

May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection
Department of Anthropology
Loyola University Chicago

Guide to May Weber Collection Archives

Catherine A. Nichols

August 2021

Updated September 2026

Contact: Catherine A. Nichols, PhD
Director, May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection
Phone: (773) 508-3887
Email: maywebercollection@luc.edu

Collection Overview

Repository:	May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection, Mundelein Center 419, Loyola University Chicago (Lakeshore campus)
Title:	May Weber Collection Archives
Date:	1970s – present
Location:	All materials held in Mundelein 419
Extent:	43 boxes
Creator:	Catherine Nichols, Department of Anthropology, Loyola University Chicago
Language:	Collection is in English.
Summary:	The May Weber Collection Archives contain documents and miscellaneous materials given to Loyola University Chicago as part of the donation of Weber's ethnographic art collection. The records pertain to documentation of some of objects held in the collection, the records of The May Weber Foundation, the May Weber Museum of Cultural Arts, and accretions of miscellaneous materials by Weber.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was donated to the Department of Anthropology, Loyola University Chicago in 2013.

Processing Information

This collection is ongoing. Additions generated by Loyola faculty and students are processed as they are created.

Processed under the supervision of Catherine Nichols by student interns from 2014 through 2023.

Preferred Citation

May Weber Collection Archives, Loyola University Chicago.

Restrictions

No restrictions. Access to the May Weber Collection Archives requires an appointment.

Conditions Governing Use

Contact May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection for terms of use.

Administrative History

The May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection was established in 2014, following the gift of a collection of approximately 4600 objects to Loyola University Chicago in 2012. Upon inventory and physical transfer of the majority of materials from the home of May Weber and Gerald Hoffman, following Weber's death, Dr. Catherine Nichols was hired by the Department of Anthropology to assess the materials and select objects to form a research and teaching collection. The majority of these selections were made during 2014. In 2019 Hoffman passed away and a remaining approximately 400 objects, part of the original gift, were physically moved from the Weber/Hoffman home to the Loyola University Museum of Art (LUMA), where they were assessed and selected by Nichols. Disposition of the objects not selected was performed by Vice President of Cultural Affairs Pam Ambrose in 2014-15 and LUMA Collections and Events Manager Carlynne Robinson. A number of objects from Weber's gifts have been placed in Loyola buildings and facilities, including LUREC and the Cuneo Mansion. The May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection is housed in Mundelein 418. The adjacent room, Mundelein 419 functions as a research, teaching, and workspace, and holds the May Weber Collection Archives, as well as Weber's collection of publications related to the collection's contents.

Scope and Contents

The May Weber Collection Archives contains correspondence, invoices, photographs, object documents, fiscal records, exhibit records, grant applications, and manuscript notes. The majority of the materials were created or retained by Weber in the course of her collecting activities, the development of exhibitions, and the operation of the May Weber Museum of Cultural Arts and The May Weber Foundation.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in 11 series: (1) Correspondence and Invoices, Alpha-Name File; (2) Object Inventory, Catalogue, Appraisal & Disposition Records; (3) Object Reference Articles and Information; (4) Records of The May Weber Museum of Cultural Arts; (5) May Weber Personal; (6) Interpretive Labels and Notes; (7) Oversize; (8) Records of The May Weber Foundation; (9) Records pertaining to LUC/LUMA; (10) Deed of Gift & Disposition Records; (11) Records of the May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection

Note on Exhibitions (prepared by Leah Swan, April 2023)

List in chronological order of Exhibits at the May Weber Museum of Cultural Art and ones that include objects from May Weber's collection. (*exhibits that took place at a different institution for which May Weber loaned objects from her collection)

Feb-March	*Masks (1981)
Oct-Nov	*African Art (1983)
March-May	*Masquerade: Mexican Masks and Related Folk Art (1986)
Jan-March	*Faces of Africa: African Masks from Prominent Chicago Collections (1987)
Sep-Nov	Art in Daily Life: The Many Faces of Beauty (1987)
Dec-Jan	The Folk Arts of Mexico (1987-88)
Dec-Jan	*In Good Taste: Folk Textiles of Japan (1987-88)
Feb-April	The Ritual Arts of the Sepik River and Papua New Guinea (1988)

April-June	Textile and Sculptural Arts of Cameroon (1988)
July-Aug	Textile and Household Arts of Eastern Asia (1988)
Aug-Oct	Beautiful Tradition: The Textiles and Household Arts of Japan (1988)
Oct-Jan	Messages to Gods and Men: Sculpture and Textiles of the Yoruba of Nigeria (1988-89)
Feb-May	The Enduring Maya: Art in the Guatemalan Highlands (1989)
Mid-year	Art in the Daily Life: Enclaves of Beauty (1989)
Sep-Jan	Art in Daily Life: Mexico's Riches (1989-90)
Feb-April	*A Parade of Mexican Folk Art (1990)
May-Aug	Japan and Her Ancestors (1990)
Sep-Jan	Indonesia: Artistic Legacies and Traditions (1990-91)
Feb-Aug	To Market, To Market (1991)
Sep-Jan	Containers of Spirit and Substance (1991-92)
Dec-Feb	*Mexican Masks and Masks Costumes (1995-96)
Feb-June	India: Living Arts, Unknown Masters (1992)
July-Dec	Everyman, Trader: Cultural Interchange in New World Commerce (1992)
Sep	Art in Daily Life: Masks of Humanity (1993)
Jan-June	A Single Blade of Grass (1993)
Aug-Sep	*A Single Blade of Grass (1995)
April-May	*Sacred and Secular Containers (1999)
July-Sep	*Art in Daily Life: The Japanese Tradition (1999)
Sep-Feb	*Splendor of Soul (2001-2)
April-Sep	The Gods As We Shape Them (2006)
May-July	Stories in Cloth (2011)
Feb-June	Wayang, Art of Puppetry (2017)

Notes for Exhibits/Folders in Series 6

Methodology: Labels were grouped together based on similar formatting, content, and date. Chronology of exhibits and their themes were generated by examining documents in Boxes 20-21 and Boxes 24-27. This included exhibit proposals, correspondents, exhibit brochures, and news articles. Labels were then grouped together by exhibit by looking at dated labels/essays, comparing against object lists and descriptions, and examining photos of exhibits to match objects pictured to labels or to descriptions given from news articles.

Masks

An exhibit at the Bernard Gallery of Calumet College in 1981 displaying masks sourced from May Weber's collection.

African Art

Exhibit at the Bernard Gallery of Calumet College in 1983 on that included sculpture, masks, cloth, and household items from Africa. Objects were sourced from May Weber's collection. (See "museum correspondence" folder for more information.)

Masquerade: Mexican Masks and Related Folk Art

This was an exhibit displayed at The William Benton Museum of Art in 1896 mainly on Mexican masks and objects but includes masks from other regions. The majority of the masks and other objects were sourced from May Weber's collection. (See "Exhibit and Museum Brochures, mailers, info" folder for more information.)

Faces of Africa: African Masks from Prominent Chicago Collections

An exhibit at the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College in 1987 for which May loaned some of her African masks. (See "museum correspondence" folder for more information.)

[May Weber Museum of Cultural Art opened in September of 1987 at 230 E Ohio St. with the first exhibit being "The Many Faces of Beauty". Prior to this the May Weber Foundation loaned out objects and had local and traveling exhibits in different institutions.]

The Folk Arts of Mexico

Exhibit about Mexican folk art in 1987-1988 by May Weber at her Museum of Cultural Art. Many of the labels/objects about Mexican objects or masks from previous years that May had loaned to other institutions were most likely used during this exhibit as well.

In Good Taste: Folk Textiles of Japan

Exhibit at the Islip Art Museum in 1987-1988 that included pieces on loan from May Weber. (See "Exhibit and Museum Brochures, mailers, info" folder for more information.)

A Parade of Mexican Folk Art

An exhibit at Fermilab in 1990 on Mexican folk art all sourced on loan from May Weber's collection.

Mexican Masks and Masks Costumes

This was an exhibit displayed at the Islip Art Museum in 1995-1996. Objects were loaned from May Weber's collection. (See "Exhibit and Museum Brochures, mailers, info" folder for more information.)

Chicago Area Lace Guild

A group that was invited to participate in an exhibit on trade routes and cultural diffusion, most likely the exhibit "Everyman, Trader."

A Single Blade of Grass (1995)

Most likely a repeat of the exhibit done by the May Weber Museum of Cultural Art in 1993 that traveled to Fermilab to be exhibited in 1995.

Sacred and Secular Containers

This exhibition was held at Columbia College Chicago in 1999. May sent sample essays along with advice on how to construct an exhibit to Kate Ezra. This included 5 exhibits: "Containers of Spirit and Substance", "The Masked Theater of Daily Life", "Art in Daily Life: The Many Faces of Beauty", "To Market To Market", and "The Gods as We Shape Them". These are also exhibits in the May Weber Museum of Cultural Art. May Weber loaned objects for this exhibition.

Art in Daily Life: The Japanese Tradition

This exhibit was displayed at DePaul University in 1999 and all objects were on loan from May Weber.

Splendor of Soul

Proposed exhibit at Meadows Museum from 2001-2002 but unsure if May agreed to loan the requested items. (See "museum correspondence" folder for more information.)

Container Listing

Series 1: Correspondence and Invoices, Alpha-Name File

10 boxes (4.6 linear feet)

Box 1	A
	Ackley, David
	Art of the Past
	B
	Baker, Herbert
	Barker, John: Object Slips & Miscellaneous, Undated (1)
Box 2	Barker, John: Object Slips & Miscellaneous, Undated (2)
	Barker, John: Correspondence 1990-2000
	Barker, John: Correspondence 2001-2011
	Baruch Foundation
	Bortignons
	C
Box 3	Casa del Rio Gallery
	Chinalai Tribal Antiquities, Inc
	Cortland-Leyten Gallery
	D
	Decoro
	Dawson, Doug
Box 4	E
	F
	Felix, Marc Leo
	Felix, Marc Leo Object Folders (tagged)
	Felix, Marc Leo Object Folders (tagged and untagged)
	Felix, Marc Leo Object Folders (untagged)
Box 5	G
	Grammet, Ivo
	Grove Gallery
	H
	Hurst Gallery
	I
Box 6	Imari
	J
	Johnson, Harmer
	K
	L
	M

N
Nomads
O
P
Q
R
S

Box 9 Saito, Inc.
 Segy, Ladislav (1)
 Segy, Ladislav (2)
 Spink

Box 10 T
 U
 V
 W
 Wigglesworth, Linda
 Wright Gallery
 X
 Unknown

Series 2: Object Inventory, Catalogue, Appraisal & Disposition Records

2 boxes (1 linear foot)

Box 11 MW Inventory (1)
 MW Inventory (2)
 MW Inventory (3)
 MW Inventory 1988? (4)
 MW Inventory (5)
 MW Inventory (6)
 MW Inventory (7)
 Home Inventories
 Appraisals
 Hindman Auctioneers
 Bizarre Bazaar

Box 12 Objects not in collection
 Photography of objects not in collection
 Possibly in collection
 In collection – needs association with object records
 May Weber Museum of Cultural Arts displays
 Object exhibit photography

Series 3: Object Reference Articles and Information

7 boxes (3 linear feet)

Box 13 Reference – Maps

Segy, Ladislav publications
 "Unity and Purpose in Human Lives" Dan P. McAdams
 Excerpts from *Japanese Traditional Furniture*
 Mexican mask essays, Janet Esser Brody
 "Philippine Prehistory" Wilhelm G. Solheim II
 excerpts from *The Great Migration* Hans-Joachim Diesner
 excerpts from *Mirror for Man* Clyde Kluckhohn

Box 14 excerpt from book on Japan
 Kalimantan tourist guide
 excerpt from *The Gods as we shape them* F. Sierksma
 "I Am Not Myself: The Art of African Masquerade" Herbert Cole, ed.
Crafts of Gujarat Jasleen Dhuma, ed.
 "Cloth as Metaphor: Nigerian Textiles from the Museum of Cultural History" Jean Borgatti, ed.
 excerpts from *Reflections of Reality in Japanese Art* Sherman E. Lee
 excerpts from book on kosode (Japanese short-robe/kimono)
 excerpts on Borneo from *Expedition* 30 no. 1 (1988)
Ancient India and Ancient China: Trade and Religious Exchange AD 1-600 Xinru Liu

Box 15 *Wayang Golek* Peter Buurman
Javanese Shadow Puppets Ward Keeler
The Uses of the Past: Profiles of Former Societies Herbert J. Muller
Nefertiti Evelyn Wells
The Rise and Splendour of the Chinese Empire René Grousset
Art and Australia 13 no. 3 (1976)

Box 16 *Woven Structures: A Guide to Oriental Rugs and Textile Analysis* Marla Mallett
 excerpts from *The Etruscans*
The Golden Trade of the Moors E.W. Bovill
Ethiopian Processional Crosses Eine Moore
A Short History of Chinese Art Hugo Munsterberg

Box 17 Reference – East Asia (1)
 Reference – East Asia (2)
 Reference – Southeast Asia
 Reference – Central Asia
 Reference – Middle East
 Reference – India
 Reference – Buddhism

Box 18 Reference – Africa (1)
 Reference – Africa (2)
 Reference – Textiles (1)
 Reference – Textiles (2)
 Reference – Textiles (3)
 Reference – Masks

Box 19 Reference – Egypt
 Reference – Europe/Mediterranean
 Reference – North America
 Reference – Central/Mesoamerica
 Reference – Oceania
 Reference – Miscellaneous

Series 4: Records of The May Weber Museum of Cultural Arts

3 boxes (1.25 linear foot)

Box 20 General Information
 List of Contacts
 Education/Outreach
 Conference on Ethnic Arts
 Floor plans
 Museum rental
 General correspondence

Box 21 Exhibit & Museum brochures, mailers, info
 DePaul Art Museum
 Museum correspondence
 Correspondence – associations
 Maxwell Street
 AAM Accreditation & Publications
 Collections management

Box 22 Association newsletters
 MW Exhibits – News Articles
 Newspaper and magazine articles about May Weber/MW Museum
 Newspaper and magazine articles retained by May Weber

Series 5: May Weber Personal

2 boxes (1 linear foot)

Box 23 About & photos
 Personal
 Holiday greetings
 “The Psychoanalytic Process” by May Weber
 Thesis on Abdullah Mwinymoyo Bin Hassan
 May Weber travel
 Milner & Fawcett documents
 Mary & Gene and friends (1980)
 Art on paper

Box 24 Museum Brochures (1) – Asia
 Museum Brochures (2) – North America
 Museum Brochures (3) – Africa

Museum Brochures (4) – Central America
Museum Brochures (5) – Oceania
Museum Brochures (6) – Europe

Series 6: Interpretive Labels and Notes

Box 25	Labels-Masks Labels-Masquerade in Mexico (1) Labels-Masquerade in Mexico (2) Labels-Beautiful Tradition Labels-Messages to God and Men Labels-The Enduring Maya Labels-Enclaves of Beauty Labels-A Parade of Mexican Folk Art Labels-Japan and her Ancestors Labels- Indonesia Artistic Legacies and Traditions Labels-To Market, To Market
Box 26	Labels-Containers of Spirit and Substance Labels-India Exhibit Labels-Everyman, Trader Chicago Area Lace Guild Labels-A Single Blade of Grass Exhibit Labels-Sacred & Secular Containers Labels-The Japanese Tradition Labels-The Gods as We Shape Them, LUMA (1)
Box 27	Labels-The Gods as We Shape Them, LUMA (2) Stories in Cloth Exhibit (1) Stories in Cloth Exhibit (2) Stories in Cloth Exhibit (3) Labels-Wayang Art of Puppetry, LUMA
Box 28	Exhibit/Label Miscellaneous Labels-Mexico and Central America Labels-Africa General Labels-Asia General Labels-Japan Miscellaneous Labels-India Miscellaneous Labels-Indonesia Labels-Oceania Labels-Jewelry Lectures (?)
Box 29	Looseleaf May Weber object notes
Box 30	Spiral bound May Weber object notes

Box 31 Spiral bound May Weber object notes

Box 32 Spiral bound May Weber object notes

Box 33 Spiral bound May Weber object notes

Series 7: Oversize

1 box (.5 linear foot)

Box 34 Bortignons (Invoices)
The World of Talavera (Ref)
African Civilizations: Precolonial cities and states in tropical Africa (Ref)
Tibetan Divination Paintings (Ref)
Hethitisches Keilschrift-Lesebach (Ref)
Transcript of clothing conference remarks (MW Museum)
North America (Ref)

Series 8: Records of The May Weber Foundation

5 boxes (2.5 linear feet)

Box 35 Unprocessed records from The May Weber Foundation

Box 36 Unprocessed records from The May Weber Foundation

Box 37 Unprocessed records from The May Weber Foundation

Box 38 Unprocessed records from The May Weber Foundation

Box 39 Unprocessed records from The May Weber Foundation

Series 9: Records pertaining to LUC/LUMA

1 box (.5 linear foot)

Box 40 Unprocessed records from LUMA

Series 10: Deed of Gift & Disposition Records

2 boxes (1 linear foot)

Box 41 Hudak Gift (1) 2019.001
May Weber Foundation 2014.001
Binding Pledge Agreement
Non-Appraised Books, Papers & Archives
Appraised Property
Binding Pledge Agreement
Non-Appraised Property
NMMA Gift Agreement
Tags – Unsorted

Box 42 LUREC
 Damen Center
 Baumhart
 LUMA Collection
 Library
 Ecology
 Mundelein
 Cuneo
 Lewis Towers
 Unsorted Records related to disposition of gift items

Series 11: Records of the May Weber Ethnographic Study Collection
2 boxes (1 linear foot)

Box 43 Object Selection
 Collections Management Policy
 LUC Audits
 Instagram Collections Consult
 Collections consults
 Notes for educational talks
 Cataloguing notes
 Object-related correspondence
 Collections processing correspondence
 Rehousing information
 Intern logs
 "Masquerade" Pop-Up Exhibit (2014)
 "Women's Work" Exhibit (2017)
 "Wayang" Exhibit (2017)
 "East Asian Textiles" Digital Archives (2020)
 N. Claudio exhibit simulation study
 India Provenance Research

Box 44 Japan Textile Pop Up 2023
 Miscellaneous
 Unprocessed Records