and a video recording concerning Meyer Bernstein's installation *Chicago Crossings: Bridges and Boundaries*.

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## Arrangement

Due to the small size of this collection the papers are 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:

Installations (Art)  
Women artists

Types of Materials:

Sound recordings  
Video recordings

Occupations:

Installation artists -- Illinois -- Chicago

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Gerda Meyer Bernstein Papers, 1973-2015

#### 1.2 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Biographical materials consist of a resume and artist statements on Meyer Bernstein's works of art. Correspondence is scattered and largely concerns the proposal and implementation of artworks. Also found are a video recording of the gallery installation of *Chicago Crossings: Bridges and Boundaries*, and digital recordings of interviews with NPR and SAIC.

The bulk of the collection consists of ten notebooks which contain Meyer Bernstein's working notes, research, and ideas for projects. They are labeled with broad annotations of the subjects contained. Project files contain installation directions, correspondence, notes, and photographs. Printed material consists of exhibition announcements and catalogs. Also found are compiled reviews of Meyer Bernstein's various installations and gallery exhibitions.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 1  | Biographical Material, 1996-2015   |
| Box 1, Folder 2  | Chicago Crossing: Bridges and Boundaries, circa 2000<br>1 Videocassettes (VHS) |
| Box 1, Folder 3  | Correspondence, 1979-2014  |
| Box 1, Folder 4  | Interviews, circa 2010<br>2 Sound discs (CD)                                   |
| Box 1, Folder 5  | Notebook 1, circa 1980   |
| Box 1, Folder 6  | Notebook 2, 1982-1984  |
| Box 1, Folder 7  | Notebook 3, 1984-1986  |
| Box 1, Folder 8  | Notebook 4, circa 1987   |
| Box 1, Folder 9  | Notebook 5, 1987-1988  |
| Box 1, Folder 10 | Notebook 6, 1989   |
| Box 1, Folder 11 | Notebook 7, 1992-1993  |
| Box 1, Folder 12 | Notebook 8, 1992-1993  |
| Box 1, Folder 13 | Notebook 9, 1994-1995  |
| Box 1, Folder 14 | Notebook 10, 1995-1996   |

Box 1, Folder 15-17      Project Files, 1992-2010

Box 2, Folder 1-3      Printed Material, 1984-2014

Box 2, Folder 4      Reviews, 1973-2015

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