Finding Aid to
The World of Charlotte Moorman,
1955-1990
Archives of Women Artists

Finding Aid Prepared by: Emily Moore (December, 2019)
Collection Processed by: Bound & Unbound Gallery, New York City. Edited by Barbara Moore

Betty Boyd Dettre Library & Research Center
Email: lrc@nmwa.org
Phone: 202-266-2835
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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:

The World of Charlotte Moorman

Provenance:

The Collection created by Bound & Unbound Gallery of New York City and was given to the LRC as a gift by Lois Pollard Price in September of 2000. Other records note, however, that it was purchased by the LRC in the summer of 2000.

Collection Dates:

Inclusive Dates: 1955-1990
Bulk Dates: 1963-1980

Physical Description:

1 box, containing 22 folders.

Summary:

The World of Charlotte Moorman collection includes announcements, programs, fliers, photographs, and press releases related to her work as a cellist, collaborations with Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys and Yoko Ono, as well as items around the Avant Garde Festival of New York. Materials in the collection range in date from 1955-1990, with the majority of items dating from 1963-1980.

Finding Aid URL:

https://nmwa.org/learn/library-research/archives/finding-aids/moorman-finding-aid
Administrative Information

Access Information:

Unrestricted

Preferred Citation:


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:

Ono, Yoko
Fluxus (Group of artists)

Processed by:

Bound and Unbound Gallery, New York City

Processing Note:

The Moorman collection was acquisitioned fully processed from Bound & Unbound Gallery. No further processing is needed unless it is determined that items should be rehoused in folders consistent with other LRC collections, or that series groups should be created.

Biographical Note

A cellist who frequently collaborated with Nam June Paik, Charlotte Moorman (1933-1991), described by Edgar Varèse as "La Jeanne-d’Arc de la nouvelle musique", was a fixture of the New York City avant-garde world from the early sixties until her death.
Moorman was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, on November 18, 1933 and collaborated with artists including Nam June Paik, John Cage, Joseph Beuys, Earle Brown, Sylvano Bussotti, Giuseppe Chiari, Toshi Ichiyanagi, Takehisaa Kosygi, Yoko Ono and Karlheinz Stockhausen. A member of Fluxus, an interdisciplinary group of artists, musicians, poets and designers, Moorman performed experimental art which privileged the artistic process over the finished product. In addition to her own work, Moorman planned the Avant Garde Festival with John Cage, Earle Brown, Edgar Varése, and Morton Feldman. She died in New York City on November 8, 1991, after fighting cancer for 10 years.

**Chronology**

1933  Born in Little Rock, Arkansas on November 18th.

1963  First Avant Garde Festival held at Judson Hall.

1965  Collaboration with Nam June Paik, “Ty Bra for Living Sculpture.”

1965  Performance of “Robot Opera” with Paik at the Festival of Free Expression.

1977  Moorman forms non-profit organization, New Ground Presentations, which sponsored the Avant Garde Festival until 1982.

1989  January 11 declared “Charlotte Moorman Day”.

1989  Moorman performs at the Fluxus retrospective “Happening and Fluxus” held in Paris in June.

1991  Moorman passes away in New York City on November 8th.

**Scope and Content Note**


The collection includes announcements, programs, fliers, photographs, press releases, etc., including her work as a cellist, collaborations with Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys and Yoko Ono, as well as items around the Avant Garde Festival of New York.
Organization and Arrangement Information

Arrangement Note:

The collection is divided into 22 folders.

Folder 1 contains a Table of Contents.

Folder 2 deals mainly with Moorman’s early career as a cellist and includes programs, fliers and announcements.

Folder 3 spans Moorman’s career as a performance artist and includes fliers, programs, announcements and schedules.

Folder 4 focuses on her collaborations with Nam June Paik and includes posters, fliers, programs, announcements and press releases.

Folders 5-20 contain information and ephemera of the 15 Avant Garde Festivals held between 1963-1980.

Folder 21 contains a bibliography compiled by Moorman and copies of several newspaper articles about her, as well as a copy of New Music News from 1987.

Folder 22 contains a short press biography of Moorman, hand-cut holiday greetings and an invitation to the party to commemorate the 3rd anniversary of her mastectomy. There is also a copy of the proclamation of Charlotte Moorman Day.

Names and Subject Terms

Avant-garde (Music) – History.
Avant-garde (Aesthetics) – History.
Conceptual art.
New York Avant Garde Festival – History.
Festival of the Avant Garde ’65 (1965 : New York (N.Y.)).
## Container Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder Number</th>
<th>Folder Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>Detailed record of the contents of each folder, with dates.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chronology: Early</td>
<td>Deals mainly with Moorman’s early career as a cellist. Includes programs, flyers, and announcements for various shows in which she played.</td>
<td>1955-1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chronology: General</td>
<td>Spans Moorman’s career as a performance artist. Includes flyers, programs, announcements, and schedules.</td>
<td>1963-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chronology: Paik Collaborations</td>
<td>This file focuses on the many works in which she and Paik collaborated. It includes posters, flyers, programs, announcements, and press releases.</td>
<td>1965-1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Avant Garde Festivals: General information</td>
<td>Provides a brief overview of the founding of the festivals and their purpose. Includes samples</td>
<td>1963-1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Festival Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>First Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>Flyers and schedules of the activities that took place in the first Avant Garde Festival.</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Second Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>A poster for the 2nd Avant Garde Festival and a program listing the participating artists.</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Third Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>Two schedules listing performers in the 3rd Avant Garde Festival, as well as a poster with an additional schedule.</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Fourth Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>A poster of where the festival was located, a list of the participating artists and a flyer with more information.</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fifth Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>A poster of the event and a program listing the artists who attended.</td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Sixth Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>Features a flyer and a poster that advertises the festival, and lists the artists’ names that participated.</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Seventh Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>A poster advertising the festival.</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Festival</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Eighth Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>A press release, a poster, and a program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Ninth Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>A press release, a poster, and a program listing the schedule.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Tenth Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>An artist’s pass into the festival, an advertising poster and a program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Eleventh Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>Plans for the festival, two posters, the program, and artist's information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Twelfth Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>A poster, a program listing participating artists, and a press release detailing festival plans.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Thirteenth Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>A program and an artist’s pass. **It does not include a poster, contrary to the Table of Contents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Fourteenth Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>Two press releases and two posters.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Fifteenth Annual Avant Garde Festival</td>
<td>A press release, a poster, artist’s information, and a program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-1988</td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>A bibliography compiled by Moorman and copies of several newspaper articles about her,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and a copy of *New Music News* from 1987.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>22</th>
<th>Biography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A short press biography of Moorman, hand-cut holiday greetings, and an invitation to a party to commemorate the 3rd anniversary of her mastectomy. There is also a copy of the proclamation of Charlotte Moorman day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>