

# A Finding Aid to the Michael Simon Papers, circa 1965-2020, in the Archives of American Art

Sabine Lipten

2022 August 8

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/

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#### **Collection Overview**

Repository: Archives of American Art

Title: Michael Simon papers

**Date:** circa 1965-2020

Identifier: AAA.simomich

Creator: Simon, Michael, 1947-

**Extent:** 4.3 Linear feet

50.74 Gigabytes

Language: English .

**Summary:** The Michael Simon papers measure 4.3 linear feet and 50.74

gigabytes and date from circa 1965-2020. The collection documents Simon's career as a ceramicist and educator. Included is printed material related to Simon consisting of publications, articles and exhibition ephemera; personal and professional correspondence with colleagues and galleries; letters from Warren MacKenzie; digital video recordings on his friends and mentors Warren Mackenzie and Ron Meyers; teaching files; writings by Simon and others; biographical information; exhibition checklists and forms; slides and photographs of works of art by Simon and others, Simon at work in his studio, friends, family and travel; materials relating to the book *Michael Simon: Evolution* edited by Susan Stokes Roberts; personal and financial information; lectures, including video and audio recordings; gallery talks and sales; kiln construction and documentation; glaze and clay body notes and recipes; and sketches. A portion of this material is in

electronic format.

#### **Administrative Information**

#### **Acquisition Information**

Donated in 2022 by Susan S. Roberts, Michael Simon's widow.

#### Related Materials

The Archives of American Art also holds a 2005 September 27-28 oral history interview with Michael Simon.

#### Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Sabine Lipten in 2022.

### **Preferred Citation**

Michael Simon papers, circa 1965-2020. 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. Archival audiovisual recordings must be digitized for research access. Researchers may access digitized audiovisual materials in the Archives' Washington, D.C. or New York, N.Y. Research Centers by appointment.

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## **Biographical / Historical**

Michael Simon (1947-2021) was a functional ceramicist and educator in Georgia. Originally from Minnesota, Simon earned his B.F.A from the University of Minnesota where he was a student of Warren MacKenzie. After receiving his B.F.A in 1970, Michael moved and set up a studio in Athens, GA, and would go on to receive his M.F.A from University of Georgia in 1980. That same year he built his own kiln and began keeping a pot from each kiln load to document his work's development. Throughout his career, his works were usually fired in salt kilns featuring motifs of nature and animals. His work has been shown in multiple exhibitions including a 2011 retrospective at The Northern Clay Center entitled *Michael Simon: A Life in Pots* covering 30 years of his pottery. In addition to numerous exhibitions, Simon taught several workshops at schools, galleries and studios across the country including at the Arrowmont school in Tennessee, and the Penland School and Cedar Creek Gallery in North Carolina. As well as abroad in Chile and Italy.

In 2011, Simon published his book *Michael Simon: Evolution* which was edited, and art directed by Susan Stokes Roberts, an award-winning designer, artist and Michael Simon's wife.

## **Scope and Contents**

The Michael Simon papers measure 4.3 linear feet and 50.74 gigabytes and date from circa 1965-2020. The collection documents Simon's career as a ceramicist and educator. Included is biographic material comprised of resumes, Simon's MFA diploma from University of Georgia and and an adapted version of an interview conducted by Mark Shapiro in September 2005 for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, as well as personal and professional correspondence with some original letters from Simon to others. Also included are wedding invitations, greeting cards and photographs from friends and family. Writings include a manuscript for his book *Evolution*, artist statements, lecture notes and video recordings, his M.F.A thesis, and notes on Warren Mackenzie. Also found are writings by others such as magazine article drafts and an NPR interview transcript with Warren Mackenzie where Michael Simon is mentioned. An annotated transcript and digital video recording of a University of Minnesota Panel Discussion and an annotated transcript of a Warren Mackenzie lecture and cassette tape recording at the Minnesota Historical Society is also included.

Professional Files document exhibition, publishing, financial and workshop records and recordings. Some documentation of exhibitions, and workshops are in born-digital and audio recorded form. Other materials include studio files regarding the construction and operation of kilns, as well as glaze and slip recipes. Studio files also document Michael Simon's website. Photographic materials make up the bulk of the collection and consist of photographs, including inkjet prints, negatives and slides of Michael Simon, his artwork, workshops, including his 1994 workshop and trip to Chile. Also found are photographs documenting the construction of his salt fire kiln and studio in Georgia, as well as photographs and slides of family, friends, and

work by other ceramicists. The papers also include sketches and printed material consisting of magazine features and news clippings on Michael Simon, his book *Evolution*, and other artists including Warren Mackenzie. Additionally, there are exhibition catalogs, pamphlets, and invitation for both Simon and other ceramicists and reference books and articles on other artists. A portion of this material is in electronic format.

## **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged as eight series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1982-2006 (0.1 Linear feet: Box 1; 0.087 Gigabytes: ER0001)
- Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1968-2016 (0.4 Linear feet: Box 1)
- Series 3: Writings, circa 1965-2020 (0.2 Linear feet: Box 1; 4.37 Gigabytes: ER0002-ER0003)
- Series 4: Professional Files, circa 1993-2014 (0.2 Linear feet: Box 1, OV; 30.5 Gigabytes: ER0004-ER0009)
- Series 5: Studio Records, circa 1965-2020 (0.2 Linear feet: Box 1-2)
- Series 6: Printed Material, circa 1973-2020 (0.6 Linear feet: Box 2; 8.73 Gigabytes: ER0010-ER0012)
- Series 7: Photographic Material, circa 1965-2020 (1.8 Linear feet: Box 2-4; 7.06 Gigabytes: ER0013-ER0018)
- Series 8: Artwork, circa 1965-2020 (0.1 Linear feet: Box 4)

## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

American studio craft movement

Names:

MacKenzie, Warren, 1924-2018 Roberts, Susan Stokes

Occupations:

Ceramicists -- Georgia Educators -- Georgia

## **Container Listing**

## Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1982-2006

0.1 Linear feet (Box 1)

0.087 Gigabytes (ER0001)

Scope and Contents:

Biographical material include resumes, Simon's MFA diploma from the University of Georgia and an adapted version of an interview conducted by Mark Shapiro in Spetember 2005 for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art. A digital copy of this adapted interview as well as digital photographs from Mark Shapiro's visit to Michael Simon's studio are also found here.

Box 1, Folder 1	Curriculum Vitae and Resumes, circa 2000-2006
Box 1, Folder 2	Diploma, Master of Fine Arts, University of Georgia, 1982
Box 1, Folder 3	"Michael Simon, An America Potter" Adapted Interview by Mark Shapiro, 2005 Includes born-digital records, see ER0001  Notes: Adapted from an interview conducted by Mark Shapiro in Spetember 2005 for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art.
Folder ER0001	Studio Visit Images and Interview Transcript, Digital Photographs and Document, 2005, 2010 0.087 Gigabytes (38 Computer Files)

## Series 2: Correspondence, circa 1968-2016

## 0.4 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents:

Correspondence is comprised primarily of received mail and email with various professional and personal contacts, with some original letters from Simon to others. Correspondence with Warren Mackenzie includes holiday newsletters, invitations to exhibitions and personal notes, indicative of the friendship between Simon and Mackenzie. Also included are wedding invitations, greeting cards and photographs from friends and family.

Box 1, Folder 4	A, 2004, 2013
Box 1, Folder 5	Posey Bacopoulos, circa 2009
Box 1, Folder 6	B, circa 1977-2016
Box 1, Folder 7	C, 1997-2005
Box 1, Folder 8	D, 1977, 2009-2013
Box 1, Folder 9	Earth and Fire Gallery, 2004
Box 1, Folder 10	Evolution Book Planning and Letter about Susan Roberts, circa 2009-2012
Box 1, Folder 11	F, 1999-2011
Box 1, Folder 12	Silvie Granatelli, circa 1995-2009
Box 1, Folder 13	G, circa 1988-2012
Box 1, Folder 14	Sheila Hoffman from Michael Simon, 2011
Box 1, Folder 15	Janet Koplos, Editor of Art in America from Michael Simon, circa 1985
Box 1, Folder 16	J, 1992, 2004
Box 1, Folder 17	K, circa 1993-2012
Box 1, Folder 18	L, circa 1977-2013
Box 1, Folder 19-20	Warren Mackenzie, circa 1975-2015
Box 1, Folder 21	Warren Mackenzie Photocopies, circa 1975
Box 1, Folder 22	Warren Mackenzie including draft letter from Michael Simon, circa 2009-2015
Box 1, Folder 23	M, 1977-2013
Box 1, Folder 24	McCollister's Transportation Group, circa 1997-2011

Box 1, Folder 25	N, circa 2002-2015
Box 1, Folder 26	O, circa 1968, 1996-1997
Box 1, Folder 27	P, circa 2011
Box 1, Folder 28	Letter to Susan Roberts from her mother, 2001
Box 1, Folder 29	R, 1977-2015
Box 1, Folder 30	S, circa 1976-2016
Box 1, Folder 31	Trax Gallery, 2006-2013
Box 1, Folder 32	V, circa 2004-2016
Box 1, Folder 33	Westmont College, 2003-2004
Box 1, Folder 34	W, 2004, 2013
Box 1, Folder 35	Miscellaneous, Last Name Unsigned, circa 1976-2015

## Series 3: Writings and Lectures, circa 1965-2020

#### 0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

#### 4.37 Gigabytes (ER0002-ER0003)

Scope and Contents:

Writings include both published and unpublished writing projects by Simon and writings by others. Writings by Simon include a manuscript for his book *Evolution*, artist statements, lecture notes, his M.F.A thesis, and notes on Warren Mackenzie. Writings by others include Ceramic Monthly articles and associated correspondence, and an NPR interview transcript with Warren Mackenzie where Michael Simon is mentioned. An annotated transcript and digital video recording of a University of Minnesota Panel Discussion and an annotated transcript of a Warren Mackenzie lecture and cassette tape recording at the Minnesota Historical Society is also found here.

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Box 1, Folder 36	Address Labels and Notes, circa 1965-2020
Box 1, Folder 37	Article for Ceramics Monthly, circa 1983
Box 1, Folder 38	"Between The Universal and Personal", Glenn Brown Article, Drafts and Correspondence, circa 2002-2003 Includes born-digital records, see ER0002
Folder ER0002	Glen Brown Modified Text, Digital Document, 2010 0.001 Gigabytes (1 computer file)
Box 1, Folder 39	"Complexity in Simplicity" Lecture, 2014
Box 1, Folder 40	Evolution: Cups, Bowls, Jars Book Manuscript by Michael Simon, circa 2010
Box 1, Folder 41	Evolution Lecture, circa 2011
Box 1, Folder 42	Jacob Seltman on Michael Simon, circa 1987
Box 1, Folder 43	Master of Arts Thesis, University Georgia, 1982-1983
Box 1, Folder 44	Michael Simon Artist Statements, circa 1965-2020
Box 1, Folder 45	National Public Radio Interview with Warren Mackenzie Transcript, Michael Simon Mentioned, 2005
Box 1, Folder 46	Notes on Practice and Warren Mackenzie, circa 2003
Box 1, Folder 47	Origins on Influence, Earth and Fire Gallery (2003), Introduction Remarks, 2003
Box 1, Folder 48	Statements on Ceramics, circa 1992
Box 1, Folder 49	Trip to Chile Agenda, 1994
Box 1, Folder 50	Warren Mackenzie Lecture, Minnesota Historical Society (Sep. 1997), 1997

	Includes 1 sound cassette
Box 1, Folder 51	University of Minnesota Panel Discussion (Mar. 13, 2011) Transcript, 2011 Includes born-digital records, see ER0003
Folder ER0003	University of Minnesota Classmates Panel Discussion (Mar. 13, 2011), Digital Video Recording, 2022 4.37 Gigabytes (1 computer file)
Box 1, Folder 52	Miscellaneous Notes, circa 1965-2020

## Series 4: Professional Files, circa 1993-2014

0.3 Linear feet (Box 1, OV 1)

30.5 Gigabytes (ER0004-ER0009)

Scope and Contents:

Professional Files document exhibition, publishing, workshop and financial records. Included are exhibition contracts and loan agreements, grant, and fellowship applications; as well as records related to the valuation and sale of ceramics. Also found is documentation surrounding the planning, publishing, and distribution of Simon's book *Michael Simon: Evolution*. Some documentation of Simon's 2013 exhibition *Pick of the Kiln* are in born-digital form including installation photographs and various edits of a digital video recording of a workshop accompanying the exhibition. Digital and videocassette recordings of Simon's 1997 workshop at Cedar Creek Gallery, in Creedmore, North Carolina are also found here. Additional born-digital records include respective recordings of a Michael Simon and Ron Meyers joint workshop and pottery sale.

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Box 1, Folder 53	Ceramic Sales Records, circa 1994-2009
Box 1, Folder 54	Design and Crafted (2014), Museum of Design Atlanta, Curated by Michael Simon, 2014
Box 1, Folder 55	Evolution Book Distribution and Marketing, circa 2011
Box 1, Folder 56	Exhibition Inventory Lists with Insurance Values and Label Sheet, 1993, Circa 2013
Box 1, Folder 57	Exhibitions and Book Planning, circa 2009-2013
Box 1, Folder 58	Loan Agreement and Exhibition Contracts, 1999-2004
Box 1, Folder 59	Michael Simon Retrospective (Mar May 2011), Northern Clay Center Exhibition Inventory, circa 2011
Box 1, Folder 60	Michael Simon Workshop Cedar Creek, Creedmore N.C., 1997 2 Videocassettes (VHS) Includes born-digital records, see ER0004
Folder ER0004	Michael Simon Workshop Cedar Creek, Creedmore N.C., (Jan. 25, 1997), Digital Video Recording, 2022 4.08 Gigabytes (1 computer file)
Box 1, Folder 61	National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and La Napule Art Foundation Fellowship Invitation, 1990
Box 1, Folder 62	Pick of the Kiln: The Work of Michael Simon (Jul Sept. 2013), Roush Gallery, Georgia Museum of Art, Exhibition Documents, 2013 Includes born-digital records, see ER0005-ER0007
Folder ER0005	Michael Simon Georgia Museum of Art Pick of the Kiln Digital Photographs, 2005-2013

	1.7 Gigabytes (38 computer files)
Folder ER0006	Michael Simon Georgia Museum of Art Pick of the Kiln Digital Video Recording (Various Edits), 2022 11.4 Gigabytes (8 computer files)
Folder ER0007	Michael Simon Visits Ted Saupe's class Digital Video Recording, Footage Used in Pick of the Kiln (2013), 2022 9.3 Gigabytes (3 computer files)
Box 1, Folder 63	Receipts and Expenses, circa 1994
Folder ER0008	Ron Meyers and Michael Simon American Pottery Festival Workshop (2010), Digital Video Recording, 2022 2.45 Gigabytes (1 computer file)
Folder ER0009	Ron Meyers and Michael Simon Pottery Sale (1999) Digital Video Recording, 2022 1.56 Gigabytes (1 computer file)
Oversize 5	Susan Roberts and Michael Simon Exhibition Text Sign, Oversized, circa 1965-2020
Box 1, Folder 64	Windgate Charitable Grant Foundation, circa 2011-2013

Series 5: Studio Records

Michael Simon papers

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## Series 5: Studio Records, circa 1965-2020

## 0.2 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents:

Studio documents include technical files regarding the construction and operation of kilns, as well as glaze and slip recipes. In addition there is documentation on Michael Simon's

website.

Box 1, Folder 65	Glaze Recipe Notebook, circa 1965-2020
Box 2, Folder 1-3	Glaze, Firing and Claybody Recipes and Notes, circa 1979-1994
Box 2, Folder 4	Kilns, Notes and Construction Diagrams, 1965-2008
Box 2, Folder 5	Michael Simon Pottery Website, circa 2002-2004
Box 2, Folder 6	Penland School Glaze and Slips Recipes and Notes, circa 1985-1996

## Series 6: Printed Material, circa 1973-2020

0.6 Linear feet (Box 2)

8.73 Gigabytes (ER10-ER12)

Scope and Contents:

Printed material is made up of magazine features and news clippings on Michael Simon, other artists including Warren Mackenzie, and his book *Michael Simon: Evolution*. Also found are exhibition catalogs, pamphlets, and invitations for both Simon and other ceramicists, as well as reference books and articles on other artists. Also included are digital video recordings on Warren Mackenzie and Ron Meyers as well as a digital recording of a Ron Meyers lecture.

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Box 2, Folder 7	Evolution Book Reviews, 2011-2012	
Box 2, Folder 8-9	Exhibition Catalogs and Pamphlets, Michael Simon, 1986-2013	
Box 2, Folder 10-11	Exhibition Catalogs and Pamphlets, Other Artists, circa 1974-2014	
Box 2, Folder 12	Exhibition Invitations, Michael Simon, circa 1996-2013	
Box 2, Folder 13-14	Exhibition Invitations, Other Artists, circa 1987-2016	
Box 2, Folder 15	"Function - Non Function" Debate Between Wayne Higby and Warren Mackenzie in Ceramics Monthly, 1986-1987	
Box 2, Folder 16-17	Magazine Features, Michael Simon, circa 1978-2006	
Box 2, Folder 18	Magazine Features, Other Artists, circa 1990	
Box 2, Folder 19	News Clippings, circa 1983-2004	
Box 2, Folder 20	Reference Books and Articles on Other Artists, circa 1973-2020	
Box 2, Folder 21	Ron Meyers and Michael Simon Sale Flyers, circa 1984-2004	
Folder ER0010	Ron Meyers and the Usual Suspects (2012), Digital Video Recording, 2022 2.24 Gigabytes (1 computer file)	
Folder ER0011	Ron Meyers Lecture, University of Minnesota (Sept. 4, 2008), Digital Video Recording, 2022 4.37 Gigabytes (1 computer file)	
Box 2, Folder 22	Warren Mackenzie: A Potter's Hand, 2013 Includes born-digital records, see ER0012	
Folder ER0012	Warren Mackenzie: A Potter's Hand Digital Video Recording, 2022 2.12 Gigabytes (1 computer file)	
Box 2, Folder 23-24	Warren Mackenzie Exhibition Catalogs, Newsclippings and Articles, circa 1976-2000	

Series 6: Printed Material Michael Simon papers
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Box 2, Folder 25 Miscellaneous Printed Materials, circa 2006-2012

## Series 7: Photographic Material, circa 1965-2020

#### 1.8 Linear feet (Box 2-4)

#### 7.06 Gigabytes (ER13-ER18)

Scope and Contents:

Photographic materials consist of photographs, including inkjet prints, negatives and slides of Michael Simon, his artwork, workshops, including his 1994 workshop and trip to Chile. Also included are photographs documenting the construction of his salt fire kiln and studio in Smithsonia, Georgia, as well as photographs and slides of family, friends and work by other ceramicists. Many files also include digital photographs of cermaics for *Michael Simon: Evolution*, and studio photography by Walker Montgomery.

Folder ER0013	Box and Pitcher Photographs for Ron Meyers' Student Exhibition (Feb. 25, 2008), University of North Texas, Digital Photographs, 2007 0.14 Gigabytes (4 computer files)
Box 2, Folder 26-27	Ceramics, circa 1982-2009
Box 2, Folder 28	Ceramics for Ron Meyers and Michael Simon Twenty Nine Oaks Sale Promotion, circa 1985-1996
Box 2, Folder 29	Chile Trip, 1994
Box 2, Folder 30	Evolution, Pots, Inkjet Prints, circa 2011 Includes born-digital records, see ER0013-ER0016
Folder ER0014	Evolution Book Photoshop Files, Digital Documents, 2004 0.086 Gigabytes (12 computer files)
Folder ER0015	Evolution Book Image JPGS and Descriptions, Digital Photographs and Document, 1998-2004, 2010 0.343 Gigabytes (358 computer files)
Folder ER0016	Evolution Book Image TIFFS, Digital Photographs, 2007-2010 5.25 Gigabytes (160 computer files)
Box 2, Folder 31	Last Firing at Smithsonia Kiln, Black and White Prints, 2005
Box 2, Folder 32	Last Firing at Smithsonia Kiln, Color Prints, 2005
Box 3, Folder 1	Michael Simon Portraits, circa 1980
Box 3, Folder 2	Michael Simon On The Wheel From Rick and Jennie Berman, circa 1956
Box 3, Folder 3	Michael Simon, Friends, Family and Studio, circa 1976-1996
Box 3, Folder 4	Michael Simon Workshop, 1987-2000
Box 3, Folder 5	Smithsonia Kiln Building, circa 1995

Box 3, Folder 6	Studio Photos for GA Magazine, circa 1965-2020
Folder ER0017	Studio Image JPGS by Walker Montgomery, Digital Photography, 2007 0.003 Gigabytes (18 computer files)
Folder ER0018	Studio Image TIFFS by Walker Montgomery, Digital Photography, 2007 1.24 Gigabytes (19 computer files)
Box 3, Folder 7	Walker Montgomery Prints of Pots Still in Michael Simon's Personal Collection, 2008 Includes born-digital records, see ER0017-ER0018
Box 3, Folder 8	Warren Mackenzie Portraits, Inkjet Prints, circa 2003
	Slides
Box 3, Folder 9-14	Assorted Ceramics, circa 1977-2006
Box 3, Folder 15	Cups, circa 1983-1984
Box 3, Folder 16	Cups and Persian Jars, circa 1970s-2000
Box 3, Folder 17	Early Salt Firing, circa 1981-1983
Box 3, Folder 18	Italian Ceramics, circa 1975-1985
Box 3, Folder 19	Kilns, circa 1979
Box 3, Folder 20-21	Light Impressions, circa 1978-2003
Box 3, Folder 22	Ron Meyers Ceramics, circa 1978-2003
Box 3, Folder 23	Michael Simon, Late 1970's, circa 1978-1979
Box 3, Folder 24-25	Michael Simon, Early 1980's, circa 1980-1982
Box 4, Folder 1-3	Michael Simon, Mid 1980's, circa 1985-1987
Box 4, Folder 4	Michael Simon, 1980s-1990s, circa 1985-1992
Box 4, Folder 5	Michael Simon, Autumn 2003, 2003
Box 4, Folder 6	Minnesota Potters, circa 1975-1981
Box 4, Folder 7	Old Pots, Pitchers and Jars, circa 1971-1984
Box 4, Folder 8	Pots Made by Other Potters, circa 1983-1998

Box 4, Folder 9	Pots Remaining in the Collection, circa 1983-2001
Box 4, Folder 10	Randy Johnson and Assorted Michael Simon, circa 1981-1983
Box 4, Folder 11	Ron Meyers and Michael Simon, circa 1974-1986
Box 4, Folder 12	University of Minnesota, circa 1971-1984
Box 4, Folder 13	Working on The Wheel and Assorted Ceramics, circa 1982-1987

Series 8: Artwork

Michael Simon papers

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## Series 8: Artwork, circa 1965-2020

0.1 Linear feet (Box 4)

Scope and Artwork consists of pen and pencil sketches of cermaic vessles, human faces and a

Contents: landscape.

Box 4, Folder 14 Sketches, circa 1965-2020