



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Papers Relating to
Art Commissioned for the Ronald Reagan
Building and International Trade Center,
1992-1998, in the Archives of American Art

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Archives of American Art
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Papers relating to art commissioned for the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center
Identifier:	AAA.zilcjudi
Date:	1992-1998
Extent:	0.4 Linear feet
Creator:	Zilczer, Judith
Language:	English
	The collection is in English.
Summary:	<p>The papers relating to art commissioned for the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, compiled by Judith Zilczer, measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1992-1998. Papers kept by Zilczer in her capacity as a member of an advisory committee to the General Services Administrations (GSA) Art-in-Architecture Program, charged with recommending works of art to decorate the federal Ronald Reagan Building and International Center. The collection documents the process that resulted in the selection of three works of art: Martin Puryear's <i>Bearing Witness</i>, Stephen Robin's <i>Federal Triangle Flowers</i>, and Keith Sonnier's <i>Route Zenith</i>. The records also document the role of the committee as advocates for the artists when Stop Work Orders for Puryear and Sonnier were issued due to massive construction overruns.</p>

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The papers relating to art commissioned for the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center were transferred from the Smithsonian Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden on July 9, 1998, where Zilczer worked as curator.

Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art are personal papers of historian, writer and curator Judith Zilczer, which measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1973-1995, and an oral history interview with Paul Allen Reed conducted by Judith Zilczer, April 29, 1994.

Additionally, The Smithsonian Institution Archives in Washington, D.C. holds a large collection of Judith K. Zilczer Papers, 1975-2003.

Processing Information

This collection was processed to a minimal level and a finding aid was created by Kristi Meltvedt in 2017.

Preferred Citation

Papers relating to art commissioned for the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, 1992-1998. 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.

Biographical / Historical

The U.S. General Services Administration allocates up to ½ of one percent of the estimated construction costs of a Federal building for commissioning works of art. The Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, at Pennsylvania Avenue and 14th Streets, had an estimated construction cost of \$350 million, but became the most expensive federal building ever constructed at a price tag of more than \$818 million. Judith Zilczer served on the panel to make recommendations concerning the type and location of works of art for GSA's consideration. Other panelists were Charles Atherton, Charles Blitzer, M. J. Brodie, Peggy Cooper Cafritz, Jack Cowart, James Ingo Freed, Tom Green, George Gurney, Lester Hunkele, and Alec Simpson. Because of their deliberations, Puryear, Robin, and Sonnier were awarded commissions. While these papers document Zilczer's interactions with committee members and others, they concern only her participation. The story behind the Reagan Building GSA commission forms a significant chapter in the history of late twentieth-century public patronage.

Scope and Contents

The papers relating to art commissioned for the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, compiled by Judith Zilczer, measure 0.4 linear feet and date from 1992-1998. Papers kept by Zilczer in her capacity as a member of an advisory committee to the General Services Administrations (GSA) Art-in-Architecture Program, charged with recommending works of art to decorate the federal Ronald Reagan Building and International Center. The collection documents the process that resulted in the selection of three works of art: Martin Puryear's *Bearing Witness*, Stephen Robin's *Federal Triangle Flowers*, and Keith Sonnier's *Route Zenith*. The records also document the role of the committee as advocates for the artists when Stop Work Orders for Puryear and Sonnier were issued due to massive construction overruns.

Records include correspondence and printed material about the building opening preparations and dedication ceremony; correspondence and notes about the Stop Work Order in 1995; correspondence and site proposal from Keith Sonnier; correspondence, meeting minutes and notes, projects, installations, and artists regarding the Art-in-Architecture Program; and correspondence, proposals, and architectural drawings regarding the GSA.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged as 1 series.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- Commissioning -- Washington (D.C.)
Art patronage
Federal aid to the arts -- United States

Names:

Puryear, Martin, 1941-
Robin, Stephen, 1944-
Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center (Washington, D.C.)
Sonnier, Keith, 1941
United States. Public Buildings Service. Art-in-Architecture Program.

Container Listing

Series 1: Committee Records, 1992-1998

17 Folders (Box 1)

Box 1, Folder 1	Building Dedication, Correspondence, 1998
Box 1, Folder 2	Building Dedication, Printed Material, 1997-1998
Box 1, Folder 3	Opening Preparations, General, 1997
Box 1, Folder 4	Stop Work Order, Correspondence, 1992-1996
Box 1, Folder 5	Stop Work Order, Printed Material, 1996
Box 1, Folder 6	Stop Work Order, Notes, 1996
Box 1, Folder 7	Sonnier, Correspondence, 1998
Box 1, Folder 8	Sonnier, Site Proposal, 1995
Box 1, Folder 9	Art-in-Architecture Program, Correspondence, 1992-1996
Box 1, Folder 10	Art-in-Architecture Program, Meeting Minutes, 1992, 1995
Box 1, Folder 11	Art-in-Architecture, Meeting Notes, 1992
Box 1, Folder 12	Art-in-Architecture, Projects, circa 1990s
Box 1, Folder 13	Art-in-Architecture, Installations, circa 1990s
Box 1, Folder 14	Art-in-Architecture, Artists, circa 1990s
Box 1, Folder 15	General Service Administration, Correspondence, 1992-1995
Box 1, Folder 16	General Service Administration, Proposals, 1992-1995
Box 1, Folder 17	General Service Administration, Architectural Drawings, 1992

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