



# Smithsonian

*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the The Girl Artists Records,  
circa 1980-1996, in the Archives of American Art

Sarah Mundy

2023/06/28

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	The Girl Artists records
<b>Date:</b>	1980-2004
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.thegarti
<b>Creator:</b>	The Girl Artists (Firm : Portland, Or.)
<b>Extent:</b>	1.51 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The Girl Artists records date from circa 1980 to 1996 and measure 1.51 linear feet. The collection documents the groups' performance artworks and the creation of the group through administrative and project files. Administrative files contain bylaws, founding documents, correspondence with Lucy Lippard and others, a photograph of the group at a reunion in 1996, group statements and resumes, and material regarding the groups' formation and the creation of their first performance titled <i>It's a Beach Party</i>. Project files consist of scripts, notes and notebooks for ideas and planning, drawings and sketches visualizing the performance area, mock-ups and props, prop lists, floor plans, photographic material of performances, and born-digital material. Performances documented include <i>Split Shift Cafe</i>, <i>TV Guidance</i>, <i>Matrons of the Arts</i>, <i>Shopping in America</i>, <i>Domestic Intrigue</i>, <i>Souvenirs</i>, <i>Free Portraits</i>, <i>30 Year Retrospective</i>, and <i>Getting into Modern Art</i>. There is a .01 linear foot unprocessed addition to this collection donated in 2023 that includes twenty letters and postcards written to Susan Martin from Char Breshgold, Cristina deGennaro, Lisa Siegel and Kathleen Clark regarding The Girl Artists projects <i>Shipping in America</i>, <i>Matrons of the Arts</i>, and <i>Souvenirs</i>. Materials date from circa 1983-1984.</p>

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The collection was donated in 2023 by Kathleen Clark on behalf of The Girl Artists.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed, and a finding aid prepared by Sarah Mundy in 2023.

### Preferred Citation

The Girl Artists records, circa 1980-1996. 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

The Girl Artists (1979-1997) was a performance group, consisting of Char Breshgold, Kathleen Clark, Cristina DeGennaro, Susan Martin, and Lisa Siegel active in Seattle, WA, and Portland, OR. The group performed multidimensional installation/performance works, which combined visual art techniques with live performance, audio recordings, and projected light.

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## Scope and Contents

The Girl Artists records date from circa 1980 to 1996 and measure 1.51 linear feet. The collection documents the groups' performance artworks and the creation of the group through administrative and project files.

Administrative files contain bylaws, founding documents, correspondence with Lucy Lippard and others, a photograph of the group at a reunion in 1996, group statements and resumes, and material regarding the groups' formation and the creation of their first performance titled *It's a Beach Party*.

Project files consist of scripts, notes and notebooks for ideas and planning, drawings and sketches visualizing the performance area, mock-ups and props, prop lists, floor plans, photographic material of performances, and born-digital material. Performances documented include *Split Shift Cafe*, *TV Guidance*, *Matrons of the Arts*, *Shipping in America*, *Domestic Intrigue*, *Souvenirs*, *Free Portraits*, *30 Year Retrospective*, and *Getting into Modern Art*.

Researchers should note that typed notes written by Kathleen Clark in 2023 were included in the donation and can be found in most of the folders. The notes provide context for the material contained in each folder.

There is a .01 linear foot unprocessed addition to this collection donated in 2023 that includes twenty letters and postcards written to Susan Martin from Char Breshgold, Cristina deGennaro, Lisa Siegel and Kathleen Clark regarding The Girl Artists projects *Shipping in America*, *Matrons of the Arts*, and *Souvenirs*. Materials date from circa 1983-1984.

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## Arrangement

This collection is arranged as 3 series.

- Series 1: Administrative Records, circa 1980-2004 (Box 1; 0.2 linear feet)

- Series 2: Project Files, 1980-1996 (Boxes 1-2, OV 3; 1.3 Linear feet)
- Series 3: Unprocessed Addition, 1983-1984 (box 4; .01 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:

Feminism and art  
Women artists

Names:

Clark, Kathleen  
Lippard, Lucy R.

Occupations:

Performance artists

Functions:

Artist groups

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Administrative Records, 1981-2004

#### 0.2 Linear feet (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: The series contains records relating to the establishment of The Girl Artists including bylaws, tax exempt material, and material for the groups' first performance titled *It's a Beach Party*. Other documents include correspondence from Lucy Lippard and fans, a hand painted group name to be used for t-shirts, group statements and resumes, and a photograph of the group at their 1996 reunion. A copy of the magazine *Heresies* featuring a layout designed by the group can be found in the correspondence folder.

Box 1, Folder 1	Bylaws and Official Documents, 1981-2004
Box 1, Folder 2	Corporate Embossed Seal, circa 1982
Box 1, Folder 3	Correspondence, circa 1982 Notes: Includes correspondence from Lucy Lippard and fan mail.
Box 1, Folder 4	Group Beginning History and It's a Beach Party, circa 1980
Box 1, Folder 5	Group Statements and Resumes, circa 1982
Box 1, Folder 6	Hand Painted Group Name for T-Shirts, circa 1982
Box 1, Folder 7	Photograph of The Girl Artists at Reunion of Portland, Oregon, 1996
Box 1, Folder 8	Tax Exempt Status Material, 1981-1983

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## Series 2: Project Files, 1980-1996

### 1.3 Linear feet (Boxes 1-2, OV 3)

**Scope and Contents:** The series documents the creation and execution of The Girl Artists' performance projects. Materials include scripts, props and prop lists, handmade postcards, audio and video plans, drawings and sketches of the performance set, correspondence with Susan Martin after her move to Oregon, photographs and slides of performances, and born-digital material containing unidentified audio, video, and photographic material.

Box 1, Folder 9	"Art/AIDS", 1987
Box 1, Folder 10	Digital Audio, Video, and Photos, circa 1990 1 USB flash drive
Box 1, Folder 11	Domestic Intrigue, Cassette Cues and Script, 1987
Box 1, Folder 12	Domestic Intrigue, Drafts, 1986
Box 1, Folder 13	Domestic Intrigue, Drafts and Ideas, 1986
Box 1, Folder 14	Domestic Intrigue, Funding, 1986-1987
Box 1, Folder 15-16	Domestic Intrigue, Notebooks, circa 1986 Notes: Includes 3 books containing notes on an NEA funding, ideas, and plans for the performance.
Box 1, Folder 17	Domestic Intrigue, Press and Promotional Material, 1987
Box 1, Folder 18	Free Portraits, 1981-1982
Box 1, Folder 19	Getting Into Modern Art, 1981
Box 1, Folder 20	The Girl Artists: A 30-Year Retrospective, Press, 1981-1982
Box 1, Folder 21	Matrons of the Arts, 1983 Notes: Includes postcard from Lucy Lippard.
Box 1, Folder 22	Multiple Projects, Notebook, circa 1981
Box 1, Folder 23	Multiple Projects, Photographs, 1984
Box 1, Folder 24-30	Multiple Projects, Photographic Materials, 1979-1996
Box 1, Folder 31	Printed Materials Regarding 2-D Works by The Girl Artists, 1980-1983
Box 1, Folder 32	Proposed Works, circa 1982

Box 1, Folder 33	Shopping in America, Press and Promotional Material, 1983-1984
Box 1, Folder 34	Shopping in America, Story and Segment Ideas, 1983-1984
Box 1, Folder 35	Shopping in America, Susan Martin's Letters, 1983 Notes: Martin moved to Portland but continued to work with The Girl Artists. The letters were written by Martin in response to recordings of meetings where ideas and projects were discussed by the rest of the group.
Box 1, Folder 36	Souvenirs, Correspondence and Administrative Records, 1985-1986 Notes: Includes letter from Lily Tomlin.
Box 1, Folder 37	Souvenirs, Ideas, 1984-1985
Box 2, Folder 1	Souvenirs, Ideas, 1984-1985
Box 2, Folder 2	Souvenirs, Press and Promotional Material, 1985-1986
Box 2, Folder 3	Souvenirs, Script, 1985
Oversize 3	Split Shift Cafe, Mock-Up, 1981
Box 2, Folder 4	Split Shift Cafe, Postcards, 1980-1981
Box 2, Folder 5	Split Shift Cafe, Press and Promotional Material, 1980-1981
Box 2, Folder 6	Split Shift Cafe, Prop Material, 1980-1981 Notes: Includes a menu, postcard mock-ups, and a book made for the gift shop titled "How to be a Cocktail Waitress."
Box 2, Folder 7	Split Shift Cafe, Slides, 1980-1981
Box 2, Folder 8	TV Guidance, Postcards, 1982
Box 2, Folder 9	TV Guidance, Press and Promotional Material, 1982
Box 2, Folder 10	TV Guidance, Story Notes, 1982

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## Series 3: Unprocessed Addition, 1983-1984

20 Items

Folder 4

Unprocessed Papers

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