



Smithsonian

Institution Archives

Correspondence, 1976-1991

Finding aid prepared by Smithsonian Institution Archives

Smithsonian Institution Archives
Washington, D.C.
Contact us at osiaref@si.edu

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Historical Note.....	1
Descriptive Entry.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., osiaref@si.edu
Title:	Correspondence
Date:	1976-1991
Identifier:	Record Unit 539
Creator::	Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Department of Textiles
Extent:	1 cu. ft. (1 record storage box)
Language:	English

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 539, Cooper-Hewitt Museum. Department of Textiles, Correspondence

Historical Note

The textile collection of the Cooper Union Museum rose to preeminence with John Pierpont Morgan's 1902 donation of three significant collections of medieval European cloth designs. Mary S.M. Gibson took charge of the museum collections as Curator in 1904, and was responsible for the general oversight of the textile department until Jean Reed was hired as Assistant Keeper for Textiles in 1935 and Elizabeth Haynes became Keeper of Lace and Embroidery in 1937. In 1941 Reed was replaced by Alvena Vajda Secklar, who was succeeded by Dorothy G. Shepherd in 1942, and by Lili Blumendau in 1944.

Haynes died in June 1948 and three months later Alice Baldwin Beer was hired as Keeper of Needlework. Beer became Keeper of Textiles in 1950, and at the same time Jean E. Mailey replaced Blumendau as Assistant Keeper. Mailey resigned in 1957, and the designation KEEPER was changed to CURATOR in October 1958. Sarah Frantz was Assistant Curator of Textiles from 1958 to 1961, and Christa C. Mayer held the post from 1961 to 1967. Milton F. Sondag of the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C., became Assistant Curator in December 1967.

In 1970 Beer retired and became Consultant for Textiles, and in fiscal year 1977 Sondag was appointed Curator of Textiles. In 1979 Beer was named Curator Emeritus, a position she held until her death in November 1981. Textile Conservator Lucy Commoner began work in FY 1977, and the appointment of Gillian Moss as Textiles Assistant in FY 1984 led to her assignment as Assistant Curator of Textiles in FY 1985.

Descriptive Entry

These records consist of departmental correspondence and office memoranda from 1976 to 1991. Files for 1984 and 1988 are missing. The records were created mostly by Milton Sondag and Gillian Moss, and concern subjects such as exhibition loans, textile scholarship, catalogs and publications, public inquiries, the donation and acquisition of objects, research on collections, activities in other museums, and administrative

needs. The records include some files on the exhibition, "Lace," which was shown at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum from August to November 1982.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Art museum curators
- Art museums
- Museum exhibits
- Museums -- Collection management
- Textile fabrics

Types of Materials:

- Manuscripts

Names:

- Beer, Alice Baldwin
- Blumenau, Lili
- Commoner, Lucy A.
- Frantz, Sarah
- Gibson, Mary S. M.
- Haynes, Elizabeth, d. 1948
- Lace (Exhibition) (1982: New York, N.Y.)
- Mailey, Jean
- Mayer-Thurman, Christa C.
- Morgan, J. Pierpont (John Pierpont), 1837-1913
- Moss, Gillian
- Reed, Jean
- Seckar, Alvena, 1916-
- Shepherd, Dorothy G.
- Sunday, Milton

Container Listing

Box 1	
Box 1 of 1	1976 Correspondence
Box 1 of 1	1977 Correspondence
Box 1 of 1	1978 Correspondence (2 folders)
Box 1 of 1	1979 Correspondence (3 folders)
Box 1 of 1	1980 Correspondence (3 folders)
Box 1 of 1	1981 Correspondence
Box 1 of 1	"Lace" Loan Requests (correspondence about exhibition loans, November 1982)
Box 1 of 1	"Lace" Group: C.I.E.T.A. (February-October 1982)
Box 1 of 1	"Lace" exhibition (correspondence with colleagues, visitor comments, press reviews, August-December 1982)
Box 1 of 1	1982 Correspondence
Box 1 of 1	Portugal, 1947-50-1 (memoranda and correspondence regarding loan of a textile object for exhibition in Portugal, December 1981-September 1982)
Box 1 of 1	1983 Correspondence
Box 1 of 1	Renovations (equipment, cleaning, and maintenance of department offices, 1979-1980)
Box 1 of 1	Museum Development (space design requirements, correspondence with Hardy, Holzman, Pfeiffer Associates, 1980)
Box 1 of 1	1985 Correspondence
Box 1 of 1	1986 Correspondence (2 folders)
Box 1 of 1	1987 Correspondence (4 folders)
Box 1 of 1	1989 Correspondence (2 folders)
Box 1 of 1	1990 Correspondence (5 folders)

Box 1 of 1 Cannon 1990 (Cannon Mills, Inc.)

Box 1 of 1 1991 Correspondence (4 folders)