



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Nina Yankowitz Papers,
circa 1950-2017, in the Archives of American Art

Hilary Price

2018/10/31

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
Scope and Contents.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects	3
Container Listing	4
Series 1: Biographical Material, 1957-2017.....	4
Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1970-2017.....	5
Series 3: Writings, circa 1968-2012.....	7
Series 4: Reproductions of Illustrated Notebooks, circa 1967-2000.....	8
Series 5: Project Files, 1970-2014.....	9
Series 6: Exhibition Files, 1972-circa 2009.....	11
Series 7: Printed Material, 1969-2016.....	12
Series 8: Photographic Material, circa 1950-2010.....	13

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Nina Yankowitz papers
Identifier:	AAA.yanknina
Date:	circa 1950-2017
Extent:	5.6 Linear feet 0.689 Gigabytes
Creator:	Yankowitz, Nina
Language:	English
Summary:	<p>The papers of feminist and new media artist, Nina Yankowitz measure 5.6 linear feet and 0.698 GB, and date from circa 1950-2017. Included in the collection is a small amount of biographical material; letters and postcards from artist colleagues and friends; writings by Yankowitz and others; project files pertaining to artwork, proposals, and Yankowitz's involvement in the Heresies Collective; a few exhibition files; printed material including booklets, catalogs, poetry chapbooks, and announcements, generated mostly by Yankowitz and her circle of Feminist, Minimalist, and New Media artists; as well as photographs of Yankowitz and documentation of her artwork through thousands of photographs and slides. The collection also contains a small amount of born-digital material including video and sound recordings pertaining to projects, and spreadsheets relating to an exhibition. Notable correspondents include Ross Bleckner, Joyce Kozloff, Frances Lewis, Sol LeWitt, Ree Morton, Miriam Shapiro, Peter Schjeldahl, Blythe Sonfist, Marjorie Strider, Robin Tewes, and Susan Yankowitz.</p>

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated to the Archives of American Art in 2018 by Nina Yankowitz.

Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Nina Yankowitz conducted by Christopher Lyon in 2018.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Hilary Price in 2018.

Preferred Citation

Nina Yankowitz papers, circa 1950-2017. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Contact Reference Services for more information. Use of archival audiovisual recordings and born-digital records with no duplicate access copy requires advance notice.

Conditions Governing Use

The donor has retained all intellectual property rights, including copyright, that he or she may own.

Biographical / Historical

Nina Yankowitz (1946-) is a feminist and new media artist in New York, New York. Born in New Jersey, Yankowitz attended Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from 1964-1967, and completed her graduate studies at the School of Visual Arts in New York City in 1969. She began exhibiting her work in galleries in New York in the late 1960s, first at Kornblee Gallery and later at Deson-Zaks Gallery, Rosa Esman Gallery, and Stefanotti Gallery. In 1972 she was a resident at the MacDowell Colony. Yankowitz has worked in a variety of media over the decades including painting, sculpture, mosaic, installation, sound, and new media. She has completed numerous public and private commissions, including a sculpture for Central Park in 1969 and a tile mosaic for New York's Arts in Transit program in 1989. Yankowitz was a member of the Heresies Collective, a group of feminist political artists founded in 1976. She has held teaching positions at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and her alma mater, the School of Visual Arts. Her husband, architect Barry Holden, is a frequent collaborator, especially for public works projects.

Scope and Contents

The papers of feminist and new media artist, Nina Yankowitz measure 5.6 linear feet and 0.698 GB, and date from circa 1950-2017. Included in the collection is a small amount of biographical material; letters and postcards from artist colleagues and friends; writings by Yankowitz and others; project files pertaining to artwork, proposals, and Yankowitz's involvement in the Heresies Collective; a few exhibition files; printed material including booklets, catalogs, poetry chapbooks, and announcements, generated mostly by Yankowitz and her circle of Feminist, Minimalist, and New Media artists; as well as photographs of Yankowitz and documentation of her artwork through thousands of photographs and slides. The collection also contains a small amount of born-digital material including video and sound recordings pertaining to projects, and spreadsheets relating to an exhibition. Notable correspondents include Ross Bleckner, Joyce Kozloff, Frances Lewis, Sol LeWitt, Ree Morton, Miriam Shapiro, Peter Schjeldahl, Blythe Sonfist, Marjorie Strider, Robin Tewes, and Susan Yankowitz.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as eight series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1957-2017 (Box 1; 5 folders)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1970-2012 (Box 1; 0.6 linear feet)
- Series 3: Writings, circa 1968-2012 (Box 1; 0.4 linear feet)

- Series 4: Reproductions of Illustrated Notebooks, circa 1967-2000 (Box 2; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 5: Project Files, 1970-2014 (Box 2, OV 7, 0.7 linear feet; ER01-ER03, 0.688 GB)
- Series 6: Exhibition Files, 1972-circa 2009 (Box 3, 0.2 linear feet; ER04, 0.001 GB)
- Series 7: Printed Material, 1969-2016 (Boxes 3-5; 2 linear feet)
- Series 8: Photographic Material, circa 1950-2010 (Boxes 5-6, OV 8; 1.3 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Feminism and art
Women artists

Names:

Heresies Collective, Inc.
Kozloff, Joyce
LeWitt, Sol, 1928-2007
Strider, Marjorie

Occupations:

Artists -- New York (State) -- New York

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1957-2017

5 Folders (Box 1)

Biographical material consists of a note featured in *Who's Who in America*; an interview with Yankowitz and her sister Susan for CreativeParents.com; certificates from the National Women's History Museum and Feminists Who Changed America; material relating to Yankowitz's mother, Ruth Yankowitz, who became president of the American Association for the United Nations in 1957; loan agreements, budgets, image releases, and receipts for artworks; as well as detailed resumes enumerating Yankowitz's exhibition history, teaching positions, grants, and bibliography.

Box 1, Folder 1	Biographical Note and Questionnaire, 1999, 2003
Box 1, Folder 2	Certificates and Identification Card, 2000s
Box 1, Folder 3	Family Documents, 1957-circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 4	Releases, Contracts, Loan Agreements, 1983-2017
Box 1, Folder 5	Resumes, 1970s-1990s

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1970-2017

0.6 Linear feet (Box 1)

Correspondence is mostly incoming letters from friends and family, galleries, universities, and arts organizations, although a few copies of drafts from Yankowitz are included as well. Personal correspondence consists of letters, postcards, and greeting cards from friends, family, and fellow artists, and relays day-to-day developments in life, artwork, and exhibitions. Professional correspondence pertains to exhibitions, teaching positions, grants, fellowships, and residencies. Some letters are photocopies of originals, particularly professional letters dating from the 1970s. Notable correspondents include Ross Bleckner, Joyce Kozloff, Frances Lewis, Sol LeWitt, Ree Morton, Miriam Shapiro, Peter Schjeldahl, Blythe Sonfist, Marjorie Strider, Robin Tewes, and Susan Yankowitz.

Box 1, Folder 6	A, General, 1974-1976
Box 1, Folder 7	Bleckner, Ross, circa 1975-1980
Box 1, Folder 8	B, General, 1970-2012
Box 1, Folder 9	C, General, 1970-2015
Box 1, Folder 10	Deson-Zaks Gallery (copies), 1972
Box 1, Folder 11	Doria, Charles, circa 1977
Box 1, Folder 12	E, General, 1976-1994
Box 1, Folder 13	F, General, 1974-2016
Box 1, Folder 14	Grigor, Murray, 1980s-2000s
Box 1, Folder 15	G, General, 1971-2017
Box 1, Folder 16	H, General, 1975-1978
Box 1, Folder 17	I-J, General, 1971-1993
Box 1, Folder 18	LeWitt, Sol, 1974-2007
Box 1, Folder 19	Kozloff, Joyce, 1970s-2008
Box 1, Folder 20	K, General, 1975-circa 2000
Box 1, Folder 21	L, General, 1972-2010
Box 1, Folder 22	M, General, 1971-1978

Box 1, Folder 23	N, General, 1971-1976
Box 1, Folder 24	O, General, circa 1972
Box 1, Folder 25	P, General, 1974-2001
Box 1, Folder 26	Q, General, 1996
Box 1, Folder 27	R, General, 1971-1985
Box 1, Folder 28	Sonfist, Blythe and Alan, 1972-1979
Box 1, Folder 29	Strider, Marjorie, circa 1972
Box 1, Folder 30	S, General, 1972-2003
Box 1, Folder 31	T, General, 1971-2017
Box 1, Folder 32	U-V, General, 1972-circa 2000
Box 1, Folder 33	W, General, 1975-2007
Box 1, Folder 34	Yankowitz, Nina, Outgoing, 1970s-2000s
Box 1, Folder 35	Yankowitz, Susan, 1970s-1980s
Box 1, Folder 36	Holiday and Greeting Cards, Signed with First Name Only, 1970s-2000s
Box 1, Folder 37	Letters, Signed with First Name Only, 1970s-2000s
Box 1, Folder 38	Postcards, Signed with First Name Only, 1970s-2000s

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Writings, circa 1968-2012

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Yankowitz's writings include student essays, a film script, notes, fragments, poetry, and responses to an exhibition and article. Writings by others consist of a stageplay by Carey Lovelace, poetry to Rose and Jacob Drachler, and several manuscripts and plays by Yankowitz's sister, Susan Yankowitz. More detailed writings about Yankowitz's work, in particular project statements and proposals, can be found with the project files in series 5. Reproductions of a dozen illustrated notebooks and journals, predominantly from the 1970s, are arranged in series 4.

Box 1, Folder 39	Art History Student Essays, circa 1970
Box 1, Folder 40	"Consumption, or Animate and Inanimates," Film Script, 1978
Box 1, Folder 41	"An Effort to Elude Amnesia", circa 2006
Box 1, Folder 42	Excerpts from "Notes from the Ground" and "Scenario Series", 1978
Box 1, Folder 43	Feminism (fragment), 2000s
Box 1, Folder 44	Poetry, 1968, 1976
Box 1, Folder 45	Response to Article "Gathering STEAM", 2012
Box 1, Folder 46	Responses to "Global Feminisms" Exhibition, 2007

Writings by Others

Box 1, Folder 47	Rose and Jacob Drachler, 1970s
Box 1, Folder 48	Carey Lovelace, 2004
Box 1, Folder 49-53	Susan Yankowitz, circa 1976-1994

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Reproductions of Illustrated Notebooks, circa 1967-2000

0.4 Linear feet (Box 2)

The reproductions of a dozen illustrated notebooks and journals found here contain detailed drawings and notes for Yankowitz's art projects, particularly those dating from the 1970s. Other illustrated notebooks contain figure drawings, preparatory drawings, journal entries, travel diaries from Japan, and lecture notes from Yankowitz's teaching career at the School of Visual Arts. Dates below indicate year of creation. Reproductions were made circa 2015.

Box 2, Folder 1	Illustrated Notebook, Figure Drawings, undated
Box 2, Folder 2	Illustrated Notebook, 1967-circa 1975
Box 2, Folder 3	Illustrated Notebook, circa 1968
Box 2, Folder 4	Illustrated Notebook, circa 1970
Box 2, Folder 5	Journal, 1972-1974
Box 2, Folder 6	Lecture Notes, circa 1975
Box 2, Folder 7	Illustrated Notebook, 1975-1976
Box 2, Folder 8	Illustrated Notebook, Drawings, 1970s
Box 2, Folder 9	Illustrated Notebook, Japan, 1970s-1985
Box 2, Folder 10	Illustrated Notebook, Drawings, 1970s-1990s
Box 2, Folder 11	Illustrated Notebook, 1980-1985
Box 2, Folder 12	Illustrated Notebook, Japan, 1985

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 5: Project Files, 1970-2014

*0.7 Linear feet (Box 2, OV 7)**0.688 Gigabytes (ER01-ER03)*

Project files include material relating to Yankowitz's art projects, teaching, and professional activities. Files related to art projects capture her range in media including sculpture, mosaics, public works, installations, sound, and new media artworks. Material may include correspondence outlining project details, proposals, sketches, photographic material, and printed material. Faculty files include course descriptions, teaching assignments, agreements, and visiting artist invitations. The file titled *Womanschool* contains material related to the course Yankowitz taught there called "Artists, Curators, and Critics: Is there a Female Aesthetic?" As a member of the Heresies Collective, Yankowitz participated in meetings and contributed to issues, illustrated here through meeting minutes, agendas, by-laws, proposed topics for issues, a list of members, photographs, printed material, and letters from Heresies members Lucy Lippard, Arlene Ladden, Patsy Beckert, and others. The file also includes material related to a Heresies film project dating to the 2000s. Multiple folders filed at the end of the series contain an assortment of project proposals, statements, and images detailing Yankowitz's work over the last several decades. Additional images of artwork are found with the photographic material in series 8. A small number of born-digital files includes a video recording of the Guerilla Girls accepting an award at a Skowhegan benefit, a video recording of a short animation related to an installation, and audio recordings from *Scenario Sounds*.

Box 2, Folder 13	<i>American Myths, 1982-1986</i>
Box 2, Folder 14	<i>Hot and Cold Houses Installations, 2005</i>
Box 2, Folder 15	<i>Criss-Crossing the Divine, 2014</i>
Box 2, Folder 16	<i>Crossings, 2009</i>
Box 2, Folder 17	Faculty Files, 1970s-2000s
Box 2, Folder 18	Furniture Mosaics, 1980s
Box 2, Folder 19	Guerilla Girls, 1993-2013 Includes born-digital material, see ER01.
Folder ER01	Guerilla Girls, Digital Video Recording of Skowhegan Awards Ceremony, 2013 <i>0.463 Gigabytes (1 computer file)</i>
Box 2, Folder 20	Heresies Collective, 1970s-2000s
Box 2, Folder 21	Installations, 1980s-2000s Includes born-digital material, see ER02.
Folder ER02	Installations, Moving Image Mock-up of <i>Glass Cathedral</i> , 2009 <i>0.033 Gigabytes (1 computer file)</i>
Box 2, Folder 22	Public Art Projects and Proposals, 1980s-2000s

Box 2, Folder 23	<i>Scenario Sounds</i> , 1979, 2007 Includes born-digital material, see ER03.
Folder ER03	<i>Scenario Sounds</i> , Digital Audio Recordings, 2007 <i>0.192 Gigabytes (2 computer files)</i>
Box 2, Folder 24	<i>Think Negative</i> , 1990s
Oversize 7	<i>Time and Space Suspensions</i> , circa 1970
Box 2, Folder 25	Womanschool, 1975-1976
Box 2, Folder 26	Women's Caucus for Art, 1987
Box 2, Folder 27-30	Project Proposals, Statements, and Images, 1970s-2000s

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 6: Exhibition Files, 1972-circa 2009

0.2 Linear feet (Box 3)

0.001 Gigabytes (ER04)

This small series captures only a selection of exhibitions Yankowitz participated in. Items include photographs of artwork, reviews, a gallery layout, press releases, artist statements, object lists, and correspondence with exhibition organizers. The folder titled *Bare Bones* contains a catalog and video recording for an exhibition curated by Yankowitz. Additional material related to Yankowitz's exhibition history can be found in the exhibition catalogs and announcements in series 7. Born-digital files are spreadsheets containing exhibition content.

Box 3, Folder 1	<i>Pleated Paintings (1972), 1972</i>
Box 3, Folder 2	<i>Hell's Breath (1982), 1982</i>
Box 3, Folder 3	<i>Bare Bones (1996), Curated by Yankowitz, 1996</i> <i>Includes 1 videocassette (VHS).</i>
Box 3, Folder 4	<i>From the Inside Out: Feminist Art Then and Now, circa 2006</i>
Box 3, Folder 5	<i>Widening the Frame (2009), 2008-2009</i> Includes born-digital material, see ER04.
Folder ER04	<i>Widening the Frame (2009), Born-digital Spreadsheets with Exhibition Content, 2008</i> <i>0.001 Gigabytes (14 computer files)</i>

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 7: Printed Material, 1969-2016

2 Linear feet (Boxes 3-5)

Printed material documents not only Yankowitz's career, but that of her artist contemporaries and close friends. Exhibition announcements and catalogs are for Yankowitz as well as Harmony Hammond, Jane Kaufman, Sol LeWitt, Doug Ohlson, Miriam Schapiro, Michelle Stuart, and Robin Tewes. Clippings consists of reviews and articles pertaining to Yankowitz's art. Periodicals include *Broadway Boogie*, *Cover*, *Feminist Art Journal*, *Karriere*, *New Wilderness Letter*, *Parnassus: Poetry in Review* featuring Yankowitz's work on the cover, *Profile*, *Shankpainter*, *Trylon*, *Women in the Arts* newsletter, and *Zing*. Books include numerous small press books, poetry collections, experimental manuscripts, and monographs by friends including Jacob and Rose Drachler, Richard Kostelanetz, Edward Dorn, Peter Schjeldahl, Jerome Rothenberg, Charles Doria, Terry Hauptman, and Susan Yankowitz. Additional books contain dedications and feature Yankowitz's work. Other material includes press releases, memorials, programs, brochures, and a printed version of Yankowitz's website.

Box 3, Folder 6-8	Announcements, 1970s-2014
Box 3, Folder 9-16	Books, 1970s-2000s
Box 3, Folder 17-18	Clippings, 1970s-2000s
Box 4, Folder 1-6	Exhibition Catalogs, 1970s-2014
Box 4, Folder 7-9	Exhibition Catalogs, Other Artists, 1970s-2007
Box 4, Folder 10	Memorials, 2005-2015
Box 4, Folder 11-16	Periodicals, 1970s-2000s
Box 4, Folder 17	Press Releases, 1970s-2000s
Box 4, Folder 18	Programs and Brochures, 1969-2013
Box 5, Folder 1	Website (printed), 2016
Box 5, Folder 2	Assorted Material, 1980s-2000s

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 8: Photographic Material, circa 1950-2010

1.3 Linear feet (Boxes 5-6)

Photographic material includes photographs, copy prints, transparencies, and slides of Yankowitz, family, and friends, as well as a comprehensive view of her artwork and exhibition installations from the 1960s-2000s. Personal photographs capture Yankowitz at all stages throughout her life engaged in her work, travel, and celebrations with friends and family. Images of artwork from the 1960s include student work and her Central Park commission; 1970s images include draped, puckered, shirred, and pleated painting series, *Painted Thread Readings*, *Dilated Grain Readings*, *Scanning Paint Placements*, and *Voices of the Eye*; 1980s images include *Hell's Breath* tile installation, *Scenario Sounds*, and *Shelter* series; 1990s images contain oil paintings and drawings including *Train/Vault*, *Wing*, and *Cantilever Boat*; 2000s images contain numerous installations that incorporate a glass house, including *CloudHouse*. Also documented here are many public art projects Yankowitz completed from the 1980s-2000s including *Tunnel Vision* in the New York City subway, an interactive poetry walk in Cleveland, Ohio, *Garden of Games/Garden of Scientific Ideas* in Queens, New York, and *American Myths* at Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania. Yankowitz's husband, Barry Holden, was a collaborator on some of these projects.

Photographic material of Yankowitz, family, and friends is arranged first, followed by photographic material of artwork. Each category is arranged chronologically.

Box 5, Folder 3	Childhood and Family, 1950s
Box 5, Folder 4	Photo Album, 1964
Box 5, Folder 5-9	Yankowitz, Family, Friends, 1970s-2000s Oversized photograph of Yankowitz housed in OV 8.
Box 5, Folder 10	Nina and Susan Yankowitz, 1970s-2000s
Box 5, Folder 11	Artwork, Photographs, 1960s-1970s Oversized photograph of Central Park commission housed in OV 8.
Box 5, Folder 16	Artwork, Slides, 1960s-1970s
Box 5, Folder 17	Artwork, Slides, 1970s-1980s
Box 5, Folder 12	Artwork, Tile Works, Photographs, 1980s
Box 5, Folder 18	Artwork, Slides, 1980s
Box 6, Folder 1	Artwork, Slides, 1980s-1990s
Box 6, Folder 2	Artwork, Slides, 1980s-1990s
Box 5, Folder 13-14	Artwork, Photographs, 1990s

Box 5, Folder 15	Artwork, Slides, 1990s-2000s
Box 6, Folder 3	Artwork, Slides, 2000s
Box 6, Folder 4	Artwork, Slides, 1970s-2000s
Oversize 8	Oversize Photographs of Yankowitz and Central Park Commission, 1969, circa 1970

[Return to Table of Contents](#)