



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Janet Kardon Papers,
1905, circa 1950-1995, bulk 1975-1991

Christopher DeMairo

The processing of this collection received Federal support from the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund, administered by the National Collections Program and the Smithsonian Collections Advisory Committee.

2019/09/25

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Arrangement.....	3
Names and Subjects	3
Container Listing	4
Series 1: Exhibition Files, circa 1950-1995.....	4
Series 2: Professional Files, 1967-1993.....	8
Series 3: Printed Material, 1905, 1967-1991.....	10

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Janet Kardon papers
Identifier:	AAA.kardjane
Date:	1905 circa 1950-1995
Extent:	6.7 Linear feet
Creator:	Kardon, Janet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Janet Kardon papers measures 6.7 linear feet and date from 1905, and circa 1950-1995, with the bulk of the records dating from 1975-1991. Papers include exhibition files, professional records, legal records, photographs, printed material, and some audiovisual material. The collection primarily documents Kardon's work on various exhibitions during her time at the Philadelphia College of Art (PCA) and the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), University of Pennsylvania.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Janet Kardon in 2005.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid written by Christopher DeMairo in 2019.

Preferred Citation

Janet Kardon papers, 1905, circa 1950-1995. 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 audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact References Services for more information.

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Biographical / Historical

Art museum director and curator Janet Kardon, curated multiple exhibitions at the Philadelphia College of Art and then served as director of the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, before her appointment as director of the American Craft Museum in New York City.

Kardon received her B.S. in education from Temple University in 1955, and her M.A. in Art History from the University of Pennsylvania in 1966. In 1984 she received an honorary Doctor of Humanities from Moore College of Art.

Kardon was a lecturer at Gwynedd Mercy College (1967) and the Philadelphia College of Art (PCA), from 1968 to 1975, and was hired by the PCA in 1975 as director of exhibitions. While at PCA, Kardon curated fifteen exhibitions including *Labryinth* (1975) *Time* (1977), *Projects for PCA* (1976-1978), and *Artists' Sets and Costumes* (1977). In 1979 Kardon accepted a position at the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania (ICA).

During her decade-long career at ICA, Kardon curated twenty-three exhibitions including *Urban Encounters: Art Architecture Audience* (1980), *Machineworks: Vito Acconci, Alice Aycock, Dennis Oppenheim* (1981), *Red Grooms' Philadelphia Cornucopia and Other Sculptopictoramas* (1982), *Siah Armajani* (1985), *David Salle* (1986), and *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment* (1988). Kardon's traveling Mapplethorpe exhibition made national headlines in 1990 when Ohio prosecutors charged ICA Director Dennis Barre with obscenity due to the graphic nature of Mapplethorpe's photographs. Kardon was brought into court as an expert on the topic of photographic art and curation. The charges were ultimately dropped.

In 1989 Kardon became the director of the American Craft Museum.

Scope and Contents

The Janet Kardon papers measures 6.7 linear feet and date from 1905, and circa 1950-1995, with the bulk of the records dating from 1975-1991. Papers include exhibition files, professional records, legal records, photographs, printed material, and some audiovisual material.

The collection primarily documents Kardon's work on various exhibitions during her time at the Philadelphia College of Art (PCA) and the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), University of Pennsylvania. The files include photographs of artwork, correspondence, audiovisual material, some insurance information, photographs of exhibitions, printed material, and ephemera. Notable people represented include David Salle, Robert Mapplethorpe, Alice Aycock, and Red Grooms.

Professional records consist of papers related to Kardon's administrative duties while at ICA, PCA, and the American Craft Museum, as well as a few panels and review boards that Kardon served on. The records consist of correspondence, printed material, a resume, audiovisual material, and some artist files.

Printed Material consists of clippings and periodicals, artist books, exhibition catalogs and announcements, and event pamphlets.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged as 3 series.

- Series 1: Exhibition Files, circa 1950-circa 1995
 - Series 2: Professional Files, 1970-1993
 - Series 3: Printed Material, 1905, 1967-1991
-

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Women museum curators

Types of Materials:

Sound recordings

Video recordings

Names:

Grooms, Red

Mapplethorpe, Robert

Philadelphia College of Art

University of Pennsylvania. Institute of Contemporary Art

Occupations:

Art museum curators -- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia

Art museum directors -- Pennsylvania -- Philadelphia

Container Listing

Series 1: Exhibition Files, circa 1950-1995

4.1 Linear feet (Box 1-5; OV 9)

Exhibition files relate to Kardon's curated exhibitions while at the Philadelphia College of Art and the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Included are correspondence with artists regarding the installation and completion of artwork; artist files consisting of photographs and research material; and ephemera and printed material. Notable artists represented in the files include Alice Aycock, David Salle, and Robert Mapplethorpe. Also included is a file related to Kardon's work on the 39th Venice Biennale exhibition *Drawings: The Pluralist Decade* (1980).

Kardon's 1988 traveling exhibit, *Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment*, became a topic of national debate when the Corcoran Gallery of Art decided to cancel the exhibition. Janet Kardon was brought in as a topical expert in the court case that followed. The *Perfect Moment* material found here includes papers related to both the exhibition and the court case, such as correspondence, printed material, photographs, notes, and legal proceedings.

Box 1, Folder 1	Artists Shown at PCA Gallery, 1976-1977, circa 1977
Box 1, Folder 2	<i>Labyrinths</i> (1975), 1975-1977
Box 1, Folder 3	<i>Labyrinths</i> (1975), Interviews, 1975
Box 1, Folder 4-6	<i>Projects for PCA</i> (1976), circa 1975-1976
Box 1, Folder 7-8	<i>Line</i> (1976), 1976-1977
Box 1, Folder 9-10	<i>Artists Sketchbooks I and 2</i> (1976), 1976
Box 1, Folder 11	<i>Artists' Maps</i> (1977), circa 1977
Box 1, Folder 12-13	<i>Time</i> (1977), 1975-1978
Box 1, Folder 14	<i>Time</i> (1977), Scott Burton, 1977-1980
Box 1, Folder 15	<i>Time</i> (1977), Performances, circa 1976-1978
Box 1, Folder 16	<i>Duane Michels: Photographs</i> (1977), circa 1977
Box 1, Folder 17-20	<i>Artists' Sets and Costumes</i> (1977), Artist Files A-M, circa 1977
Box 2, Folder 1-3	<i>Artists' Sets and Costumes</i> (1977), Artist Files N-W, circa 1977
Box 2, Folder 4-5	<i>Artists' Sets and Costumes</i> (1977), Printed Material, circa 1974-1979

Box 2, Folder 6 *Artists' Sets and Costumes (1977)*, Correspondence, 1977-1978

Box 2, Folder 7 *George Trakas (1977)*, 1977

Box 2, Folder 8-9 *Seventies Painting (1978)*, circa 1977-1978

Box 2, Folder 10-11 *Project for PCA 4 (1978)*; Alice Aycock, circa 1978

Box 2, Folder 12 *Point (1978)*, 1978

Box 2, Folder 13 *Urban Encounters: Art Architecture Audience (1980)*, 1979-1980

Box 2, Folder 14 The 39th Venice Biennale, *Drawings: The Pluralist Decade (1980)*, 1980

Box 2, Folder 15 *Red Grooms' Philadelphia Cornucopia and Other Sculptopictoramas (1982)*,
circa 1982
1 Videocassettes (VHS)

Box 2, Folder 16-17 *Red Grooms' Philadelphia Cornucopia and Other Sculptopictoramas (1982)*,
circa 1982

Box 2, Folder 18-19 *David Salle (1986)*, 1986

Box 2, Folder 20 David Salle, Interviewed by Janet Kardon, Transcripts, 1983-1989

Box 2, Folder 21 David Salle, Interview, undated
1 Sound cassette

Box 2, Folder 22 David Salle, Biographical Photographs, 1973-1985

Box 3, Folder 1-2 David Salle, Images, circa 1950-1983

Box 3, Folder 3 David Salle, General Source Material, circa 1950-1983

Oversize 9 David Salle, Drawings, circa 1970-1985

Box 3, Folder 4 David Salle, "Short Videos", circa 1972-1973
1 Videoreels (1/2 inch)

Box 3, Folder 5 David Salle, "What's Cooking"; "Dream/Flowers", 1974
1 Videocassettes (U-matic)

Box 3, Folder 6 David Salle, "What's Cooking"; "Dream/Flowers", 1974

1 Videoreels (1/2 inch)

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|------------------|--|
| Box 3, Folder 7 | David Salle, Images from "What's Cooking", circa 1974 |
| Box 3, Folder 8 | David Salle, Exhibition Announcements, circa 1978-1984 |
| Box 3, Folder 9 | David Salle, Installation View of Exhibitions, 1976-1980 |
| Box 3, Folder 10 | David Salle, Bibliographic Material, 1979-1985, undated |
| Box 3, Folder 11 | David Salle, Periodicals, 1982, 1987 |
| Box 3, Folder 12 | <i>Siah Armajani</i> (1985), Meeting at ICA, 1985 |

Robert Mapplethorpe: The Perfect Moment (1988)

Box 3, Folder 13	<i>The Perfect Moment</i> (1988), circa 1987-1988
Box 3, Folder 14	<i>The Perfect Moment</i> (1988), 1988 <i>1 Videocassettes (VHS)</i>
Box 3, Folder 15-16	Mapplethorpe, Exhibition and Collection Material, circa 1980-1993
Box 3, Folder 17	Mapplethorpe, XYZ Portfolio, undated
Box 3, Folder 18	Mapplethorpe, "Lady", 1984 <i>1 Videocassettes (VHS)</i>
Box 3, Folder 19	Mapplethorpe, "Patti Smith", undated <i>1 Videocassettes (VHS)</i>
Box 4, Folder 1	Mapplethorpe, Interview, 1987 August 13 <i>1 Sound cassette</i>
Box 4, Folder 2	Mapplethorpe, Exhibit Letters of Congratulations, 1988
Box 4, Folder 3	Mapplethorpe, Senators' Remarks on NEA, 1989
Box 4, Folder 4-6	Mapplethorpe, Legal Proceedings, Correspondence and Notes, 1989-1993
Box 4, Folder 7	Mapplethorpe, Miller Test; Government and Obscenity, circa 1990
Box 4, Folder 8-10	Mapplethorpe, Legal Proceedings, 1990
Box 4, Folder 11	Mapplethorpe, Papers Related to a Docudrama on the Trial, 1991
Box 4, Folder 12	Mapplethorpe, Corcoran Gallery of Art Clippings, 1989
Box 4, Folder 13-20	Mapplethorpe, Clippings, 1989-1993
Box 4, Folder 21	Mapplethorpe, Periodicals, 1989-1995

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Professional Files, 1967-1993

0.8 Linear feet (Box 5)

This series consists of letters of congratulations to Kardon, papers from symposiums and talks, some gallery reports and financial papers, artist files, a resume, and correspondence related to various organizations that sought out Kardon to sit on panels and review boards.

This series is arranged as 4 sub-series.

- 2.1: Philadelphia College of Art, 1975-1979 (3 folders)
- 2.2: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1967-1989 (5 folders)
- 2.3: American Craft Museum, 1989-1993 (6 folders)
- 2.4: Other Professional Files, 1970-1987 (12 folders)

2.1: Philadelphia College of Art , 1975-1979

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Box 5, Folder 1 | PCA Shows and Events, Letters, 1975-1978 |
| Box 5, Folder 2 | Gallery Report, 1978 |
| Box 5, Folder 2 | Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Testimony, "State of the Arts", 1979 |

2.2: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania , 1967-1989

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Box 5, Folder 4-5 | Congratulation Letters for Position at ICA, 1979 |
| Box 5, Folder 6 | Catalog Comments and Appreciation Letters, 1981-1988 |
| Box 5, Folder 7 | General Correspondence, 1980-1989 |
| Box 5, Folder 8 | Financial Operations, 1967-1986 |

2.3: American Craft Museum, 1989-1993

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| Box 5, Folder 9 | Announcement, Printed Material, 1989-1990 |
| Box 5, Folder 10 | Congratulation Letters for Position at ACM, 1989 |
| Box 5, Folder 11 | Resume, circa 1990 |
| Box 5, Folder 12-13 | Symposium, History of 20th Century American Craft: A Centenary Project, 1991 |
| Box 5, Folder 14 | American Craft Council 50th Anniversary; <i>Ideal Home, 1900-1920</i> (1993-1994), 1993
1 Sound cassette |

2.4: Other Professional Files, 1970-1987

Box 5, Folder 15	Organizational Art Movement Letter to J. Edgar Hoover, 1970
Box 5, Folder 16	Artist Files, Miscellaneous, 1973-1979
Box 5, Folder 17-19	Smithson, Robert, 1973-1974
Box 5, Folder 20	Purchase of "Marcel Duchamp" Print by Irving Penn, 1976
Box 5, Folder 21	Panels and Affiliations, College Art Association, Frank Jewett Mather Award, 1983-1984
Box 5, Folder 22	Panels and Affiliations, National Endowment for the Arts, 1984-1986
Box 5, Folder 23	Panels and Affiliations, School of Art and Design at the University of Chicago, 1987
Box 5, Folder 24	Panels and Affiliations, International Exhibitions Panel, 1987
Box 5, Folder 25	Panels and Affiliations, Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, circa 1987
Box 5, Folder 26	"A Lexicon of the Sixties," Janet Kardon, undated
Box 5, Folder 27	Photographs of Janet Kardon, undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Printed Material, 1905, 1967-1991

2 Linear feet (Boxes 5-8)

This series consists primarily of exhibition catalogs and artist books that are seemingly unrelated to Kardon's curatorial work, and also includes press clippings from magazines and newspapers, exhibition announcements and posters, and pamphlets from the College Art Association of America's annual meeting (1983-1984). Names include Martha Haslanger, Pati Hill, Maria Nordman, Larie Simmons, Richard Kostelanetz, Jean-Pierre Armeaux, George Griffin, Athena Tacha, Stu Horn, Robert Barry, Lucas Sumaras, Hundert Wasser, Dotty Attie, Laurie Anderson, and Ida Applebroog. Also found in this series is a 1905 copy of Elbert Hubbard's publication, *The Philistine*.

Box 5, Folder 28	Exhibition Ephemera, PCA, circa 1975-1978
Box 5, Folder 29	Exhibition Ephemera, ICA, circa 1980-1989
Box 5, Folder 30	Miscellaneous Clippings, circa 1975-1986
Box 5, Folder 31	Press Clippings, 1980
Box 6, Folder 1-5	Press Clippings, 1981-1985
Box 6, Folder 6	College Art Association of American Annual Meeting Pamphlet, 1983-1984
Box 6, Folder 7	<i>The Philistine</i> , by Elbert Hubbard, 1905
Box 6, Folder 8	Aspen No. 5 + 6, The Minimalist Issue, 1967 <i>1 Film reel (8 mm)</i> Also includes 5 sound reels (vinyl).
Box 6, Folder 9	"S.M.S. no. 1," The Letter Edged in Black Press Inc., Fragment, 1968
Box 6, Folder 10	<i>Sick of Love</i> , by Sue Hertz, 1982
Box 6, Folder 11-15	Artists' Books, 1970-1991
Box 6, Folder 16-18	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, circa 1973-1991
Box 7, Folder 1-6	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, circa 1973-1991
Box 8, Folder 1-2	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, circa 1973-1991

[Return to Table of Contents](#)