

Finding Aid to the Ruth Leavitt Fallon Papers, 1984-2019

Summary Information

Title: Ruth Leavitt Fallon papers

Creator: Ruth Leavitt Fallon (primary)

ID: 2021.leavitt

Date: 1984-2019 (inclusive); 1984-1985, c. 2008-2009 (bulk)

Extent: 0.25 linear feet

Language: The materials in this collection are in English.

Abstract: The Ruth Leavitt Fallon papers are a compilation of materials related to the career of computer artist Ruth Leavitt Fallon, including documentation on the word processing program *Write Island* and an art piece titled *The Creative Muse*.

Repository:

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong
One Manhattan Square
Rochester, New York 14607
585.263.2700
library@museumofplay.org

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Use: This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, she has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

Custodial History: The Ruth Leavitt Fallon papers were donated to The Strong in February and June 2020 as a gift of Ruth Leavitt Fallon. The papers were sent by Fallon and accessioned by The Strong under Object IDs 120.851 and 120.1839, respectively.

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Processed by: Julia Novakovic, February 2021

Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- Beil, Don
- Fallon, Ruth Leavitt
- Leavitt, Ruth
- Myers, Tom

Subjects

- Computer art
- The Creative Muse (Sculpture)
- Women in Games
- Write Island (Computer program)

Biographical Note

Ruth Leavitt Fallon (also known professionally as Ruth Leavitt) is an American computer artist.

Leavitt's art studies focused on abstract impressionism. By 1967, she began producing art on mainframe computers, creating and transforming graphics by stretching and distorting the images. She later worked with personal computers. In 1976, Leavitt edited *Artist and Computer*, one of the earliest books about computer art, which showcased 35 artists and detailed how individuals could use computers to create new art forms and visual expressions. Within a few years, she produced film animations using her computer graphics and customized programs. In 1984, Leavitt was an instructor of computer art at SUNY Buffalo; her name was passed along to Don Beil and Tom Myers, who were looking to hire a graphic artist for their word processing program called *Write Island*. She developed the graphics for the game, a visual product for children to learn word processing. For the next few decades, Leavitt taught computer art courses and produced her own art pieces.

As of 2021, Ruth Leavitt Fallon resides in Maryland and continues to create art.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Ruth Leavitt Fallon papers are a compilation of materials related to the career of computer artist Ruth Leavitt Fallon. This collection includes documentation and images on the graphics word processing program *Write Island* and the art piece *The Creative Muse*. Additional scope and content information can be found in the Contents List section of this finding aid.

The Ruth Leavitt Fallon papers are arranged into three series. The collection is housed in one archival document box.

System of Arrangement

Series I: *Write Island*, 1984-1985

Series II: *The Creative Muse*, c. 2008-2009

Series III: Background information, 2019

Contents List

Series I: *Write Island*, 1984-1985

Scope and Content Note: This series contains graphics slides and game design documentation drafts on *Write Island*, a graphics and word processing program for children. The slides are graphics created by Leavitt, with annotations written on the cardboard surrounding the image transparency.

Box 1

- Folder 1 *Write Island* game graphics slides with annotations, 1984
- Folder 2 *Write Island* game design document draft; Don Beil, Tom Myers, and Ruth Leavitt; 1985
- Folder 3 *Write Island* game design document draft, Revision 1; Don Beil, Tom Myers, and Ruth Leavitt; March 5, 1985

Series II: *The Creative Muse*, c. 2008-2009

Scope and Content Note: Within this series are disks related to Leavitt's interactive project, *The Creative Muse*. (The art piece, a sculpture of a female figure "pregnant with ideas," housed a computer monitor, instructing players to explore learning, creativity, and discovery.) Files include image screenshots, short introductory videos, and a photograph of Leavitt Fallon with the sculpture.

Box 1

- Folder 4 *The Creative Muse* zip disks and DVD, n.d. [c. 2008-2009]

Series III: Background information, 2019

Scope and Content Note: This series holds a print-out of emails sent to Andrew Borman, Digital Curator at The Strong, from Leavitt Fallon. This correspondence provides additional background information on her computer art, career, and details about *The Creative Muse*.

Box 1

- Folder 5 Emails from Ruth Leavitt Fallon to Andrew Borman at The Strong, 2019