



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Kathy Vargas Papers, circa 1965-2016, in the Archives of American Art

Sarah Mundy

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Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center.

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Kathy Vargas papers
Date:	circa 1965-2016
Identifier:	AAA.vargkath
Creator:	Vargas, Kathy
Extent:	10.8 Linear feet
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of San Antonio-based educator and photographer Kathy Vargas measure 10.8 linear feet and date from circa 1965-2016. Vargas's career is documented through biographical material, correspondence, writings and notes, project and exhibition files, professional files, and printed material.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The Kathy Vargas papers were donated in 2016 by Vargas.

Related Materials

Also found at the Archives of American Art is an oral history with Kathy Vargas conducted by Jacinto Quirarte, in San Antonio, Texas on November 7-25, 1997 for the Archives of American Art.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Sarah Mundy in 2019.

Preferred Citation

Kathy Vargas papers, circa 1965-2016. 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. Use of archival records with audiovisual records with no duplicate copies requires advance notice.

Biographical / Historical

Kathy Vargas (1950-) is an educator and photographer in San Antonio, Texas.

Vargas's early influences were the stories of her elder family members, Catholicism, and her uncle Antonio Valdez, a photographer. In the early 1970s, Vargas became acquainted with rock and roll photographers who introduced her to their world of professional photography. Her interest led to taking photography classes at the Southwest Craft Center

where she studied under photographer Tom Wright. She quickly became captivated with the art form and started freelancing as a rock and roll photographer. Around this time, Vargas also became familiar with Chicano art and the artist group Con Safo, co-founded by Mel Casas. Vargas and Casas maintained their friendship until his death.

In addition to attending the Southwest Craft Center, Vargas also attended San Antonio College. She went on to earn a Bachelor of Fine Art in 1981 and a Master of Fine Art in 1984 from the University of Texas in San Antonio. Vargas has exhibited her work, as well as curated numerous exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad, collaborating with colleagues such as Jim Goldberg, close friend Lucy Lippard, and others. Vargas is a professor and art department chair at the University of the Incarnate Word where she developed a Bachelor of Fine Art program for photography. Previously she was the Visual Arts Director at the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center.

Scope and Contents

The papers of San Antonio-based educator and photographer Kathy Vargas measure 10.8 linear feet and date from circa 1965-2016. Vargas's career is documented through biographical material, correspondence, writings and notes, project and exhibition files, professional files, and printed material.

The collection contains biographical materials, including a video recording of an interview, photographs of family and friends, and records for Vargas's studies at the University of Texas. Correspondence is with Lucy Lippard, Jim Goldberg, Jeff Perrone, colleagues, and others. Topics of professional correspondence includes exhibitions, publications, and residencies. Writings and notes that include five notebooks, manuscripts by Vargas and others, notes, and lecture and panel talks. Project and exhibition files document her work on major exhibitions of Chicano art, and include twelve sound recordings of interviews for the exhibition *Hospice: A Photographic Inquiry*. Other projects include the Guerrilla Girls Fotonovela and research on San Antonio shrines. Professional files document Vargas's activities on various boards and committees, employment, and for her work on selection panels. Printed material includes clippings, exhibition material, magazines, posters, and other publications.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as six series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1965-2014 (Boxes 1, 12; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1979-2014 (Boxes 1-5, 12; 4.0 linear feet)
- Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1985-2014 (Boxes 5-6; 1.0 linear feet)
- Series 4: Project and Exhibition Files, 1984-2004 (Boxes 6-8, 12; 2.0 linear feet)
- Series 5: Professional Files, 1975-2016 (Boxes 8-9; 1.0 linear feet)
- Series 6: Printed Material, 1974-circa 2010 (Boxes 9-12, OV 13; 2.4 linear feet)

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Latino and Latin American artists
Women artists
Women educators
Women photographers

Types of Materials:

- Interviews
- Sound recordings
- Video recordings

Names:

- Goldberg, Jim, 1953-
- Guerrilla Girls (Group of artists)
- Lippard, Lucy R.
- Perrone, Jeff

Occupations:

- Educators -- Texas -- San Antonio
- Photographers -- Texas -- San Antonio

Container Listing

Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1965-2014

0.4 Linear feet (Boxes 1, 12)

Scope and Contents: Biographical material includes two appointment books, awards and certificates, education records for the University of Texas in San Antonio, one video recording of an interview, and written interviews. Also included is a draft of a report on the Eleanor Heard survey of Latino art in San Antonio for which Vargas was interviewed. Photographs include Vargas at exhibition and political events, and with friends; photographs of her uncle, who was also a photographer; and one photograph by Christopher Rauschenberg.

Box 1, Folder 1-2 Appointment Books, 1994, 1997

Box 1, Folder 3-4 Awards and Certificates, 1979-2004

Box 12, Folder 1 Awards and Certificates, 2000

Box 1, Folder 5 Education, circa 1983

Box 12, Folder 1 Education, 1981-1984

Box 1, Folder 6 Interviews, 1996-2014

Box 1, Folder 7 Interview, "What Follows... Mixing It Up III", 1990
1 Videocassettes (VHS)

Box 1, Folder 8-9 Photographs, circa 1965-circa 2000

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Series 2: Correspondence, 1979-2014

4 Linear feet (Boxes 1-5, 12)

Scope and Contents: The series contains Kathy Vargas's correspondence with Allan D. Coleman, Jim Goldberg, Lucy Lippard, Chon A. Noriega, Jeff Perrone, May Stevens, Kay Turner, and colleagues and collectors, as well as correspondence regarding donations, exhibitions, publications, and residencies and grants.

Box 1, Folder 10	Business, 1981-2006
Box 1, Folder 11	Coleman, Allan D., 1992-1998
Box 1, Folder 12-18	Colleagues, 1988-2014
Box 2, Folder 1-2	Collectors, 1994-2012
Box 2, Folder 3-4	Community and Community Awards, 1985-2004
Box 2, Folder 5-7	Donations, 1991-2013
Box 2, Folder 8-15	Exhibitions, 1979-2014
Box 3, Folder 1-12	Exhibitions, 1979-2014 Notes: Includes records for exhibitions of Vargas's work organized by Juan Bruce Novoa, Con Safo, <i>Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation</i> (CARA), and other exhibitions.
Box 3, Folder 13	Goldberg, Jim, 1996-1997
Box 3, Folder 14	Internet, Regarding, 1995-2002
Box 3, Folder 15-16	Lippard, Lucy, 1987-2012 Notes: Includes post cards, illustrated envelopes, photographs of travel to Oaxaca in Mexico, and a photographs album of Vargas's trip to New Mexico to visit Lippard.
Box 4, Folder 1-3	Lippard, Lucy, 1987-2012
Box 12, Folder 1	Lippard, Lucy, circa 1989
Box 4, Folder 4	Noriega, Chon A., 1993
Box 4, Folder 5-9	Panels, Lectures, and Talks, 1980-circa 2005
Box 4, Folder 10-11	Perrone, Jeff, 1984-1989
Box 4, Folder 12	Personal, circa 1995

Box 4, Folder 13	Publications, 1989-2012
Box 5, Folder 1	Publications, 1989-2012
Box 5, Folder 2	Residencies and Grants, 1991-2005
Box 5, Folder 3	Stevens, May, 2000-2001
Box 5, Folder 4	Turner, Kay, 1989-2013

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Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1985-2014

1 Linear foot (Boxes 5-6)

Scope and Contents: Writings include a commencement address, various lectures and panel talks that include three video recordings, manuscripts and drafts by Vargas and others that includes one electronic disc, five notebooks, and notes.

Box 5, Folder 5	Commencement Address, circa 1985
Box 5, Folder 6-7	Lectures, circa 1985-1994 Notes: Includes a videocassette recording of a telecourse titled "The New Patronage" at the University of California in Davis.
Box 5, Folder 10-16	Manuscripts and Drafts, circa 1985-circa 2014 Notes: Includes manuscripts and drafts for the book <i>Born of Resistance</i> ; an article in the journal <i>Nueva Luz</i> that also includes an electronic disc; a manuscript titled "A Gust of Wind Through the Mexican Apple Tree" for the <i>Revelaciones/Revelations</i> symposium; manuscripts, notes, and newspapers for articles published in <i>San Antonio Light</i> . Also included are manuscripts by Shifra M. Goldman and Amelia Malagamba-Ansotegui.
Box 5, Folder 17-20	Notebooks, circa 1990-circa 1997 Notes: Includes five notebooks with notes on artwork for exhibitions, lists of artwork, writings about empowerment and mentoring, contact information, and project notes.
Box 5, Folder 21-22	Notes, circa 2005 Notes: Includes notes on the preface by Vargas for the book <i>Available Light</i> . Also included is a published copy of the book along with sketches and other notes.
Box 6, Folder 1-2	Panels, circa 1990-2005 2 Videocassettes (VHS) Notes: Panels include "Lightning in a Bottle" at Texas State University and a panel in conjunction with the exhibition <i>Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation</i> at the Wight Art Gallery.

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Series 4: Project and Exhibition Files, 1984-2004

2 Linear feet (Boxes 6-8, 12)

Scope and Contents: The series consists of material for *American Voices*, *Chicano: An American Experience*, *Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge*, and *Intimate Lives: Work by Ten Contemporary Latina Artists*. Also included are files for a Blue Art Space exhibition, drawings for the Guerrilla Girls Fotonovela, Vargas's research on San Antonio shrines, and 12 sound recordings for the exhibition *Hospice: A Photographic Inquiry*.

Box 6, Folder 3-15	American Voices, 1992-2002 Notes: Includes letters with Robert Buitron and artists, artist lists, meeting notes, material for a Latino book, slides of artwork, and correspondence.
Box 12, Folder 1	American Voices, 1994
Box 6, Folder 16	Blue Art Space Exhibition, 2001
Box 6, Folder 17	Chicano: An American Experience, Consultant, 1999
Box 6, Folder 18	Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge, Panel Moderator, 2001-2004
Box 6, Folder 19	Guerrilla Girls Fotonovela, 1989
Box 7, Folder 1-11	Hospice: A Photographic Inquiry, circa 1995 Notes: Includes writings by hospice workers and relatives of patients, loan papers, correspondence, research material on death and hospice care, and 12 sound cassettes tapes of interviews.
Box 7, Folder 12-16	Intimate Lives: Work by Ten Contemporary Latina Artists, circa 1993 Notes: Includes slides of artwork, correspondence with artists, and the original proposal for the exhibition.
Box 8, Folder 1-5	San Antonio Shrines, 1984-1995 Notes: Includes research material and notes, slides, manuscripts, and records related to Vargas's participation in the Smithsonian Folklife Summer Institute as a Community Folklife Scholar.

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Series 5: Professional Files, 1975-2016

1 Linear foot (Boxes 8-9)

Scope and Contents: Vargas's professional files contain records for her membership on various boards and committees; her employment with the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, as a music photographer, and at the University of the Incarnate Word; Juan Bruce Novoa memorabilia, including photographs and printed material; and files for her work on selection panels.

Box 8, Folder 6-7	Board, Art Matters, 1992-2006
Box 8, Folder 8-9	Boards, Various, 1986-2013
Box 8, Folder 10	Committee, AIDS Fundraising, 1991
Box 8, Folder 8	Committee, Gateway San Antonio Public Art Project, 2004-2005
Box 8, Folder 12-14	Employment, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1987-2000
Box 8, Folder 15	Employment, Rock and Roll Photographer, 1975-1996
Box 8, Folder 16-17	Employment, University of the Incarnate Word, 2000-2016
Box 9, Folder 1-2	Employment, University of the Incarnate Word - Tenure and Promotion Presentation Book 1, circa 2002 Notes: The tenure and promotion presentation books contain correspondence, printed materials, and other documents that highlight Vargas's professional accomplishments.
Box 9, Folder 3-5	Employment, University of the Incarnate Word - Tenure and Promotion Presentation Book 2, circa 2002
Box 9, Folder 6	Novoa, Juan Bruce, 1983-circa 1995
Box 9, Folder 7-9	Selection Panels, 1987-2013

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Series 6: Printed Material, 1974-circa 2010

2.4 Linear feet (Boxes 9-12, OV 13)

Scope and Contents: The series consists of a book and book jacket, clippings, three scrapbooks of clippings, a documentary video recording of the Day of the Dead event, exhibition announcements and catalogs, journals and magazines, newsletters, posters, press releases, programs, and a thesis written by Ann Marie Leimer about Vargas.

Box 9, Folder 11	Book Jacket, No Bluebonnets, No Yellow Roses: Essays on Texas Women in the Arts, 2005
Box 9, Folder 11	Book, Native Soil: Poems from South Texas Poets, 2007
Box 9, Folder 12-15	Clippings, 1974-2013
Box 12, Folder 3	Clippings, 1974-2013
Box 10, Folder 1-3	Clippings Scrapbook, 1977-1991 Notes: 3 scrapbooks
Box 10, Folder 4	Documentary, "The Day of the Dead" - Institute of Texan Cultures, circa 2000 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
Box 10, Folder 5-18	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1976-circa 2010 Notes: The files contain materials on Vargas's early exhibitions, her first solo exhibition announcement, group exhibitions, exhibitions in which Vargas served on the jury, and catalogs with text written by Vargas.
Box 12, Folder 3	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1993
Box 10, Folder 19-20	Journals and Magazines, 1978-2009 Notes: Includes articles by Vargas.
Box 11, Folder 1-4	Journals and Magazines, circa 1985-circa 2010
Box 12, Folder 2	Journals and Magazines, circa 1985-circa 2010
Box 11, Folder 5	Newsletters, 1994
Oversize 13	Posters, circa 1980-circa 2010
Box 11, Folder 6	Press Releases, 1991
Box 11, Folder 7	Programs, 1998

Box 11, Folder 8

Thesis on Vargas by Ann Marie Leimer, 2001

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