

FINDING AID

Reference Codes

AAP-MnCS-US: Arca Artium Prints

AABP-MnCS-US: Arca Artium Bookplates

AAJ-MnCS-US: Arca Artium Three-Dimensional Objects

AAT-MnCS-US: Arca Artium Textiles

Name and Location of Repository

Saint John's University
Collegeville, Minnesota

Collection Title

Arca Artium. Art Collection

Date(s) of Creation

300 CE-20th century, bulk 1500-1970

Date(s) of Record-keeping Activity

1947-1995: collected by Frank Kacmarcik

1995-present: continuing acquisitions via Kacmarcik Endowment

Extent

More than 8,500 art works

Creator

Kacmarcik, Frank, 1920-2004
Saint John's University

Abstract

Arca Artium primarily represents the art collection of the late graphic designer and liturgical consultant Frank Kacmarcik.

Biographical Note

Frank Kacmarcik (12 March 1920 - 22 February 2004) was an American graphic designer, liturgical consultant, arts educator, artist, and art and book collector. He was born in Saint Paul, Minnesota, United States, and graduated from the Minneapolis School of Art (later known as the Minneapolis College of Art and Design) in 1947. In 1988, he joined Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota as an oblate.

Kacmarcik's work as a liturgical consultant includes the Saint John's Abbey and the University Church at Saint John's University (Collegeville, Minnesota), St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church (Carmel, Indiana), and Mepkin Abbey (Moncks Corner, South Carolina). His work as a graphic designer was largely for book publishers, including Benziger Brothers, University of Chicago Press, McGraw Hill, and Saint John's University's Liturgical Press.

His art and book collecting activities began in 1947, during study in Paris, and continued until the 1990s. Kacmarcik's collection of rare books and manuscripts is also held at Saint John's University and is also administered by the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library. His collections were donated to Saint John's University in 1995.

Scope and Contents

Arca Artium contains more than 8,500 art works. The majority are works on paper, primarily prints. Other represented works include 20th century American pottery, Russian and Greek icons, early Coptic textiles, and modernist sculpture. Works in the collection date from the 15th to the 20th century.

Especially well represented are prints and other materials related to books and to the history of book printing and publishing, typography, and illustration. Other strengths include Dutch and Flemish prints of the 16th and 17th centuries, engravings and etchings on the theme of architecture, and the early work of the American potter Warren MacKenzie.

Arca Artium has a number of objects on the subject of religion and spirituality. Though Christianity is the most referenced in works of this type, there is also a significant collection of modernist Judaica, including the work of Ben-Zion, Ben Shahn, Abraham Rattner, and Jack Levine. There are some

works in the collection on Muslim themes and other representations of spirituality.

Highlights

- Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Veduta di Piazza Navona sopra le rovine del Circo Agonale*, from the series *Vedute di Roma*, 1751
- Albrecht Dürer, *St. John before God and the elders*, from *The Apocalypse*, approximately 1498
- Charles Meryon *Collège Henri IV, Paris, ou Lycée Napoléon*, 1864
- Master of the Unicorn Hunt, *The Holy Grail*, leaf from a *Book of Hours*, approximately 1500
- Ben Shahn, *Alphabet of creation*, 1957
- Ben-Zion, *The 36 unknown*, designed 1971-1975; printed 1980
- Warren MacKenzie, *Large pot*, approximately 1950s
- Andō Hiroshige, *Festival at the Shiba Shinmei Shrine*, from the series *Famous places in the eastern capital*, approximately 1840-1842
- Florian Kulikowski, *Album of 16th-17th century woodcuts, headpieces, tailpieces, and capitals* (assembled in Paris in the early 20th century)
- Parviz Tanavoli, *Prophet with an extra chest*, 1963

System of Arrangement

Arca Artium represents the entirety of the materials donated by Frank Kacmarcik to Saint John's University. These have been physically separated into the Arca Artium Art Collection; the Arca Artium Archives; the Arca Artium Rare Book Collection; and the Arca Artium Reference Collection.

Within the Arca Artium Art Collection, accession numbers have been assigned based on the object's type: prints (AAP), textiles (AAT), three-dimensional objects (AAJ), and bookplates (AABP).

Administrative Information

Arca Artium is an art collection owned by and housed at Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota. It is overseen by the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library (also at Saint John's University) and by HMML's curator/registrar of the art collection.

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research use. Cataloged and digitized objects can be found online via HMML Museum (<https://www.vhmml.org/museum>). To

view the physical objects in situ on the campus of Saint John's University, contact Curator/Registrar of Art Collections, Katherine Goertz, at kgoertz001@hmmml.org.

Language

English; many collection items represent other languages, including Dutch, French, German, Italian, Latin, Spanish, Arabic, Syriac, Greek, and Hebrew, among others.

Acquisition Information

Donated 1995 by Frank Kacmarcik. Thirteen works donated in 2002 by William Wenninger. Additional works donated in 1999 by Lance Crombie.

Continuing accruals occur infrequently through use of the Kacmarcik Acquisition Endowment.