

Mildred Schmertz, 1925-2018

A Finding Aid for the
Mildred Schmertz Collection,
The Architectural Archives, University of
Pennsylvania

Archival Description

Descriptive Summary

Title: The Mildred Schmertz Collection

Coll. ID: 383.

Origin: Mildred Schmertz, 1925-2018, photographer, architect, editor/writer.

Extent: Architectural drawings, 129;
Boxed files, 4 linear ft;
Photoprints, 140;
Transparencies, 105;
Slides, 2,250;
Negatives, 442;
Scrapbooks, 1.

Repository: The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania
102 Meyerson Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6311
(215) 898-8323

Abstract: This collection contains professional and personal materials belonging to editor, architect, and lecturer Mildred Schmertz (1925-2018). It includes prints, slides, architectural prints, personal items (passports, notebooks, scrapbook), writings (thesis papers, articles), and professional material related to her work at *The Architectural Record*.

Indexes:

Cataloging:

Biographical/Historical Sketch

Mildred Schmertz was born on March 25, 1925 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She received her Bachelor of Architecture from Carnegie Mellon University, then known as Carnegie Institute of Technology. Schmertz worked as a draftsman and renderer under John Schurko, a Pittsburgh architect, for eight years. She then explored her interest in graphic arts (photography, typography) while attending Yale University and earned a Master's degree in Fine Arts. Schmertz worked in the art department of *The Architectural Record* during summers while studying at Yale and advanced to full time after she graduated. Upon graduation, she obtained her license to practice architecture in New York State.

In 1985, Schmertz became the first female editor-in-chief of a professional architectural publication. She worked for *The Architectural Record* from 1957 until her retirement in 1990 but continued to write for the publication until 2010.

Schmertz is responsible for some of the most notable photography of Louis I. Kahn's Richards Medical Research Laboratories, which is considered the breakthrough project of his career. In addition to her photography and writing, she was a visiting lecturer at the Yale School of Architecture and the Graduate Program in Architecture and Design Criticism in the New School at Parsons School of Design. She served as commissioner for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission from 1988 to 1991.

Mildred Schmertz died on January 9, 2018 at the age of 92.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains materials related to the professional work of Mildred Schmertz, an architect, photographer, writer and editor. It measures approximately six linear feet and includes architectural and travel photography, correspondence, and research and writings. It also contains chapters for an unpublished book on architect Benjamin Thompson, materials related to the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, general correspondence, and papers regarding her work at *The Architectural Record*.

Highlights of the collection include photography of Louis I. Kahn's Richards Laboratories and houses designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in Arizona.

Arrangement

- I. Photography
- II. Papers

Access Points for Indexing (Controlled Vocabulary)

Schmertz, Mildred, 1925-2018.

Architectural Record.

Kahn, Louis I., 1901-1974.

Wright, Frank Lloyd, 1867-1959.

Thompson, Benjamin, 1918-2002.

Architectural photography.

Gropius, Walter, 1883-1969.

Rudolph, Paul, 1918-1997.

Women architects.

History of architecture.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on access: This collection is available for research by appointment only.

Preferred collection citation: Mildred Schmertz, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.

Acquisition: Gift of the Estate of Mildred Schmertz, 2019

Processing: The collection was processed and the finding aid prepared by Heather Isbell Schumacher with the assistance of Jessica Lin, Lauren Mitchell, and Shubhan Nagendra.

Container list

Series I. Photography

Box 1

- 383.I.01 Early student work, 1950s-60s (13 b&w photographic prints, 4 transparencies)
383.I.02 Set of numbered slides of various locations, 1-252 (251 color slides)
383.I.03 Set from 1a-100b (242 color slides)
383.I.04 Set of 100 slides from various places (97 color slides)
383.I.05 Set of 2 slides at beach (2 color slides)
383.I.06 Set of travel 1-200 (136 slides)
383.I.07 July 1997 (16 color slides)
383.I.08 England (12 color slides)
383.I.09 Switzerland (20 color slides)
383.I.10 Spain (150 color slides)
383.I.11 France (207 color slides)
Includes: Angouleme, Biarritz, Blois, Bayonne, Cannes, Mt. St. Michael, Chambord, Chenonceaux, Cheverny, Chantilly, Chartes, Poitiers, Marseille, Gibraltar, St. Tropez, Langeais, Loches, Villandry, St. Malo, Carcassonne, Tours
- 383.I.12 Paris (111 color slides)
383.I.13 Barbados, September 1967 (2 color prints, 35 color slides)
383.I.14 Brandeis/Huntan Stone Harbor (16 b&w architectural prints from contact sheet, 7 portrait negatives, 12 negative strips)
- 383.I.15 Soviet Union, October 1972 (5 b&w negatives, 32 color negatives)
383.I.16 Georgetown Canal (5 b&w contact sheets, 15 b&w negatives strips)
383.I.17 Travel slides, July-August 1996 (196 color slides)
Includes: Sezincote, Oxford, Broughton Castle, Bellport, Blenheim, Kelmscott, Stowe, Cotswold, Rousham Park
- 383.I.18 Travel slides miscellaneous (137 color slides)
383.I.19 Miscellaneous (185 color slides)
Includes: Providence, RI; Nantucket, Rome, Harwich Port, Regretta, Edgartown, Hyannis, Headshots of friends, Rosenberg, I.P., Studio, Cartwright party, Litchfield
- 383.I.20 Mon Daw Min store (8 color slides)
383.I.21 Frank Lloyd Wright Arizona houses, February 1958 (62 color slides)
Includes: Taliesin West, Jorgine Boomer House, David and Gladys Wright
- 383.I.22 Louis Kahn, Richards Laboratories (3 contact sheets, 35 b&w negatives)
383.I.23 Safdie, Jerusalem (12 color slides)
383.I.24 RIT photos (55 color slides)
383.I.25 Expo '67 (7 b&w negatives, 55 color slides)
383.I.26 Expo '70 Japan, black and white (13 b&w prints, 5 contact sheets, 48 b&w negatives, 31 b&w negatives strips)
383.I.27 Expo '70 color (90 color negatives)
383.I.28 Drawings of maps and floor plans (14 b&w slides)
383.I.29 Aga Khan (137 color slides; 101 color film transparencies)

- 383.I.30 Aga Khan, M. Sorkin selection, August 21, 1989 (110 color slides)
- 383.I.31 AIA Convention in San Diego (14 color prints, 27 b&w prints)
- 383.I.32 AIA photos (4 images from contact sheet, 99 b&w negatives)
- 383.I.33 Open Space Book Photos 1972 (13 b&w prints)
- 383.I.34 Architectural Record misc. (17 b&w photoprints *Louis Kahn pictured*, 9 color photoprints)
- 383.I.35 "Human Settlements," Architectural Record special issue, National Magazine Award winner, 1977 (4 b&w photoprints)
- 383.I.36 Fete Champetre (4 b&w photoprints, 4 contact sheets, 6 b&w negative strips)
- 383.I.37 Gene Hawley Chowder Meeting (45 b&w negatives, 1 sketch, 1 receipt)
- 383.I.38 Schmertz personal—Chris Little pix (5 b&w photoprints, 8 contact sheets, 10 b&w negatives strips, 24 color film strips)
- 383.I.39 Mildred Schmertz and friends (1 color photoprint, 1 b&w photoprint, 1 sepia photoprint, 1 b&w transparency)

Box 2 Oversized photography

- 383.I.40 Photo scrapbook, France, August-September 1953
- 383.I.41 Oversize photograph of Mildred Schmertz and three others in Amsterdam, nd

Series II. Papers

Box 3 Benjamin Thompson book

- 383.II.01 Thompson
- 383.II.02 Thompson Outline & Overview
- 383.II.03 Thompson, Ben and Jane Thompson
- 383.II.04 Jane Thompson Correspondence
- 383.II.05 Thompson Correspondence
- 383.II.06 Thompson Chapters 1a and 1b
- 383.II.07 Thompson Chapter 2
- 383.II.08 Thompson Chapter 3A
- 383.II.09 Thompson Chapter 4
- 383.II.10 Thompson Chapter 5
- 383.II.11 Thompson Chapter 6
- 383.II.12 Thompson Chapter 7
- 383.II.13 Thompson Chapter 8
- 383.II.14 Thompson Chapter 9
- 383.II.15 Thompson Chapter 10
- 383.II.16 Thompson Chapter 11
- 383.II.17 Thompson Chapter 12a
- 383.II.18 Thompson Chapter 12b
- 383.II.19 Thompson Chapter 13

- 383.II.20 Thompson Chapter 14
- 383.II.21 Thompson Chapter 15
- 383.II.22 Thompson Chapter 16
- 383.II.23 Graham Foundation
- 383.II.24 B.T. Biography
- 383.II.25a Research notes A
- 383.II.25b Research notes B
- 383.II.26a Drafts A
- 383.II.26b Drafts B
- 383.II.27 AIA Gold Medal press coverage, 1991-1992
- 383.II.28 *Architectural Record*, December 1977
- 383.II.29 *Process Architecture*, "Benjamin Thompson & Associates," No. 89 June 1990 (2 copies)

Box 4

- 383.II.30 Mildred Schmertz CV
 - 383.II.31 Yale master's thesis, March 2, 1957
 - 383.II.32 Yale History of Art essay, 5/20/57
 - 383.II.33 Mildred Schmertz passport, expires April 30, 1974
 - 383.II.34 Mildred Schmertz passport, expires May 15, 1980
 - 383.II.35 Mildred Schmertz passport, expires March 25, 1985
 - 383.II.36 Mildred Schmertz passport, expires January 31, 1995
 - 383.II.37 Notebook of translations and notes from trip to Soviet Union, n.d.
 - 383.II.38 Notebook, July 1975
- Alphabetical correspondence*
- 383.II.39 A
 - 383.II.40 B
 - 383.II.41 C
 - 383.II.42 D
 - 383.II.43 E
 - 383.II.44 F
 - 383.II.45 G
 - 383.II.46 H
 - 383.II.47 I
 - 383.II.48 J
 - 383.II.49 K
 - 383.II.50 L
 - 383.II.51 M
 - 383.II.52 Mc
 - 383.II.53 N
 - 383.II.54 O
 - 383.II.55 P

- 383.II.56 Q
- 383.II.57 R
- 383.II.58 S
- 383.II.59 T
- 383.II.60 V
- 383.II.61 W
- 383.II.62 X,Y, Z
- 383.II.63 Gropius
- 383.II.64 Gropius Obituaries, July 1969
- 383.II.65 Gropius, media clips
- 383.II.66 Gropius honors, AIA/Gold Medal
- 383.II.67 Gropius correspondence
- 383.II.68 Gropius Bauhaus Symposium, September 1969
- 383.II.69 Gropius misc. photos
- 383.II.70 Rense, Paige
- 383.II.71 Paul Rudolph correspondence
- 383.II.72 P. Rudolph MFS support of AIA gold medal candidacy
- 383.II.73 Paul Rudolph photo and Sorkin profile
- 383.II.74 Paul Rudolph clips-Christian Science building destroyed
- 383.II.75 Paul Rudolph clips-Beekman Place Apts.
- 383.II.76 Paul Rudolph Southeast Asia
- 383.II.77 Paul Rudolph crit of M. Graves' Whitney Museum
- 383.II.78 Paul Rudolph/Personal/Professional/Honors and Awards/Writings/Commissions
- 383.II.79 Saxon, Charles
- 383.II.80 *Architectural Record*, Frank Lloyd Wright, May 5, 1958 (photocopy)
- 383.II.81 *Architectural Record*, February 1973
- 383.II.82 *Architectural Record*, December 1974
- 383.II.83 *Architectural Record*, May 1976 (2 copies)
- 383.II.84 *Architectural Record*, November 1980
- 383.II.85 *Architecture*, September 1990
- 383.II.86 *Architectural Record*, September 2016

Box 5

- 383.II.87 Letters the M. Schmertz/Praise
- 383.II.88 Praise
- 383.II.89 Praise
- 383.II.90 St. Bart's
- 383.II.91 St. Bart's/M. Schmertz
- 383.II.92 Promotion to Chief Editor
- 383.II.93 Promotion to Chief Editor
- 383.II.94 Promotion to Chief Editor
- 383.II.95 Architectural Record misc.
- 383.II.96 Architectural Record/Alliance of Women in Architecture

- 383.II.97 Architectural Record, "Human Settlements"
- 383.II.98 Newspaper article clippings (housing, MS work)
- 383.II.99 M. Schmertz Landmarks Commission
- 383.II.100 Century General
- 383.II.101 Century
- 383.II.102 Yale Writing Course
- 383.II.103 Schmertz Writings - General
- 383.II.104 M. Schmertz/Misc. speeches
- 383.II.105 Personal
- 383.II.106 Personal
- 383.II.107 Personal
- 383.II.108 Personal
- 383.II.109 Personal
- 383.II.110 Personal
- 383.II.111 Personal

Box 6 Aga Khan Award

- 383.II.112 Aga Khan
- 383.II.113 Aga Khan
- 383.II.114 Aga Khan
- 383.II.115 Aga Khan Granada Seminar
- 383.II.116 The Aga Khan Awards-1998 7th Cycle
- 383.II.117 Aga Khan Awards 20th anniversary interview
- 383.II.118 The Aga Khan Award for Architecture 1980 (2 copies)
- 383.II.119 The Aga Khan Award for Architecture 1983 (2 copies)
- 383.II.120 The Aga Khan Award for Architecture 1989
- 383.II.121 Designing in Islamic Cultures 3, Adaptive Reuse: Integrating Traditional Areas into the Modern Urban Fabric, 1982
- 383.II.122 Designing in Islamic Cultures 4, Continuity and Change: Design Strategies for Large-Scale Urban Development, 1984
- 383.II.123 Seminar on the Changing Rural Habitat Beijing, People's Republic of China, October 1981
- 383.II.124 Highlights, 1980 Award Presentation Ceremony Lahore and Karachi Seminars
- 383.II.125 Places of Public Gathering in Islam, Amman, Jordan 1980
- 383.II.126 Architecture Education in the Islamic World, Granada, Spain 1986
- 383.II.127 Reading the Contemporary City, Dakar, Senegal, 1982
- 383.II.128 Participants' Paper, 19th-22nd December 1985, Dhaka
- 383.II.129 Historic Cities Support Programme, Zanzibar Stone Town Projects
- 383.II.130 *The Architecture of Self-Help Communities: The First International Design Competition for the Urban Environment of Developing Countries*, Michael Y. Seelig.