

February 12, 1968

Mrs. Stewart Udall, Chairman
Center for the Arts of Indian America
U. S. Department of the Interior Building
Suite 5129
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Mrs. Udall:

Laura Gilpin and I are in the process of planning both the retrospective for the Institute of American Indian Arts and the Indian subject exhibition for the Center for the Arts of Indian America.

The quality of the work is both extremely important historically and an adventure in aesthetics. Laura tends to look at her work as art, rather than documents; this attitude gives us great documentary art.

At the same time that Laura and I are working, Amon Carter Museum director, Mitchell Wilder (now on the Indian Arts and Crafts Board) is planning a similar exhibit for his Fort Worth Museum. This Amon Carter collection will be from Laura's new book, The Enduring Navajo, and containing only Navajo photographs. Photographs will run from 48 x 72 down to 4 x 5; 14 large ones and over 100 smaller ones for a total of 170 prints. This collection will ultimately travel. At the same time Mitchell Wilder will purchase some few prints for his museum's collection. Thus, Wilder will not have any color prints. Because Amon Carter is helping finance the book, that museum will have the rights to the first showing of the Navajo prints.

Now a recommendation for you to consider. Laura's Indian work covers Navajo, Pueblo, Maya, Yucatan, and such sites as; Chicken Itza, Uxmal in Yucatan and Mesa Verde and Chaco Canyon, dating from 1925 to the present. Some have been shown in the Library of Congress and a myriad of other places; some have never been shown. Many are black and white, many in color. Yucatan alone would have a selection of at least 25 outstanding pieces; Navajo up 220.

I would like to recommend that the Center allocate some moneys to purchase a collection of Indian photographs to include both mural size up to 48 x 72 and groups of smaller sizes, black and white, and color.

Mrs. Stewart Udall

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Laura feels a good show would be 75 prints of the best Navajo, Yucatan, Pueblo, and Archaeological an added 75 prints for a total of 150 prints. Color photographs would number up to 20 prints. (The 5 major weaves of the Navajo weaver, for instance, is best seen in color.)

This show would become a circulating show to the BIA schools and like the McKenney Hall prints become the first highly significant traveling collection and would become a major part of the visual image of your cultural program planning.

When you come in late February, let us go over this with Laura so you can see the Navajo prints and some others, discuss content, and go from there. The projection for the show would be after the first of 1969.

Do let me know your thoughts on this; and I shall project an appointment with Laura. We will need to select soon so as to aid in the actual printing process; when the negative is out, it is best to do all the prints at once. I am most excited about all this. Such an honor to work with this great artist, Laura Gilpin.

Best wishes to everyone,

James McGrath
Acting Director of Arts

cc: Miss Laura Gilpin ✓
Mrs. Edna Massey