



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Sylvia Lark papers, 1971-1994, in the Archives of American Art

Sabine Lipten

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.

2023 March 13

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Sylvia Lark papers
Date:	1971-1994
Identifier:	AAA.larksylv
Creator:	Lark, Sylvia, 1947-1990
Extent:	1.4 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The Sylvia Lark papers measure 1.4 linear feet and date from 1971- 1994, documenting Lark's career as an abstract artist and college professor, particularly her tenure at the University of California, Berkeley. Included are biographical materials; correspondence with museums, galleries, universities, colleagues and other artists; writings by and about Lark's work; professional files such as gallery represented sale records, grant applications and inventory lists; exhibition files; teaching files; printed and photographic material.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated 1998 by Christine Carter.

Location of Originals

Collection contains mostly photocopies.

Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Sabine Lipten in 2023.

Preferred Citation

Sylvia Lark Papers, 1971-1994. 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 born-digital records or audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact Reference Services for more information.

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Biographical / Historical

Sylvia Lark (1947-1990) was a Seneca abstract expressionist painter, printmaker and educator from Buffalo, New York. Lark received her M.F.A from University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1972 before moving to California where she began teaching printmaking at California State University, Sacramento. In 1977 she received a Fulbright grant to travel and study in Korea and Japan. She also began teaching at the University of California, Berkeley that same year where she remained a professor for the rest of her life. She was awarded the Distinguished Teaching Award for teaching art by the College Art Association posthumously in 1991.

In addition to her professorial career, Lark was a widely exhibited artist who collaborated on a number of Native American exhibitions, and served as a member of a different women in the arts organizations. Her work can be found in numerous collections including that of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Oakland Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Scope and Contents

The Sylvia Lark papers measure 1.4 linear feet and date from 1971-1994, documenting Lark's career as an abstract artist and college professor, particularly her tenure at the University of California, Berkeley. Included are biographic material, such as resumes, an interview transcript and an award certificate from the College Art Association of America; correspondence between Lark and galleries, city art departments, Native American organizations and other artists, and colleagues regarding various exhibitions and teaching employment opportunities. Also found are writings by and about Lark's work, exhibition files which document select solo and group exhibitions that Lark participated in, as well as tribute exhibition. Professional files include materials documenting Lark's involvement serving as a juror for various exhibitions, her membership and participation in professional organizations and financial records related to the selling and loaning of her artwork. Teaching files include student evaluations, course schedules, U.C. Berkeley employment documents, correspondence and reports regarding Lark's tenure case, U.C. Berkeley personnel informational paperwork, Faculty grant and fellowship documents and sabbatical leave applications and awards. Printed material primarily consists of newspaper and magazine clippings reviewing Lark's exhibitions along with exhibition announcements, flyers and catalogs. Photographs are of Lark's artwork as well as her Fulbright travels in Korea and Japan.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as eight series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, 1977-1991 (3 Folders: Box 1)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1976-1991 (0.3 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 3: Writings, 1975-1987 (0.1 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 4: Exhibition Files, 1978-1994 (0.2 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 5: Professional Files, 1976-1994 (0.1 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 6: Teaching Files, 1977-1990 (0.4 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 7: Printed Material, 1973-1992 (0.3 Linear feet: Box 2)
- Series 8: Photographic Material, 1971-1987 (0.1 Linear feet: Box 2)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Native American artists
- Painting, Abstract
- Women artists
- Women educators
- Women painters
- Women printmakers

Names:

- University of California, Berkeley. Department of Art

Occupations:

- Educators -- California
- Painters -- California
- Printmakers -- California

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, 1977-1991

3 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Biographical Material contains versions of Lark's resumes spanning the course of her career as well as an interview transcript conducted by Lita S. Whitesel for The Journal of the National Education Association's Women's Caucus. Also found is an award certificate from The College Art Association of America for Distinguished Teaching of Art.

Box 1, Folder 1	Resumes, circa 1980-1997
Box 1, Folder 2	"Personal Profile: Interview with Sylvia Lark" Interview by Lita S. Whitesel, 1977
Box 1, Folder 3	The College Association of America Distinguished Teaching of Art Award Certificate, 1991

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1976-1991

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Correspondence consist of a mix of letters to and from Lark with galleries, city art departments, Native American organizations, and other artists regarding various exhibitions, conferences and engagements. Notable correspondence include Jim Melchert, Edgar Heap of Birds and Kay WalkingStick. Additional letters include grant notice letters from the National Endowment of the Art's fellowship program as well as letters related to Lark's petition for professorial appointment and eventual tenure promotion at the University of California, Berkeley. The series is arrange alphabetically.

Box 1, Folder 4	A, 1982-1985
Box 1, Folder 5	University of California, Berkeley Printmaking Professor Letters of Recommendation, 1977
Box 1, Folder 6	University of California, Berkeley Printmaking Professor Application Letters to Jerrold Ballaine from Sylvia Lark, 1977
Box 1, Folder 7	University of California, Berkeley Tenure Case Correspondence, 1978-1980
Box 1, Folder 8	B, 1983-1987
Box 1, Folder 9	College Art Association of America Distinguished Teaching of Art Award Nomination Letters, 1989-1991
Box 1, Folder 10	C, 1982-1988
Box 1, Folder 11	Rolf Eiselin, 1983
Box 1, Folder 12	F, circa 1977-1987
Box 1, Folder 13	G, circa 1983-1987
Box 1, Folder 14	Edgar Heap of Birds, 1982-1983
Box 1, Folder 15	H, 1983-1984, 1988
Box 1, Folder 16	K, 1985
Box 1, Folder 17	L, 1979
Box 1, Folder 18	Jim Melchert, circa 1977, 1983
Box 1, Folder 19	M, 1983-1989
Box 1, Folder 20	National Endowment for The Arts, 1976-1987

Box 1, Folder 21	N, 1985
Box 1, Folder 22	O, 1983
Box 1, Folder 23	P, 1982-1983
Box 1, Folder 24	Q, 1982-1984
Box 1, Folder 25	Letter to Conrad Ross from Sylvia Lark, 1987
Box 1, Folder 26	Letters to Alan Stone from Sylvia Lark, 1980-1982
Box 1, Folder 27	S, 1982-1984
Box 1, Folder 28	Thomas Center Gallery, 1986-1987
Box 1, Folder 29	U, 1983-1987
Box 1, Folder 30	V, 1983-1985
Box 1, Folder 31	W, 1982-1988
Box 1, Folder 32	Yellowstone Art Center, 1985
Box 1, Folder 33	Letters to Esther Zahn from Sylvia Lark, 1977
Box 1, Folder 34	Miscellaneous Letters from Sylvia Lark, Last Name Unsigned, 1977, 1984
Box 1, Folder 35	Miscellaneous, Last Name Unsigned, circa 1982-1987

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Series 3: Writings, 1975-1987

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Writings contain statements by Sylvia Lark on her artistic process as well monotyping. Other writings by Lark include notes on various topics related to her career such as an exhibition installation, faculty rankings and corresponding salaries, reminders to contact the Archives of American Art, and lists of catalogs and articles written about her. Additionally there are two essay manuscripts about her artwork written by artist Dan Nadaner.

Box 1, Folder 36	Artist Statements, circa 1985
Box 1, Folder 37	Statements on Monotyping, circa 1978
Box 1, Folder 38	Artwork List and Installation Notes, circa 1976-1978
Box 1, Folder 39	Catalog and Press Mention List, 1975
Box 1, Folder 40	Professor Professional Step Notes, circa 1977-1980
Box 1, Folder 41	Archives of American Art Contact Notes, circa 1982
Box 1, Folder 42	Essay Manuscripts on Sylvia Lark by Dan Nadaner, circa 1987
Box 1, Folder 43	Miscellaneous Notes, circa 1981-1986

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Series 4: Exhibition Files, 1978-1994

0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Exhibition Files document select solo and group exhibitions that Lark participated in spanning across her career. Materials include correspondence, contracts, price lists and printed materials. Also included is documentation related to the planning of a tribute exhibition of Lark's work.

Box 1, Folder 44	Chicago Installation (Aug. 28 - Sept. 1, 1978), N.A.M.E Gallery, 1978-1979
Box 1, Folder 45	Sylvia Lark, Paintings and Recent Monotypes (Nov. 1 - Dec. 3, 1983), Jeremy Stone Gallery, 1982-1983
Box 1, Folder 46	Sylvia Lark & Emmi Whitehorse: Mixed Media (Apr. 8 - May 10, 1983), Akmak Galerie, 1983
Box 1, Folder 47	Contemporary Native American Art (Oct. 1 - 28, 1983), Gardiner Art Gallery, 1982-1985
Box 1, Folder 48	Sylvia Lark Paintings (Apr. 30 - Jun. 1, 1985), Jeremy Stone Gallery, 1985
Box 1, Folder 49	Women of Sweetgrass, Cedar and Sage (Jun. 1 - 30, 1985), American Community Gallery, 1985
Box 1, Folder 50	Contemporary Art: 30,000 B.C. to the Present (Sept. 17 - Oct. 19, 1985), San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art, 1985
Box 1, Folder 51	American Women in Art: Works on Paper and American Album (Jul. 1985), United Nations Conference on Women, Nairobi Kenya, 1985
Box 1, Folder 52	Sylvia Lark Solo Exhibition of Paintings (Nov. 12 - Dec. 7, 1985), Galerie Hartje, 1985
Box 1, Folder 53	Art of Seventh Generation (May 11 - Jul. 13, 1986), Roberson Center for the Arts and Sciences, 1985-1986
Box 1, Folder 54	U.C. Prints: Printmaking at University of California, Berkeley since 1950 (Sept. 4 - Oct. 19, 1986), Civic Arts Gallery, 1986
Box 1, Folder 55	California Printmaking (Nov. 1 - Dec. 13, 1987), Lang Art Gallery, 1987
Box 1, Folder 56	The Ethnic Idea, An Artistic Genesis (1987), Berkeley Art Center, 1987
Box 1, Folder 57	Native Proof: Contemporary American Indian Artists in Print (May 11 - Jul. 8, 1989), American Indian Contemporary Arts, 1989
Box 1, Folder 58	Sylvia Lark Watercolors (Sept. 12 - Oct. 13, 1990), Jeremy Stone Gallery, 1990

Box 1, Folder 59	Casting Light; Acknowledging the Shadow: a Tribute to Sylvia Lark (Sept. 1992), Museum of Art, Washington State University, 1988-1992
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Box 1, Folder 60	The Women's Mentor Show (May 5 - Jun. 11, 1994), San Francisco Art Commission Gallery, 1994
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Series 5: Professional Files, 1976-1994

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Professional Files include materials documenting Lark's involvement serving as a juror for various exhibitions, her membership and participation in various professional organizations and her financial records. Materials include Jeremy Stone Gallery's records of the sale, consignment, donation and loan of Lark's work, as well as invoices from the gallery to Lark. Also found are shipping records and other documents related to the creation and sale of Lark's work such as artwork inventory lists, and grant applications.

Box 1, Folder 61	Women's Caucus for Art Membership, 1983-1985
Box 1, Folder 62	California Society of Printmakers International Show Exhibition Jury, 1983
Box 1, Folder 63	Transcending Confines (Apr. 1 - 30, 1989), Matrix Gallery Exhibition Jury, 1989
Box 1, Folder 64	Order and Intuition: Aspects of Bay Area Abstract Painting (Jan. 15 - Mar. 5, 1989), Exhibition Lecture Agreement, 1988-1989
Box 1, Folder 65	Jeremy Stone Gallery Records, 1983-1992
Box 1, Folder 66	E.B. Crocker Gallery Price List, 1983
Box 1, Folder 67	Consignment, Shipping and Loan Records, 1983-1987
Box 1, Folder 68	Fulbright Grant Application and Award, 1976-1977
Box 1, Folder 69	National Endowment of the Arts Grant Applications, circa 1979-1985
Box 1, Folder 70	Art Against AIDS Artwork Donation, 1989
Box 1, Folder 71	Charity Auction Artwork Donation Records, 1983-1986
Box 1, Folder 72	Rights of Image Publication Agreement, 1994

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Series 6: Teaching Files, 1977-1990

0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Teaching files include student evaluations, course schedules, University of California, Berkeley employment documents, correspondence and reports regarding Lark's tenure case, U.C. Berkeley personnel informational paperwork, faculty grant and fellowship documents and sabbatical leave applications and awards.

Box 1, Folder 73	University of California, Berkeley Employment Appointment, 1977
Box 1, Folder 74	University of California, Berkeley Retirement Savings and Insurance Benefit Summary, 1984-1985
Box 1, Folder 75	University of California, Berkeley Faculty Roster and Class Schedules, 1984-1986
Box 1, Folder 76	University of California, Berkeley Art Department Organizational Chart, 1984
Box 1, Folder 77	University of California, Berkeley Faculty Committee Assignments, 1984
Box 1, Folder 78	Class Rosters, 1984
Box 1, Folder 79	Student Course Evaluations, 1977-1978
Box 1, Folder 80	Provost Art Department Review and Response Reports, 1982-1983
Box 1, Folder 81	Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Academic Affirmative Action Report, 1981-1982
Box 1, Folder 82	University of California, Berkeley Art Department Mini-Grant Application, 1977-1978
Box 1, Folder 83	University of California, Berkeley Faculty Research Grant, 1980, 1988-1990
Box 1, Folder 84	Regents' Junior Faculty Fellowship Application and Award, 1978
Box 1, Folder 85	Humanities Research Fellowship Applications and Awards, 1982-1986
Box 1, Folder 86	Sabbatical Project Applications and Awards, 1982-1989
Box 1, Folder 87	University of California, Berkeley Professor Appointment and Promotion Guidelines, 1977
Box 1, Folder 88	University of California, Berkeley Promotion Preparation Documents, circa 1984-1985
Box 1, Folder 89-91	University of California, Berkeley Tenure Review and Misconduct Case, circa 1977-1980

Box 1, Folder 92 Faculty Retention: "Survival at Berkeley" Conference, 1979

Box 1, Folder 93 Miscellaneous University of California, Berkeley Documents, circa 1984-1990

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Series 7: Printed Material, 1973-1992

0.3 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Printed Material primarily consists of newspaper and magazine clippings reviewing Lark's exhibitions. Also found are exhibition announcements, flyers and catalogs as well as compiled articles and announcements related to professional activities such as participation in conferences and lecture series.

Box 2, Folder 1	San Francisco Museum of Modern Art Artists' Soap Box Derby, 1978
Box 2, Folder 2	Prints: New Points of View (1979), Exhibition Curated by Sylvia Lark, 1979
Box 2, Folder 3	Bhirasri Institute of Modern Art Exhibition, 1980
Box 2, Folder 4	National Women's Caucus of Art Annual Art Conference, 1981
Box 2, Folder 5	New Orleans Women's Caucus for Art, 1983
Box 2, Folder 6	Modern Native American Abstraction (1983), Philadelphia Art Alliance Exhibition Ephemera, 1982-1983
Box 2, Folder 7	California Society of Printmakers, 1984
Box 2, Folder 8	Exhibition Catalogs, 1985, 1987
Box 2, Folder 9	Exhibition Catalog Excerpts, circa 1979-1987
Box 2, Folder 10	Exhibition Flyers and Announcements, 1975-1987
Box 2, Folder 11-13	Newspaper and Magazine Clippings, 1973-1992
Box 2, Folder 14	Miscellaneous Printed Material, 1983-1989

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Series 8: Photographic Material, 1971-1987

0.1 Linear feet (Box 2)

Scope and Contents: Photographic material includes black and white photographs of Lark's artwork as well as photographs Lark took while on her Fulbright trip to Korea and Japan. Also found are photocopies of negatives from an art performance Lark participated in and photocopies of slides of her artwork.

Box 2, Folder 15	Photographs of Artwork, 1977-1979
Box 2, Folder 16	Fulbright Travel Photographs, 1977-1979
Box 2, Folder 17	Photocopies of Wisconsin Performance Negatives, 1971
Box 2, Folder 18	Photocopies of Slides, circa 1977-1987

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