

CRANBROOK

ARCHIVES

Martha M. Lauritzen (1909-) Papers

(1948-1997)
1.2 linear ft.

Acquisition Number: 1999-11

Acquisition: Gift of Martha M. Lauritzen in May 1999. See donor file for additional provenance.

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Citation: Martha M. Lauritzen Papers, Cranbrook Archives, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.

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HISTORY

Martha Middleton Lauritzen, from Alton, Illinois, was a student in the art department at Michigan State University under Albert Christ-Janer. In the spring of 1945, she was heavily influenced by a lecture given by Maija Grotell and transferred to Cranbrook Academy of Art in the fall of 1945. She studied ceramics under Grotell, receiving her B.F.A. in the spring of 1947.

In the summer of 1947, Middleton married Cranbrook art student Frederick Lauritzen and became Grotell's summer teaching assistant. She continued to study, receiving her M.F.A. in June 1948. After taking the summer of 1948 off, Lauritzen continued to work as Grotell's summer assistant through 1952.

One of Lauritzen's accomplishments as a potter came when she "fell upon the beginnings of the fact that copper could be used" in glazes. Grotell took Lauritzen's initial findings and developed the beautiful copper blue glazes used on her series of blue pieces in the 1950's. In 1954, with the assistance of Grotell, Lauritzen submitted an article on "Stoneware Copper Blue Glazes" to *Ceramics Monthly* magazine that was never published.

Lauritzen was highly influenced by the work and teachings of Maija Grotell. Even after her family moved to Los Angeles in 1960, Lauritzen continued to remain close friends with Grotell. After giving birth to her second child, Lauritzen retired from the art world to become a full-time mother. In 1990, after her husband's death, Lauritzen moved to Pioche, Nevada where she opened a small antiquarian book shop called The Book Mine.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection deals primarily with Martha Lauritzen's experiences at Cranbrook, particularly her relationship with her ceramics mentor, Maija Grotell. The bulk of the collection is correspondence to Lauritzen from Grotell (1948-1954) and from other students of Grotell's. Two of these students, Jeff Schlanger and Toshiko Takaazu, published a book on Grotell, and correspondence relating to the publication is included. The letters detail experiences at Cranbrook and specifically relating to ceramics in the 1940's, including processes, concepts and design. Additional correspondence is included relating to Maija Grotell's death and memorial service.

Of particular note for ceramics students interested in the development of copper blue glazes are the manuscript notes and correspondence relating to the unpublished article "Stoneware Copper Blue Glazes" written by Grotell and Lauritzen, as well as a small sample of the glaze.

There are also two oral history interviews: one of Maija Grotell by Jeff Schlanger and Toshiko Takaazu in May 1968, and a copy of a typed transcript that Lauritzen made in 1981 and sent to the Academy for their 50th anniversary.

RELATED COLLECTIONS

- The Maija Grotell Papers (2002-08)
- The Cranbrook Art Academy holds a video of films taken 1939-1942 which contain scenes of Maija Grotell at the potter's wheel.
- The Maija Grotell Papers are located at the George Arents Research Library, Syracuse University, and on microfilm at the Smithsonian Archives of American Art.
- See also: Schlanger, Jeff and Toshiko Takeazu. (1996) *Maija Grotell: works which grow from belief*. Goffstown, NH: Studio Potter Books.

Box Number--Description

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1. Correspondence, 1948-1954
2. Correspondence, 1973-1976
3. Correspondence, 1993
4. Manuscript – “Stoneware Copper Blue Glazes,” 1955
5. Memorial Service, Maija Grotell, 1973
6. Oral History Interview, Maija Grotell, May 1968
7. Oral History Interview, Martha M. Lauritzen, Fall 1981

Box 2

Ceramics Smock, Maija Grotell

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