

Kim Stringfellow: Greetings from the Salton Sea
Collection CAE1205

Introduction/Abstract

The archive *Kim Stringfellow: Greetings from the Salton Sea* contains maps, real estate films, media releases and coverage, book dummies, research materials, correspondence, work prints, press, and exhibition documentation related to Stringfellow's research for her book, *Greetings from the Salton Sea: Folly and Intervention in the Southern California Landscape, 1905-2005*, which was published by the Center for American Places in 2005.

Biographical Note: Kim Stringfellow

Kim Stringfellow is an artist and educator residing in Joshua Tree, California. She teaches multimedia and photography courses at San Diego State University as an associate professor in the School of Art, Design, and Art History. She received her MFA in Art and Technology from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2000. Her work and research interests address ecological, historical, and activist issues related to land use and the built environment through hybrid documentary forms incorporating writing, digital media, photography, audio, video, installation, mapping, and locative media.

Scope and Content

Greetings from the Salton Sea is a book, physical installation, and website project documenting the cultural and environmental history of the multi-challenged Salton Sea—California's largest inland body of water located in Southern California near the Mexican border. The project discusses the societal, environmental, and historical background of this unique place through photography, text, archival real estate promotion films, and collected objects.

The book, *Greetings from the Salton Sea: Folly and Intervention in the Southern California Landscape, 1905-2005* was published by the Center for American Places in 2005. The publication was funded with a substantial production grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

In 1905 and 1906, the Salton Sea formed during a misguided engineering accident when Colorado River levees broke below the California-Mexico border. Great floodwaters filled the depression previously known as the Salton Sink—which, at its peak level of 195 feet below sea level, covered upwards of 400 square miles—creating an immediate sanctuary for birds and opportunities for future development.

During the past 100 years, numerous resorts schemes arose along the shores of the Salton Sea. Frank Sinatra, Desi Arnaz, President Eisenhower, Jerry Lewis, the Beach Boys, and the Marx Brothers all frequented the area, and during the 1960s tourists visited the Salton Sea in numbers that at times exceeded tourism in Yosemite. By the 1980s, however, the Salton Sea's biologically overburdened system resulted in the near abandonment of the area's resort and communities, and massive fish and bird die-offs reflected escalating environmental harm, especially from agricultural runoff in the Imperial Valley.

The future of the Salton Sea is uncertain. It remains a major habitat and stopover to more than 400 bird species as part of the Sonny Bono Salton Sea National Wildlife Refuge; but poor water quality and impending water transfers to ever-expanding Southern California communities complicate the environmental picture.

The Salton Sea archive includes numerous research materials both physical and digital, vintage real estate films, maps, and various printed ephemera concerning the Salton Sea. Also included are the original book prototype and production files for *Greetings from the Salton Sea: Folly and Intervention in the Southern California Landscape, 1905–2005*. Other materials include the full press archive for the project, exhibition catalogs, radio interviews, installation documentation, and the archived website for the project that was included in ICP's *Ecotopia* Triennial exhibit in 2006.

Dates

1966 – 2012

Quantity/Extent

. 5 cubic feet

Language

English and Spanish

Arrangement

Kim Stringfellow: Greetings from the Salton Sea is organized into eleven folders grouped into the following categories: artist information, research, book productions, and exhibitions.

Related Publications

Stringfellow, Kim. *Greetings from the Salton Sea: Folly and Intervention in the Southern California Landscape, 1905 - 2005*. Chicago: The Center for American Places at Columbia College Chicago, 2011.

Fox, William L. *Playa Works: The Myth of the Empty*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002.

DeBuys, William Eno. *Salt Dreams: Land and Water in Low-down California*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999.

Landis, Christopher. *In Search of Eldorado: the Salton Sea*. Palm Springs, CA: Palm Springs Desert Museum, 2000.

Container Listing:

CAE1205: Folders 1-11, Inclusive Dates 1966 – 2013

CAE Box 32

- 1 Artist and Website Information, 2012
- 2 Project Research Materials (1 of 2), 1998 – 2005
- 3 Project Research Materials (2 of 2), 1998 – 2005
- 4 Historic Project Research Materials, 1966 – 1993
- 5 Project Research Materials: Milton Friend, 1999 – 2011

- 6 Project Research Materials: Donald Scheidler, 2000
- 7 Book BLAD and Book Dummy, 2002
- 8 Book Proof, 2005
- 9 Book Reviews and Press, 2005 – 2011
- 10 Exhibition Ephemera, 2002 – 2012
- 11 Exhibition Texts, Reviews, and Press, 2005 – 2006