

April 14, 1976

Miss Laura Gilpin, Photographer
409 Camino del Monte Sol
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Laura:

It is a great pleasure to hear from you and as you already know, I had a pleasant meeting with your cousin, Lewis Allen, and naturally the talk focused on you.

As I told Mr. Allen, I was a little surprised to know that you were in a position to consider any further disposition of your photographic oeuvre, as I had thought you had made the arrangement with Fred Dockstader some years ago. I am glad to know I am mistaken and that enough time has passed and some important changes have developed in Fort Worth that I can write to you with something concrete so far as the future of photography in the Amon Carter Museum is concerned.

As you know, we have, since the opening, been interested in exhibitions of photography both historic and contemporary. We have not made an attempt to be in the vanguard of the art, as it is simply out of the question for us to keep up with a discipline which is moving as rapidly as photography is today. We do a great many photographic shows, but of course we are in no wise a complete photographic museum such as the people in Tucson have envisioned. Nor are we in the educational involvement to the degree that the University of New Mexico can offer. Ours is strictly an archive and museum operation, which means, of course, the proper care and feeding of collections and their presentation to the public as well as making study materials available for students and scholars.

One of our problems in the past, of course, has been space, but with the arrival of 1976 the ground is finally broken for a new addition to the building which will, in effect, double our spatial capabilities. In particular we are securing a better than 300% increase in our vault storage and will soon have print study rooms, conservation lab, and the many amenities which we lacked in the past because of our crowded situation.

Administratively we suffer from the same ailment of having too much to do and too little space with too few people. Fortunately this will change when we get into our new building, as there will at least be the office and lab space necessary for the proper operation of the photographic department, which, of course, assume that photographic lab facilities are available for purposes of conservation and printing of special materials

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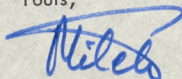
needed in the photo department. All of this is financed with funds from the Amon G. Carter Foundation, so I think you can look upon it as a substantial program both in terms of its physical and fiscal needs.

I know there are many questions which you must study before making any decisions and I certainly do not wish to press you either on the basis of our interest in photography and particularly in the American West, nor out of our long friendship. Let me say that if there is any information I can supply or background on the Carter Museum, et al., let me know and I shall see that it comes to you on wings. And if it seems appropriate, I would be only too pleased to have that long needed excuse to make a trip to Santa Fe. Perhaps I could even work in a visit to Dr. Bobb.

No, we do not have a copy of the catalogue of your retrospective show. Please send one along and bill us for it, and I will see that it goes to the library.

Sal joins in fond greetings to you. I won't fill up space with an Indian report, but there is much to tell, including observations on Indira. She is a tough gal.

Yours,



Mitchell A. Wilder
Director

MAW:vws

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