

Kim Abeles
Collection CAE1213

Introduction/Abstract

Kim Abeles is a community-based and feminist artist who seeks to make visible local environmental issues. The archive contains materials related to her lifelong process including book dummies, exhibition ephemera, objects, journals, sketches, manuscripts, catalogs, correspondence, videos, and press.

Biographical Note: Kim Abeles

Kim Abeles is a trans-disciplinary and media artist who explores and maps the urban environment to chronicle broad social issues. *The Smog Collector* series brought her work to national and international attention in the art world, and mainstream sources such as *Newsweek*, *National Public Radio*, *CBS Evening News*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. A mid-career survey curated by Karen Moss and sponsored by the Fellows of Contemporary Art for the Santa Monica Museum, *Kim Abeles: Encyclopedia Persona A-Z*, toured the United States and South America, and was awarded the Best Regional Museum Show category for 1993-94 by the International Association of Art Critics. She represented the U.S. in both the *Fotografie Biennale Rotterdam* and the *Cultural Centre of Berchem* in Antwerp. Her work is in numerous private and public collections including the Museum of Contemporary Art; United States Information Agency; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Yucun Art Museum, Suzhou, China; Sandwell Community History and Archives, U.K. Her work is also archived in the library collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Cooper-Hewitt Publication Design Collection of the Smithsonian. Abeles has been awarded grants from the Andy Warhol Foundation and Peter Norton Foundation, and fellowships from J. Paul Getty Trust Fund for the Visual Arts, Pollack-Krasner Foundation, and the California Arts Council.

Scope and Content

The archive includes early journals and diaries, book projects, and documentation of several significant art projects, including *The Smog Project* and the related *Mountain Wedge*, by an important community-based and feminist artist who seeks to make visible local environmental issues. Although the archive contains materials related to her lifelong practice, the primary focus is on the two aforementioned works, which used smog as an artistic medium. *The Smog Project* plates and watches were created by putting them face up on her downtown LA studio rooftop and allowing particulate matter to settle through templates placed atop them, thereby creating metaphorical drawings. *Mountain Wedge* documented over time the view from her rooftop through the streets to the mountains, which were visible at the end of her street and in between buildings only on days when smog was either not present or very light. Abeles' work is characterized by the use of common materials in the *arte povera* tradition, involvement of community participants, and a high degree of educational outreach, all of which is documented in the archive.

Inclusive Dates

1971 - 2015

Quantity/Extent

7.5 cubic feet

Language

English, Chinese (Mandarin), German, Hindi-Urdu, Japanese, Polish, Spanish

Arrangement

The archive *Kim Abeles* is organized into four series: Artist Information, Projects, Exhibition Announcements, and Press. Folders are further organized by date.

- Series 1: Artist Information
- Series 2: Projects/Exhibitions
- Series 3: Exhibition Announcements
- Series 4: Press

Related Publications

Barnes, Lucinda. *Between Artists: Twelve Contemporary American Artists Interview Twelve Contemporary American Artists*. Los Angeles: A.R.T. Press, 1996.

Contemporary Jewish Museum. *Do Not Destroy: Trees, Art, and Jewish Thought*. San Francisco CA: Contemporary Jewish Museum, 2012.

Cultureel Centrum Berchem. *Paradise Lost*. Antwerp, Netherlands: Cultureel Centrum Berchem, 1993.

Johnstone, Mark. *Contemporary art in Southern California*. Sydney, Australia: Craftsman House, G+B Arts International, 1999.

Lineberry, Heather Sealy. *Sites around the city: Art and Environment*. Tempe, Ariz.: Arizona State University Art Museum, 2000.

Moore, Sylvia, ed. *Yesterday and Tomorrow: California Women Artists*. New York, N.Y.: Midmarch Arts Press, 1989.

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. *See Hear: Museums and Imagination*. Los Angeles: Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 2006.

Container Listing by Series:

CAE1213/1 Series I: Artist Information, Folders 1-15, 1971 - 2013

Series 1 includes personal ephemera of Kim Abeles, artist information such as awards, interviews, correspondence, and personal journals.

CAE Box 40

- 1-1 Resumes/Chronologies, 1988 - 2013
- 1-2 Artist Statements, 1984 - 2010
- 1-3 Awards, Honors, Fellowships, 1992 - 2007
- 1-4 Correspondence, 1985 - 1998

- 1-5 Interviews, 1987 - 1995
- 1-6 Journals, 1972 - 2009
- 1-7 Letters of Recommendation, 1979 - 2010
- 1-8 Newsletters, 2010 - 2013
- 1-9 Self Portraits, not dated
- 1-10 Silo Home, 1975
- 1-11 Task Lists, 1984 - 1989
- 1-12 Writings, Poetry, 1971 - 1983
- 1-13 Writings, General, 1976 - 1977
- 1-14 Writings, Graduate School Thesis, 1980
- 1-15 Writings on Work 1981 - 1983

CAE1213/1 Series I: Additional Materials

CAE Box 44: Objects

- 1-6#1 Journal (1 of 20) Spring 1972
- 1-6#2 Journal (2 of 20) Fall 1972
- 1-6#3 Journal (3 of 20) 1974
- 1-6#4 Journal (4 of 20) 1976 - 1977
- 1-6#5 Journal (5 of 20) 1979
- 1-6#6 Journal (6 of 20) 1981 - 1982
- 1-6#7 Journal (7 of 20) 1982 - 1983
- 1-6#8 Journal (8 of 20) 1983 - 1984
- 1-6#9 Journal (9 of 20) March 1986
- 1-6#10 Journal (10 of 20) 1985 - 1986
- 1-6#11 Journal (11 of 20) 1987
- 1-6#12 Journal (12 of 20) August 1995
- 1-6#13 Journal (13 of 20) August 1995 - April 1997
- 1-6#14 Journal (14 of 20) May 1997 - December 1998
- 1-6#15 Journal (15 of 20) 1999 - 2000
- 1-6#16 Journal (16 of 20) June 2001 - September 2001
- 1-6#17 Journal (17 of 20) 2002 - 2003
- 1-6#18 Journal (18 of 20) December 2004 - 2005
- 1-6#19 Journal (19 of 20) 2006 - 2007
- 1-6#20 Journal (20 of 20) November 2008 - March 2009

CAE S-Box 9

- 1-9#1 Experiment for Myself as Other (PVC Pipe), 1979

CAE1213/2 Series 2: Projects/Exhibitions, Folders 1-55, 1976 - 2015

Series 2 includes projects and exhibition related ephemera, except for exhibition announcements and press materials related to exhibitions. Those materials reside in series 3 and 4 respectively. Materials include contracts, correspondence, photographs, artist books and binders, and travel ephemera related to the

CAE Box 40

- 2-1 Crafts, Cookery and Country Living (1 of 4), 1976
- 2-2 Crafts, Cookery and Country Living (2 of 4), 1976
- 2-3 Crafts, Cookery and Country Living (3 of 4), 1976

- 2-4 Crafts, Cookery and Country Living (4 of 4), 1976
- 2-5 Impressions, 1979
- 2-6 Kimonos, 1979 (Folder contents 1969 – 1981)
- 2-7 Our Position, Always Reciprocal, 1981
- 2-8 The Manuscripts of J. Denton Snider, 1982
- 2-9 A Mile a Minute (Los Angeles to Del Mar As Seen From A Moving Train), 1986
- 2-10 Calamity Jane and the Questions of Truth, 1986 (Folder contents 1985 – 1986)

CAE Box 41

- 2-11 Experiment to Identify Change, 1986 (Folder contents 1983 – 1986)
- 2-12 Horizon Lines, 1986
- 2-13 Rara Avis, 1986
- 2-14 tōō rāz a bil'diñ iz tōō târ it doun, 1986 (Folder contents 1983 – 1986)
- 2-15 Horizon Block, 1987
- 2-16 Index for the Pluperfect, 1987
- 2-17 The Image of St. Bernadette 65/100, 1987
- 2-18 The Book of Parts, 1988 (Folder contents 1985 – 1990)
- 2-19 Mountain Wedge, Pilgrimage to the Wedge, 1989
- 2-20 Smog Collectors, 1991
- 2-21 Smog Check Campaign, 1991 (Folder contents 1991 – 1994)
- 2-22 Presidential Smog Plates, 1991 (Folder contents 1991 – 2008)
- 2-23 World News, 1991
- 2-24 Smog Watches, 1992
- 2-25 Footprints of the Sky, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, 1992
- 2-26 60 Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch (View to the East), 1993 (Folder contents 1993 – 1994)
- 2-27 Encyclopedia Persona, 1993
- 2-28 Encyclopedia Persona, A Fifteen-Year Survey, 1993 (Folder contents 1992 – 1995)
- 2-29 HIV/Aids Tarot, 1993
- 2-30 American Air, Oberlin College, 1994
- 2-31 Runoff Dolphin Suitcase, 1995 (Folder contents 1994 – 1997)

CAE Box 42

- 2-32 Environmental Activity Book, 1996 (Folder contents 1995 – 1996)
- 2-33 Encyclopedia Persona, USIA Tour, 1996 (Folder contents 1994 – 1997)
- 2-34 Encyclopedia Persona, Argentina, 1996 (Folder contents 1988 – 1998)
- 2-35 Encyclopedia Persona, Brazil, 1996
- 2-36 Encyclopedia Persona, Chile, 1996
- 2-37 Equidistant, 1996 (Folder contents 1993 – 2002)
- 2-38 Evita as Official Portrait; As Madonna; As Fay; and Cinderella as Evita, 1997
- 2-39 L.A Stories: Engaging the City; Legend for a Mapping, 1998
- 2-40 Susret Art, 1998 - 2000
- 2-41 Medicinal Herb Book, Beginning Drawing 124A, 1999
- 2-42 Leaf Lounge (All the World's Leaves), 2000
- 2-43 Frankenstein's Hearts, 2001 (Folder contents 1998 – 2002)
- 2-44 Rotunda Mapping and Valley Story Benches, 2003
- 2-45 36 Streets of Hanoi, 2004
- 2-46 Documents K-12, 2004
- 2-47 The Importance of Objects, 2005
- 2-48 Getting in Touch with the Past, 2006
- 2-49 The Golden Mile, 2009

- 2-50 The Invisible Connectedness of Things, 2012
- 2-51 Shared Skies, 2012 (Folder contents 2012 – 2015)
- 2-52 Compiled Project Binders and Artist Books (Folder contents 1979 – 2008)
- 2-53 Miscellaneous Projects (1 of 3) (Folder contents 1997 – 2012)
- 2-54 Miscellaneous Projects (2 of 3) (Folder contents 1990 – 2007)
- 2-55 Miscellaneous Projects (3 of 3) (Folder contents 1987 – 1998)
- 2-56 Miscellaneous References to Abeles Work (Folder contents 1984 – 2008)

CAE1213/2 Series 2: Additional Materials

CAE Box 14: Small Objects

- 2-34#1 Argentinian Coat of Arms, not dated

CAE Box 34: Large Objects

- 2-50#1 The Invisible Connectedness of Things T-shirt, 2012
- 2-50#2 The Invisible Connectedness of Things Baby Onesie, 2012
- 2-52#3 Broadcast, (Artist Book), 1997

CAE Box 37: Large Objects

- 2-22#1 Smog Plate, not dated
- 2-22#2 Smog Plate in Process, not dated

CAE Box 38: Objects

- 2-8#1 The Manuscripts of Denton J. Snider/"AS THOUGH THE READER WERE THE WRITER'S GHOST"
– Bachelard, (Original Manuscript), 1982
- 2-17#2 The Image of St. Bernadette 65/100 (Artist Book)

CAE Box 39: Large Objects

- 2-52#4 Observation/Territory (Artist Book, Edition of 1), 1985

CAE Box 44: Objects

- 2-52#1 Kim Abeles, 1979 – 1985, Installations (Compiled Binder)
- 2-52#2 Large-Scale Sculpture Series, 1982 – 1983, Kim Abeles (Compiled Binder)

CAE Box 45: Objects

- 2-12#55 Kim Abeles, 1989, Horizon Lines (Binder)
- 2-18#1 The Book of Parts: The Story of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Kim Abeles, 1988 (Binder)
- 2-19#8 Kim Abeles, 1989, Mountain Wedge, Pilgrimage to the Wedge (Binder)
- 2-32#2 Environmental Activity Book Storyboards, 1995
- 2-50#3 The Invisible Connectedness of Things Puzzle, 2012
- 2-52#5 Biographical Portraits, 1982 – 1987, Kim Abeles (Binder)

CAE Box 46: Objects

- 2-24#1 Smog Watch, Flatware, Sky Background, 1992
- 2-24#2 Smog Watch, Flatware, White Background, 1992
- 2-24#3 Smog Watch, Gas Mask, 1992
- 2-24#4 Smog Watch, Skull, 1992
- 2-24#5 Smog Watch, United States, 1992
- 2-51#6 Fact/Fiction Boxes, 1988

CAE S-Box 9

- 2-10#2 Book Layout for Calamity Jane and the Questions of Truth
- 2-17#3 Drawing for "The Image of St. Bernadette"

Flat File F2: Oversized Items

- 2-12#1-#54 Horizon Line Pivot Point Drawings 1-54
- 2-37#1 Los Angeles City Map, 1993
- 2-51#1 *Shared Skies, Antelope Valley*, Ed. 115/150, 2015
- 2-51#2 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies)*, NCAR, Ed. 11/30, 2014
- 2-51#3 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies)*, En Route, Ed. 22/25, 2014
- 2-51#4 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies)*, Sunrise/Sunset, Ed. 23/25, 2014
- 2-51#5 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies)*, IX, Ed. 12/24, 2014
- 2-51#6 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies)*, VIII, Ed. 17/24, 2014
- 2-51#7 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies)*, VII, Ed. 20/25, 2014
- 2-51#8 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies)*, XVIII/XXV, 2012
- 2-51#9 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies) II*, V/V, 2013
- 2-51#10 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies) III*, Ed. 6/24, 2013
- 2-51#11 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies) IV*, Ed. 10/26, 2013
- 2-51#12 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies) V*, Ed. 11/25, 2013
- 2-51#13 *Shared Skies (13 Global Skies) VI*, Ed. 10/25, 2013
- 2-52#7 Project Chart, 2008

CAE1213/3 Series 3: Exhibition Announcements, Folders 1-10, 1979 – 2015

Series 3 includes exhibition announcement materials for group and solo exhibitions.

CAE Box 42

- 3-1 1979 – 1984 Exhibitions
- 3-2 1985 – 1989 Exhibitions
- 3-3 1990 – 1991 Exhibitions

CAE Box 43

- 3-4 1992 – 1994 Exhibitions
- 3-5 1995 – 1996 Exhibitions
- 3-6 1997 – 1999 Exhibitions
- 3-7 2000 – 2004 Exhibitions
- 3-8 2005 – 2007 Exhibitions
- 3-9 2008 – 2009 Exhibitions
- 3-10 2010 – 2015 Exhibitions

CAE1213/4 Series 4: Press, Folders 1-34, 1976 – 2012

Series 4 includes press materials related to Abeles' exhibitions and artistic practice.

CAE Box 43

- 4-1 1976 – 1980 Press
- 4-2 1981 Press
- 4-3 1982 Press

- 4-4 1983 Press
- 4-5 1984 Press
- 4-6 1985 Press
- 4-7 1986 Press
- 4-8 1987 Press
- 4-9 1988 Press
- 4-10 1989 Press
- 4-11 1990 Press
- 4-12 1991 Press
- 4-13 1992 Press
- 4-14 1993 Press
- 4-15 1994 Press
- 4-16 1995 Press
- 4-17 1996 Press
- 4-18 1997 Press
- 4-19 1998 Press

CAE Box 3

- 4-20 1999 Press
- 4-21 2000 Press
- 4-22 2001 Press
- 4-23 2002 Press
- 4-24 2003 Press
- 4-25 2004 Press
- 4-26 2005 Press
- 4-27 2006 Press
- 4-28 2007 Press
- 4-29 2008 Press
- 4-30 2009 Press
- 4-31 2010 Press
- 4-32 2011 Press
- 4-33 2012 Press
- 4-34 Undated Miscellaneous Press