



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Elaine Sturtevant  
Papers, circa 1960-2014, bulk 1990-2014,  
in the Archives of American Art

Hilary Price

2018/12/19

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Elaine Sturtevant papers
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1960-2014 (bulk 1990-2014)
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.sturelai
<b>Creator:</b>	Sturtevant, 1924-2014
<b>Extent:</b>	5.2 Linear feet 0.003 Gigabytes
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of multi-media artist Elaine Sturtevant date from circa 1960-2014, with the bulk of material dating from the period of the artist's resurgence, 1990-2014. The collection measures 5.2 linear feet and 0.003 GB. The papers document Sturtevant's career and artistic process through correspondence with artists and curators, writings and illustrated notes, exhibition and catalog files, project files, and printed material. Sturtevant's voice and artistic mission emerge through the many items of correspondence, essays, and project notes in the collection. The collection also contains a few born-digital files of scans of exhibition photographs dating from the 1960s.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Donated to the Archives of American Art in 2018 by Loren Sturtevant, Elaine Sturtevant's daughter.

### Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Elaine Sturtevant conducted by Bruce Hainley and Michael Lobel in 2007.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Hilary Price in 2018.

### Preferred Citation

Elaine Sturtevant papers, circa 1960-2014. 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 in this collection must use access copies. Contact References Services for more information.

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## Biographical / Historical

Elaine Sturtevant (1924-2004) was a multi-media artist in New York and Paris known for her carefully inexact repetitions of others artists' works. She is sometimes called the "mother of appropriation art" for being among the first to question concepts such as originality, individual authorship, and plagiarism. Sturtevant had her first exhibition at the Bianchini gallery in New York in 1965, showing works resembling those of George Segal, Frank Stella, and Andy Warhol. While Sturtevant mainly withdrew from the art world in the 1970s, she reemerged in the mid-1980s and began exhibiting internationally. In the last decades of her career, Sturtevant worked increasingly in video and installation.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of multi-media artist Elaine Sturtevant date from circa 1960-2014, with the bulk of material dating from the period of the artist's resurgence, 1990-2014. The collection measures 5.2 linear feet and 0.003 GB. The papers document Sturtevant's career and artistic process through correspondence with artists and curators, writings and illustrated notes, exhibition and catalog files, project files, and printed material. Sturtevant's voice and artistic mission emerge through the many items of correspondence, essays, and project notes in the collection. The collection also contains a few born-digital files of scans of exhibition photographs dating from the 1960s.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as five series.

- Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1960-2011 (Box 1; 0.8 linear feet)
  - Series 2: Writings, 1980-2010 (Boxes 1-2; 0.2 linear feet)
  - Series 3: Exhibition and Catalog Files, 1980-2012 (Boxes 2,7, 1.3 linear feet; ER01, 0.003 GB)
  - Series 4: Project Files, 2000-2010 (Box 3; 0.3 linear feet)
  - Series 5: Printed Material, 1960-2014 (Boxes 3-6, OV 8; 2.6 linear feet)
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## Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Multimedia (Art)  
Women artists

Occupations:

Artists -- France -- Paris

Artists -- New York (State) -- New York

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1960-2011

#### 0.8 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Personal and professional correspondence is with artists, admirers, students, writers, museums, and galleries. Sturtevant composed many letters, especially her emails, in a distinct and short staccato style that is poem-like. Within her correspondence, she articulates her method and process, and repeatedly reminds others to refer to her only as Sturtevant. Notable correspondents include artists Marcel Duchamp, John Waters, Trisha Donnelly, Paul McCarthy, and one postcard from Yvonne Rainer. There is significant overlap between professional and personal correspondence, as her relationships with gallerists and curators spanned many years and often assumed a personal tone. See notes at the file level for additional detail.

Box 1, Folder 1	Art Forum, 2002-2010
Box 1, Folder 2	A, General, circa 2000-2010
Box 1, Folder 3	Galerie Daniel Blau, 2002-2005
Box 1, Folder 4	B, General, 1990-2010
Box 1, Folder 5	Carr, Adam, 2010
Box 1, Folder 6	Casino Luxembourg, 1999-2005
Box 1, Folder 7	Centre d'art contemporain (Abbaye Saint-André), 2009
Box 1, Folder 8	Chivaranond, Sylvia and Vergne, Phillippe, 2004-2008
Box 1, Folder 9	Crow, Thomas and Phillips, Catherine, 2002-2005
Box 1, Folder 10	C, General, 2007-2010
Box 1, Folder 11	Deichtorhallen Hamburg, 2004 Notes: Includes correspondence with Robert Fleck.
Box 1, Folder 12	Donnelly, Trisha, 2004-2011
Box 1, Folder 13	Duchamp, Marcel, 1968
Box 1, Folder 14	D, General, 1990s-2011
Box 1, Folder 15	École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts , 1993-1994

Box 1, Folder 16	E-F, General, 1990s-2010
Box 1, Folder 17	Fleck, Robert, 1996-2004 Notes: More correspondence with Fleck in the Deichtorhallen Hamburg folder.
Box 1, Folder 18	Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain, 2003
Box 1, Folder 19	Galerie Six Friedrich - Lisa Ungar, 2002
Box 1, Folder 20	G, General, 2004-2010
Box 1, Folder 21	Hainley, Bruce, 2004-2009
Box 1, Folder 22	Hayward Gallery, 2009
Box 1, Folder 23	Pat Hearn Gallery, 1998-1999
Box 1, Folder 24	Rhona Hoffman Gallery, 1990-2008
Box 1, Folder 25	Hoare, Philip, 2004-2006
Box 1, Folder 26	Hudek, Anthony, 2002-2010
Box 1, Folder 27	H, General, 1994-2009
Box 1, Folder 28	I-J, General, 2008-2009
Box 1, Folder 29	Kittleman, Udo, 2005-2009 Notes: More correspondence with Kittleman in the Museum für Moderne Kunst folder.
Box 1, Folder 30	Kramer, Mario, 2005-2010 Notes: More correspondence with Kramer in the Museum für Moderne Kunst folder.
Box 1, Folder 31	Galerie Krinzinger, 1997
Box 1, Folder 32	K, General, 1994-2010
Box 1, Folder 33	Lobel, Michael, 2000-2008
Box 1, Folder 34	L, General, 1996-2009
Box 1, Folder 35	Manez, Paul, 1991-2006
Box 1, Folder 36	McCarthy, Paul, 1997-1998

Box 1, Folder 37	Museum für Moderne Kunst, 2003-2010 Notes: Includes correspondence with Udo Kittleman and Mario Kramer.
Box 1, Folder 38	Muzzey, Loren, 2004-2009
Box 1, Folder 39	M, General, 1994-2009
Box 1, Folder 40	N, General, 2000-2010
Box 1, Folder 41	Office for Contemporary Art Norway, 2008-2009
Box 1, Folder 42	Obrist, Hans Ulrich, 2008-2009
Box 1, Folder 43	O, General, 1969-1971, 2004-2009
Box 1, Folder 44	Pace/MacGill Gallery, 2001-2002
Box 1, Folder 45	P, General, 1971, 1991-2011
Box 1, Folder 46	Rapp, Julie, 2001
Box 1, Folder 47	Anthony Reynolds Gallery, 2005-2010
Box 1, Folder 48	Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, 1994-2008
Box 1, Folder 49	Rosenblum, Robert, 1998
Box 1, Folder 50	Perry Rubenstein Gallery, 2005-2006
Box 1, Folder 51	R, General, circa 1960, 1991-2009
Box 1, Folder 52	Serpentine Gallery, 1991, 2008-2009
Box 1, Folder 53	S, General, 1994-2011
Box 1, Folder 54	Tate Modern, 2001-2009 Notes: Includes correspondence with Catherine Wood and Stuart Comer.
Box 1, Folder 55	T, General, 2004-2009
Box 1, Folder 56	U-V, General, 1996-2011
Box 1, Folder 57	Wachs, Joel and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, 1998-2009
Box 1, Folder 58	Walker Art Center, 2008-2010
Box 1, Folder 59	Waters, John, 2003-2011



Box 1, Folder 60	White Chapel, 2008-2009
Box 1, Folder 61	Wyn Evans, Cerith, 2004-2009
Box 1, Folder 62	W, General, 1990-2011
Box 1, Folder 63	Y-Z, General, 2008-2010
Box 1, Folder 64	Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, 2000-2002
Box 1, Folder 65	Unidentified, Outgoing, 1972-2005
Box 1, Folder 66	Unidentified, circa 1968-2000s

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## Series 2: Writings, 1980-2010

### 0.2 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Writings include a wide variety of essays, prose, interviews, questionnaires, lecture notes, course descriptions, drafts, an illustrated notebook, as well as many notes, some of which are also illustrated. Writings by others include a few essays about Sturtevant. Additional writings related to specific projects can be found in Series 4: Project Files.

Box 1, Folder 67	First Draft Essays, 2000s
Box 1, Folder 68	Illustrated Notebook, circa 2000
Box 1, Folder 69	Interviews and Lecture Drafts, 1990s-2000s
Box 1, Folder 70	Notes for Artworks, 1990-2003
Box 2, Folder 1	Assorted Writings, Notes, and Drafts, 1980s-2000s
Box 2, Folder 2	Writings by Others, 1990s-2000s

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## Series 3: Exhibition and Catalog Files, 1980-2012

### 1.3 Linear feet (Boxes 2, 7)

#### 0.003 Gigabytes (ER01)

Scope and Contents: Exhibition and catalog files document Sturtevant's exhibitions beginning in the mid-1990s. Folders may contain correspondence with curators, exhibition layouts, object lists, notes and drawings, promotional material, reviews, and some photographic material. Drafts and mock-ups for exhibition catalogs, as well as a draft of Sturtevant's catalog raisonne are also arranged here. A few born-digital files contain scans of exhibition photographs dating from the 1960s.

Box 2, Folder 3	A Contemporary Tribute to Magritte (1996), 1995-1996
Box 2, Folder 4	Magic des Plastiques (1996), 1996
Box 2, Folder 5	Int./Ext. Visibilities (1998), 1998
Box 2, Folder 6	Faiseurs d'Histoires (1999), 1999
Box 2, Folder 7	Patchwork in Progress (1999), 1999
Box 2, Folder 8	Powerful Reversals (2000), 1999-2002
Box 2, Folder 9	Ça Va Aller (2001), 2002-2003
Box 2, Folder 10	TRADE (2001), 2001
Box 2, Folder 11-12	Shifting Mental Structures Catalog Mock-up, 2002
Box 2, Folder 13-14	The Dark Threat of Absence (2003), 2002-2005
Box 2, Folder 15	Mezzanin (2003), 2001-2004
Box 2, Folder 16-18	The Brutal Truth, 2003-2004
Box 7, Folder 1	The Brutal Truth, 2003-2005
Box 7, Folder 2	<a href="#">Catalog Raisonne Draft, 2004</a>
Box 2, Folder 19	Push and Shove (2005), 2005
Box 2, Folder 20	Le Consortium (2008), 2008
Box 2, Folder 21	Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2009), 2009
Box 2, Folder 22	Catalog Cover Mock-ups and Drawings for Announcements, 1980s-2000s
Box 2, Folder 23-24	General Exhibition Files, 1990s-2000s

Notes: Includes born-digital images, see ER01.

Folder ER01

General Exhibition Files, Born-Digital Images, 2012

0.003 Gigabytes (5 computer files)

Notes: Digital images are scans of exhibition installation photographs from the 1960s.

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## Series 4: Project Files, 2000-2010

### 0.3 Linear feet (Box 3)

Scope and Contents: Project files encompass book projects (apart from the catalogs filed in series 3), a detailed inventory of Sturtevant's archive prepared in 2004, a theatre project, and multiple video projects. Items include book mock-ups with images and text, notes and drawings, printed material, and related correspondence.

Book Mock-ups	
Box 3, Folder 1	"The Quixote, Incomplete Fragments", 2004
Box 3, Folder 2	"House of Horrors", 2000s
Box 3, Folder 3	"The Reluctant Indifference of Marcel Duchamp", 2000s
Box 3, Folder 4	"Sucked Out Content: The Dialectics of Thinking Series", 2000s
Box 3, Folder 5-7	Inventory, 2004
Box 3, Folder 8	Theatre Project, "Spinoza in Las Vegas", 2009-2010
Box 3, Folder 9	Video Projects, 2000s

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## Series 5: Printed Material, 1960-2014

### 2.6 Linear feet (Boxes 3-6, OV 8)

Scope and Contents: Printed material comprises half of the collection and documents Sturtevant's career through announcements, invitations, auction catalogs, brochures, magazine and newspapers clippings, exhibition catalogs, lecture flyers, a poster, press releases, periodicals including journals, newsletters, and small press magazines. Some clippings and catalog essays contain annotations by Sturtevant.

Box 3, Folder 10	<a href="#">Announcements and Invitations, 1960s, 1980s</a>
Box 3, Folder 11	Announcements and Invitations, 1990s
Box 3, Folder 12-16	Announcements and Invitations, 2000s
Box 3, Folder 17	Announcements and Invitations, 2010s
Box 4, Folder 1	Auction Catalogs, 1990-2004
Box 4, Folder 2	Brochures, 1998-2010
Box 4, Folder 3	Clippings, 1970s-1980s
Box 4, Folder 4-5	Clippings, 1990s
Box 4, Folder 6-8	Clippings, 2000s
Box 4, Folder 9	Clippings, 2010s
Box 4, Folder 10	Exhibitions Catalogs, 1985, 1990s
Box 4, Folder 11-15	Exhibitions Catalogs, 1990s
Box 5, Folder 1-3	Exhibitions Catalogs, 2000s
Box 5, Folder 4	Exhibitions Catalogs, 2000s-2010s
Box 5, Folder 5	Flyers for Lectures, 1999-2005
Box 5, Folder 6	Periodicals, 1980s
Box 6, Folder 1-2	Periodicals, 1980s-1990s
Box 6, Folder 3-4	Periodicals, 2000s
Oversize 8	Poster, circa 1992

Box 6, Folder 5	Press Releases, 2002-2011
Box 6, Folder 6	Publications, 1995-2000
Box 6, Folder 7	Assorted Printed Material, 2000s

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