



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

Shirley Z. Johnson Papers

FSA.A2016.06

Max Howell 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).

December 2019

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	
Administrative Information .....	1
Biographical Note .....	2
Scope and Contents .....	2
Arrangement .....	3
Names and Subjects .....	
Container Listing .....	
Series 1: Inventory of Textile Collections, 1980-2015 .....	4
Series 2: Correspondence with Collectors, 1980-2015 .....	8
Series 3: Correspondence with Dealers, 1986-2000 .....	9
Series 5: Correspondence with Curators, 1986-2013 .....	11
Series 4: Correspondence with Museums, 1944-2014 .....	12
Series 6: Research Files, 1991-2011 .....	14

## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Shirley Z. Johnson Papers
<b>Date:</b>	1979-2015
<b>Identifier:</b>	FSA.A2016.06
<b>Extent:</b>	4 Linear feet (consisting of 8 legal document boxes)
<b>Language:</b>	Collection is primarily in English with some material in written Chinese.
<b>Summary:</b>	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.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Donated by Shirley Z. Johnson in 2015. Addition donated by Shirley Z. Johnson in 2019.

### 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 Max Howell, 2017 August and was revised by Shirley Z. Johnson in August 2019.

### Preferred Citation

Shirley Z. Johnson Papers. FSA.A2016.06. National Museum of Asian Art 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.

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## Biographical Note

Shirley Z. Johnson is 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 Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (Freer|Sackler), others have been loaned to it and, as of 2019, have been promised as a gift. Her 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 around 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 Art Museum 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 Freer|Sackler from 2004-2012 and from 2017 to 2021.

Ms. Johnson had published several articles on Asian art: "Tomobako: Functional Beauty," *Impressions*, 42 Part One 2021; "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.

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## 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 Textiles 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.

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## 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

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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:

- Art -- China
- Art -- Collectors and collecting
- Art, Chinese
- Costume -- Chinese
- Textile fabrics

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence -- 1950-2000
- Notes
- Photographs

Places:

- Metropolitan Museum of Art

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Inventory of Textile Collections, 1980-2015

Language: English.

Box 1, Folder 1 Shirley Z. Johnson Inventory By Item  
Notes: Formerly "Binder 19" per donor's original label.

Box 1, Folder 2 Analysis of Inventory

Box 1, Folder 3 9.1: Object 9.1: Skirt

Box 1, Folder 4 Object 9.2: Rank Badges Goose (2)

Box 1, Folder 5 Object 9.3: Sleeve Bands (2)

Box 1, Folder 6 Object 9.4: Picture

Box 1, Folder 7 Object 9.5: Skirt Fragment

Box 1, Folder 8 Object 9.8: Skirt Fragment

Box 1, Folder 9 Object 9.9: Skirt

Box 1, Folder 10 Object 9.10: Skirt Roundel

Box 1, Folder 11 Object 9.11: Hat bands (2)

Box 1, Folder 12 Object 9.13: Chair Cover

Box 1, Folder 13 Object 9.14: Robe Fragment Lishui

Box 1, Folder 14 Object 9.15: Rank Badges (2)

Box 1, Folder 15 Object 9.16: Rank Badges (2)

Box 1, Folder 16 Object 9.18: Dragon Robe

Box 1, Folder 17 Object 9.20: Dragon Robe

Box 1, Folder 18 Object 9.21: Rank Badges on Lady's Court Vest

Box 1, Folder 19 Object 9.22: Rank Badge Silver Pheasants (2)

Box 1, Folder 20	Object 9.23: Imperial Yellow Cushion Cover
Box 1, Folder 21	Object 9.24: Embroidered Panel
Box 1, Folder 22	Object 9.25: Sleeves with Scene (2)
Box 1, Folder 23	Object 9.26: Elbow Cushions
Box 1, Folder 24	Object 9.27: Rank Badge Double Phoenix
Box 1, Folder 25	Object 9.28: Chair Cushion
Box 1, Folder 26	Object 9.29: Rank Badge Roundels (2)
Box 1, Folder 27	Object 9.30: Rank Badge Roundels (2)
Box 1, Folder 28	Object 9.31: Sleeve Bands
Box 1, Folder 29	Object 9.32: Robe - Complete Chau Fu
Box 1, Folder 30	Object 9.33: Rank Badge Bear
Box 1, Folder 31	Object 9.34: Rank Badges Tiger (2)
Box 1, Folder 32	Object 9.35: Robe Chuba
Box 1, Folder 33	Object 9.36: Rank Badge - Roundel
Box 1, Folder 34	Object 9.37: Rank Badges Lions (2)
Box 1, Folder 35	Object 9.39: Robe Chau Fu Skirt
Box 1, Folder 36	Object 9.40: Rank Badge Egrets Double
Box 1, Folder 37	Object 9.41: Ladies Yellow Satin Skirt
Box 1, Folder 38	Object 9.42: Uncut Pu'fu
Box 1, Folder 39	Object 9.43: Hat Pendants (2)
Box 1, Folder 40	Object 9.44: Sutra Cover
Box 1, Folder 41	Object 9.45: Rank Badges Leopard (2)
Box 1, Folder 42	Object 9.46: Rank Badge with Tiger
Box 1, Folder 43	Object 9.47: Rank Badge Crane (2)

Box 1, Folder 44	Object 9.48: Rank Badge Goose (2)
Box 1, Folder 45	Object 9.49: Rank Badges Silver Pheasant (2)
Box 1, Folder 46	Object 9.50: Rank Badge Egret
Box 1, Folder 47	Object 9.51: Rank Badge Silver Pheasant (2)
Box 1, Folder 48	Object 9.52: Rank Badges (2)
Box 1, Folder 49	Object 9.53: Rank Badge Silver Pheasant (2)
Box 1, Folder 50	Object 9.54: Egret (2)
Box 1, Folder 51	Object 9.55: Rank Badge Mandarin Duck
Box 1, Folder 52	Object 9.56: Rank Badge Lion
Box 1, Folder 53	Object 9.57: Uncut Yellow Cuff
Box 1, Folder 54	Object 9.58: Informal Robe
Box 1, Folder 55	Object 9.59: Rank Badge, Crane with Spread Wings
Box 1, Folder 56	Object 9.60: Rank Badge Dragon Profile
Box 1, Folder 57	Object 9.61: Fan Cases (5)
Box 1, Folder 58	Object 9.62: Twelve Symbol Robe
Box 1, Folder 59	Object 9.63: Fan Case
Box 1, Folder 60	Object 9.65: Rank Badges (2) Golden Pheasant
Box 1, Folder 61	Object 9.66: Rank Badge Crane
Box 1, Folder 62	Object 9.67: Orange Chi-Fu
Box 1, Folder 63	Object 9.68: Rank Badge Quail
Box 1, Folder 64	Object 9.69: Rank Badge Roundel
Box 1, Folder 65	Object 9.70: Rank Badges (2)
Box 1, Folder 66	Object 9.71: Sleeve Bands on Green Fields
Box 1, Folder 67	Object 9.72: Robe Waistband



Box 1, Folder 68	Object 9.73: Sleeve Bands
Box 1, Folder 69	Object 9.74: Sleeve Bands (2)
Box 1, Folder 70	Object 9.75: Rank Badge
Box 1, Folder 71	Books, Purchases and Information
Box 1, Folder 72	Books, Information and Research
Box 1, Folder 73	Photographs, Multiple Pieces Notes: Slides and 35 mm negative strips

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 2: Correspondence with Collectors, 1980-2015

Scope and Contents: 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

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 3: Correspondence with Dealers, 1986-2000

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

	Notes:	Photographs, transparencies, and correspondence. Formerly "Binder 15" per donor's original label.
Box 4, Folder 3	Spink, 1986-2000 Notes:	Correspondence. Formerly "Binder 15" per donor's original label.
Box 4, Folder 4	Wrigglesworth, Linda, 1986-1998 Notes:	Formerly "Binder 16" per donor's original label.
Box 4, Folder 5	Miscellaneous and Individual Sellers, 1986-1998 Notes:	Formerly "Binder 16" per donor's original label.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 5: Correspondence with Curators, 1986-2013

Scope and Contents: 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  
Notes: Formerly "Binder 17" per donor's original label.

Box 5, Folder 2 Vollmer, John, 1994-1998  
Notes: Formerly "Binder 17" per donor's original label.

Box 5, Folder 3 Wang, Daisy, 2011-2012  
Notes: Formerly "Binder 17" per donor's original label.

Box 5, Folder 4 Stuart, Jan, 1994-2011  
Notes: Formerly "Binder 17" per donor's original label.

Box 5, Folder 5 Yong, Yan, 2011-2013  
Notes: Formerly "Binder 17" per donor's original label.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## 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 Notes: Formerly "Binder 13" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 10	Freer Sackler, Ancestor Portraits Exhibition, 2001 Notes: Formerly "Binder 13" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 11	Freer Sackler, Ancestor Portraits Exhibition, Articles, 2001 Notes: Formerly "Binder 13" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 12	Freer Sackler, Ancestor Portraits Exhibition, Loans, 2001 Notes: Formerly "Binder 13" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 13	Freer Sackler, Ancestor Portraits Exhibition, Gala, 2001 Notes: Formerly "Binder 13" per donor's original label.
Box 5, Folder 14	Metropolitan Museum Photographs and Correspondence, 1988-1994 Notes: 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 Notes: Formerly "Binder 12" per donor's original label.
Box 6, Folder 3	Textile Museum, 1989-1999 Notes: Formerly "Binder 12" per donor's original label.
Box 6, Folder 4	Textile Museum, 1989-1993 Notes: Formerly "Binder 12" per donor's original label
Box 6, Folder 5	Textile Museum, Chinese Textile Inventory, 1989-1999 Notes: 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

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Series 6: Research Files, 1991-2011

Scope and Contents: 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 Notes: Formerly "Binder 11" per donor's original label.
Box 7, Folder 5	Imperial Robes Notes: Formerly "Binder 18" per donor's original label.
Box 7, Folder 6	Dating Chinese Textiles, 1991-2011 Notes: 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 Notes: Formerly "Binder 7" per donor's original label.
Box 8, Folder 1	Art Tax Deductions Notes: Restricted until 2041. Newspaper Clippings.
Box 8, Folder 2	Travel, 1983-1989
Box 8, Folder 3	Conservation Notes and Index to Various Asian Periodicals, 1987-1996 Notes: Restricted until 2140.
Box 8, Folder 4	Meeting Notes with Curators, Dealers, and Collectors, 1987-1996 Notes: Restricted until 2140.

[Return to Table of Contents](#)