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Trailblazing Art Dealer Andrea Rosen Donates Her Gallery Archives to the Smithsonian

The treasure trove of documents shines a light on the 1990s art world.

[Eileen Kinsella](#), August 22, 2019



Andrea Rosen in 2010. Photo ©Patrick McMullan.

The influential art dealer Andrea Rosen is getting a permanent spot at the Smithsonian. Or, at least, her papers are.

The veteran dealer and prominent taste-maker has donated her archives to the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art in Washington, DC. Rosen, who opened her gallery in SoHo in 1990, surprised the art world when she announced, in 2017, that she would close her spaces and stop representing living artists.

Now, the legacy of her gallery will live on in the form of hundreds and hundreds of boxes of records that paint a dynamic picture of what it was like to run an art business in the 1990s and early aughts. The records measure 250 linear feet and include photos, correspondence, checklists, price lists, and press clippings.

Photographs that Rosen took of installations, dinners, art fairs, and studio visits are a highlight of the collection, the Smithsonian said in a statement. The archives also contain detailed business and financial records related to the production of artworks.

Rosen is perhaps best known for championing the work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, the Cuban-American artist whose paper stack works were the subject of the gallery's first show in 1990. (In 2017, Rosen said she planned to shift her focus from running the gallery to working with the Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation, which she co-represents with David Zwirner.) Rosen also played a key early role in the careers of artists including Rita

Ackermann, John Currin, Sean Landers, Wolfgang Tillmans, Andrea Zittel, Ryan Trecartin, and Lizzie Fitch.

Building archives for her artists “was always a critical component of the gallery’s focus,” Rosen said in a statement. “I am delighted and proud that these artist archives as well as the gallery’s archives will be held, cared for, and accessible in the most important archive in America.”

Calling the gallery a “vibrant and stalwart presence in New York’s art scene for 27 years,” American Archives director Kate Haw said: “Andrea’s eye for young talent is legendary and her exhibitions were truly groundbreaking. With her very generous gift, we aim to preserve the gallery’s mission to be ‘conceptually rigorous, fully aware of the responsibility of putting one’s subjectivity in the public realm, and unafraid of actually being beautiful.’”

The Rosen records will join those of Leo Castelli Gallery, Betty Parsons Gallery, André Emmerich Gallery, Tanager Gallery, Park Place, and around 200 other historic galleries held by the Archives. Rosen’s is the first gallery founded in the 1990s to be represented in the collection.