



Guide to the Rebecca Sittler photographs, 2011-2013

This collection guide was produced in **2015**.

This PDF version was created on **April 3, 2026**.

David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library

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Summary

Collection Title:

Rebecca Sittler photographs, 2011-2013

Creator:

Sittler, Rebecca

Source:

Archive of Documentary Arts (Duke University)

Abstract:

Collection contains 30 color prints from Sittler's project All the Presidents' Men. This project combines photographs made in presidential museums and historic sites across the United States with images from Sittler's father and grandfather's homes.

Extent:

2.0 Linear Feet (1 flat box)

Language:

English

Language:

Materials in English

Collection ID:

RL.11064

Permalink:

<http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/sittlerrebecca/>

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Rebecca Sittler Photographs, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

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Background

Scope and Content

Rebecca Sittler's series *All the Presidents' Men* was the winner of the 2015 Archive of Documentary Arts Award for Innovation in the Documentary Arts. The ADA Collection Awards were established to diversify the ADA's collection in order to better reflect the multitude of viewpoints and communities from which work is being made in the documentary arts today.

Sittler included the following abstract about her work:

All the Presidents' Men combines photographs made in presidential museums and historic sites across the United States with images from my father and grandfather's homes. In 1959, after a spontaneous all-night road trip, my 18-year-old father met former president Harry Truman out for a morning walk on the streets of Independence, Missouri. He doesn't remember what they talked about, only the thrill of meeting a "powerful," yet "unassuming" man. Nearly 50 years later, I visited Truman's presidential museum and noticed there was little evidence of the restlessness and uncertainty that have shaped my father's generation and characterized Truman's legacy.

I am intrigued by photography's increasing role within history museums, where historical narratives intersect with the complexities of photographs, replicas, and ephemera, and are interpreted through the viewer's imagination and personal experiences. In particular, I see presidential museums as archives of a particular version of American masculinity, informed by American dreams, fictional narratives, and political rhetoric. Presidential power is reified and celebrated within the history museum while aspects of presidential identities that are more revealing of their complexity, individual struggles or humanity are only rarely or subtly articulated. These "preferred" heroic narratives have their own blind spots that are also absorbed into our political and personal lives despite the tenuous grasp they hold on the complexities of history and the multifaceted lives of men.

Biographical/Historical

Rebecca Sittler is a photographer, writer, and Associate Professor of Art at California State University, Long Beach. She has exhibited her work at venues such as Sam Lee Gallery, Daviel Cooney Gallery, the Photographic Center Northwest, Torrance Museum of Art, the Griffin Museum, Atlantic Center for the Arts, RayKo Gallery, Photographic Resource Center, as well as the University of Florida, Texas Woman's University, Boston University, and Washington State University. Internationally, Sittler's photographs have been shown in Russia, South Korea, China, and England. She received her MFA from

Massachusetts College of Art in 2003 where she studied with photographer Aberlardo Morell.

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Arrangement

Photographs are boxed in folders. One artist book, *All the Presidents' Men* (published 2014) has been removed from the archival collection for individual cataloging in Rubenstein Library.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Access Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Researchers must register and agree to copyright and privacy laws before using this collection.

All or portions of this collection may be housed off-site in Duke University's Library Service Center. The library may require up to 48 hours to retrieve these materials for research use.

Please contact Research Services staff before visiting the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library to use this collection.

Use Restrictions

The copyright interests in this collection have not been transferred to Duke University. For more information, consult the copyright section of the Regulations and Procedures of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library.

Acquisition Information

The Rebecca Sittler Photographs were received by the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library as a purchase in 2015.

Processing Information

Processed by Beth Weiss and Meghan Lyon, Sept. 2015.

Accessions described in this collection guide: 2015-0117

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Names and Subjects

- Documentary Photography
- Presidents -- United States -- History -- 20th century
- Presidents -- United States -- Material culture
- Sittler, Rebecca
- Archive of Documentary Arts (Duke University)
- Ronald Reagan Presidential Library
- Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum
- Harry S. Truman Library
- Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library
- Gerald R. Ford Museum

Collection Inventory

All the Presidents' Men, 2011-2013

Scope and Contents

30 archival pigment prints, sized 18x22.5" (22x26.5" with borders). Printed in color on Epson Luster Paper; originating as digital files. Captions provided by Sittler.

Resolute Reflection, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 1

Scope and Contents

Replica of the presidential resolute desk and oval office designed for visitor "photo ops" within Plains High School, Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (Plains, GA).

Before and After, 2013

Box 1 > Folder 1

Scope and Contents

Photographs of my grandfather, Alvin Luebbe, a glider pilot in World War II, before and after the war, displayed on my grandmother's artificial fireplace (Beaver Crossing, NE)

Gliders, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 1

Scope and Contents

Museum display of toy planes demonstrating the number of Allied aircraft bringing supplies to West Berlin during the height of the Berlin Airlift, Truman Presidential Museum (Independence, MO)

Open Road Stetson, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 1

Scope and Contents

A display of the "Open Road Stetson" hat, worn by many celebrities and cowboys and renamed the LBJ Hat after he popularized it during his presidential campaign, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Museum (Austin, TX)

Picket Fence, 2011

Box 1 > Folder 1

Scope and Contents

A clash between American idealism and television images of unrest at home and abroad, Richard Nixon Presidential Museum (Yorba Linda, CA)

American, 2013

Box 1 > Folder 2

Scope and Contents

Shuffleboard score panel in my father's workshop, (Grand Island, NE)

Correction, 2012 Box 1 > Folder 2

Scope and Contents

Original teleprompter text of JFK's acceptance of the Democratic Party nomination for the presidency, JFK Presidential Museum (Boston, MA)

Oxfords, 2012 Box 1 > Folder 2

Scope and Contents

Detail of a photograph of Reagan and Gorbachev meeting at the first summit in Geneva, Ronald Reagan Presidential Museum (Simi Valley, CA)

The Speaker, 2012 Box 1 > Folder 2

Scope and Contents

Museum spotlight on an enlarged version of a photograph of then Governor Reagan addressing a student protest in Sacramento, CA by asserting that taxpayers should not be "subsidizing intellectual curiosity". Ronald Reagan Presidential Museum (Simi Valley, CA)

Atomic, 2012 Box 1 > Folder 2

Scope and Contents

Museum mash up of a photograph of Dwight D. Eisenhower working the BBQ, a photograph of daughter-in-law Barbara on her tricycle outside the White House, and modern appliances from the Atomic Age. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Museum (Abilene, KS)

Fenced Couple, 2012 Box 1 > Folder 3

Scope and Contents

Captioned on the print as "Picket Fence." Photograph of Ronald and Nancy Reagan at Rancho del Cielo within replica of Rancho del Cielo where visitors can "ride a horse alongside President Reagan." Ronald Reagan Presidential Museum (Simi Valley, CA)

2005 in 2011, 2011 Box 1 > Folder 3

Scope and Contents

A section of my father's office/personal archive (Grand Island, NE)

Magic Camera Riot, 2012 Box 1 > Folder 3

Scope and Contents

A display featuring 1970s fashion and Edward Land featured in LIFE Magazine alongside photographs of race riots and JFK's funeral, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum (Grand Rapids, MI)

Up, 2011

Box 1 > Folder 3

Scope and Contents

Captioned on the print as "Atomic, 2012." Detail of museum display narrating the American postwar boom, Harry S. Truman Presidential Museum (Independence, MO)

Newsreel Narrator, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 3

Scope and Contents

Subtitles from a video about the fall of the Berlin wall, Ronald Reagan Presidential Museum (Simi Valley, CA)

Great and Famous, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 4

Scope and Contents

Display of an anthology of Great Men and Famous Women, edited by Charles Horne, collecting dust behind glass, Harry Truman Presidential Library (Independence, MO)

The Brothers, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 4

Scope and Contents

Family photographs on freshly installed replica wallpaper, Dwight D. Eisenhower Boyhood Home (Abilene, KS)

Decision Room Replica, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 4

Scope and Contents

Reflection of a copy of a painting of Abe Lincoln on a table in a basement replica of the West Wing. Known as the "White House Decision Center", this replica is used for school visit reenactments of major moments during the Truman presidency, Harry Truman Presidential Museum (Independence, MO)

Twinkle, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 4

Scope and Contents

Home display of my family's Lincoln portrait and southern bayou landscape at Christmas (Grand Island, NE)

Elder Statesman, 2011 Box 1 > Folder 4

Scope and Contents

Television replaying Hoover speeches in a replica of Hoover's retirement suite in New York's Waldorf Towers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Museum, (West Branch, IA)

Memory Box, 2013 Box 1 > Folder 5

Scope and Contents

My father's collection of "memory objects" from his memory box, spread out on my mother's desk with reflection of the American flag (Grand Island, NE)

Fireside, 2011 Box 1 > Folder 5

Scope and Contents

Atomic Age Living Room Replica at Christmas, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Museum (Abilene, KS)

Double Judiciary, 2012 Box 1 > Folder 5

Scope and Contents

Replica of Congressional Hearing room with display asking museum visitors to act as jury, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum (Grand Rapids, MI)

Home Movies, 2011 Box 1 > Folder 5

Scope and Contents

Reflection of an image of President Hoover and wife Lou Henry Hoover through a window of a display referencing Lou's silent home movies, Herbert Hoover Presidential Museum (West Branch, IA)

Inaccessible, 2011 Box 1 > Folder 5

Scope and Contents

Locked doors narrating bank closings after the fall of the stock market before the great depression, Herbert Hoover Presidential Museum (West Branch, IA)

Luminous Present, 2012 Box 1 > Folder 6

Scope and Contents

Light coming through the shower window in my father's self designed and constructed bathroom (Grand Island, NE)

The Line, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 6

Scope and Contents

Audio narrated replica of Camp David office of former President George H.W. Bush, highlighting his passions and pastimes, George Herbert Walker Bush Presidential Museum (College Station, TX)

Regeneration, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 6

Scope and Contents

Section of a replica display of Lincoln's boots left on the floor in his chaotic law office, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum (Springfield, IL)

In Death, 2012

Box 1 > Folder 6

Scope and Contents

A portrait of Washington overlooking a replica of Lincoln's closed casket, lying in state with a replica of Springfield's Old State Capitol. The museum's exhibition designers refer to Lincoln's museum as the "first truly experiential museum in the world", Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum (Springfield, IL)

The Gold of Peru, 2011

Box 1 > Folder 6

Scope and Contents

Detail of replica of Nixon's last home office left exactly as it was the night he died, narrated by a video of Nixon reflecting on his presidency and the Watergate scandal, Nixon Presidential Museum (Yorba Linda, CA)

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