
Summary Information

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Abstract: Consists of photographer Margareta K. Mitchell's working files on the life and work of Ruth Bernhard (1905-2006), a German-born American photographer known for her black-and-white still lifes and female nudes. The working files contain research materials, drafts, and recordings and transcripts of interviews for Mitchell's biography of Bernhard, Ruth Bernhard: Between Art and Life (2000); drafts of Mitchell's essays that appeared in Ruth Bernhard's book The Eternal Body (1986); as well as correspondence, proofs, financial documents, and publicity materials related to both projects.
Location: This collection is stored offsite at the ReCAP facility.
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Margaretta K. Mitchell is a professional and fine art photographer, author, and educator based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She holds degrees from Smith College and the University of California, Berkeley. As a professional photographer, Mitchell photographs people, gardens, interiors and other assignments, and she exhibits her fine art photography internationally.

Throughout her career, Mitchell has drawn attention to 20th century women photographers, whose contributions had often previously been excluded from major exhibitions and reviews. In 1979, Mitchell published Recollections: Ten Women of Photography and curated a traveling exhibition under the same name, which opened at the International Center of Photography (ICP) in New York City. The book and exhibition showcased the work of ten living women photographers, among them Berenice Abbott and Ruth Bernhard. Mitchell continued her collaborative relationship with Ruth Bernhard for many years; she later composed the text for The Eternal Body (1986), Bernhard’s first photographic monograph of nudes, and published the first biography of Bernhard, Ruth Bernhard: Between Art and Life (2000), which was based on her extensive interviews with the artist and her colleagues.


Description


A majority of the files relate to Mitchell's 2000 biography of Bernhard, Ruth Bernhard: Between Art and Life. These consist of research materials, drafts, galleys, jacket and page proofs, correspondence, contracts, financial documents, and publicity materials. The research materials include 16 audiocassette tapes containing sound recordings of Mitchell's extensive series of interviews with Bernhard and her associates, including Michael Kenna, Avery McGinn, David Holman, Gwen Evans, and Said Nuseibeh. The interviews were conducted between 1997 and 1999 and provided much of the biography's content. These are accompanied by notes and transcriptions. There are also a few photographs and contact sheets of Ruth Bernhard and her friends as well as photographs of her work. Files on various individuals include correspondence with Mitchell regarding Bernhard or the book project, notes and stories submitted to Mitchell, and occasional photocopies of correspondence between Bernhard and her friends and fellow photographers. Mitchell also contributed text for Bernhard's 1986 book of photographs, The Eternal Body. Working files for this project include several drafts of Mitchell's essays "The Nude: Symbol and Light" and "Toward the Light: Biography of Ruth Bernhard," a copy of an autobiographical essay draft by Ruth Bernhard,
and related editorial correspondence, notes, announcements, and brochures. There are also a few original letters to and from Ruth Bernhard throughout.

**Arrangement**

Materials are arranged into two file groups by book project. Within those file groups, original order was maintained.

**Access and Use**

Access

Open for research.

For preservation reasons, physical access to original audiocassettes is restricted.

This material is stored off site. Please allow 24-48 hours for retrieval.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information

Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. No further photoduplication of copies of material in the collection can be made when Princeton University Library does not own the original. Inquiries regarding publishing material from the collection should be directed to RBSC Public Services staff at rbsc@princeton.edu. The library has no information on the status of literary rights in the collection and researchers are responsible for determining any questions of copyright.

**Acquisition and Appraisal**

Provenance and Acquisition


Appraisal

No materials were removed from the collection during 2018 processing.

**Related Materials**

Related Archival Material

*Ruth Bernhard Papers (C1468)*
Encoding
This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2018-02-06T13:01-0500

Descriptive Rules Used
Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

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Description: Consists of recorded interviews with Ruth Bernhard, Michael Kenna, Avery McGinn, David Holman, Gwen Evans, and Saïd Nuseibeh. 16 audiocassette tapes, plus 1 empty case.

Access:
For preservation reasons, physical access to original audio and visual media in a variety of magnetic and optic formats is restricted. The Special Collections does not have playback equipment and facilities, and all original media, especially in obsolete formats, must be digitally remastered or converted in accordance with prevailing preservation standards in order to
be safely accessed. Subject to curatorial approval, patrons may request duplicates of such original media, but will be responsible for both the cost of digital conversion and the cost of the duplicate, payable in advance. Public Services staff handles all such requests. Depending on the nature of the media, this process can take several months.

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