DEAR FRIENDS,

This was a year of new beginnings. We saw the public launch of our Pandemic Oral History Project; the podcast Articulated: Dispatches from the Archives of American Art; a blog series produced in collaboration with Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art; our popular monthly virtual program Unboxed Lunch; new trustee-inspired virtual events; and new fundraising initiatives. We also hosted four workshops on teaching with primary sources, funded by the Dedalus Foundation. The Archives of American Art Journal continues to lead the field, this year winning the American Alliance of Museums’ first prize for design in the category of magazine or scholarly journal.

Most gratifying for our staff was the debut of our Pandemic Oral History Project and the attendant press. Praised in the New York Times for “preserving this moment of pandemic and protest for the future,” the project consists of 85 remote, short-form video interviews with individuals across the American art world, framed around responses to the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racism. On a practical level, the project helped us work as a team in telework toward a common goal, while strengthening our relationships with artists, and building new ones. As a scholarly contribution, these firsthand accounts are a testament to the adaptability, interconnectedness, and diversity of the American art world.

We have completely transformed the manuscript reading room in our DC office. The new 825-square-foot space will be the welcoming in-person entry point to the world’s largest collection of primary sources documenting the history of American art (and is a potential naming opportunity). Improvements include increased seating capacity for researchers, enhanced security, easy access to born-digital records, and broad tables for consulting oversized materials.

Our collectors Josh T. Franco, Uchenna Itam, Jacob Proctor, and Matthew Simms acquired significant collections, most notably the papers of distinguished Yale School of Art painting and printmaking professor Robert Reed (1938–2014); Los Angeles Light and Space artist Laddie John Dill (b. 1943); New York-based cultural historian Michèle C. Cone (b. 1932); and the records of the Allan Stone Gallery. In mid-June we received the first installment of the Nancy Holt Estate records, an event that generated more press coverage than any other single acquisition since the Archives’ founding in 1954.

This year we received major funding from the Alice L. Walton Foundation to digitize the papers of historically underrepresented artists, conduct new oral history interviews of Latino, African American, Asian American, and Native American artists, and launch a new podcast series. This support allowed us to fully transition to remote interviewing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We purchased state-of-the-art recording kits to send to interviewers and interviewees so that they could create high-quality audio and video oral histories. Our new podcast, Articulated: Dispatches from the Archives of American Art, draws on our incomparable collection of oral history interviews from 1958 to the present. Monthly episodes address a wide range of topics, from the New Deal arts initiatives to queer activism in response to the AIDS crisis, putting voices from the past in dialogue with today’s experts.

On our social media platforms, we created engaging campaigns for National Poetry Month, Asian Pacific
“One never knows what is lucky in this world. You just never know. You know, the person you meet on the corner, the telephone call you didn’t hear, those are things that change your life, as you find ten years afterwards.”

A. HYATT MAYOR, ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW, 1969
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<th>Year In Review</th>
<th>2021 Annual Report</th>
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Exhibitions

What is Feminist Art?


The exhibition will remain up through February 7, 2022.

Pushing the Envelope: Mail Art from the Archives of American Art

Traveled to Rollins College in Winter Park, FL, on view from January 15 through March 28, 2021.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
2 Installation view of What is Feminist Art? in the Lawrence A. Fleischman Gallery in Washington, DC.
3 Elizabeth Was mail art to John Held, Jr. John Held papers relating to mail art, 1973–2003.
Events

October 19

October 28

November 19

January 7

February 1
For a select group of donors, the Archives convened artists Allana Clarke, Ken Gonzales-Day, and Cannupa Hanska Luger for a virtual conversation about their participation in the Pandemic Oral History Project. Ben Gillespie, Arlene and Robert Kogod Secretarial Scholar for Oral History and Josh T Franco, national collector, guided the discussion.

March 18
Interim director Liza Kirwin and Ben Gillespie, Arlene and Robert Kogod Secretarial Scholar for Oral History, joined artist Wendy Red Star and moderator Beth Finch for a “Lunder Institute Talk” focused on the Archives’ Pandemic Oral History Project.

March 31
Archivist Jennifer Neal participated in the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York’s panel, “One Year of Documenting the Pandemic in New York City,” where she presented on the Archives’ Pandemic Oral History Project.

May 1
May 14

Trustee George Merck and his wife Lauren Layne Merck led a virtual tour of their collection at their Palm Beach, FL, home in conversation with Matthew Simms, the Archives’ Gerald and Bente Buck West Coast Collector.

June 4

Trustee Bennie Johnson hosted a virtual event dedicated to artist Emma Amos, including a conversation between Shawnya L. Harris, the Larry D. and Brenda A. Thompson Curator of African American and African Diasporic Art at the Georgia Museum of Art, and Uchenna Itam, the Archives’ curator of African American manuscripts, which featured a tour of the exhibition Emma Amos: Color Odyssey at the Georgia Museum of Art and a first look at the artist’s papers.

July 9


August 12

Archivist Rayna Andrews gave a presentation about the Archives’ African American Collecting Initiative, funded by the Henry Luce Foundation, and her role as processing archivist to a class at the California Rare Book School.

September 14

Interim director Liza Kirwin and head of collections processing Erin Kinhart joined design historian Alexa Griffith Winton and Susan Brown, associate curator and acting head of textiles at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, for a virtual program, “The Thread of the Story: the Dorothy Liebes Papers.” The event celebrated new research on Liebes, the digitization of her papers, and a Liebes retrospective exhibition that will open at Cooper Hewitt in 2023.
Teaching with Primary Sources

This summer, with funding from the Dedalus Foundation, the Archives refined and scaled-up its Teaching with Primary Sources program (est. 2019) by offering Zoom-based workshops to two cohorts of art history professors. Our teachers developed innovative assignments for integrating archival material into undergraduate courses with the intent of enhancing student engagement and building critical thinking skills. Through this program, we have increased the number of schools, students, and teachers using our collections online with a special focus on primary sources for the study of Latino, African American, Asian American, Native American, and women artists.

A Teaching with Primary Sources assignment by Bernida Webb-Binder, Assistant Professor, Art History and Curatorial Studies, Spelman College, "Artists, Archives, and Student-Authored Letters," published on the Smithsonian Learning Lab.

“Given that I teach in San Marcos, Texas, I had never thought that using the Archives of American Art for my classes was a possibility. With the increase in digitized collections, my students now have the opportunity to begin to think about history and its mediation in completely new ways. I am so excited for them to explore these one-of-a-kind collections.”

ERINA DUGANNE, PROFESSOR OF ART HISTORY AT TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Unboxed Lunch

On December 16, 2020, the Archives launched a new virtual program, Unboxed Lunch. Designed to attract a broad, diverse lunchtime audience, Unboxed Lunch relies on an element of surprise and curiosity, with a staff member “unboxing” a newly acquired collection live online. It is a perfect platform to talk about new collections, start new conversations about our work, and field questions from the audience throughout the 30-minute program.

December 16: Emil Milan papers
January 29: Art in General records
February 25: Nela Arias-Misson papers
March 26: Howard Kanovitz papers
April 15: Frederick Hammersley papers and Hammersley Foundation records
May 24: Michèle Cone papers
June 25: Women & Their Work records
July 30: Dudley Huppler papers
September 10: Herman Rose papers

Unboxed Lunch invitation, July 30, 2021.
Our Spring 2021 issue of the Archives of American Art Journal focused on feminism and archives and featured scholarly and artistic responses to the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic racism. We convened nine scholars—a diverse cross-section of the field—to consider what role the Archives can play in the pandemic. Each participant contributed a short essay, drawing from or highlighting some aspect of the Archives in their response to the social and political challenges of the current moment.

In Fall 2021, the journal featured New Research articles on the New-York Sketch Club, Cuban American artist Ana Mendieta, and the Black art collective AfriCOBRA. The issue also included commissioned contributions from William College Museum of Art curator Kevin M. Murphy on illegibility in the Archives and from Jennifer Liese, director of the RISD Center for Arts & Language, on the genre of the artist’s talk.

The Archives of American Art Journal continues to lead the field, this year winning the American Alliance of Museum’s first prize for design in the category of magazine or scholarly journal.
Articulated: Dispatches from the Archives of American Art

In August 2021, the Archives launched a new podcast series, Articulated: Dispatches from the Archives of American Art, which brings our unparalleled oral history collection to new audiences. Monthly episodes address a wide range of topics, from the New Deal arts initiatives to queer activist art in response to the AIDS crisis, putting the voices of history into dialogue with today’s experts. Beyond making our primary sources more accessible and approachable, the podcast also represents a new frontier in the Archives’ programming while generating new collaborative possibilities. Articulated is supported by the Alice L. Walton Foundation.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:


Loan Highlights

April 30, 2020–August 1, 2021

**Senga Nengudi: Topologies**

**ITEMS LENT:** Four drawings by Nengudi and an announcement for a show at Gallery 32 featuring Nengudi, all from Nengudi’s papers.

**VENUES:** Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus und Kunstbau, Munich, Germany, September 17, 2019–January 19, 2020; Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP), São Paulo, Brazil, October 13–November 15, 2020; The Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO, December 6, 2020–April 11, 2021; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA, April 29–August 1, 2021.

November 7, 2020–May 31, 2021

**Shaping the Future. Environments by Aleksandra Kasuba**

**ITEMS LENT:** Writings and sketches by Kasuba from her papers.

**VENUE:** Lithuanian National Museum of Art, Vilnius, Lithuania

July 9, 2021–September 25, 2022

**Alma W. Thomas: Everything is Beautiful**

**ITEMS LENT:** Photographs and works of art from the Alma Thomas papers.


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Loan Highlights

July 10, 2021–January 8, 2023

**Bob Thompson: The House is Mine**

**ITEMS LENT:** Thompson’s artist statement, brochures, photographs, and the artist’s personal photograph album, all from his papers.


September 25, 2021–February 20, 2022

**Horace Pippin: War and Racism**

**ITEMS LENT:** Horace Pippin’s illustrated memoir of his WWI experiences, from the Horace Pippin notebooks and letters.

**VENUE:** Trout Gallery at Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA

September 15, 2021–April 30, 2022

**This Must Be the Place: Latin American Artists in New York, 1965–1975**

**ITEMS LENT:** Photograph of reproductions of destroyed murals by Brigada Ramona Parra, a flyer that reads “Come Help Recreate Chilean People’s Mural,” and a publication Murals for the People of Chile, by Eva S. and James D. Cockcroft from the Lucy Lippard papers.

**VENUE:** The Americas Society, New York, NY

September 29, 2021–February 13, 2022

**Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror**

**ITEMS LENT:** Letters from Johns to Leo Castelli and a list of works by Johns destroyed in a fire at his South Carolina home and studio in 1966 from the Leo Castelli Gallery records.

**VENUES:** Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY and Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:


Selected New Collections

Art in General records, 1981–2020
Ken Cory papers, circa 1960–1990
Laddie John Dill papers, 1960–2015
Frederick Hammersley Foundation records, circa 1860–2009
Howard Kanovitz papers, circa 1950–2009
Marjorie Kreilick papers, 1948–2018
James Melchert papers, 1950–2021
Chiura Obata papers, 1930–1975 (addition)
Nancy Holt Estate records, circa 1960–circa 2001
Herman Rose papers, 1946–2007
Wiegand Gallery records, 1975–2019
Women & Their Work records, 1977–2015
Connie Zehr papers, 1960–2020

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Oral History Highlights

Interviews Conducted

Joe Feddersen
G. Peter Jemison
James Lavadour
William Weller Leavitt
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith
Julia Santos Solomon
Wendy Red Star
Leo Tanguma & Jeanne Stanford Tanguma
Krzysztof Wodiczko

“I think the message that we have to impart—and when I say we, I’m talking about all Native Americans... is something that this country needs to hear. I feel that there is a lack of a spiritual underpinning in a way, that is—what would I call it? Real and deep.”

G. PETER JEMISON, 2021

“I am a storyteller. Everything has a story in it and tells something about Native life or Native ideology or, our know, something about our connection to the earth. Every story counts as something, as some important idea about Native Americans.”

JUANE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH, 2021
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For more information, contact Jenny L. Williams at WilliamsJL@si.edu or 202.633.7265.

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TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:
1 Oscar Bluemner, color studies of snow, colored pencil, 1931. Oscar Bluemner papers, 1886–1939.
5 Kate Steinitz’s travel ephemera from trip to Switzerland and Italy, 1936. Kate Steinitz papers, circa 1910–2002.

MIDDLE ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:
1 George Stout, diary of his military service in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives section of the U.S. Army in WWII, diary #2, October 1944 to June 1945. George Leslie Stout papers, 1855, 1897–1978.
3 Harry Bowden, painting on board titled Suggestion for a Mural, circa 1936. Harry Bowden papers, 1922–1972.

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT:
2 Louise Nevelson (fourth from left) with her teammates in their school basketball team portrait, 1913. Louise Nevelson papers, circa 1903–1982.

All images are from the collections of the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.