Joseph Marcella student work, 1968-1971, 2004
KA.0123

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists’ Toolkit
February 28, 2017
Describing Archives: A Content Standard
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Collection Overview

Repository Kellen Design Archives

Creator Marcella, Joseph

Title Joseph Marcella student work

Date [bulk] Bulk, 1968-1970

Date [inclusive] 1968-1971, 2004

Extent 5.8 linear ft: 1 box, 7 folders

Summary The collection consists of student work and related records created or received by Joseph Marcella while studying in the Design Correlations Department (now Product Design) of Parsons School of Design between 1968 and 1970. In addition to project files for portable structures, underwater and outerspace habitations, and a one-piece plastic chair,
the collection includes photographs, posters, and textual materials documenting the first Earth Day observances at Parsons.

Preferred Citation note
[Identification of item], [date (if known)], Joseph Marcella student work, KA.0123, box __, folder __, New School Archives and Special Collections, The New School, New York, New York.

Biographical note
Joseph J. Marcella graduated with honors from Parsons School of Design’s Design Correlations Department (formerly Industrial Design and now known as Product Design) in 1970 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. He studied with department chair William Katavalos, and, while still in school, designed and created a prototype of a one-piece, foam-injected plastic chair that is ubiquitous today.

In addition to his coursework, in 1970 Marcella was instrumental in organizing Parsons' participation in the first Earth Day. With funding provided by the Parsons Student Council, Marcella and fellow Design Correlations student Michael Rosenthal recruited internationally-known speakers to campus and convinced the school administration to cancel classes so that students could participate in teach-ins and a macrobiotic meal.

After his studies at Parsons, Marcella attended the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) where he focused his creativity on photography. Since his years of formal education, Marcella has worked in construction, historical restoration, and farming. He currently resides in Westchester, New York.

Scope and Contents of Collection
The collection includes design drawings and sketches, photographs, screen prints, school assignments in the form of hand-outs and lecture notes, and a notebook Joseph Marcella created while attending Parsons School of Design. A theme running throughout Marcella's student work is his interest in exploring options for shelter in inhospitable environments, and a reduction in ecological harm through thoughtful design.

The General folder includes a copy of Marcella's admissions essay for CalArts, in which he provides information about his educational background and interests. The essay is useful for understanding the types of records associated with the projects in the collection, as he describes the exercises and methodologies used to investigate each design problem, such as SCAN ("Speculative Calculative Assimilation Network") drawings and wordplay associations ("Synection Sessions").
Project documentation in the collection includes an inhabitation for the Apollo space station, a "four-legged, one-piece fiberglass shell" stackable chair, an inflatable underwater habitat, and a portable recreational shelter consisting of reflective panels, which Marcella deemed a "M.E.S.S." (Modular Environmental Structural System).

M.E.S.S. documentation includes photographs of small-scale models and a full-size fiberglass prototype in various states of construction, templates for the model, and a press kit for an industry-sponsored design conference to which Marcella was invited. The press kit features a designer's statement in which Marcella notes that one of his aims is to reduce visual pollution and humankind's overall impact upon the environment.

Earth Day materials consist of photographs (black and white prints and color slides), press releases, and screen printed posters advertising teach-ins by Daniel Gildesgame, Stewart Brand, Immanuel Velikovsky, and D. W. (Dery) Bennett, and planning documents, including a letter from Governor Nelson Rockefeller. Documentation also includes a floor-by-floor layout of Parsons' facilities on East 54th Street. The school re-located to 66 Fifth Avenue in 1972, shortly after Marcella's graduation.

Organization and Arrangement

Arrangement is alphabetical by format.

Administrative Information

Publication Information
Kellen Design Archives May 5, 2011

Conditions Governing Access note
Collection is open for research use. Please contact archivist@newschool.edu for appointment.

Use Restrictions
To publish images of material from this collection, permission must be obtained in writing from the New School Archives. Please contact: archivist@newschool.edu.

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Donated by Joseph Marcella, 2011.

Existence and Location of Copies note
The New School Archives holds photographic documentation of a wire prototype of Marcella's FRP chair. Original model, measuring 7" high x 5 1/2" wide x 3 3/4 " deep, returned to donor. Images may be furnished to researchers upon request.
Keywords for Searching Related Subjects

Corporate Name(s)
- Parsons School of Design. Design Correlations Department.

Genre(s)
- Drawings.
- Lecture notes.
- Notebooks.
- Photographs.
- Posters.
- Press kits.
- Renderings.
- Sketchbooks.
- Sketches.
- Slides (photographs).
- Student projects.

Personal Name(s)
- Katavolos, William

Subject(s)
- Air-supported structures.
- Chair design.
- Earth Day.
- Industrial design -- Study and teaching -- New York (State) -- New York.
- Modular construction.
- Product design -- Study and teaching -- New York (State) -- New York.

Other Finding Aids note
For selected item-level description and images from the Joseph Marcella student work, see The New School Archives Digital Collections at http://digitalarchives.library.newschool.edu/index.php/Detail/collections/KA0123.
## Collection Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apollo Saturn Station drawings [reproductions], 1968-1969</td>
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<tr>
<td>Earth Day, 1970</td>
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<tr>
<td>General</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clippings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Posters</td>
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<td>FRP Chair, 1968-1971, 2004</td>
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<td>Inflatable Underwater Habitat System, 1969</td>
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<td>M.E.S.S., 1969-1970</td>
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<td>Armco Student Design Program</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>General</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>k_OSx-4</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roll drawing, circa 1968-1969</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Created with felt-tip pens, this series of sketches made on a long roll of paper was known as a SCAN, or Speculative Calculative Assimilation Network drawing. This type of exercise was frequently used at Parsons in the late 1960s. The top left corner of the roll reads, “Six Basic Blocks &amp; Directions.”</td>
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<td>Sketchbook 1, undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sketchbook 2, 1968-1969</td>
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<td>11-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slides, 1970</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Color slides depicting Marcella’s student projects, particularly M.E.S.S., as well as Earth Day activities at Parsons School of Design in its former East 54th Street facility.</td>
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<td>Student notebook, 1968-1969</td>
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<td>14-15</td>
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