The Friends of Fiber Art
International Artist File Collection

Beth Goodrich, Librarian
American Craft Council
Since 1943, the ACC has championed craft and craft artists
PRESENT TENSE 2019

A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON CRAFT IN AN INCREASINGLY TENSE AND COMPLEX PRESENT.

When: October 10-12, 2019
Presented By: AMERICAN CRAFT COUNCIL
The ACC Library

~20,000 volumes
~120 periodicals
~archival collections
~4000 artist files
The ACC Digital Collections

~Institutional archives

~Museum of Contemporary Crafts (MAD)

~Craft Horizons/American Craft magazine

~Other craft organizations
Contemporary Fiber Art

The distinguished magazine, Art In America, said "Fiber art could be recognized simply as a division of visual art — not any more specific than Pointillism or Pop Art, but not something less — with it's own particular identity and strengths." — Janet Koplos, 1996

Beginning in the 1960s Magdalena Abakanowicz, Olga de Amaral, Jean Lurcat, Ed Rossbach, Lenore Tawney, Claire Zeisler and others began to extend the boundaries of acceptable material for production of fine art. Their one-of-a-kind works were usually constructed of flexible materials using textile techniques. Works called "fiber art" include (but are not limited to) sculptural baskets, quilts made for the wall and the first fiber art, tapestry.

Our Mission

Friends of Fiber Art tells the world that fiber art is the collectible of the 21st century and helps you find it. We facilitate opportunities and programs for the education of potential collectors. Such as:

- Present public lectures and symposia such as the annual member-artist presentations at the SOFA Expo in Chicago each November.
- Provide a calendar of contemporary fiber art exhibitions in galleries, art centers and museums all over the globe and on the Internet. Click on WHERE for a list of shows.
- Support a series of regional exhibitions featuring contemporary fiber art from private and public collections. The catalog for the first show from Midwest collections. MATERIAL DIFFERENCE: Soft Sculpture and Wall Works, may be purchased from Friends. Click here.
- Award grants to support professionally-mounted exhibitions with catalogs of soft sculpture and wall works. Since founding in 1991, Friends of Fiber Art has granted more than a quarter million dollars to such shows. Annual grant deadline is July 1st for projects which commence following January 1 of the following year. Download the Guidelines and Application from here.
Selection of artists

- FoFA Artist Files represented approximately 1500 artists

- Referenced the ACC Artist Files for artists common to both FoFA and ACC collections

- Gave special consideration to additional artists from underrepresented communities
Selection of materials

- Focused on unpublished materials/avoided material that would involve third party rights
- Careful about material with personal information
- 80% of selected materials consisted of images, 20% textual documents
- Combined the FoFA and ACC artist file materials for a more robust selection
PERMISSIONS
Outreach for permissions

- ACC artists have agreed to allow access to their files
- Had contact information for many of the artists
- Digital collection includes a clear rights statement

- Sent letter requesting permission
- Assured use for educational purposes only
- 35% return of signed permission agreements, only one refusal
Lessons learned

- Start work with vendor early
- Orientation Issue: address orientation with vendor
- Difficulty in connecting with artists for permission

- Unexpected rewards

- Reconnecting with artists
- Additional materials!
- Project ready for future students and interns
Where we’re at...

~Approximately 40% complete

~3724 digital objects to date

~One intern, one practicum student, and four volunteers have contributed so far
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Mary Merkel-Hess, *Blue Wave*  
Sonya Clark, *Hair Series*

https://digital.craftcouncil.org/digital/
Thank You!

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www.craftcouncil.org