Guide to the California Institute of the Arts Publications Collection

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Guide to the California Institute of the Arts Publications Collection
Dates: 1964-2014
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Valencia, California 91355
Abstract: The California Institute of the Arts Publications Collection contains books, directories, handbooks, magazines, newsletters, and other materials documenting a variety of aspects of CalArts including academics, campus events, creative endeavors, and student life. The collection covers the years 1964 to 2014 with the bulk of the material ranging from 1971 to 2000.
Language of Material: English

Access
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Biography/Administrative History
California Institute of the Arts, commonly known as CalArts, is located in Valencia, California, and grants degrees in the visual and performing arts. Incorporated on September 1, 1961, it was the first degree-granting institution of higher learning in the United States created specifically for students of both the visual and the performing arts. It was the dream and vision of Walt Disney to create such an institute and he provided funding for it in his will. Initially formed through the merger of the Chouinard Art Institute (founded 1921) and the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music (founded 1883), it opened at its present campus in Valencia, California, in November 1971. California Institute of the Arts was incorporated on September 1, 1961, and the first Board of Trustees meeting was held the following March. Chouinard and the Conservatory began operating under the name of the Institute while the Trustees began working on the establishment of a permanent campus and a development program. Preparation continued in 1964, when the “Cal Arts Story” was dramatized on film by the Disney studios and shown at the world premiere of Mary Poppins at Grauman’s Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, California. Prior to the Mary Poppins premiere (whose proceeds were donated to CalArts) Walt Disney and Mrs. Von Hagen introduced the Institute to an audience of 1,500 guests in a fifteen-minute special film. Among those who attended the Premiere were Julie Andrews, Dick Van Dyke, and numerous other Hollywood luminaries. Land for a campus was acquired in 1967 and planning for the physical facilities was immediately undertaken. Disney interests had discovered a simple solution to their land acquisition problem – give CalArts part of the Golden Oaks Ranch in Newhall. The 728-acre ranch had belonged to Walt Disney Productions for years. In 1967 the gift property was sold back to the Disney interests so they could find a more spacious and suitable site. Price proposed a 60-acre site down the road from the Placerita Ranch, on the edge of the rural town of Valencia, located 32 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. At the time, the area was remote from Los Angeles, bordered by Placerita Canyon State Park and a national forest, yet readily accessible to downtown Los Angeles. Other locations had also been considered, such as the Hollywood Bowl area. Ground was broken for the new campus on May 3, 1969. Construction was frustrated by torrential rains and labor troubles of every variety. So, instead the “new” school began its first year in the buildings of Villa Cabrini Academy, a former Catholic girls’ school on the edge of downtown Burbank. Woefully behind schedule and over budget, the Valencia campus finally opened in November 1971. Admission to CalArts was based solely on artistic ability and potential. Students received intensive professional training in the area of their career focus without being cast into a rigid pattern. Instructional emphasis was placed on the development of the professional artist – the artist of tomorrow. “There is an urgent need,” said Disney, “for a professional school which will not only give its students thorough training in a specific field, but will also allow the widest possible range of artistic growth and expression.” Sources: Economic Research Associates. “A Historical Summary of Cal Arts,” July 13, 1967. Real, James. “When You Wish Upon A School,” in West, 1972.
Scope and Content of Collection

The California Institute of the Arts Publications Collection contains books, directories, handbooks, magazines, newsletters, and other materials documenting a variety of aspects of CalArts including academics, campus events, creative endeavors, and student life. The collection covers the years 1964 to 2014 with the bulk of the material ranging from 1971 to 2000. The collection consists primarily of published, textual material with the exception of a few non-paper items scattered throughout the collection. The largest series in the collection, Institute Publications, is comprised of official materials published by the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). Institute Publications include a comprehensive collection of bulletins, published by the Office of Admissions, that describe the various degree programs offered by CalArts. Course catalogs from 1968 to 2013, with some years missing, give additional information about the degree programs including descriptions of the classes offered within each school. A nearly complete set of annual reports with dates ranging from 1977 to 2004 also show how the institute has changed over the years. Student/Alumni Publications include monographs and serial publications. However, the serial publications are sporadic, with missing issues or only a single issue for some publications. Due to the large amount of duplication within the collection and the scattered nature of the publications, this collection was reorganized during processing to bring consistency to its arrangement and to improve research access. The collection is organized into four series: Series 1. Institute Publications, 1964-2014. 10.0 cubic feet Series 2. Student/Alumni Publications, 1969-2012. 3.2 cubic feet Series 3. External Publications, 1970-2000. 1.8 cubic feet Series 4. Oversize Materials, 1968-1990. 1.2 cubic feet

Publications Collection Finding Aid