NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS

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nmwa.org

Finding Aid to UN Conference on Women: Focus International (Nairobi) 1984-1986 Archives of Women Artists

Finding Aid Prepared by: Emily Moore (April, 2020)
Collection Processed by: Rebecca Quon (2014)

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Table of Contents

(Click a section title to skip down.)

Overview..... i

Administrative Information..... ii

Historical Note..... iii

Scope and Content Note iii

Organization and Arrangement Information iii

Container Inventory iv

Overview

Repository Information:

National Museum of Women in the Arts,
Betty Boyd Dettre Library & Research Center
1250 New York Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20005
Email: lrc@nmwa.org
Phone: 202-783-5000

Title:

UN Conference on Women: Focus International Festival

Provenance:

This collection was bestowed to the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) by Soon-Young Yoon on behalf of Conference of NGOs (CONGO) and NGO Forum 1995. The ongoing gift was received between 1980-2014. The Focus International United Nations Conference on Women materials are part of a group of documents and objects donated to NMWA in 1987 by Nancy Cusick, director of the project, and Ellouise Schoettler, initiator and coordinator of "An American Album."

Collection Dates:

Inclusive Dates: 1984-1986

Physical Description:

6 boxes and 9 albums (approx. 10.75 linear feet)

Summary:

Focus International was an art event held concurrently with the United Nations World Conference on Women in Nairobi, Kenya (1985). The project sought to expand the worldwide network of women artists that started five years earlier, at the first International Festival of Women Artists, which took place in Copenhagen (see: Related Materials). This collection documents the various stages of the event, from its inception to its outcome.

Finding Aid URL:

https://nmwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Nairobi-Finding-Aid-2020.pdf

Administrative Information

Access Information:

Unrestricted

Preferred Citation:

Item, Date, Series, UN Conference on Women: Focus International, Archives of Women Artists, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Betty Boyd Dettre Library & Research Center.

Publication and Photocopies Note:

Permission from the National Museum of Women in the Arts required for publication and reproduction of original materials. Photocopies of original materials can be made for a fee and at the discretion of the library director.

Related Materials Note:

Betty Boyd Dettre Library and Research Center (LRC) Collection

Archival collections:
UN Conference on Women: International Festival of Women Artists, 1979-1981 (Copenhagen, Denmark)
UN Conference on Women: Global Focus, 1995 (Beijing, China)

Processed by:

Mary Oliver Humke (1994)
Rebecca Quon (2014)

Processing Note:

The Copenhagen and Nairobi finding aids were prepared and collection processed by Mary Oliver Humke in 1994. The Beijing finding aid was prepared and collection processed in 1998. The collections were further processed and finding aids updated in 2014 by Rebecca

Quon. Subsequent LRC support provided in 2017 to create an overarching finding aid under the title UN World Conferences on Women which would have served as the umbrella finding aid to the three collection series. Series 1: International Festival of Women Artists (Copenhagen, Denmark). Series 2: Focus International (Nairobi, Kenya). Series 3: Global Focus (Beijing, China). It is unclear why an overarching finding aid was never created. A re-evaluation of the collections and their inventories lead to the 2020 decision to keep the collections separate in order to maintain proper records of provenance and ensure usability for researchers. To this end, a new set of finding aids was created by Emily Moore in April of 2020.

Historical Note

The UN World Conferences on Women collection consisted of three separate festivals, series of art events held concurrently with the United Nations World Conferences on Women and the collections dates from 1979-1995. The Focus International festival was the second out of three and was held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985. Sponsored by Midmarch Associates, the project aimed to expand the worldwide network of women artists that had started in 1980 at the International Festival of women Artists in Copenhagen. The Nairobi program included films, slides, literary readings, visual and performance arts, as well as panel discussions and workshops. The focal piece was an exhibition of works on paper entitled "American Showcase." Works by artist such as Georgia O'Keeffe, Lee Krasner, Faith Ringgold, and Jennifer Bartlett enabled women form all around the world to experience the diversity of American women's art. Also exhibited was "An American Album," a collection of nine albums containing original artwork by women across the United States.

Scope and Content Note

This collection is comprised of 6 boxes and 9 albums and documents the festival and programming where the artists could share their creative work and a platform to address issues of the women's art movement. Events included films, art slides, literary readings, panel discussions, performances, workshops and more. Materials in the collection include artists albums, conference documents, postcards and other related items.

Organization and Arrangement Information

Arrangement Note:

The collection is arranged chronologically within subject. There are files devoted to correspondence at the planning stage. Primarily, they contain letters between director, Nancy Cusick, and the National Women's Conference Committee, the American Cultural Center, and various other organizations. Budget estimates, a proposal, and correspondence regarding funding are also included in the collection. Documents from the conference itself include programs, accommodations information, and photographs. There is a large collection of press coverage of the event beginning in February 1985. Included are newspapers from Nairobi and the U.S. Post-Conference material consists of programs, correspondence, articles and a tape containing TV interviews. United Nations information and two women's publications complete the printed portion of the collection.

The collection also includes one box of postcards submitted by artists and displayed at the conference. They were created in a variety of media: paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, collages, and mixed media. There are also nine albums containing a body of work entitled, "An American Album" comprised of original artwork no larger than 8-1/2 x 11 inches, a biographical statement and a photograph of each artist.

Container Inventory

Series #1: Project Planning

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	1	UN Conference on Women preparations
1	2	Focus International: American Women in Art preparations
1	3	Correspondence: Aug. 6, 1984-Mar. 9, 1985
1	4	Correspondence: Mar. 15, 1985-May 1, 1985
1	5	Correspondence: May 6, 1985-Jul. 18, 1985
1	6	Artist Correspondence and Resumes

Series #2: Funding Material

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	7	Proposal and Correspondence: Nov. 1984-Jan. 1985
1	8	Correspondence: Mar.-Aug. 1985

Series #3: Conference Documents

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	9-10	Programs
1	11	Accommodations
1	12	Photographs

Series #4: Press Files

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	13	Coverage: Feb. 1985-Winter 1986
1	14	Nairobi: *Forum 85*: Jul. 10, 1985
1	15	Nairobi: *Forum 85*: Jul. 12, 1985
1	16	Nairobi: *Forum 85*: Jul. 15, 1985
1	17	Nairobi: *Forum 85*: Jul. 16-17, 1985
1	18	Nairobi: *Forum 85*: Jul. 18, 1985
1	19	Nairobi: *Forum 85*: Jul. 19, 1985
1	20	Nairobi: *Forum 85*: Jul. 22, 1985
1	21	Nairobi: *Forum 85*: Jul. 24-25, 1985
1	22	Nairobi: Newspaper Clippings Jul. 11-25, 1985
1	23	United States: Newspaper Clippings Jul. 11-17, 1985
1	24	United States: Newspaper Clippings Jul. 18-25, 1985
1	25	United States: Newspaper Clippings Jul. 25-Aug. 1, 1985
1	26	United States: Newspaper Clippings No Dates

Series #5: Post-Conference Files

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	27	Program and Events
1	28	TV Interview: Miami, FL Mar. 21, 1986
1	29	Article, *Equity: Washington Artist News* by Nancy Cusick
1	30	Correspondence: Aug. 8, 1985-Feb. 28, 1986

Series #6: United Nations Publications

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	31	*Decade for Women: Conference Review*

Series #7: Women's Organization Publications

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
1	32	*Sowjetfrau* 1985
1	33	*Women Artist News*, Winter 1986

Series #8: Postcards

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title

2	Artists A – Z

Series #9: Slides (note: black binder contains a guide)

Box #	Folder #	Folder Title
3		Artists A - D
4		Artists E - L
5		Artists M - V
6		Artists W – Z

Series #10: Albums (note: held in vertical file cabinets)

An American Album, Artists A - Z