



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

## A Finding Aid to the Ruth Vollmer Papers, circa 1940-1980, 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

2020/01/29

Archives of American Art  
750 9th Street, NW  
Victor Building, Suite 2200  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	1
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Names and Subjects .....	2
Container Listing .....	3
Series 1: Ruth Vollmer Papers, circa 1940-1980.....	3

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Ruth Vollmer papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1940-1980
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.vollruth
<b>Creator:</b>	Vollmer, Ruth, 1903-1982
<b>Extent:</b>	2.5 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of sculptor Ruth Vollmer measure 2.5 linear feet and date from circa 1940 to 1980. Found are biographical materials, correspondence, writings and notes, personal business records, printed material, photographic material including photos of Vollmer and her artwork, and a sketch for a sculpture.

---

## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Ruth Vollmer lent the majority of items on reels 55-56 for microfilming in 1971 and donated the photographs of works of art. Unmicrofilmed material was donated by the Vollmer Estate in 1981, through Thomas N. McCarter, executor.

### Separated Materials

Reels 55-56 contain correspondence, catalogs, clippings, exhibition announcements, and photographs of works of art. All material except photographs were returned to the lender, Ruth Vollmer, after microfilming in 1971. This material is not described in the collection container inventory.

### Available Formats

Material lent for microfilming is available on 35mm microfilm reels 55-56 at the Archives of American Art offices and through interlibrary loan.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Jayna Josefson in 2021.

### Preferred Citation

Ruth Vollmer papers, circa 1940-1980. 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

Ruth Vollmer (1903-1982) was a German born sculptor based in New York City, New York. She was known for working with metal wire and mesh to create minimalist sculptures.

Ruth Vollmer was born Ruth Landshoff in Berlin, Germany, in 1903, to Jewish parents who were musicians and encouraged her artistic talents. Vollmer moved to New York City in 1935 with her husband, Hermann Vollmer, who was a pediatrician.

Vollmer began decorating windows for department stores and shops such as Bonwit Teller and Tiffany and Co., integrating small metal pieces into her designs. Later in her career, Vollmer took large commissions and taught classes at the Fieldston School's Children's Art Center.

Vollmer was acquainted with many important figures in the Abstract Expressionist movement and was an avid collector of art. She died in 1982.

---

## Scope and Contents

The papers of sculptor Ruth Vollmer measure 2.5 linear feet and date from circa 1940 to 1980. Found are biographical materials, correspondence, writings and notes, personal business records, printed material, photographic material including photos of Vollmer and her artwork, and a sketch for a sculpture.

---

## 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:

- German American artists
- Jewish artists
- Women artists
- Women sculptors

### Types of Materials:

- Drawings

### Occupations:

- Sculptors -- New York (State) -- New York

---

## Container Listing

### Series 1: Ruth Vollmer Papers, circa 1940-1980

#### 2.5 Linear feet (Boxes 1-3, OV 4)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material includes resumes, CVs, and eight calendars from the 1970s. Correspondence is largely with family, colleagues, and friends and shows Vollmer's deep connections to the New York City art world in the mid-20th century. Notable correspondents include Carl Andre, Betty Parsons Gallery, Margarete Bieber, Chryssa, Kate Emil, Jack Gordon, Eva Hesse, Gabe Kohn, Gyorgy Kepes, Charles Lambert, Sol Lewitt, Herbert Lust, Dorothy Miller, Yoko Ono, Herman Vollmer, Peg Weiss, and Rita Ziprokowksi.

Writings are primarily by Vollmer and include lecture notes, notebooks, and scattered writings on art. Writings by others are by B. H. Friedman or are unsigned.

Pricelists, travel receipts and expenses, loan records, and sales records are found within personal business records. Printed material includes exhibition announcements and catalogs and clippings. Photographic materials form the bulk of the collection and include portraits of Vollmer, personal snapshots, photos of her exhibitions and works of art, slides, and negatives.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Material, 1960s
Box 1, Folder 2-4	Calendars, 1971-1979
Box 1, Folder 5	Correspondence, 1949-1959
Box 1, Folder 6	Correspondence, 1960-1965
Box 1, Folder 7	Correspondence, 1966-1969
Box 1, Folder 8	Correspondence, 1970-1973
Box 1, Folder 9	Correspondence, 1974-1975
Box 1, Folder 10	Correspondence, 1976-1980
Box 1, Folder 11	Correspondence, circa 1950-circa 1970
Box 1, Folder 12-16	Writings and Notes, circa 1950s-1960s
Box 1, Folder 17-20	Personal Business Records, 1960s-1975
Box 1, Folder 21-22	Printed Material, 1955-1979
Box 2, Folder 1-3	Printed Material, 1955-1979
Box 2, Folder 4	Sketch, Stainless Steel Sculpture, 1976

Box 2, Folder 5	Photographs, of Ruth Vollmer, circa 1940-1970s
Box 2, Folder 6-16	Photographs, Works of Art, circa 1950-1970s
Oversize 4	Photographs, Works of Art, Oversized, circa 1950-1970s
Box 2, Folder 17-20	Slides, 1960s
Box 3, Folder 1-3	Slides, 1960s
Box 3, Folder 4-6	Negatives, 1950s-1970s

*[Return to Table of Contents](#)*