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

Sarah Mundy

The processing of this collection received Federal support from the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center.

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Collection Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository:</th>
<th>Archives of American Art</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>Kathy Vargas papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifier:</td>
<td>AAA.vargkath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>circa 1965-2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent:</td>
<td>10.8 Linear feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator:</td>
<td>Vargas, Kathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language:</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summary:</td>
<td>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.</td>
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</tbody>
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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

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:
   Hispanic American artists
   Women artists

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)*

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
Series 2: Correspondence, 1979-2014

4 Linear feet (Boxes 1-5, 12)

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
Includes records for exhibitions of Vargas's work organized by Juan Bruce Novoa, Con Safo, *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation* (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
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
Series 3: Writings and Notes, circa 1985-2014

1 Linear foot (Boxes 5-6)

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
                       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
                       Includes manuscripts and drafts for the book *Born of Resistance*; an article in the journal *Nueva Luz* that also includes an electronic disc; a manuscript titled "A Gust of Wind Through the Mexican Apple Tree" for the Revelaciones/Revelations symposium; manuscripts, notes, and newspapers for articles published in *San Antonio Light*. Also included are manuscripts by Shifra M. Goldman and Amelia Malagamba-Ansotegui.

Box 5, Folder 17-20   Notebooks, circa 1990-circa 1997
                       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
                       Includes notes on the preface by Vargas for the book *Available Light*. 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)
                       Panels include "Lightning in a Bottle" at Texas State University and a panel in conjunction with the exhibition *Chicano Art: Resistance and Affirmation* at the Wight Art Gallery.

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Series 4: Project and Exhibition Files, 1984-2004

2 Linear feet (Boxes 6-8, 12)


Box 6, Folder 3-15 American Voices, 1992-2002
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
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
Includes slides of artwork, correspondence with artists, and the original proposal for the exhibition.

Box 8, Folder 1-5 San Antonio Shrines, 1984-1995
Includes research material and notes, slides, manuscripts, and records related to Vargas's participation in the Smithsonian Folklore Summer Institute as a Community Folklore Scholar.

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Series 5: Professional Files, 1975-2016

1 Linear foot (Boxes 8-9)

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
   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)

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 12-15  Clippings, 1974-2013

Box 12, Folder 3  Clippings, 1974-2013

Box 10, Folder 1-3  Clippings Scrapbook, 1977-1991

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

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

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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