

Finding Aid to the Women in Toys (WIT) Collection, 1963-2018

Summary Information

Title: Women in Toys (WIT) collection

Creator: Claire Marschak, Maureen Trotto, Lauren Trotto, Carol Spencer, Erin Libby (primary); The Strong (secondary)

ID: 2017.WIT

Date: 1963-2018 (inclusive); 1983-2016 (bulk)

Extent: 8.5 linear feet (physical); 321 MB (digital)

Language: The materials in this collection are in English.

Abstract: The Women in Toys (WIT) collection is an ongoing compilation of materials from members of the WIT Emeritus Program, established in 2016. Archival materials include design documentation, photographs, narratives, ephemera, and more. The bulk of this collection is dated between 1983 and 2016.

Repository:

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong
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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 donors have not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, they have given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

Custodial History: The Women in Toys (WIT) collection was assembled by The Strong using donations from Claire Marschak (Object ID 116.1859), Maureen Trotto and Lauren Trotto (Object ID 117.37), Carol Spencer (Object ID 117.2054), and Erin Libby (Object ID 119.546). Materials, including related prototypes and production toys, were received from Marschak in May 2016, the Trottos in January 2017, Spencer in February 2017, and Libby in March 2019.

Preferred citation for publication: Women in Toys (WIT) collection, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

Processed by: Julia Novakovic, March 2017; revised May 2019

Revision Note: Revised to incorporate Erin Libby series in May 2019.

Controlled Access Terms

Personal Names

- Libby, Erin
- Marschak, Claire
- Spencer, Carol
- Trotto, Lauren

- Trotto, Maureen

Corporate Names

- Coleco Industries, Inc.
- Fisher Price (Firm)
- Hasbro, Inc.
- Mattel, Inc.
- The Erinworks (Firm)
- Women in Toys

Subjects

- Barbie dolls
- Barbie dolls--Clothing
- Boglins (Toys)
- Character toys
- Dolls
- Infant toys
- Sectaurs (Toys)
- Toy industry
- Toys
- Toys--Design and construction.
- Women in Toys

Historical Note

[Women in Toys](#) (WIT), founded in 1991 by Anne Pitrone and Susan Matsumoto, is the leading global community of professional women in the toy, entertainment, and licensing industries. The mission of WIT is to support, promote, educate, and empower women in these industries, and to provide the resources, connections, and leadership tools to help them achieve personal success. Through the WIT Foundation, the organization empowers young women by granting academic scholarships for studies in industry-related programs.

In 2016, WIT announced the establishment of its WIT Emeritus Program to pay tribute to pioneering women who have made significant contributions to the toy industry. Members of this program represent leaders in the industry as well as women who worked behind the scenes as designers, inventors, marketers, publishers, and more. Emeritus members are invited to contribute their professional papers and associated materials to the WIT Collection at The Strong in Rochester, New York, where their stories will be preserved and made accessible to researchers and museum visitors.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Women in Toys (WIT) collection at The Strong is an ongoing compilation of materials from members of the WIT Emeritus Program. As of May 2019, this archival collection contains professional papers from Claire Marschak, Maureen Trotto, Laureen Trotto, Carol Spencer, and Erin Libby. Materials include product development drawings, presentations, narratives, publicity information, photographs, and other ephemera. Additional biographical details and scope and content information can be found in the Contents List section of this finding aid.

The Women in Toys (WIT) collection is arranged into four series. The collection is housed in six archival document boxes and three oversized folders. Digital-only files are accessible via the internal network at The Strong.

Related Materials

Contributors to the Women in Toys (WIT) collection at The Strong have also donated associated prototypes and products, which are housed in the museum's collections.

System of Arrangement

Series I: Claire Marschak, 1983-2016

Series II: Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto, 1984-2016

Series III: Carol Spencer, 1963-2017

Series IV: Erin Libby, 1984-2018

Contents List

Series I: Claire Marschak, 1983-2016

Biographical Note: Claire Marschak worked as a toy designer for more than 35 years. She studied at the Cleveland Institute of Art and The University of the Arts before joining Fisher-Price as a Senior Designer. In 1986, she established her own design studio, Marschak Design (later renamed Blue Sky).

Among the highlights of Marschak's inventions are the Fisher Price Cozy Cottage (1984), Fisher-Price Splash & Stack Bird (1983-1989), Fisher-Price Play Quilt (1984-1986), Today's Kids GymFinity (1990-2000), Playskool Create-A-Flower (1992-1995), and Fisher-Price Musical Play Garden (2004-2007). She created the first infant activity quilt on the market, as well as the first baby gym that converted to a toddler play table.

Scope and Content Note: This series contains development drawings, presentation drawings, patents, production photographs, publicity information, and other documentation related to inventions by Claire Marschak. The bulk of this series is dated between 1983 and 2004. Included are designs for her most well-known creations, as well as sketches for unproduced toys.

Box 1

- Folder 1 Claire Marschak - Publicity clippings and photographs, c. 1983-2005 and n.d.
- Folder 2 Claire Marschak - Splash & Stack Bluebird images and patent, c. 1983-1985
- Folder 3 Claire Marschak - Cozy Cottage designs, patent, and production images, c. 1984-1986
- Folder 4 Claire Marschak - Play quilt designs, patent, and production images, 1984-1986
- Folder 5 Claire Marschak - Toddler table/baby gym prototype images, patent, and production images [GymFinity], c. 1989-1993
- Folder 6 Claire Marschak - Create-A-Flower images and production advertisement, c. 1992-1995
- Folder 7 Claire Marschak - Quilt mobile designs and images, c. 1996-2004
- Folder 8 Claire Marschak - Fisher-Price catalogs, 1984, 2004
- Folder 9 Claire Marschak - "Marschak Toys," CD with images, 2016 [hard copy CD for digital files]

Box 4

- Folder 1 Claire Marschak - Wave Lengths (dolls) presentation drawings, 1989
- Folder 2 Claire Marschak - Flower Fun/Create-A-Flower development drawings and presentation drawings, 1991-1992 and n.d.
- Folder 3 Claire Marschak - Musical Play Garden/ Quilt mobile presentation drawings, n.d.
- Folder 4 Claire Marschak - Minnie Mixer (food play line) development drawings and presentation drawings, n.d.

Oversized

- Folder 1 Claire Marschak - Toddler table/baby gym development drawings and presentation drawings [GymFinity], 1989-1990
- Folder 2 Claire Marschak - Wacky Wind Works presentation drawings, n.d.

Digital - I

- Folder 1 Folder 01_Claire [4 files]
- “01. claire” - .TIF, n.d.
 - “02. claire1” - .TIF, n.d. [c. 1983]
 - “03. claire2” - .TIF, n.d. [c. 1983]
 - “04. toy testing” - .TIF, n.d. [c. 1983]
- Folder 2 Folder 02_Cozy Cottage [2 files]
- “01. cottage drwg” - .TIF, n.d. [c. 1984]
 - “02. cottage sketches” - .TIF, n.d. [c. 1984]
- Folder 3 Folder 03_Flower Fun [4 files]
- “01. flower basket” - .JPG, n.d.
 - “02. flowers1” - .TIF, n.d.
 - “03. flowers2” - .TIF, n.d.
 - “04. flowers3” - .TIF, n.d.
- Folder 4 Folder 04_Gymfinitiy [6 files]
- “01. first prototype” - .JPG, c. 1989
 - “02. form studies” - .JPG, c. 1989
 - “03. gym_laying9EF5” - .JPG, n.d. [c. 1990]
 - “04. gym_sitting9770” - .JPG, n.d. [c. 1990]
 - “05. gym_standingFA18” - .JPG, n.d. [c. 1990]
 - “06. gymfinitiy testing” - .JPG, 1989
- Folder 5 Folder 05_Play Quilt [5 files]
- “01. play quilt package” - .TIF, n.d.
 - “02. quilt drawing” - .TIF, n.d.
 - “03. quilt photo” - .TIF, n.d.
 - “04. quilt2” - .TIF, n.d.
- Folder 6 Folder 06_quiltmobile [7 files]
- “01. 1st model” - .TIF, 1996
 - “02. final model” - .TIF, 1996
 - “03. graphics” - .TIF, 1996
 - “04. poloroid wyatt” - .JPG, 1996
 - “05. quilt mobile sketch” - .TIF, 1996
 - “06a. Quilt Mobile” - .PSD file, 1996
 - “06b. Quilt Mobile” - .TIF, 1996

Series II: Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto, 1984-2016

Biographical Note: Sisters Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto (along with colleague Duane Langenwaller) established their design studio, Thin Air, in 1984. They found success almost immediately with action figure line Sectaurs (created by Maureen Trotto and Tim Clarke), released by Coleco in 1985. Throughout their more than three decades in the toy design industry, Thin Air has produced creations for Hasbro, Mattel, Disney, Kenner, Bandai, Playmates, and many other prominent toy companies.

Scope and Content Note: This series contains product descriptions, narratives, images, and other materials relating to inventions by Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto of Thin Air, LLC. A large portion pertains to the toy line Sectaurs, produced by Coleco and optioned into a television mini-series in the mid-1980s. The bulk of the materials in this series are dated between 1984 and 1986, with accompanying narratives written in 2016.

Box 1

- Folder 10 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs narrative and information, 2016
- Folder 11 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs: Warrior of Symbion press kit, Coleco, 1984
- Folder 12 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "Sectaurs: Warrior of the Shining Realm" packet - Welcome letter, Sectaurs Alphabet transfers, *Guardian* issue (Vol. 1, No. 1), Warrior certificate, and Coleco Sectaurs flier; Coleco, 1984 [see also OS Folder 3]
- Folder 13 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs instruction sheets, Coleco, 1984
- Folder 14 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "The Genesis of the Planet Verduron" artwork and story, Maureen Trotto, April 1984
- Folder 15 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs intro script for Toy Fair 1985, Coleco Marketing Services, December 1984
- Folder 16 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "Sectaurs Television Special, Presentation to Board of Directors, May 6, 1985," Cheryl Stoebenau, May 1985
- Folder 17 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "Production Proposal for a Two Hour Made-for-Television Movie Introducing Sectaurs: Warriors of Symbion, Book II - Search for Hyve," Submitted by John Goodhue, Maureen Trotto, and Tim Clark; n.d. [c. 1985]
- Folder 18 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs "Search for Hyve" television movie script drafts, Maureen T. Trotto, April 1985
- Folder 19 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "An Uneasy Truce" Sectaurs television movie script draft, Maureen T. Trotto, April 1985
- Folder 20 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "The Desert of Lost Hope" draft script, Maureen Trotto, May 1985
- Folder 21 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs promo script, September 1985
- Folder 22 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "The Sectaurs Five-Part Miniseries Synopses" report, October 1985
- Folder 23 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs "Spidrax Attacks" pilot script, #5127-8501, Dan DiStefano and Janis Diamond, October-November 1985

- Folder 24 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs "Slave City" script, #5127-8502, Dan DiStefano and Janis Diamond, October-November 1985
- Folder 25 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs "Slave City" animation storyboard, #5127-8502, Final Board, Ruby-Spears, n.d. [c. 1985]
- Folder 26 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs "Ranco's Revenge/ Valley of the Stones" script, #5127-8503, Dan DiStefano and Janis Diamond, October-November 1985

Box 2

- Folder 1 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs "Valley of the Stones" animation storyboard, #5127-8503, Ruby-Spears, n.d. [c. 1985]
- Folder 2 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs "Trapped in the Acid Desert" scripts, #5127-8504, Ted Field, November 1985
- Folder 3 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs "Battle for the Hyve" script, #5127-8505, Matt Uitz, October-November 1985
- Folder 4 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Notes [Sectaurs], 1985 and n.d.
- Folder 5 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "Warrior Videotape, pre-recorded" script, n.d.
- Folder 6 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - *The Symbion Suns*, Vol. I, Nos. 1-2, Coleco, 1985
- Folder 7 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs publicity clippings, 1985 and n.d.
- Folder 8 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Sectaurs-related correspondence, 1985-1986
- Folder 9 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Boglins narrative, documentation, sketches, and correspondence; 1986-2016 and n.d.
- Folder 10 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Shoezies narrative, presentation, and documentation; 2010-2016 and n.d.
- Folder 11 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Total Meltdown narrative, 2016 and n.d.
- Folder 12 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Lite Brite Loops documentation and prototype images, 2016 and n.d.

Box 3

- Object 1 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "Coleco/Sectaurs, XQLI6605 Experiment 00:60; XQLI6306 Flyers 00:30; XQLI6307 Crawlers 00:30; XQLI6237 The Warriors 00:30; XQLI6328 Night Flying Dargon 00:30; XQLI6329 Hyve 00:30, 6/25/85" - U-Matic tape, commercials for Sectaurs, June 1985
- Object 2 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "Richard & Edward's Coleco/Sectaurs, XQLI9001 thru 9013, 00:30 sec. each, 'Episodes 1 thru 13' 9/5/85, w/no bars, no slates" - U-Matic tape, commercials for Sectaurs, September 1985
- Object 3 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "Sectaurs Promo Revised, Ruby Spears, 3:00, 12/31/85" - U-Matic tape, promo for Sectaurs series, December 1985
- Object 4 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "Sectaurs Promo Version #3, Ruby Spears, 2:30, 1/23/86" - U-Matic tape, promo for Sectaurs series, January 1986
- Object 5 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "Sectaurs 5-Part Mini Series, Trapped in the Acid Desert" - U-Matic tape [no run time indicated], n.d. [c. 1986?]
- Object 6 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - "Sectaurs 5-Part Mini Series, Valley of the Stones, Slave City" - U-Matic tape [no run time indicated], n.d. [c. 1986?]

Object 7 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto -“Sectaurs 5-Part Mini Series, Spidrax Attacks, Battle for the Hyve” - U-Matic tape [no run time indicated], n.d. [c. 1986?]

Box 4

Folder 5 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - Mission Zone [later Total Meltdown] concept boards, n.d. [c. 2002-2003?]
 Folder 6 Maureen Trotto - Boglins playset sketches [The Mini Boglin’s Play Scape, The Great and Mighty Bogus], n.d. [c. 1989-1991?]

Oversized

Folder 3 Maureen Trotto and Laureen Trotto - “Sectaurs: Warrior of the Shining Realm” packet component - Map of the Planet Symbion and flags, Coleco, 1984 [See also Box 1, Folder 12]

Series III: Carol Spencer, 1963-2017

Biographical Note: In 1963, Carol Spencer joined the Barbie team at Mattel, where she developed innovative lines (Sew Free and Color Magic Barbie), and best-selling products (My First Barbie, Baby Sister Kelly, and Totally Hair Barbie). Besides designing hundreds of fashions for Barbie dolls, Carol worked on Ken, Skipper, Francie, and Tutti. She also created merchandise for the Big Jim action figure line, the Heart Family, and many other products. Spencer retired from Mattel in 1999. In 2008, Spencer donated a large collection of her dolls to the United Federation of Doll Clubs Doll Museum in Kansas City, Missouri.

Scope and Content Note: This series houses narratives, images, ephemera, and other documentation related to the long career of designer Carol Spencer at Mattel. The bulk of this series is dated between 1989 and 2017.

Box 2

Folder 13 Carol Spencer - Collection introduction documents; 1988, 2017, and n.d.
 Folder 14 Carol Spencer - “Design Career of Carol Spencer, 1955-2013” hardcover bound designs, Carol Spencer, c. 2013
 Folder 15 Carol Spencer - Share, Learn, Innovate, Connect, Execute (S.L.I.C.E.) presentation printout, “Mattel Days,” Carol Spencer, February 2016
 Folder 16 Carol Spencer - Sew Free, Sew Magic, and Color Magic Barbie design projects at Mattel, 1963-1973, narrative and documentation; 2017 [See also Box 4, Folder 7]
 Folder 17 Carol Spencer - Documentation of 2008 donation to UFDC Doll Museum, 2008; 2017
 Folder 18 Carol Spencer - My First Barbie documentation and narrative, 1978-2017
 Folder 19 Carol Spencer - Baby Sister Kelly, 1959-2012, documentation and narrative; 2017
 Folder 20 Carol Spencer - Collector dolls vs. play dolls information, c. 1988-1989; 2017
 Folder 21 Carol Spencer - “1990s Dolls that Made an Impact” [Totally Hair Barbie, Classique Collection, Gone with the Wind collectors’ dolls, Golden Jubilee Barbie], c. 1990s, documentation and narratives; 2017

- Folder 22 Carol Spencer - Mattel "Lifestyles: An Update from Market & Business Analysis" newsletters, 1988
- Folder 23 Carol Spencer - Play reference articles, 1999-2007

Box 4

- Folder 7 Carol Spencer - Sew-Free fabric example, Mattel, 1963 [See also Box 2, Folder 16]

Box 5

- Object 1 Carol Spencer - Gone with the Wind Barbie hat design, n.d. [c. 1993]

Series IV: Erin Libby, 1984-2018

Biographical Note: Erin Libby, a formally trained artist, developed commercial dolls for nearly four decades. While in elementary school, Libby won a scholarship to the Museum School of the Gallery of Fine Art in Columbus, Ohio. She began exhibiting her art as a teenager, and her talent carried her to receiving graduate degrees in fine art and animation. Libby joined Mattel in the late 1960s, where she was Manager of Doll Characterization. At Mattel, Libby managed various successful product lines and helped to develop faces for dolls. She later founded her own design firm, The Erinworks, consulting with toy companies on major projects such as Cabbage Patch Kids, Puff-a-Lumps, and Baby So Beautiful. As of 2019, Libby is a painter in Bellingham, Washington.

Scope and Content Note: This series holds photographs and other documentation of products developed by Erin Libby. Photographs show various stages of prototypes for dolls as well as some final production versions. The bulk of this series is dated between 1984 and 1990.

Box 6

- Folder 1 Erin Libby – "The Erinworks" company folder, n.d.
- Folder 2 Erin Libby – Various doll sculpt photographs, n.d. [c. 1980s]
- Folder 3 Erin Libby – Cabbage Patch Kids 'Koosas sculpt photographs, n.d. [c. 1984]
- Folder 4 Erin Libby – Baby Smurf sculpt photograph, n.d. [c. 1984]
- Folder 5 Erin Libby – Tiny Blessings sell sheet copy, n.d. [c. 1987]
- Folder 6 Erin Libby – Tyco My Pretty Ballerina brochure copy and related email, c. 1989, 2018
- Folder 7 Erin Libby – Dick Tracy dolls, sculpt and production photographs, n.d. [c. 1990]
- Folder 8 Erin Libby – Baby So Beautiful sculpt photographs and notes, 1985, 2018