

Center for Creative Photography

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Finding aid for the
Laura Volkerding Miscellaneous Acquisitions collection,
circa 1970s - 1989
AG 256

Laura Volkerding Miscellaneous Acquisitions, circa 1970s - 1989

AG 256

Creator

Center for Creative Photography

Abstract

Materials in this collection are related to educator and photographer Laura Volkerding.

Quantity/ Extent

.5 linear feet

Language of Materials

English

Biographical/ Historical Note

Educator and photographer Laura Volkerding (1939-1996) began her artistic career making prints and drawings, and discovered her passion for photography in 1972, at age thirty-three. Volkerding studied fine arts at the University of Louisville and the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology where she received a Master's degree in graphic design. She taught at University of Chicago from 1970 to 1980, and then served as a senior lecturer in photography at Stanford University until her death in 1996. Citing photographs by Walker Evans and Art Sinsabaugh, as well as Chicago's modernist architecture as visual influences, Volkerding's early photographic work depicts quirky vernacular architecture, campgrounds and suggestive landscapes. In the late 1970s, Laura Volkerding, Nicholas Nixon, Stephen Shore, Frank Gohlke, and Lewis Baltz were among twenty-four photographers chosen to participate in an intensive project entitled Court House that documented historic court house architecture across America. Published in 1979, the monograph Court House: A Photographic Document exhibits a diverse and inclusive examination of America's architectural heritage. In 1980, Volkerding moved to California and embarked on a project documenting the development of the San Francisco and San Pablo Bay waterfronts creating panoramic images by joining continuous frames of 5 x 7 inch negatives into a more expansive view.

Volkerding experimented with multiple photographic formats before settling, in 1984, on the rich clarity of prints produced with a Deardorff 8 x 10 inch view camera. This same year, Volkerding discovered the subject that would drive her work for over a decade: Les Compagnons du Devoir, a French sculpture apprentice community founded in medieval times. Their history of sculptural practice and reverence for craftsmanship resonated for Volkerding. She was attracted to the figurative and architectural forms

that populated their work space. Volkerding photographed classrooms and apprentice projects, foundries and workshops, and cathedral restoration projects. The images suggest the presence of the craftsmen, but are devoid of the actual artisans, thus alluding to the longer craft tradition rather than the contemporary individuals. In addition to making many photographs of Les Compagnons in France, Volkerding photographed other sculpture workshops in Quebec, Tunisia, Spain, Greece, Italy, and the United States. This body of work was exhibited at Stanford in 1986; in 1988 she was awarded her second Guggenheim fellowship. The Center for Creative Photography published a related monograph, Solomon's Temple: the European Building-Crafts Legacy, shortly before Volkerding's death.

Scope and Content Note

Subgroup one includes two black-and-white portraits of Laura Volkerding taken by Tom McCormick. Subgroup two includes one black-and-white portrait of Robert Gottlieb by Laura Volkerding, as well as correspondence and a snapshot of Volkerding.

Names and Subject Terms

Volkerding, Laura [<http://vocab.getty.edu/ulan/500037074>]

Restrictions

Conditions Governing Access

Access to this collection requires an appointment with the Volkerding Study Center.

Conditions Governing Use

It is the responsibility of the user to obtain permission from the copyright owner (which could be the institution, the creator of the record, the author or his/her transferees, heirs, legates or literary executors) prior to any copyright-protected uses of the collection.

The user agrees to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Arizona Board of Regents, the University of Arizona, Center of Creative Photography, including its officers, employees, and agents, from and against all claims made relating to copyright or other intellectual property infringement.

Provenance

Subgroup One, gift of Thomas McCormick, 2016.

Subgroup Two, gift of Robert Gottlieb, 2017.

Related Materials

AG 162 – Laura Volkerding collection

Preferred Citation

Laura Volkerding Miscellaneous Acquisitions collection. AG 256. Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.

Processing Information

Finding aid updated by Alexis Peregoy in 2018.

Container List

Subgroup 1, 1973

Note: Gift of Thomas McCormick, 2016. Extent: 1 folder.

Box Folder

1 1 Two, 8x10 inch, black-and-white portraits of Laura Volkerding: Tom McCormick, *Laura Volkerding – Chicago, 1973*

Subgroup 2, circa 1970s, 1988-1989

Note: Gift of Robert Gottlieb, 2017. Extent: 2 folders.

Box Folder

1 1 One, 12x18 cm, black-and-white portrait of Robert Gottlieb by Laura Volkerding, Chicago, 1970s

1 3 Two letters from Laura Volkerding to Robert Gottlieb, 1988
One postcard from Laura Volkerding to Robert Gottlieb, 1989
One, Polaroid photograph of Laura Volkerding by Robert Gottlieb, San Francisco, July 1988