

**Jeff Kelley: A Critic's Life**  
**Collection IAE2503**

**Introduction/Abstract**

The archive "Jeff Kelley: A Critic's Life" contains materials related to Jeff Kelley's career as an art critic, curator, and teaching career at various institutions.

**Biographical Note: Jeff Kelley**

Jeff Kelley was the first noteworthy art critic to come out of Nevada. He started writing art reviews in Las Vegas in 1977, then moved to Reno to write for the Reno-Gazette Journal. He went on to write for prominent national art magazines, sometimes featuring Nevada artists, sometimes national figures, for publications such as *Art in America* and *Artforum*. He earned his master's in art history at UC San Diego, where he met his future wife, the artist Hung Liu. He then founded and served as the director of the Center for Research in Contemporary Art (CRCA) at the University of Texas at Arlington. He has also held teaching positions at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, California College of Arts and Crafts, and the San Francisco Art Institute. Between 1998 and 2008 Kelley served as Consulting Curator of Contemporary Art at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, organizing major exhibitions by contemporary Chinese artists. He taught Art Theory and Criticism at UC Berkeley for eleven years and continues to publish internationally.

**Scope and Content**

The archive covers art critic Jeff Kelley's career from early days writing for Las Vegas newspapers and Reno's Reno-Gazette Journal, then into his work with national and international art magazines. His directorship of the Center for Research in Contemporary Art (CRCA) at the University of Texas at Arlington, as well as his teaching in the Art Department at UC Berkeley and other places are covered. His files include extensive archive materials on his work with Allan Kaprow, (about whom he published two books with UC Press), Ai Weiwei, and John Mason (the most famous artist to have been born and raised in Nevada), and others alongside prominent Nevada artists from the 1980s onward. His archive is a keystone for the art history of Nevada, including the foundational role of Kaprow's Happenings in the origins of Burning Man.

Materials include published articles, correspondence, slides, photographs, transparencies, video, documents, and exhibition ephemera.

**This archive is currently in process.**