

PRESS RELEASE

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston

CONTEMPORARY ARTS MUSEUM HOUSTON ARCHIVE AT RICE UNIVERSITY

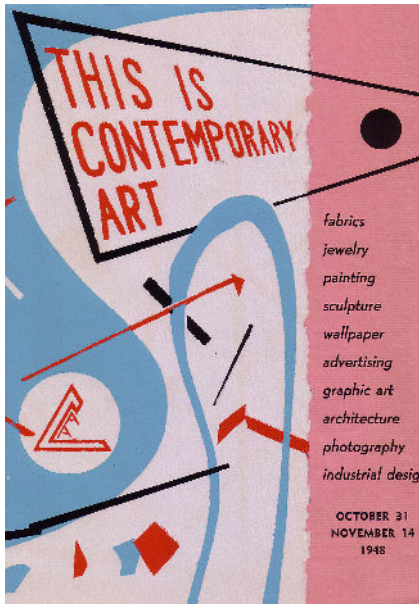


Vito Acconci gallery talk at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston on August 8, 1981
Photo: Unknown
Courtesy Contemporary Arts Museum Houston Archive at Rice University, Texas

HOUSTON, TX (September 18, 2017)—The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH) is excited to announce the donation of its extensive archive to the Woodson Research Center, a division of the Fondren Library at Rice University. The archive documents the history of CAMH since its founding in 1948. Exhibitions, interviews, and lectures with once emerging artists and now luminaries of contemporary art history will be of great interest and accessible to scholars, lovers of art, and future art historians. The relationship between CAMH and Rice University will be ongoing, as the museum continues to add to the repository of materials in the coming years. This will allow CAMH’s archival collection to be available and searchable for all interested in the art history that has occurred in Houston.

“CAMH is committed to being free and accessible to the general public. It is therefore natural to partner with Rice’s Woodson

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Cover of *This is Contemporary Art*, 1948
Design: Frank Dolejska
Courtesy Contemporary Arts Museum Houston
Archive at Rice University, Texas

Research Center in the Fondren Library who will make our archives accessible to the public and to scholars all around the world. Our Institution has shared the art of our time with audiences for nearly 70 years; the wealth of experiences and knowledge that can be gained from our treasure trove of materials will prove to be a marvelous resource for academic and personal research. Founded as a *kunsthalle*, or non-collecting institution focused on presenting current art and artists, our archives represent CAMH's institutional legacy in a way that other museums are defined by their permanent collections. The richness of this legacy will be explored for generations, with help from our friends at Rice."—Bill Arning, CAMH Director

CAMH's long-standing mission to showcase cutting edge art began with its inaugural exhibition *This is Contemporary Art* (1948) and continues through to current programming. CAMH's model of showing six to eight exhibitions per year in two different gallery spaces, demonstrates the importance of *kunsthalle*s in presenting to the public the practices of emerging and established artists. The archive spans decades of documentation in a variety of media: photographs, videos, correspondence, and audio files. CAMH's integral role in creating the history of contemporary art becomes evident through the archive of exhibitions. Many renowned contemporary artists exhibited at CAMH early in their careers, including: *John Chamberlain: Recent Sculptures* (1975), *Cindy Sherman: Photographs* (1980), *Bill Viola: Survey of a Decade* (1988), *Ann Hamilton: kaph* (1997), *Shirin Neshat* (2003), and *Perspectives 173: Clifford Owens* (2011). CAMH's website (CAMH.ORG), which currently lists the entire history of its exhibitions, will provide a link to the Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives for those who wish to delve deeper into the history of CAMH, specific exhibitions, and artists.

Documentation on CAMH's search for its first director will draw attention to Houston's early goal to create a precedent for innovative arts organizations and to provide support to the contemporary art community. Ultimately, Jermayne MacAgy was hand-picked by Dominique and John de Menil to lead CAMH, then the Contemporary Arts Association, and she played a central role in realizing such groundbreaking exhibitions as *Mark Rothko* (1957) (the artist's second museum exhibition) and *Totems Not Taboo: An Exhibition of Primitive Art* (1959). In conjunction with its other collections, the Woodson Research Center serves as a central resource for the history of Houston arts.

"We are delighted at the Woodson Research Center to provide public access to the archives of the Contemporary Arts Museum

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Merce Cunningham Dance Company (Viola Farber, Carolyn Brown, Merce Cunningham, Barbara Lloyd) performing *Suite For Five* in April 1965 in conjunction with CAMH exhibition *Robert Rauschenberg*

Photo: Martin Silver

Courtesy Contemporary Arts Museum Houston Archive at Rice University, Texas

Houston. Rice University and CAMH have enjoyed strong connections over the years, and the CAMH archives will serve researchers well in the company of other Houston fine and performing arts collections at Rice. Such collections include the Rice Gallery records, Houston Arts and Media Oral Histories, Ann Holmes Fine Arts Archive, Marion Kessel Performing Arts collection, Grace Spaulding John papers, and the William Camfield papers. The CAMH records are being processed currently, and will begin to be open for research by the end of 2017.” — Amanda Focke, Assistant Head of Woodson Research Center

The Museum and Woodson Research Center share two passions – accessibility and technology. CAMH has long used the latest technology to document contemporary art and the Woodson Research Center has a strong commitment to both analog and digital preservation. The CAMH collection contains hours of audio and visual recordings, including a rare recorded performance by Merce Cunningham. Interviews and lectures featuring Vito Acconci, Yoko Ono, Lorna Simpson, Pat Stier, and Fred Wilson are a small sampling of the treasures identified within the collection with many more to be discovered. The archivists of the Woodson Research Center Special Collections and Archives will not only conserve the delicate audio/visual recordings but also digitize and make the metadata searchable to facilitate research and online access.

Archive inquiries may be sent to woodson@rice.edu, or call 713.348.2586.

Press inquiries may be sent to cbrungardt@camh.org, or call 713.284.8265.

CAMH MISSION

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is a leading destination to experience innovative art. CAMH actively encourages public engagement with its exhibitions through its educational programs, publications, and online presence.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CAMH

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, at the corner of Montrose and Bissonnet, in the heart of Houston’s Museum District. Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 10AM–7PM, Thursday 10AM–9PM, Saturday 10AM–6PM, and Sunday 12PM–6PM. Admission is always free. For more information, visit CAMH.ORG or call 713.284.8250.

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE WOODSON RESEARCH CENTER

The Woodson Research Center is located on the Rice University campus at 6100 Main Street in the Fondren Library. Hours are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 9AM–4PM. For more information about the collections, visit library.rice.edu/woodson.