

**Finding Aid to  
Kleps-Hok Collection of Maria Sibylla  
Merian  
1620-1993  
Archives of Women Artists**

Finding Aid Prepared by: Emily Moore (March, 2020)  
Collection Processed by: Karen Ho (October, 1997)

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# Table of Contents

(Click a section title to skip down.)

Overview.....	i
Administrative Information.....	ii
Biographical Note.....	iv
Scope and Content Note .....	v
Organization and Arrangement Information .....	vi
Names and Subject Terms.....	vi
Container Inventory .....	vii

## Overview

### Repository Information:

National Museum of Women in the Arts,  
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Washington, D.C. 20005  
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### Title:

Kleps-Hok Collection on Maria Sibylla Merian

### Provenance:

The Kleps-Hok Collection on Maria Sibylla Merian was donated in 1994 by Patricia Kleps-Hok to the National Museum of Women in the Arts. The details of the gift are noted in the correspondence between Kleps-Hok and the Museum and in a preliminary inventory from March 1994. The collection was sorted by medium, and a final inventory was prepared in October 1997.

### Collection Dates:

Inclusive Dates: 1650-1993

### Physical Description:

2 boxes (approx. 1.8 linear feet)

### Summary:

The Kleps-Hok Collection consists of items related to the life and professional work of Maria Sibylla Merian, the first published woman naturalist. Famous for her botanical and entomological subjects, Merian worked primarily in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Patricia Kleps-Hok discovered Merian's work while traveling in Germany in the 1970s and her research makes up the bulk of the collection.

**Finding Aid URL:**

<https://nmwa.org/learn/library-research/archives/finding-aids/merian-finding-aid>

**Administrative Information****Access Information:**

Unrestricted

**Preferred Citation:**

Item, Date, Series, Kleps-Hok Collection on Maria Sibylla Merian, 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:**

In addition to the holdings listed below, The National Museum of Women in the Arts owns original works by Merian in its permanent collection.

LRC Library Collection

Deckert, Helmut. Maria Sibylla Merians "Neues Blumenbuch": (Nürnberg 1680). Leipzig:

Insel-Verlag, 1968. (VF MON N44 .M5 1968)

Friedewald, Boris. A Butterfly Journey: Maria Sibylla Merian, artist and scientist. Munich;

New York: Prestel, 2015. (MON N44 .M5 2015)

Kaiser, Helmut. Maria Sibylla Merian: eine Biographie. Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler,

1997. (MON N44 .M5 1997)

Kerner, Charlotte. Seidenraupe, Dschungelblüte: die Lebensgeschichte der Maria Sibylla

Merian. Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg, 1988. (MON N44 .M5 1988)

Kleps-Hok, Patricia. Search for Sibylla: The 17<sup>th</sup> Century Woman of Today. Philadelphia:

Xlibris, 2007. (MON N44 .M5 2007a)

- Lendorff, Gertrud. Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717: ihr Leben und ihr Werk: Mit acht bisher unveröffentlichten Aquarellen. Basel: Gute Schriften, 1955. (VF MON N44 .M5 1955)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. Artist File. (VF Merian, Maria Sibylla, 1647-1717)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. Das Insektenbuch = Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium. Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1992. (MON N44 .M5 1992)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. De exotische kunst van Maria Sibylla Merian. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1984. (MON N44 .M5 1984)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. Die schönsten Tafeln aus dem grossen Buch der Schmetterlinge und Pflanzen Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium. Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe, 1964. (RARE FOLIO N44 .M5 1964)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. Flowers, butterflies and insects: all 154 engravings from "Erucarum ortus". New York: Dover, 1991. (MON N44 .M5 1991)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. Leningrad Watercolours. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974. (RARE N44 .M5 1974 FOLIO)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717: artist and naturalist. Ostfildern: G. Hatje; New York, NY, 1998. (MON N44 .M5 1998)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. Maria Merian's butterflies. London: Royal Collection Trust, 2016. (MON N44 .M5 2016)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. Maria Sibylla Merian: Schmetterlinge, Käfer und andere Insekten: Leningrader Studienbuch. Leipzig: Edition Leipzig; Weinheim, Acta humaniora, 1976. (RARE N44 .M5 1976)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. Metamorphosis insectorum Surinamensium. London: Pion, 1980-1982. (FOLIO N44 .M5 1980)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. Neues Blumenbuch = New book of flowers. Munich; New York: Prestel, 1999. (MON N44 .M5 1999)
- Merian, Maria Sibylla. The St. Petersburg watercolours. Munich; New York: Prestel, 2003. (FOLIO N44 .M5 2003)
- Pomeroy, Sarah B. and Kathirithamby, Jeyaraney. Maria Sibylla Merian: artist, scientist, adventurer. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum. (PR990 .M45 2018)
- Quednau, Werner. Maria Sibylla Merian: der Lebensweg einer grossen Künstlerin und Forscherin. Gütersloh: S. Mohn, 1961. (MON N44 .M5 1961)
- Rücker, Elisabeth. Maria Sibylla Merian 1647-1717. Nürnberg: Germanisches Nationalmuseum Nürnberg, 1967. (MON N44 .M5 1967)
- Rücker, Elisabeth. Maria Sibylla Merian als Wissenschaftlerin und Verglegerin. München: Dr. Karl H. Pressler, 1985. (VF MON N44 .M5 1985)
- Stuldreher-Nienhuis, J. J. Verborgten paradijzen; het leven en de werken van Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717. Arnhem: Van Loghum Slaterus' uitgeversmaatschappij, 1944. (RARE N44 .M5 1944)
- Todd, Kim. Chrysalis: Maria Sibylla Merian and the secrets of metamorphosis. Orlando: Harcourt, 2007. (MON N44 .M5 2007)

**Processed by:**

Karen Ho, October, 1997

**Processing Note:**

In 1997, Karen Ho processed the collection. The collection is housed in 32 folders within two archival boxes in the Library and Research Center at the National Museum of Women in the Arts. A final inventory was taken and a finding aid written by Karen Ho in October 1997. The finding aid was updated to a new format, with additional material added, by Emily Moore in March 2020.

**Biographical Note**Patricia Kleps-Hok

Patricia Kleps-Hok was a founder of the Davis Art Center in Davis, CA and on the Board of Directors for the Helene Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens in San Francisco. In addition to her work in the arts, she worked in the publications office of the College of Home Economics at Cornell University. Art and botany are two subjects in which she held a life-long interest, the combination of both led to her love for the works of Maria Sibylla Merian, whom she first discovered in 1973 while visiting Heidelberg, Germany. Fascinated by both the fact that Merian was born in 1647 and she had visited America in 1699, Kleps-Hok began to research the artist. She took German lessons to translate material on Merian as there was very little printed about her in English. The anonymity of Merian convinced Kleps-Hok that the modern world should learn more about her. Kleps-Hok died in 2019 at the age of 102.

Maria Sibylla Merian

Besides creating visual images of great beauty, Maria Sibylla Merian (1647-1717) made observations that revolutionized both botany and zoology. This extraordinary artist-scientist was born in Frankfurt. Her father, Matthäus Merian the Elder, was a Swiss printmaker and publisher who died when she was three. One year later her mother married Jacob Marell, a Flemish flower painter and one of Merian's first teachers.

From early childhood, Merian was interested in drawing the animals and plants she saw around her. In 1670, five years after her marriage to the painter Johann Andreas Graff, the

family moved to Nuremberg, where Merian published her first illustrated books. In preparation for a catalogue of European moths, butterflies, and other insects, Merian collected, raised, and observed the living insects, rather than working from preserved specimens, as was the norm.

In 1685 Merian left Nuremberg and her husband, from whom she was later divorced, to live with her two daughters and her widowed mother in the Dutch province of West Friesland. After her mother's death, Merian returned to Amsterdam. Eight years later, at the age of 52, Merian took the astonishing step of embarking-with her younger daughter, but no male companion-on a dangerous, three-month trip to the Dutch colony of Surinam, in South America, having received a grant from the City Fathers of Amsterdam. Having seen some of the dried specimens of animals and plants that were popular with European collectors, Merian wanted to study them within their natural habitat. She spent the next two years studying and drawing the indigenous flora and fauna. Forced home by malaria, Merian published her most significant book in 1705. The lavishly illustrated *Metamorphosis of the Insects of Surinam* established her international reputation. A second, posthumous, edition was published under the title *Dissertation in Insect Generations and Metamorphosis in Surinam*.

She was the first published woman naturalist and became so respected and well known that many eminent collectors, including Peter the Great, bought her work. Merian died on January 13, 1717 possibly from a stroke.

## Scope and Content Note

The Kleps-Hok Collection on Maria Sibylla Merian consists of two boxes of material, which includes biographical & bibliographical information, correspondence, notes, and photographs. These items relate to Merian's artistic life and Kleps-Hok's search for information. They are arranged by medium within the boxes.

The biographical files series is the largest, containing fourteen folders of information, dating from c 1650 to 1993. This section not only includes Kleps-Hok's manuscript entitled, *Search for Sibylla: The 17<sup>th</sup> Century's Woman of Today*, but also copies of German text from books (some have English translations) regarding Merian found during Kleps-Hok's research period.

The correspondence series consists of information dating from 1682 to 1979, including copies of sections of letters by Merian to her daughter, translations from the letters, and also letters regarding Kleps-Hok's interest in Merian.

The notes series consists of material on Merian and the author's notes on Merian's books and correspondence. Also, this section includes translations of Merian's *Caterpillar Book: The Wonderful Metamorphosis and the Special Flower Sustenance of the Caterpillar* and *Neues Blumenbuch*.

There are only two photographs in the photograph series: one is a reproduction of the genealogical tree of Merian and the other is a Merian family portrait. Another series is photocopies of excerpts from Merian's books *Caterpillar Book: The Wonderful Metamorphosis and the Special Flower Sustenance of the Caterpillar* and *Neues Blumenbuch*.

There is also a lithographs/facsimile series containing facsimiles of Frankfurt, Germany (Merian's birthplace) and a castle in Heidelberg, German and the lithograph is of Nuremberg, German where Merian lived for a time.

Two miscellaneous items are also included in this collection: a bibliography, consisting of three pages from the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, and microfilm of part of Merian's book, *Caterpillar Book: The Wonderful Metamorphosis and the Special Flower Sustenance of the Caterpillar*- (Photocopies of the same pages can also be found previously in the collection.)

## Organization and Arrangement Information

### Arrangement Note:

The collection is divided into eight series:

- Series I: Biographical Files, c. 1650-1675, 1835-1839, 1909-1993
- Series II: Bibliography, n.d.
- Series III: Correspondence, 1682-1705, 1975-1979
- Series IV: Excerpts, 1679-1680
- Series V: Lithograph/Facsimiles, c. 1620 and 1716
- Series VI: Microfilm, 1679
- Series VII: Notes, n.d.
- Series VIII: Photographs, 1945

## Names and Subject Terms

Kleps-Hok, Patricia



Merian, Maria Sibylla, 1647-1717

## Container Inventory

### Series #1: Biographical Files

Box #	Folder #	Title
1	1	Photocopied text from Una Birch's <i>Anna Van Schurman: Artist, Scholar, Saint</i> .
1	2	Forward from Patricia Kleps-Hok's manuscript <i>Search for Sibylla</i>
1	3	Patricia Kleps-Hok's manuscript <i>Search fro Sibylla</i>
1	4	Photocopied text from Matthaas Merian Jr.'s <i>Autobiography of Matthaas Merian</i>
1	5	English Translation of Matthuas Merian Jr.'s <i>Autobiography of Matthaas Merian</i>
1	6	Photocopied text from George Kaspar Nagler's <i>Neues Allgemeines Kunstler Lexikon</i>
1	7	English translation of George Kaspar Nagler's <i>Neues Allgemeines Kunstler Lexikon</i>
1	8	Photocopied text from Claus Nissen's <i>Die Botanische Buchillustration ihre Geschichte und Bibliographie</i>
1	9	Photocopied text by Elisabeth Rucker from exhibition catalogue <i>Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717</i>
1	10	English translation of Elisabeth Rucker's <i>Maria Sibylla Merian, 1647-1717</i>
1	11	Photocopied text by Elisabeth Rucker, <i>Maria Sibylla Merian</i>
1	12	English translation of text by Elisabeth Rucker, <i>Maria Sibylla Merian</i>
1	13	Photocopied text from Ulrich Thiene and Felix Becker's <i>Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Kunstler von der Antike bis dur Gegenwart</i>
1	14	Photocopied text from Joachim von Sandrart's <i>Deutsche Akademie der Edlen Bau-Bild-und Mahlerey-Kunste</i>

### Series #2: Bibliography

Box #	Folder #	Title
1	15	Bibliography on Maria Sibylla Merian

### Series #3: Correspondence

Box #	Folder #	Title
1	16	To/From: Patricia Kleps-Hok. Concerning her interest in Merian
1	17	Maria Sibylla Merian- Published German text
1	18	English translation of Merian's letters from Folder 17

### Series #4: Excerpts

Box #	Folder #	Title
2	27	Excerpts from Maria Sibylla Merian's <i>Caterpillar Book: The Wonderful Metamorphosis and the Special Flower Sustenance of the Caterpillar</i>
2	28	Excerpts from Maria Sibylla Merian's <i>Neues Blumenbuch</i>

### Series #5: Lithograph/Facsimiles

Box #	Folder #	Title
2	29	Facsimile of Frankfurt on the Main, Germany, by Matthaus Merian the Elder
2	30	Facsimile of a castle at Heidelberg, Germany. Castle of Frederick, Regent of Bohemia, the Palentine Elector
2	31	Lithograph of Nuremberg, Germany, by I.A. Delfenbach. Color

### Series #6: Microfilm

Box #	Folder #	Title
2	32	Microfilm of Maria Sibylla Merian's <i>Caterpillar Book: The Wonderful Metamorphosis and the Special Flower Sustenance of the Caterpillar</i>

### Series #7: Notes

Box #	Folder #	Title
1	19	Kleps-Hok's notes on Merian's <i>Butterflies, Beetles, and Other Insects: the Leningrad Book of Notes and Studies</i>
1	20	Miscellaneous Research Notes
1	21	Patricia Kleps-Hok's notes on Merian's correspondence
1	22	Kleps-Hok's translation notes
1	23	English translation from Maria Sibylla Merian's <i>Caterpillar Book: The Wonderful Metamorphosis and the Special Flower Sustenance of the Caterpillar</i>
1	24	English translation from Maria Sibylla Merian's <i>Neues Blumenbuch</i> , 1680

### SERIES VIII: Photographs

Box #	Folder #	Title
1	25	Maria Sibylla Merian's genealogical tree from J. Stuldreher-Nienhaus's <i>Verborgten Paradizen</i>
1	26	Merian family portrait from J. Stuldreher-Nienhaus's <i>Verborgten Paradizen</i>

