

SEPTEMBER, 2023

## Filling a Gap in the History of American Art

*Estate Donates Papers of Colorado Artist Clark Richert to Smithsonian Archives of American Art*

**DENVER, Colorado.** In a contract signed in September, 2023, the Clark W. Richert Estate transferred ownership of thousands of papers in more than 40 boxes to the Smithsonian Archives of American Art, in Washington, D. C. Included in the gift were items spanning the artist's entire career—from childhood juvenilia and student work to artifacts from the Drop City artist's community in Southern Colorado, the Criss-Cross Art Cooperative, and Richert's lengthy career as an artist and educator. Sketches, correspondence, news clippings, announcements of shows, slides and transparency images of the artist's work, photographs from his life experience, as well as digital media and files were sent to the museum. These items represent not only the rich art history of Colorado and the West, but also the creative outpourings of the 1960s and 1970s counterculture movement; and fill important gaps in the Smithsonian's vast collection of more than 3 million items from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, contributed by artists, collectors, art historians, art dealers, and critics.

Among the treasures are:

- Historic photographs and correspondence from the 1960s Drop City art community
- Original copies of the Drop City Newsletter and Being Bag comic
- Mock-ups of designs for the artist's Third Eye Black Light posters
- A full set of the 1970s *Criss-Cross Art Communications* journal, along with notes and correspondence between editors and members of Criss-Cross Artist Cooperative
- A sampling of Richert's art proposals, both realized and unrealized
- Original templates and images of zometool models used in the artist's paintings
- Transcripts and recordings of interviews and speeches
- Teaching notebooks
- Countless images of the artist's iconic geometric paintings and other works

The Smithsonian staff will digitize, organize, and catalog contents of the estate, preserving it for future generations and providing online access for research and education. Barbara Ittner, personal

representative of the estate, stated, “The Richert family is deeply honored to donate this collection to the Smithsonian, and to share Clark’s work and ideas with interested parties around the world.”

Known for contemplative, deep dives into geometry in large-scale paintings and brilliant explorations of hyperdimensional space, Richert has shown his throughout the country and abroad over the past 60 years. Historic work dating back to the Drop City era as well as newer paintings will be exhibited in Denver, Marfa, and New York City in 2024. Details forthcoming.

**About Clark Richert:**

Clark Richert (b. 1941, Wichita, KS, d. 2021, Denver, CO) earned his BFA from the University of Kansas in 1963 and his MFA from the University of Colorado in 1972. He is one of the three founding members of *Drop City* (Trinidad, CO, 1965), which is considered the first counterculture artist’s community in the US. Their strategic adaptations of geodesic dome technology drew the attention of Buckminster Fuller for which they received the first Dymaxion Award in 1966; and inspired other communes in Colorado and the Southwest. Subsequently, Richert co-founded the national artists’ group known as *Criss-Cross Artist Cooperative*, which built on the original concepts of *Drop City*.

Over a career that spanned more than 60 years, Richert exhibited widely in galleries and institutions around the world, including the Walker Art Center of Minneapolis; The Denver Art Museum, Denver; Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver; the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, AZ; The Kirkland Museum, Denver; The Museum of Modern Art, Vienna Austria; Yellowstone Art Center, Billings MT; Berkley Art Museum, CA; RedLine Contemporary Arts, Denver; Mizel Center for the Arts, Denver; Museum of Friends, Walsenburg, CO, among many others.

In 2019, Richert was given a dual career retrospective staged at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver and the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art. Richert recently unveiled two public artworks in Denver; *Quadrivium*, a fourteen-foot, lighted aluminum triacontahedron structure in 2020, and *Four Color Intertwine*, a tribute to Herbert Bayer, an early proponent of Richert’s work. In addition to public and corporate commissions, Richert’s work can be found in the collections of the Smithsonian Museum, Nelson-Atkins Museum, Wichita Art Museum, Denver Art Museum, Kirkland Museum, University of Colorado, Boulder, Amoco, Container Corporation of America, and many others.