Finding aid for the Sandra Leonard Starr papers related to California assemblage art

Danielle Goynes and Julie Kalmar
Descriptive Summary

Title: Sandra Leonard Starr papers related to California assemblage art


Number: 2011.M.22

Creator/Collector: Starr, Sandra Leonard

Physical Description: 4.2 Linear Feet (8 boxes)

Repository:
The Getty Research Institute
Special Collections
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles 90049-1688
reference@getty.edu
URL: http://hdl.handle.net/10020/askref
(310) 440-7390

Abstract: The collection contains art historian, curator and gallery director Sandra Leonard Starr’s papers related to her 1988 exhibition and catalog titled, Lost and Found in California: Four Decades of Assemblage Art. Included are her research files on artists, production material for the exhibition and publication, and audio recordings and transcripts of Starr’s interviews with 12 significant figures in the California art scene from 1940 to 1987, including artists Robert Alexander, Cameron, Richard Diebenkorn, George Herms, and Edward Kienholz.

Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the catalog record for this collection. Click here for the access policy.

Language: Collection material is in English.

Biographical/Historical Note

Art historian and curator Sandra Leonard Starr was the longtime director of the James Corcoran Gallery in Santa Monica, California. She has written extensively on Joseph Cornell, among other topics, and in 1988 she mounted a three-part exhibition on California assemblage art titled, Lost and Found in California: Four Decades of Assemblage Art. The exhibition featured assemblage works by artists active in California from 1940 to 1987, and was held concurrently in three Santa Monica venues from July 16 to December 7, 1988. The exhibition was presented chronologically, beginning with “The First Generation, 1940-1962” at the Corcoran Gallery. The later years were divided into “The Second Generation: The Narrative, 1957-1987” at Shoshana Wayne Gallery, and “The Second Generation: Form and Idea, 1960-1987” at Pence Gallery. The exhibition catalog, considered a significant contribution to scholarship on the history of California art, and assemblage art in particular, was edited by Starr and includes two essays by her: "Assemblage Art: A Pocket History" and "Assemblage Art in California: A Collective Memoir 1940-1969."

Access

Open for use by qualified researchers with the exception of audio cassettes, which are unavailable until reformatted.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

http://hdl.handle.net/10020/cifa2011m22

Acquisition Information


Processing History

The collection was initially re-housed by the Registrar’s Office in 2011. In 2014, graduate students Danielle Goynes and Julie Kalmar completed the processing and wrote the finding aid as a class project for UCLA IS 438B, under the supervision of Andra Darlington, Holly Deakyne and Nancy Enneking. Goynes is responsible for Series I, while Kalmar is responsible for Series II and Series III. They both contributed to the collection-level notes and access points.

Scope and Content of Collection
The collection contains Starr’s papers related to her 1988 exhibition and catalog titled, Lost and Found in California: Four Decades of Assemblage Art. The first series contains audio recordings and transcripts of Starr’s interviews in 1986 and 1988 with significant figures in the California art scene from 1940 to 1987, including artists Robert Alexander, Cameron, Richard Diebenkorn, George Herms, and Edward Kienholz. Among the subjects discussed are the artists’ relationships with Wallace Berman, and Man Ray’s influence on the movement. The most extensive interviews are with Alexander and Herms. The second series contains production material and press clippings from the 1988 exhibition and publication, including drafts of Starr’s catalog essays, exhibition checklists and didactics. In the third series are research files on artists, as well as topics more broadly related to California art, which include notes, photocopied articles and clippings. While much of the research material is undated, dated materials span from 1960 to 1995.

Arrangement

Subjects - Names
Kienholz, Edward, 1927-1994
Diebenkorn, Richard
Hedrick, Wally Bill
Brown, Joan
Berman, Tosh
Jahrmarkt, Joan
Herms, George
Smith, Hassel
Mason, Fred
Cameron, Marjorie
Brittin, Charles
Alexander, Robert
Berman, Shirley
Berman, Wallace

Subjects - Topics
Art, American -- California -- Exhibitions
Artists -- California -- Interviews
Assemblage (Art) -- California
Artists -- California -- History -- 20th century
Art, Modern -- 20th century -- Criticism, interpretation, etc
Art, American -- California -- 20th century

Contributors
Starr, Sandra Leonard
Diebenkorn, Richard
Hedrick, Wally Bill
Brown, Joan
Berman, Tosh
Jahrmarkt, Joan
Herms, George
Smith, Hassel
Mason, Fred
Cameron, Marjorie
Brittin, Charles
Berman, Shirley
Alexander, Robert
Series I. **Oral history interviews 1986, 1988**

**Physical Description:** 4 boxes

**Scope and Content Note**

This series contains audio recordings and transcripts of Starr's interviews with 12 people in preparation for her exhibition and accompanying catalog, *Lost and Found in California* (1988). Among the interviewees are artists and other significant figures from the early period of California assemblage art, including artists George Herms, Hassel Smith, Charles Brittin, Cameron, gallerist Joan Jahrmark, and Shirley and Tosh Berman (Wallace Berman's widow and son). The interviews provide detailed first-hand accounts of a historic period in California art. Many of the transcripts are annotated. Also included are related notes and some related letters. The bulk of the material in this series is undated, but is probably concurrent with the interviews, which date from 1986 to 1988. The audio recordings are contained on 30 cassette tapes, and are unavailable until reformatted.

**Arrangement**

Arranged in Starr's original alphabetical order by interviewee.

**Alexander, Robert, 1986**

*box 1, folder 1-2*

__Transcripts and papers, 1986__

__Audio recordings, 1986__

**Scope and Content Note**

Nine sound cassettes.

**Berman, Tosh and Shirley, 1986**

*box 1, folder 3-4*

__Transcripts and papers, 1986__

__Audio recordings, 1986 October 16__

**Scope and Content Note**

Three sound cassettes.

**Brittin, Charles, 1986**

*box 1, folder 5*

__Transcripts and papers, 1986__

__Audio recordings, 1986__

**Scope and Content Note**

Four sound cassettes.

**Brown, Joan, 1986**

*box 1, folder 6*

__Transcripts and papers, 1986__

__Audio recording, 1986 September 10__

**Scope and Content Note**

One sound cassette.

**Cameron, probably 1986**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box, Folder, Cassette</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>box 1, folder 7, box 7, Cassette C18</td>
<td>Transcript, undated, Audio recording, [1986?] October 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 1, folder 8, box 7, Cassette C19</td>
<td>Diebenkorn, Richard, 1988, Transcripts and papers, 1988, Audio recording, 1988 April 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 2, folder 1, box 8, Cassette 20</td>
<td>Hedrick, Wally, 1986, Transcripts and papers, 1986, Audio recording, 1986 October 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 2, folder 2, box 8</td>
<td>Herms, George, 1986, Transcripts and papers, 1986, Audio recordings, 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 8, Cassette C21</td>
<td>Jahrmarkt, Joan, 1986, Transcripts and papers 1986, Audio recording, 1986 September 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 2, folder 3, box 8, Cassette 26</td>
<td>Smith, Hassel, 1988, Transcripts and papers, 1988, Audio recording, 1988 March 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 8, Cassette 30</td>
<td>ARTS/LA ca. 1988, Scope and Content Note</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scope and Content Note

One sound cassette. Labeled "Cameron 10/7" with no indication of the year. The interview was probably conducted in 1986, when Starr conducted most of her interviews.

One sound cassette.

One sound cassette.

Five sound cassettes.

One sound cassette.

Two sound cassettes.

One sound cassette.

KCRW radio program hosted by Lyn Kienholz and Ara Guzelimian discussing the *Lost and Found in California* exhibition. The program features Starr discussing California assemblage art and artists. One sound cassette.
Series II. Lost and Found in California, 1988

Physical Description: 3 boxes

Scope and Content Note
In this series are materials related to the planning and production of Starr’s exhibition and catalog titled, *Lost and Found in California: Four Decades of Assemblage Art* (1988). Included are drafts of Starr’s catalog essays, as well as exhibition checklists, didactics, press clippings, notes, and photographs. Of particular note is an annotated mock-up of the second catalog essay, referred to in these documents as the “Chronology.” Although the bulk of the material is undated, most of it is probably from the mid-1980s, when Starr worked most actively on the exhibition and publication.

Arrangement
The arrangement reflects Starr’s original organization by document type.

box 4, folder 1
- Bibliography, undated
- Catalog essays, undated

box 4, folder 2
- Typescript drafts and notes, undated
- Annotated typescript draft of catalog essay, undated

box 6*, folder 1
- Index cards, undated

Series III. Research files, 1960-1995

Physical Description: 2 boxes

Scope and Content Note
The third series contain Starr’s research on individual artists, as well as topics more broadly related to California art. While most of the material in the series is undated, the dates that are identified span from 1960 to 1995. Material is largely textual, comprising notes, photocopied articles, newspaper and journal clippings. Research materials include photocopied articles, press clippings, notes and other documents related to specific artists, including the artists whom Starr interviewed, as well as many more. The dates of the material are indicated when present, but most folders also contain undated material. Among the folders with significant content are Ed and Nancy Reddin Kienholz, Wally Hedrick, George Herms and Wallace Berman. The topical research files relate to California art more broadly, including files on writers, poets and filmmakers.

Arrangement
The arrangement reflects Starr’s original order, with alphabetical artist files followed by topical research files.

Artist files

box 5, folder 1
  - Scope and Content Note
  - Includes documents related to The Temple of Man, founded by Robert Alexander in San Francisco in 1968, and its Archive/Museum of California Modern Art.

box 5, folder 2
- Allen, Terry, 1980-1981
box 5, folder 3
- Allen, William, 1970
box 5, folder 4
- Almarez, Carlos, undated
box 5, folder 5
- Bereal, Ed, 1964
box 5, folder 6
- Berlant, Tony, circa 1965
box 5, folder 7
box 5, folder 8
- Bernhardt, John, circa 1960
box 5, folder 9
- Borofsky, Jonathan, circa 1980
box 5, folder 10
- Brittin, Charles, 1988
box 5, folder 11
- Brown, Joan, undated
box 5, folder 12
- Burden, Chris, circa 1980
box 5, folder 13
- Cameron, 1986-1995
box 5, folder 14
- Celmins, Vija, 1979-1980
box 5, folder 15
- Collins, Jess, circa 1980
Conner, Bruce, circa 1985
   Photocopied checklist from unidentified exhibition, undated
Research material, circa 1985
Chamberlain, John, 1986
De Forest, Roy, 1984, undated
Diebenkorn, Richard, 1988-1989
Frazier, Charles, 1964-1976
Gutkin, Peter, circa 1970
Hanson, Mel, undated
Hedrick, Wally, 1968-1988
Herms, George, circa 1986
Hopper, Dennis, circa 1960
Hudson, Robert, circa 1980
Johnson, Daniel La Rue, circa 1964
   Scope and Content Note
   Folder 30 contains a small amount of material relating to Nancy Reddin Kienholz and a
   letter from Nancy to Sandra dated 1988. Folder 29 includes interview material with Ed
   Kienholz.

McMillen, Michael, 1980-1988
Mason, Fred, 1968-1988
Miyashiro, Ron, circa 1964
Morris, Robert, circa 1976
Nauman, Bruce, undated
Ruscha, Ed, 1987
Shaw, Levine, 1986
Smith, Alexis, undated
Smith, Hassell, 1988-2011
Talbert, Ben, undated
Wagner, Gordon, undated
Wilson, Robert, 1984

Index cards, circa 1985
   Scope and Content Note
   Index cards contain notes about artists and are organized alphabetically by artist
   name.

East LA Artists, 1988 March 27
Black group LA/SF 1960s, 1960-1969
Writers, filmmakers, undated
Poets, cities essays, undated
Miscellaneous writing by others, 1964-1986
Artist list and miscellaneous notes, 1986-1988, undated
Letters to Starr, 1988
Funk Exhibition (1967), 1967-1986