



Smithsonian
*Freer Gallery of Art and
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

Shirley Z. Johnson Papers

FSA.A2016.06

Kendra Jae and Lisa Fthenakis

Funding for partial processing of the collection was supported by a grant from the Smithsonian Institution's Collections Care and Preservation Fund (CCPF).

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives
Title:	Shirley Z. Johnson Papers
Identifier:	FSA.A2016.06
Date:	1979-2015
Extent:	4 Linear feet (consisting of 8 legal document boxes.)
Language:	English Collection is primarily in English with some material in written Chinese.
Summary:	The Shirley Z. Johnson Papers, dating from 1979-2015, measure 4 linear feet and include an inventory, correspondence, and research files related to Johnson's collection of Chinese textiles.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated by Shirley Z. Johnson in 2015.

Processing Information

In 2016, with funding provided by the Smithsonian Institution's Collections Care and Preservation Fund, the Archives at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives implemented the use of minimal level processing standards to increase information about and facilitate access to more of our collections.

Minimal processing included arrangement to the folder level, based on prior processing and preservation action, with retention of the pre-existing arrangement when possible. Otherwise, an order was imposed by the Processing Archivist. For this collection, minimal level processing was implemented, which included arrangement to the series, subseries and folder levels, adhering to the creator's original arrangement as much as possible. Generally, folder contents were simply verified with the original folder titles, but items within folders were not arranged further. Non-archival housing was replaced for long-term stability, but staples and other fasteners have not all been removed.

Minimal level processing and machine-readable finding aid completed by Kendra Jae, 2017 August and was revised by Shirley Johnson in August 2019.

Preferred Citation

Shirley Z. Johnson Papers, FSA.A2016.06. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of Shirley Z. Johnson, 2015.

Restrictions

Collection is restricted until 2140.

Conditions Governing Use

Permission to reproduce and publish an item from the Archives is coordinated through the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery's Rights and Reproductions department. Please contact the Archives in order to initiate this process.

Biographical Note

Shirley Z. Johnson was a scholarly collector, antitrust attorney and autism advocate.

Ms. Johnson's first Asian art collection consisted of imperial Chinese textiles about which she wrote an article in *Arts of Asia*, (1995). Some textiles have been given to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art, the Freer and Sackler Galleries of Art (Freer/Sackler), others have been loaned to it and have been promised as a gift. An interest in Chinese textiles began in 1979 when she visited China and purchased four pieces: two from Chinese people seated on the ground among the stone animals leading to the Ming tombs and two rank badges from an antique store on Lui Li Chang street in Beijing.

Beginning in about 1992, she became interested in Japanese metal work, when she spotted a piece she liked of the Meiji period (1868 – 1912) at Orientations Gallery in New York. Thereafter, she collected metal art of that era until 2006, when she began collecting work of living metal artists. She gave her collection of Meiji metal work to the Walters in 2019 (along with Japanese cloisonné and prints) and has promised her collection of contemporary metal art to the Freer/Sackler, along with extensive archives relating to each piece and interviews with about 100 metal artists beginning in 2006.

She served on the Board of The Textile Museum from 1989-2003 and on the Board of the Smithsonian's Freer/Sackler from 2004-2012 and from 2017 to 2021.

Ms. Johnson had published several articles on Asian art: "Tomobako: Functional Beauty," *Impressions*, 2020; "Japanese Metal Art: An Enduring Tradition," *Arts of Asia*, May-June 2017; "Chinese Ancestor Portraits in the Sackler's Collection," *Arts of Asia*, July-August 2003; "A Textile Collector's Approach to Collecting," *Arts of Asia*, July-August 1995.

Her legal specialty was antitrust law. She worked as a trial attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice Antitrust Division, was counsel to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, Antitrust Subcommittee, and entered private practice in 1976 until she retired in 2009.

She graduated from the University of Michigan law school in 1965 with a Juris Doctor degree and was a member of The Order of the Coif. Previously she received a bachelor's degree in Political Science, *summa cum laude*, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

In 2004 she founded a unique social skills program for children with autism at the West Burlington, Iowa School District involving classroom guidance, luncheon and after-school groups and a summer camp. Each activity involved both autistic and neurotypical children. The program was called the TRI Project, standing for Intense, Inclusive, Individual.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Shirley Z. Johnson measure 4 linear feet and date from 1979-2015. The papers largely relate to Johnson's collection of textiles. The papers include inventories, object files, correspondence, and research files.

The inventories and object files document Johnson's textile collecting and include book lists, images, documentation, and research organized by individual object.

The correspondence files include letters, notes, emails, news clippings, interview notes, museum object lists, press releases, and notes related to the holdings of museums, art dealers. They also contain information related to imperial robes and the individual Yan Yong, a scholar and Deputy Director of the Court History Department and the Head of the Division of Textile at the Palace Museum in Beijing, China.

Research files comprise printed material, articles and speech drafts, and notes related to Chinese textile research. Topics represented in the records include sumptuary laws, symbolism in religious traditions in China, rank badges in various Chinese military branches, and instructions for dating textiles.

The original container numbers established by the creator are documented with their corresponding files.

Arrangement

The Shirley Z. Johnson papers are arranged in six series.

Series 1: Inventories

Series 2: Correspondence with Collectors

Series 3: Correspondence with Dealers

Series 4: Correspondence with Museums

Series 5: Correspondence with Curators

Series 6: Research Files

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Art -- China
Art -- Collectors and collecting
Art, Chinese
Textile fabrics
metropolitan museum of art

Types of Materials:

Correspondence -- 1950-2000

Notes
Photographs
Textiles

Container Listing

Series 1: Inventory of Textile Collections, 1980-2015

Box 1, Folder 1	Shirley Z. Johnson Inventory By Item Formerly "Binder 19" per donor's original label.
Box 1, Folder 2	Analysis of Inventory
Box 1, Folder 3	Object 9.32: Robe - Complete Chau Fu
Box 1, Folder 4	Object 9.59: Rank Badge, Crane with Spread Wings
Box 1, Folder 5	Object 9.62: Twelve Symbol Robe
Box 1, Folder 6	Books, Purchases and Information
Box 1, Folder 7	Books, Information and Research
Box 1, Folder 8	Photographs, Multiple Pieces Slides and 35 mm negative strips

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Series 2: Correspondence with Collectors, 1980-2015

Includes correspondence, news clippings, photographs, and notes related to collecting of Chinese textiles

Box 2, Folder 1	Chung, Y.Y., 1998-2002
Box 2, Folder 2	Fennimore, B., 1995-2001
Box 2, Folder 3	Hall, C., 1993-1998
Box 2, Folder 4	Hamburger, M., 1995
Box 2, Folder 5	Hayes, Mary, 1986-1988
Box 2, Folder 6	Hugus, D., 1998-1999
Box 2, Folder 7	Jackson, B., 1995-2001
Box 2, Folder 8	Koplan, J., 1999-2002

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Series 3: Correspondence with Dealers, 1986-2000

Box 3, Folder 1	Altfield Gallery, 1989-1990 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 2	Blackburn, 1986-1989 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 3	Burris, Betty J. , 2009 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 4	Day, Shirley, 1988-1990 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 5	Fitzgerald, Esther, 1990-1996 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 6	Garrett, Valery, 1993 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 7	Holmes, Lisbet, 1986-1995 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 8	Junnaa/Judkins, 1986 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 9	Kennedy, Alan, 1990-1999 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 11	Lotus-Tigerman, 1991 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 12	Plum Blossoms, 1988-1994 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 13	Rutherford, J., 1992-1993 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 3, Folder 14	Sneider/Hausman, 1988 Formerly "Binder 14" per donor's original label.
Box 4, Folder 1	Spink, 1986-2000 Photographs and Transparencies. Formerly "Binder 15" per donor's original label.
Box 4, Folder 2	Spink, 1986-2000

Photographs, transparencies, and correspondence. Formerly "Binder 15" per donor's original label.

Box 4, Folder 3

Spink, 1986-2000

Correspondence. Formerly "Binder 15" per donor's original label.

Box 4, Folder 4

Wigglesworth, Linda, 1986-1998

Formerly "Binder 16" per donor's original label.

Box 4, Folder 5

Miscellaneous and Individual Sellers, 1986-1998

Formerly "Binder 16" per donor's original label.

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Series 5: Correspondence with Curators, 1986-2013

Correspondence relating to research inquiries, the background of particular objects, and photographs of collection material. Material is filed by last name of correspondent.

Box 5, Folder 1	Bugener, Annette, 2014 Formerly "Binder 17" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 2	Vollmer, John, 1994-1998 Formerly "Binder 17" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 3	Wang, Daisy, 2011-2012 Formerly "Binder 17" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 4	Stuart, Jan, 1994-2011 Formerly "Binder 17" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 5	Yong, Yan, 2011-2013 Formerly "Binder 17" per donor's original label.

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Series 4: Correspondence with Museums, 1944-2014

Box 5, Folder 6	Cleveland Museum of Art, 1988-1997
Box 5, Folder 7	Denver Art Museum
Box 5, Folder 8	Freer Sackler, Directors, 1995-2015
Box 5, Folder 9	Freer Sackler, Friends, 2002 Formerly "Binder 13" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 10	Freer Sackler, Ancestor Portraits Exhibition, 2001 Formerly "Binder 13" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 11	Freer Sackler, Ancestor Portraits Exhibition, Articles, 2001 Formerly "Binder 13" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 12	Freer Sackler, Ancestor Portraits Exhibition, Loans, 2001 Formerly "Binder 13" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 13	Freer Sackler, Ancestor Portraits Exhibition, Gala, 2001 Formerly "Binder 13" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 14	Metropolitan Museum Photographs and Correspondence, 1988-1994 Formerly "Binder 11" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 15	Nelson-Atkins, 1987-1988
Box 5, Folder 16	Oxford Asian Textile Group, 1994-1997
Box 6, Folder 1	Royal Ontario Museum, 1988
Box 6, Folder 2	Textile Museum, 1989-1999 Formerly "Binder 12" per donor's original label.
Box 6, Folder 3	Textile Museum, 1989-1999 Formerly "Binder 12" per donor's original label.
Box 6, Folder 4	Textile Museum, 1989-1993 Formerly "Binder 12" per donor's original label
Box 6, Folder 5	Textile Museum, Chinese Textile Inventory, 1989-1999 Formerly "Binder 12" per donor's original label.
Box 6, Folder 6	University of Philadelphia , 1988

Box 6, Folder 7	Victoria & Albert Museum
Box 6, Folder 8	Yale University Art Gallery, 1993
Box 6, Folder 9	Miscellaneous Museum Correspondence

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Series 6: Research Files, 1991-2011

Includes article drafts, book lists, images, correspondence, notes, printed material related to Chinese textile research, sumptuary laws, symbolism related to religious traditions in China, instructions for dating textiles, and civil, military, and imperial Chinese rank badges.

Box 7, Folder 1	Talks on Textiles, Draft Book, 1989-2004
Box 7, Folder 2	Conservation - Textile Dye Research, 2011-2014
Box 7, Folder 3	China History and Chronology, Photos
Box 7, Folder 4	Metropolitan Museum Photographs and Correspondence Formerly "Binder 11" per donor's original label.
Box 7, Folder 5	Imperial Robes Formerly "Binder 18" per donor's original label.
Box 7, Folder 6	Dating Chinese Textiles, 1991-2011 Formerly "Binder 8" per donor's original label.
Box 7, Folder 7	Symbolism
Box 7, Folder 8	Sumptuary Laws, 2011
Box 7, Folder 9	Chinese Textile Sales Research
Box 7, Folder 10	Standards and Loan Information, 1994-2010 Formerly "Binder 7" per donor's original label.
Box 8, Folder 1	Art Tax Deductions Newspaper Clippings. Restricted until 2041.
Box 8, Folder 2	Travel, 1983-1989
Box 8, Folder 3	Conservation Notes and Index to Various Asian Periodicals, 1987-1996 Restricted until 2140.
Box 8, Folder 4	Meeting Notes with Curators, Dealers, and Collectors, 1987-1996 Restricted until 2140.

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