

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-934 (Rev. 12-2015)

OMB Control No. 1024-0276 (Exp. 01/31/2019)

POND FARM POTTERY

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

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1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Pond Farm Pottery

Other Name/Site Number: Pond Farm, Pond Farm Workshops, Walker Ranch

Street and Number (if applicable): Armstrong Woods Road, Austin Creek State Recreation Area

City/Town: Guerneville

County: Sonoma

State: California

2. SIGNIFICANCE DATA

NHL Criteria: 1 and 2

NHL Criteria Exceptions: 8

NHL Theme(s): III. Expressing Cultural Values

1. Educational and Intellectual Currents
2. Visual and Performing Arts
6. Popular and Traditional Culture

Period(s) of Significance: 1942-1980

Significant Person(s) (only Criterion 2): Marguerite Wildenhain (1896 – 1985)

Cultural Affiliation (only Criterion 6): N/A

Designer/Creator/Architect/Builder: Marguerite Wildenhain, Gordon Herr, Albert Lanier

Historic Contexts: American Studio Pottery Movement, 1940s to 1980s

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3. WITHHOLDING SENSITIVE INFORMATION

Does this nomination contain sensitive information that should be withheld under Section 304 of the National Historic Preservation Act?

Yes

No

4. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

1. Acreage of Property: 34.35

2. Use either Latitude/Longitude Coordinates or the UTM system:

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (enter coordinates to 6 decimal places):
Datum if other than WGS84:

Latitude:	Longitude:
NE Corner: 38.552171 N,	-123.004539 W
NW Corner: 38.552392 N,	-123.000013 W
SW Corner: 38.549002 N,	-122.999561 W
SE Corner: 38.549405 N,	-123.003896 W

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3. Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property consists of approximately 34 acres of natural landscape with few buildings or structures. The northern boundary is the southern edge of the ridge overlooking the pond, partially crossed by the East Ridge Trail. The eastern boundary runs along the eastern edge of Fife Creek. The western boundary is a natural ridge where Wildenhain hosted classes. This boundary encompasses lands utilized by Wildenhain in her teaching. The southern boundary negotiates and excludes private property not owned by California State Parks.

4. Boundary Justification:

Pond Farm Pottery is approximately 34 acres, including the 7 acres Marguerite Wildenhain purchased from Gordon and Jane Herr. The boundaries encompass the natural areas Wildenhain utilized and took inspiration from in her artistry and teaching from 1942 to 1980. This includes the significant natural features and man-made resources Wildenhain and her students utilized and considered to be Pond Farm Pottery. The southern and northern boundaries encompass hiking trails used by Wildenhain and students. During hikes, Wildenhain encouraged a philosophical approach to art and life inspired by natural proportion and design. The natural landscape was a source of inspiration for pottery forms, colors, and patterns. The northern boundary encloses the pond, a distinct feature of the property. The eastern boundary is determined by the western bank of Fife Creek. The western boundary includes the hillside upon which Wildenhain conducted lessons. It extends past Armstrong Woods Road as both sides of the roadway were significant to Wildenhain's teaching onsite. There is no evidence that Wildenhain, or her students, utilized the excluded private property not owned by California State Parks. Wildenhain believed that one must devote themselves completely to art by working and living in an isolated, natural environment.¹

5. SIGNIFICANCE STATEMENT AND DISCUSSION

INTRODUCTION: SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance

Pond Farm Pottery is eligible as a National Historic Landmark based on its association with master potter Marguerite Wildenhain under NHL Criterion 2 and as the site of important events in the American Studio Pottery Movement under NHL Criterion 1. Located outside of Guerneville, California, the extant pottery studio, residence, and cultural landscape of Pond Farm Pottery retain a high degree of integrity from the period of significance of 1942 to 1980. As a Bauhaus trained potter, Wildenhain introduced new techniques and philosophies to studio pottery in the United States. Her prolific career encompassing artistic production, teaching, writing, and speaking made her a prominent voice in the studio ceramics community during the period of significance.

Wildenhain immigrated to the United States in 1940 as part of the Jewish diaspora of artists fleeing Nazi influence and occupation in Europe. She was already a well-known potter in Europe prior to her immigration. From 1919 to 1925, Wildenhain trained in pottery at the Bauhaus workshop in Dornburg, Germany, located about thirty miles from the Weimar Bauhaus.² There, she achieved the rank of master potter, the first woman to

¹ Charles Hillinger, "Wilderness Artist – She Loves Her Isolation," *Los Angeles Times (1923-1995)*, December 20, 1971.

² Wildenhain, Marguerite., interview by Hazel Bray, March 14, 1982, transcript, California Oral History Project, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 4, 21.

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attain this distinction in her craft. She went on to teach and produce pottery in Germany and the Netherlands. The studio she maintained in the Netherlands, *Het Kruikje*, or Little Jug, with her husband Frans Wildenhain (1905-1980), also a ceramist, was well known. By the time she fled Europe she had already won accolades and awards for her modern, Bauhaus-inspired creamware.

In 1942, after a brief period of teaching in the California College of Arts and Crafts pottery program, Wildenhain settled outside of Guerneville, California at the site of a planned artist community known as Pond Farm Workshops. The land and workshops at Pond Farm had a great influence on Wildenhain. She established a Bauhaus-style studio and developed a philosophy of pottery that was heavily influenced by natural forms and minimalist glazes intended to highlight textures found in the surrounding landscape while still subscribing to the key Bauhaus aesthetic of form follows function. When the Pond Farm Workshops collapsed in 1952, Wildenhain negotiated the purchase of a portion of the property and the buildings she had been using as her residence and studio. She rebranded the site Pond Farm Pottery and it became the central location of her artistic life and teaching.

Wildenhain's influence on the American Studio Pottery Movement was wide ranging. Her role as a champion of American studio pottery and one of the burgeoning movement's leaders is illustrated by her response to English potter Bernard Leach's comments at the International Conference of Potters and Weavers held at Dartington Hall in England in 1952. Leach opined that American pottery was deficient when compared to the great ceramic traditions of Europe and Asia, because those regions had a long tradition of technique and production in pottery to draw from, a tradition that he viewed as inaccessible to American potters. Wildenhain, despite her own influences and training in European pottery, argued that American pottery's value was in its lack of historic traditions, allowing for new traditions to be formed that drew on the diversity of the population of the United States.³

Wildenhain also wrote on pottery and contributed to disciplinary publications throughout her lifetime. She published three monographs, *Pottery: Form and Expression* (1959), *The Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts* (1973), and *...That We Look and See: An Admirer Looks at the Indians* (1979). Her written works encapsulated her beliefs on technique and artistic philosophy. Wildenhain taught workshops at Pond Farm Pottery throughout her residence, further impacting the movement through her students. Many students from Pond Farm, such as Frances Senska, Hui Ka Kwong, Dean Schwarz, and Peter Deneen became influential potters and ceramic instructors. The natural environment and isolation of Pond Farm Pottery, and its connection to the San Francisco Bay Area arts scene, were essential components of Wildenhain's influence and ideology.

Wildenhain was also invited to lecture and teach at schools across the United States, including the influential Black Mountain College located just east of Asheville, North Carolina. Her work was acquired by well-regarded art museums throughout the United States and Europe during the period of significance including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the De Young Museum in San Francisco. A comparison of her European and American production shows a potter with exceptional technique who was deeply influenced by the landscape at Pond Farm Pottery. Wildenhain won accolades and awards for her Pond Farm inspired works throughout her lifetime. She believed that there was little distinction between art and craft, and that every potter must create not only with their hands, but with the passionate essence of their being. Pond Farm Pottery was the location where Wildenhain was able to create in this way, allowing her to cultivate her personal philosophy and

³ Marguerite Wildenhain, "The Potter in the New World," Lecture presented at the International Conference of Potters and Weavers, Totnes, Devon, England, July 20, 1952. Marguerite Wildenhain papers, 1930-1982. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/items/detail/potter-new-world-210>.

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her pottery in harmony with nature. It was the most significant location in her prolific and influential artistic life and is therefore eligible for designation as a National Historic Landmark.

Criterion 1 Justification

Pond Farm Pottery is associated with key developments in pedagogy, technique, and aesthetic philosophy that characterized the American Studio Pottery Movement in the mid-twentieth century. The Pond Farm Pottery summer sessions, taught by Marguerite Wildenhain, were particularly important in introducing Bauhaus principles of form, technique, and artistry into American ceramics.

After World War II, the ceramic profession experienced considerable growth in the United States. The GI Bill made college an attractive and viable option for returning veterans. Universities expanded their academic programs to accommodate the rapid growth of student populations. Art departments, previously averse to instruction in ceramics due to a common perception of ceramics as a craft rather than a legitimate form of high artistic expression, began to hire ceramics instructors to meet rising demands for coursework in clay.⁴ As a result, American pottery evolved from a hobby taught in night classes and workshops to the subject of coursework in colleges and universities meant to produce self-supporting, professional artists.⁵

The availability of pottery instruction at universities also increased public perception of the professional status of potters in the United States. This phenomenon developed in part due to the immigration of European artists-craftspeople during and immediately after the war. These new arrivals, often Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi violence, introduced skills and philosophies that helped shape the trajectory of the American Studio Pottery Movement. Marguerite Wildenhain was among the most influential of these ceramic innovators, arriving in the United States in March of 1940, just months before the Nazis invaded Holland, where she had been operating a pottery studio with her husband. When Wildenhain arrived, she noticed that American potters were not at a skill level commensurate with European potters. What she saw as a lackadaisical attitude toward craft conflicted with her personal philosophies, developed during her time at the Bauhaus and deepened throughout her career as a master potter.⁶

In 1942, Wildenhain left a teaching position at the California College of Arts and Crafts to join Pond Farm Workshops, an experimental art colony established by artists Gordon and Jane Herr at their rural property in the hills outside of Guerneville, California. Wildenhain's involvement in the workshops elevated Pond Farm to a position of influence in American pottery. She attracted prospective students from around the country while adapting the landscape and built environment of Pond Farm to meet her needs as a home, studio, and classroom.

Following the dissolution of the Pond Farm Workshops in 1952, Wildenhain remained on the property and began offering her own summer sessions. Attracting students from across the United States and even around the world, Pond Farm Pottery's Bauhaus-influenced curricula emphasized a balance of technical proficiency and imaginative design which became key philosophical underpinnings of the mid-twentieth century American Studio Pottery Movement. Many students who trained at Pond Farm Pottery became professional ceramists in their own right. Hui Ka-Kwong, Val Cushing, and Dorothy Herger all studied under Wildenhain and later taught at notable universities and held positions on national councils. Former student Dean Schwartz opened South Bear School in Decorah, Iowa. Frances Senska sold her wares through Gump's in San Francisco and

⁴ Peter Held, "A Rising Tide," *Ceramic Arts Networks*, January 9, 2017, <https://ceramicartsnetwork.org/ceramics-monthly/ceramic-art-and-artists/ceramic-artists/a-rising-tide/#>.

⁵ Martha Drexler Lynn. *American Studio Ceramics: Innovation and Identity, 1940 to 1979*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 2-3.

⁶Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 60-61.

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introduced pottery to prominent Abstract Expressionist, Peter Voulkos, at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana.⁷

The Pond Farm Pottery summer sessions encouraged rigorous discipline, absolute commitment, and the development of artists as craftspeople before all else. Students attending the sessions studied under a Bauhaus-influenced pedagogy not seen in university programs in the United States. Students participated in a master/apprentice relationship that mimicked Bauhaus pedagogy. This included the balance of discipline in craft and artistic freedom, and the idea that form follows function. Wildenhain also introduced a smoother and more advanced kick wheel of her own design, installing them at Pond Farm for use during the summer sessions and at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa where she frequently lectured. Several of her kick wheels are preserved in the barn/studio at Pond Farm.

Pond Farm was also the location where Wildenhain wrote her first two books, *Pottery: Form and Expression* (1959) and *The Invisible Core: A Potter's Life and Thoughts* (1973), both of which influenced the development of American studio pottery. *Pottery: Form and Expression* provided technical explanations and images of her work at Pond Farm Pottery. *The Invisible Core* offered how-to advice for working studio potters, and included an explanation of Pond Farm Pottery's Bauhaus influenced pedagogy.⁸ Pond Farm Pottery therefore serves as a site of innovations and discourse that encouraged imaginative design and technical proficiency during a period when Americans began to see pottery as a profession and an artistic craft. The influence on the trajectory and philosophy of the American Studio Pottery Movement from 1942 through 1980 qualifies Pond Farm Pottery for designation as a National Historic Landmark under Criterion 1.

Criterion 2 Justification

Pond Farm Pottery is eligible for National Historic Landmark designation under Criterion 2 for its association with the life of master potter Marguerite Wildenhain. Wildenhain's year-round artistic production, summer sessions at Pond Farm Pottery, and the many accolades she received for her work and influence attest to her legacy as a consummate studio craftswoman who achieved recognition and financial independence in a male-dominated field. Wildenhain's attention to both skill and artistry set her apart in mid-century American ceramics. She exemplified mastery of not only craft, form, and technique but also a naturalistic style that reflected her commitment to artistic freedom and imaginative design. Her pots are known for their functional design inspired by the natural environment of Pond Farm, as well as figural inspiration of South American indigenous culture, evident in her 1950 piece titled, "Large Jar," and her 1972 ceramic bottle titled, "Olmec Face Bottle."⁹

Wildenhain arrived in the United States in 1940 already a prominent potter with a reputation as a master. That same year, the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte, North Carolina and the Art Institute of Chicago displayed Wildenhain's pottery. However, it was during her tenure at Pond Farm beginning in 1942 that she established herself as a pivotal figure in the American Studio Pottery Movement and helped elevate the position of American pottery within an international dialog. During her long and prolific career at Pond Farm, she exhibited her work at prominent museums and galleries across the United States and Europe including the National Collection of Fine Arts in Washington D.C., The Seattle Art Museum, Alabama's Birmingham Museum of Art, The Utah Museum of Fine Arts in Salt Lake City, the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, France, Liljevalchs

⁷ "On Marguerite Wildenhain and the Deep Work of Making Pots: A Conversation with Dean Schwarz," interview by Richard Whittaker, *Works & Conversations*, August 1, 2010, <http://www.conversations.org/story.php?sid=243&op=pdf>, 4; Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 91.

⁸ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 5.

⁹ Jenni Sorkin, "Marguerite Wildenhain: Large Jar," in *Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College, 1933-1957*, ed. Helen Molesworth and Ruth Erikson, (Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 2015), 112-113; Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 89.

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Museum in Stockholm, Sweden, and The Museum of Arts and Crafts in Hamburg, Germany.¹⁰ The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art currently holds several of her pieces in their permanent collection, including a 1928 porcelain vase and tea set. The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York also lists several of Wildenhain's pieces in their permanent collection, such as a 1945 bowl that represents her transition to a naturalistic artistic style.

During her professional career, Wildenhain moved seamlessly between artistic production, teaching, lecturing, and writing. In the offseason of the Pond Farm Pottery summer sessions, universities invited her to lead seminars on multiple occasions. In 1952, Black Mountain College invited her to host a seminar where she taught alongside major figures in the British and Japanese Mingei Movements: Bernard Leach, Soetsu Yanagi, and Shoji Hamada.¹¹ She contributed to the discourse of studio pottery with written editorials to disciplinary craft magazines, including *Craft Horizons*, as well as the publication of her three monographs. In 1969, Luther College in Decorah, Iowa acknowledged her contributions to the field with an honorary Doctorate of Humanities.¹²

Wildenhain's contributions as a teacher and potter continue to influence art and craft even after her death in 1985. In 1995, the Art Institute of Chicago accessioned two of Wildenhain's stoneware pieces. Wildenhain created the pieces between 1947 and 1960 and titled them "Pair of Candlesticks." They provide an example of her natural glazing, typical of Pond Farm Pottery influence, and a functional Bauhaus form.¹³ In 2015, Black Mountain College published an exhibit catalogue, *Leap Before You Look*, that includes biographical praise of Marguerite Wildenhain and several illustrative examples of her work. The catalogue recognizes Wildenhain's blend of technique and artistry.¹⁴ Acknowledgment by multiple acclaimed art programs and her year-round production attest to Wildenhain's national influence from her home and studio at Pond Farm Pottery.

Criterion Exception 8

Pond Farm Pottery's period of significance of 1942 to 1980 ends ten years short of fifty years. However, the property achieved exceptional national significance within this period through its important role in the American Studio Pottery Movement and as the property most closely associated with prominent ceramist Marguerite Wildenhain.

Wildenhain's Bauhaus-inspired teaching and writing changed the way American pottery students interacted with clay by emphasizing an equal balance between the freedom of art and discipline of craft.¹⁵ Her exceptional significance is reflected in recognition from reputable ceramics schools such as Black Mountain College where she was offered a teaching position in 1951. Wildenhain declined the offer but returned to teach a ceramics seminar hosted by the college in 1952. There she lectured for two-weeks alongside key craftsmen like English potter, Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada, a renowned Japanese potter, and Dr. Soetsu Yanagi, director of the National Folk Museum in Tokyo, Japan, and founder and leader of the Japanese Craft Movement for thirty

¹⁰ "Locations Exhibited," Box 2, Folder 3, Papers of Marguerite Wildenhain, Luther College Archives, Decorah, Iowa.

¹¹ Robert L. Diffendal, "Black Mountain College Holds Pottery Seminar," *Ceramic Age*, December 1952, Series VI, Box 2, Folder 24, Papers of Marguerite Wildenhain, RG15 Manuscripts, Luther College Archives, Decorah, Iowa.

¹² Jane Kemp and David Kamm, "An Unlikely Pairing: Luther College and Marguerite Wildenhain," in *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, ed. Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz (Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007), 627.

¹³ "Pair of Candlesticks," Art.cedu, accessed November 11, 2019, <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/137014/pair-of-candlesticks>.

¹⁴ Sorkin, "Marguerite Wildenhain: Large Jar," in *Leap Before You Look*, 112-113.

¹⁵ Jenni Sorkin, *Live Form: Women, Ceramics, and Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 275.

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years.¹⁶ Later that year, she spoke at the International Conference of Potters and Weavers where she challenged Leach's dismissive characterization of American ceramics, further establishing herself as a key figure in the American Studio Pottery Movement.

Wildenhain's pottery also caught the eye of well-respected institutions such as New York's MoMA, the de Young Museum in San Francisco and the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California, and the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1946 and 1947, MoMA exhibited and sold her work in an exhibition entitled "Useful Objects, 1946" and "100 Useful Objects of Fine Design, 1947." The exhibition focused on works with a practical application in the common American household. Today, the MoMA currently holds three pieces of Wildenhain's in their permanent collection.¹⁷ In 1953, she exhibited a black and white bowl at the de Young Museum in San Francisco, California. The bowl was featured in the Western Living Exhibition and judged by a jury of San Francisco potters who awarded Wildenhain a general excellence award.¹⁸ In 1954, Scripps College in Claremont, California awarded Wildenhain an annual ceramic award for her work exhibited at the eleventh annual Scripps Ceramic Exhibition.¹⁹ The Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California also showed her work in a 1955 exhibition titled, "Clay, Form, and Expression." The exhibition highlighted photographic evidence of her technique and style alongside physical examples of her work.²⁰

Wildenhain continued to have a major influence on American studio ceramics through her pottery production, writing, and summer sessions at Pond Farm until her retirement in 1980. She continued to live on the property until her death in 1985. During this period, retrospective exhibits held in Ithaca, New York and Oakland, California highlighted her life's work. Pond Farm's exceptional national significance is demonstrated through its association with the life and productive career of Marguerite Wildenhain and her distinctive influence on American studio pottery from 1942 to 1980, supporting its eligibility under Criterion Exception 8.

Period of Significance Justification

Pond Farm Pottery's period of national significance spans from 1942, when Marguerite Wildenhain first began living, teaching, and producing pottery on the property, to 1980, when she ceased teaching and professional artistic production. During this thirty-eight-year period, Wildenhain shaped the trajectory of the American Studio Pottery Movement and established Pond Farm Pottery as a nationally significant property within art and craft.

Between 1942 and 1969, Wildenhain developed and solidified her influence on the American Studio Pottery Movement through her involvement with Pond Farm Workshops and Pond Farm Pottery, as well as through her pottery production, museum exhibitions, and publications. In 1942, Wildenhain began to teach, built her residence, and shaped the landscape of Pond Farm Pottery as an extension of her Bauhaus technique and philosophy. She modified the barn on the property as an active studio in Bauhaus style for herself and future students. Wildenhain opened Pond Farm Pottery in 1952, holding her first summer session the following

¹⁶ Robert L. Diffendal, "Black Mountain College Holds Pottery Seminar" *Ceramic Age*, December 1952, Series VI Box 2, Folder 24, Papers of Marguerite Wildenhain, RG15 Manuscripts, Luther College Archives, Decorah, Iowa.

¹⁷ "Useful Objects, 1946," Museum of Modern Art,

https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/1076/releases/MOMA_1946-1947_0059_1946-11-25_461125-57.pdf.

¹⁸ "Mrs. Wildenhain Among Award Winners at Ceramic Exhibit," *New York Times*, June 28, 1953, Marguerite Wildenhain papers, 1930-1982. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, microfilm, roll no. 5047.

¹⁹ "Guerneville Potter Wins Top Award as 'Outstanding Potter,'" *Guerneville Times*, March 25, 1954, Marguerite Wildenhain papers, 1930-1982. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, microfilm, roll no. 5047.

²⁰ "Works in Clay," *Sacramento Bee*, March 26, 1955, Marguerite Wildenhain papers 1932-1980, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, microfilm, roll no. 5047.

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summer. In the offseason, she introduced her Pond Farm and Bauhaus inspired philosophy to a national audience by hosting university seminars, contributing to craft periodicals, and exhibiting her Pond Farm work at museums around the county. In 1959, Wildenhain published her first book, *Pottery: Form and Expression*, which *Craft Horizons*, a national craft magazine published by the American Craft Council, described as “a rare book – one that communicates the thinking and philosophy of one of the most respected potters of our time.”²¹ Between 1965 and 1969, Wildenhain hosted several workshops at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, where she installed several of her own modified kick wheels and inspired new students to enroll in Pond Farm Pottery summer sessions.²²

Wildenhain’s growing interest in indigenous pottery and art characterized her work in the latter half of her professional career. Following the 1968 World Craft Council in Lima, Peru, Wildenhain became interested in indigenous pottery and spent much of the offseason traveling to Central and South America, specifically Peru.²³ Her pottery during this period exhibited heavy Peruvian and indigenous influence, specifically in the incorporation of figural and facial designs. During this period, Wildenhain published her 1973 autobiography, *The Invisible Core: A Potter’s Life and Thoughts*. After 1973, Wildenhain’s health began to decline, limiting her ability to produce pottery at her previous volume. Although she remained nationally influential and continued to teach at Pond Farm Pottery until 1980, she attended less conferences and seminars. In 1979, Wildenhain published her final book, *...That We Look and See: An Admirer Looks at the Indians*, a book on her admiration for the art, religion, and everyday life of indigenous peoples.²⁴ The American Studio Pottery Movement also began to diverge into new ideologies and movements, like the Funk Art Movement. The Funk Art Movement philosophically contradicted the American Studio Pottery Movement in ideas of discipline and freedom and deemphasized a mastery of the craft before inspiration of art. Wildenhain retired from artistic production in 1980 and lived on the property until her death in 1985. Her personal correspondent, teacher, mentor, and lifelong friend, Gerhard Marcks, indicated that she fired the kiln at Pond Farm Pottery for the final time in the summer of 1981, though she ceased production for professional purposes in 1980.²⁵

Although Marguerite Wildenhain came to the United States an established potter and continued to receive recognition after her retirement, it was during her active professional life at Pond Farm between 1942 and 1980 that she made her greatest impact on the American Studio Pottery Movement.

Historic Context

The Bauhaus

The Second Industrial Revolution that occurred in Great Britain, Germany, and the United States from roughly 1870 to 1914 introduced a widespread increase in mechanization and mass production. These changes affected traditional regional artisans who found their longstanding roles as the source of handcrafts challenged by the

²¹ “Pottery: Form and Expression,” *Craft Horizons*, 19, no. 4 (July/August, 1959): 50, <https://digital.craftcouncil.org/digital/collection/p15785coll2/id/6076/rec/83>.

²² Jane Kemp and David Kamm, “An Unlikely Pairing: Luther College and Marguerite Wildenhain,” in *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, ed. Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz (Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007), 627.

²³ Kopolos and Metcalf, *Makers*, 199; Levin, “The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain,” 70.

²⁴ Ruth R. Kath, *The Letters of Gerhard Marcks and Marguerite Wildenhain 1970-1981: A Mingling of Souls* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1991), 206, 212; Marguerite Wildenhain, *...That We Look and See: An Admirer Looks at the Indians* (Decorah, Iowa: South Bear Press, 1979).

²⁵ Kath, *The Letters of Gerhard Marcks and Marguerite Wildenhain*, 206, 212.

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influx of inexpensive mass-produced goods.²⁶ As lower cost manufactures became more prevalent in the marketplace, the skilled vocations of art and craft, passed down from master to apprentice, began to transition to lesser-skilled industrial professions dependent upon mechanization. This shift was evident to the German architect Walter Gropius and his compatriots, fellow artists and architects, who sought to reform art education in interwar Germany to help a new generation of artists and craftspeople establish themselves within an industrial context without sacrificing commitment to their art.

The absorption of the Grand-Ducal Saxon Academy of Fine Arts into the neighboring Grand-Ducal Saxon School of Arts and Crafts, where Gropius served as director, presented an opportunity to realize their vision, resulting in the founding of the *Staatliches Bauhaus* in early April of 1919. The decision to absorb a fine arts school into a crafts school reflected Gropius' ambition to achieve complete and harmonious unity between art and craft. The Academy of Fine Arts included courses in media such as painting and printmaking, and had more of a focus on the academic aspects of producing art than the School of Arts and Crafts, which focused primarily on the production of functional objects. In the same year, Gropius issued the *Manifesto of the Staatliches Bauhaus*, outlining the philosophy and intentions of the new school. The chief goal of the Bauhaus was *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a complete unification of art and artist-craftspeople-designers in the pursuit of both technical precision and artistic achievement with the ultimate aim of cultivating a generation of artists prepared to engage in industrial production while maintaining the integrity of their art and their craftsmanship.²⁷ Gropius and other founding members of the Bauhaus sought to create an environment which would encourage the formation of strong interpersonal relationships through collaboration and preserve some of the pedagogical traditions in a new, industrialized context. This philosophy rejected the fundamentally impersonal nature of mass production which often had the effect of isolating artists by removing them from traditional workshops.²⁸ To achieve this synthesis of traditional learning and industrial production, each Bauhaus workshop had two masters, one dedicated to teaching the technical fundamentals of craft and one dedicated to the development of artistic form, ensuring that objects contained artistic value in addition to displaying skilled craftsmanship.²⁹

In its initial form at Weimar, the Bauhaus offered programs in a wide range of visual arts including ceramics, printmaking, stained glass painting, sculpting in wood, stone, and plastic, metalworking, photography, weaving, and architecture.³⁰ Before the first-year Bauhaus students formally selected their specialization, they underwent a preparatory program to familiarize themselves with basic knowledge of artistic elements like color and form while creating a social foundation between students to encourage the sort of collaboration required to achieve *Gesamtkunstwerk*. At the end of the six-month course, each student chose their specialization and entered another six-month trial period in the appropriate workshop.³¹ The Bauhaus remained in Weimar for about six years before the rapidly shifting political climate in Germany and longstanding accusations of communism forced a move to Dessau. Within months of an election placing representatives of multiple right-wing groups in the Thuringian parliament, the state government halved the school's funding and announced its complete dissolution effective April 1, 1925. Upon hearing about the Bauhaus' imminent closure, the city council of Dessau in Anhalt extended an invitation to Gropius, offering to allow the Bauhaus to continue in the small industrial town.³² It was from this second location at Dessau that the Bauhaus gained an international reputation for producing innovative and often minimalist design. Within the first year of moving to Dessau, the school

²⁶ Michael Siebenbrodt and Lutz Schöbe, *Bauhaus: 1919-1933* (New York: Parkstone International, 2009), 13-14.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 20-22.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

³¹ Bray, "Oral History of Marguerite Wildenhain," 5.

³² Siebenbrodt and Schöbe, *Bauhaus*, 34, 37-38.

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received accreditation as an academy of design from the state of Anhalt, granting the school's programs the ability to award formal degrees. The programs became more comprehensive, including training in natural sciences, geometry, and related studies to underpin students' artistic education.³³

While in Dessau, the school experienced further sociopolitical controversy and internal turmoil, ultimately resulting in the resignation of Walter Gropius and several others in 1928. Gropius appointed fellow architect Hannes Meyer as his successor. Meyer sought to streamline the Bauhaus' education and remove all factors he perceived as extraneous. Meyer considered the influence of art and artists to be excessive and unnecessary. With these changes, combined with the growth of radical leftist factions within the Bauhaus, Meyer's career as director ended with his discharge in 1930.³⁴ Architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe succeeded Meyer as director within the year. Mies van der Rohe attempted to preserve the Bauhaus within the context of the global economic depression in the interwar period and the growth of right-wing political power, taking measures such as expelling politically troublesome students and removing most practical education from Bauhaus curricula.³⁵ These measures served to maintain the Bauhaus's presence in Dessau for another two years before an Anhalt parliamentary election installed several right-wing members, forcing the Bauhaus to relocate for a second time in 1932, this time to Berlin.³⁶ Nearly all students and faculty members followed the school in its final move.³⁷ The Bauhaus lasted less than a year in Berlin. The election of Adolf Hitler to the position of Chancellor led to a police raid on the school. Though it briefly reopened, the Bauhaus officially closed on July 20, 1933.³⁸

Bauhaus Pottery and Marguerite Wildenhain

The short-lived Bauhaus pottery studio, which lasted from 1919 until 1925, was unique among the Bauhaus workshops in part because it was in Dornburg, about twenty kilometers from the school's primary campus in Weimar. Failure to find local professionals to serve as the master of craft within the ceramics program led Gropius to the eventual selection of Max Krehan for the role. In keeping with the Bauhaus' desire to carry traditional forms of craft education into the industrial world, the school established their ceramics workshop in the Krehan family pottery, a centuries-old workshop deeply entrenched in the ancient traditions of the ceramics tradition of the Thuringia region.³⁹ As with the other workshops, the core of pottery teaching at the Bauhaus emphasized a close working relationship between masters and apprentices in a continuation of longstanding craft tradition.

Marguerite Friedlander (Wildenhain) was among the first students of the Weimar Bauhaus, joining the ceramics program under master of craft Max Krehan and master of form Gerhard Marcks. She remained within the Bauhaus pottery studio until Krehan's death in 1925.⁴⁰ Wildenhain described her experience at the Bauhaus and its influence on her work as an artist and a teacher in a 1982 interview with Hazel Bray of the Oakland Museum. She emphasized how her Bauhaus education influenced her approach to art, craft, and teaching, and instilled a strong belief in the apprentice/master relationship, something rarely seen in American art education. Wildenhain expressed a particular passion for the idea that the master was responsible for their students' education beyond the mechanics of the craft; a master was responsible for aiding their students' intellectual

³³ Ibid., 46.

³⁴ Ibid., 57.

³⁵ Ibid., 59.

³⁶ Ibid., 62.

³⁷ Ibid., 63.

³⁸ Ibid., 64.

³⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁰ Bray, "Oral History of Marguerite Wildenhain," 3-5, 21.

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development and the cultivation of their minds to allow them to develop into complete people.⁴¹ For Wildenhain, this meant an absolute integration between art, craft, and life with no boundaries between the three. In a manner similar to the Bauhaus, Wildenhain built Pond Farm Pottery on a philosophy of devotion to and value of the work of human hands. The studio she created bears a striking resemblance to photographs of the Dornburg workshop in which she worked as an apprentice, demonstrating a continuation of both Bauhaus ideals and the traditions of Krehan's Thuringian pottery.⁴²

The philosophy Wildenhain carried from the Bauhaus was in part an intense dedication to "the foundations of proficiency" as the basis for true artistic expression, something she saw as lacking in contemporary American art and craft education. The close relationships between master and apprentice and between apprentices also emerged within Wildenhain's teaching at Pond Farm and is evidenced by the lifelong reverence many of her students retained for her and their time at Pond Farm Pottery. Her abandonment of industrial production after her arrival in the United States was a point at which Wildenhain diverged from Bauhaus philosophy. While she sought to produce items that were useful, beautiful, and affordable to the average person, she developed a preference against creating items for mass production. Despite this shift in her personal aesthetic, throughout her long and prolific career, Wildenhain remained dedicated to a strict integrity of functional form in her work. Her commitment to her philosophy came at the expense of some of her cultural relevance within the mainstream artistic community as it shifted away from purely functional pottery as art, but also set her apart within the American Studio Pottery Movement.⁴³

American Studio Craft and American Studio Pottery

The American Studio Craft Movement emerged from the Arts and Crafts Movement that began in England in the mid-nineteenth century, inspired by the writings of three prominent men: Augustus Pugin (Architect), John Ruskin (Art and architecture critic), and William Morris (Textile designer and author/poet).⁴⁴ Pugin, Ruskin, and Morris believed that art and craft improved social conditions through the aesthetic uplift provided via hand-based labor, resulting in high quality goods made by workers outside of the factory system. The Arts and Crafts Movement's arrival in the United States by the end of the nineteenth century in part can be traced to world's fairs, specifically the 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Although world's fairs often emphasized the future, the exhibited art usually demonstrated traditions of the past. The fair introduced American audiences to English design, Japanese art, Moorish decoration, and reproductions of Greek vessels.⁴⁵ By the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition, held in San Francisco, California, fine arts exhibitions had become an important display to offer at world's fairs, encouraging the birth of professionalized American decorative arts.⁴⁶ The exposure to contemporary and historic examples of art and design production from Europe, coupled with the public validation of exhibition practice and individual artistic recognition, greatly encouraged the birth of the American Studio Craft Movement by the 1920s. The movement encompassed four distinct disciplines: ceramics, textiles, metalwork, and jewelry. However, in 1962, Harvey Littleton, a pottery instructor, and Otto Wittmann, then director of the Toledo Museum of Art, initiated the Studio Glass Movement which added glass as a fifth discipline.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Bray, "Oral History of Marguerite Wildenhain," 20.

⁴² Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 88.

⁴³ Sorkin, *Live Form*, 91-96.

⁴⁴ Kopolos and Metcalf, *Makers*, 2-8.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 14.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 13-14.

⁴⁷ "Studio Glass Movement," Toledo Museum of Art, accessed September 29, 2020,

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Like the Arts and Crafts Movement, the American Studio Craft Movement represented a rejection of industrialization but emphasized a return to skilled labor that encouraged craftspeople to become specialists of their own work. By the 1940s, a Studio Craft Movement became fully rooted in the United States. In 1940, America House opened in New York City, a retail store that sought to recognize American craftspeople through display and access to a flourishing urban marketplace.⁴⁸ In 1941, the Handcraft Cooperative League of America, an organization that sought to market rural craftsman in urban areas, initiated the publication of *Craft Horizons*, a professional magazine that became the center of discourse for craftspeople to exchange information and understand what craftsmanship meant.⁴⁹ The following year, in 1942, Anne Morgan, daughter of J.P. Morgan, and Aileen Osborn Webb, a philanthropist, formed the American Craftsmen's Cooperative Council, Inc., later renamed the American Craft Council. The council promoted solidarity and encouraged a national discourse through published media. Its sister organization, the American Craftsmen's Educational Council also promoted national publicity for craftspeople. The educational council hosted exhibitions, encouraged sales at America House, provided support for public programs, and sponsored national competitions.⁵⁰ Over time, the increase in national solidarity and public validation among craft professionals laid the groundwork for media specificity, in which specialized crafts, such as pottery, emerged with regional and stylistic branches under the umbrella of the American Studio Craft Movement.

While the movement represented a break from industrially produced craftwork, it also blurred the lines by seeking to enhance technical proficiency while respecting imaginative design. Due to the complex origins and activity of the Studio Craft Movement and other longstanding craft traditions in the United States, it is difficult to provide a definitive start date for the American Studio Pottery Movement but it was in evidence by the mid-twentieth century. English ceramist Bernard Leach emphasized the cultural importance of studio pottery with the publication of his 1940 monograph, *A Potter's Book*, which was disseminated widely throughout the United States during the 1940s and 1950s. The book offered practical information for studio potters, as well as philosophical and cultural messages about art and craft, and argued that ceramists should work towards a standard that instilled pottery with cultural value. *Craft Horizons* strongly endorsed the book, writing "every potter will have to read this book," as it became a type of manifesto for American studio potters.⁵¹

Wildenhain also emerged as an important voice through her pottery production, teaching, and writing. In a 1950 article for *Craft Horizons*, she conveyed her view of the importance of developing studio potters with high levels of both technical skill and individual creativity in order to successfully compete with mass-produced pottery. "If we want hand pottery to keep its importance in spite of big business and the quick turn-over of cheap mass products," she wrote, "it must be first-rate. It must convey something to man that he does not get in machine work and it must have those qualities that industrial production cannot have: a live and ever-growing push towards things that are both technically well made and beautifully alive."⁵² Publication of Wildenhain's first book, *Pottery: Form and Expression* in 1959 further elevated her as a national figure in American Studio Pottery. The book provided technical information, as well as illustrated examples of her Pond Farm Pottery summer sessions. In July 1959, *Craft Horizons* endorsed her book and wrote, "One of America's leading potters, trained at the famous Bauhaus in Germany, Mrs. Wildenhain in this book conveys the very essence of what it is to be a creative craftsman."⁵³

⁴⁸ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 68.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 70; "Our History," American Craft Council, last modified January 12, 2012, <https://www.craftcouncil.org/post/our-history>.

⁵⁰ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 67-68.

⁵¹ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 76-77.

⁵² Marguerite Wildenhain, "Pottery as a Creative Craft," *Craft Horizons* 10, no. 2 (Summer 1950): 29, <https://digital.craftcouncil.org/digital/collection/p15785coll2/id/2127/rec/1>.

⁵³ "Pottery: Form and Expression," *Craft Horizons*, 19, no. 3 (July/August 1959): 4.

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Wildenhain's career also developed in connection with California's emergence as a regional hub in American studio craft. Arriving in the United States as a Jewish refugee in 1940, Wildenhain settled temporarily in San Francisco, an established center of the arts since the late nineteenth century. The Bay Area art community noted her arrival, spawning exhibitions and news articles about the master potter as she began work at the California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC). Though the CCAC curricula failed to meet her rigorous standards of discipline, she maintained connections with the broader San Francisco Bay Area art community through exhibitions of her work, giving seminars at local schools such as Mills College, and by selling her wares through stores including Gump's.⁵⁴ However, it was from Pond Farm that Wildenhain made her most important contributions, teaching balance between discipline in craft and freedom of imaginative design, which became guiding principles of the American Studio Pottery Movement. She established communal principles that encouraged the development of the whole person through rigorous training. Pond Farm also served as a draw for artists from around the state and the country. Notable artists with connections to Pond Farm and Wildenhain include photographers Otto Hagel and Hansel Mieth, sculptor Ruth Asawa and her husband, architect Albert Lanier, and painter Forrest Bailey. Although it developed as an isolated western outpost of the American Studio Pottery Movement, through its connections to the Bay Area arts scene and as a result of Wildenhain's nationwide recognition, Pond Farm Pottery found itself at the center of discourse of studio potters across the United States.

In 1960, *Craft Horizons* became the official magazine of the American Craft Council and began to sponsor conferences and promote regional programs. These activities helped further link developments in studio craft in California and other regional hubs into a more cohesive national movement. In 1963, the council created a program where they named "fellows" in their respective disciplines to promote studio craft and recognize significant American craftspeople.⁵⁵ In 1977, the council nominated Wildenhain to its College of Fellows. Owing to her own complex aesthetic beliefs and professional rivalries, she declined the nomination. However, the council's recognition of Wildenhain attests to her esteemed status within the American Studio Pottery Movement.

Studio Craft and the Twentieth Century Jewish Diaspora

At the start of World War II in 1939, the United States, under the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, hesitated to allow Jewish immigration due to the fear of German infiltration and espionage. The United States required Jewish applicants to submit moral affidavits that attested to their identities and good, moral conduct. In July 1941, American consulates in Nazi-occupied countries shut down and ended the hope for further European Jewish immigration to the United States.⁵⁶ However, before the closure of American consulates, the United States welcomed many European Jewish artists across disciplines who sought refuge and asylum as the Nazi threat grew and spread across Europe. The American Studio Pottery Movement benefitted from the influx of Jewish immigrants and refugees in the interwar period who infused new techniques and philosophies into the movement.

The closure of the Bauhaus in 1933, a direct result of Adolf Hitler's election to chancellor and the subsequent police raid on the school, was part of a pattern of persecution of modernist artists stemming from Hitler's belief that modernism was a calculated Jewish attack on German arts and culture.⁵⁷ Jewish artists in other countries,

⁵⁴ Jonathan Herr, "Love, Because Nothing Else Matters," in *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus*, 320.; Hazel Bray, "Oral History Interview with Marguerite Wildenhain," 59.

⁵⁵ "Our History," American Craft Council.

⁵⁶ "United States Immigration and Refugee Law, 1921-1980," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed October 2, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/united-states-immigration-and-refugee-law-1921-1980>.

⁵⁷ Siebenbrodt and Schöbe, *Bauhaus*, 64.; Henry Grosshans, *Hitler and the Artists*, (New York: Holmes & Meyer, 1983), 5,

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such as Gertrud and Otto Natzler in Austria, as well as Marguerite Wildenhain in Holland, faced a similarly perilous environment. The Natzlers and Wildenhain both fled Nazi persecution and established artistic, professional lives in the United States.⁵⁸

American artists and architects embraced the sleek modernity of Bauhaus and European design brought by the European newcomers. Institutions and universities across the American landscape welcomed Jewish émigré architects and designers. This included ceramists who infused new techniques and technology into American studio pottery. The Natzlers introduced the flywheel with a treadle base as an improvement on the American wheel that forced the potter to stand on one foot.⁵⁹ Several notable artist communities across the United States also became focal points for artists of the Jewish Diaspora, including Black Mountain College, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the Walker Arts Center in Minneapolis, and Pond Farm Workshops.⁶⁰ Trude Guermonprez, Victor Ries, and Marguerite Wildenhain, all Jewish immigrants who fled Nazi Europe, were among the original artists invited to settle, create, and teach at Pond Farm Workshops.

Wildenhain also arrived in the United States at a time when college art departments began to add ceramic divisions and established higher educational qualifications for faculty in these new programs. In 1945, the Truman administration passed the “Truman Directive” and granted American visas to displaced persons (DPs). Between 1945 and 1948, upwards of 40,000 DPs entered the United States on American visas, most of whom were Jewish.⁶¹ Although Wildenhain arrived at Pond Farm three years prior to the Truman Directive, she still worked and operated as part of the diasporic Jewish artistic community. These émigré artists, comprising architects and artists of many mediums including pottery, had a profound impact on the American artistic landscape.

Marguerite Wildenhain

Marguerite Wildenhain was born Marguerite Friedlander in Lyon, France on October 11, 1896. She spent much of her childhood in Germany but was educated at French, German, and English schools.⁶² She began her education in the arts as a teenager, experimenting with anatomical drawings in her natural history class. At the age of seventeen, she attended the School of Fine and Applied Arts in Berlin, Germany where she had her first exposure to techniques of sculpture, before briefly attending a boarding school in England the same year. Her family returned to Germany after the onset of World War I and Friedlander enrolled in the Berlin Academy where she remained only briefly due to disinterest in the program, choosing instead to gain employment at a porcelain factory in Rudolstadt, Thuringia.⁶³ It was while working at the factory that she first observed the process of throwing and firing ceramics. After over a year in Rudolstadt, she encountered an advertisement for a new art school called the Bauhaus, founded by German architect, Walter Gropius, in Weimar, Germany.⁶⁴ Friedlander arrived at the Bauhaus as the first prospective potter before the school opened, between 1918 and 1919. Gropius accepted Marguerite Friedlander in 1919 as a student of pottery and following the completion of

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⁵⁸ Hazel Bray, “Oral History Interview with Marguerite Wildenhain,” 29-31; “Gertrud and Otto Natzler,” American Craft Council, Accessed September 27, 2020, <https://www.craftcouncil.org/recognition/gertrud-and-otto-natzler?fbclid=IwAR0XiGtnTPcJ9dHnu2n4scDrfZv5HGSHb616fz02aUd5UmX1hNRLgYPBNRI>.

⁵⁹ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 59.

⁶⁰ “Designing Home: Jews and Midcentury Modernism,” The Contemporary Jewish Museum, <https://www.theejm.org/exhibitions/19>.

⁶¹ “United States Immigration and Refugee Law, 1921-1980,” United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

⁶² Elaine Levin. “The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain,” *Ceramics Monthly* 45, no. 6 (June/August 1997): 70-75.

⁶³ Hazel Bray, “Oral History of Marguerite Wildenhain,” 1-3.

⁶⁴ Paul Gleye, “The Bauhaus Revisited,” *Planning* 58, no. 6 (1992): 27; Bray, “Oral History Interview with Marguerite Wildenhain,” 2.

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her six-month trial period, she began an apprenticeship with master of craft Max Krehan and master of form Gerhard Marcks at the Bauhaus School of Pottery in Dornburg, Thuringia, Germany.⁶⁵

Gender discrimination influenced early twentieth century ceramics. Even within the relatively progressive Bauhaus, teachers demonstrated a deeply entrenched bias against women in the arts. Gropius himself believed that women lacked the capacity to think in three-dimensional space and used this belief to justify limiting the programs in which women could participate.⁶⁶ The Bauhaus School of Pottery initially resisted accepting Friedlander based on gendered practices.⁶⁷ Two years into her apprenticeship, in 1923, Marcks expressed vocal resistance about women potters, despite Friedlander excelling in the program.⁶⁸ Her apprenticeship with Marcks and Krehan consisted of working six days a week, eight to ten hours a day. Training began under Krehan with a rigorous pursuit of mastery of various traditional pottery forms, with apprentices required to throw the same basic form one hundred times before progressing. Once they could demonstrate technical mastery of the forms, they could train under Marcks in the aesthetic principles of fine art and craft. Friedlander wrote about the sense of unity among the ceramic students forming from the seriousness of their work. However, out of the four women that arrived in Dornburg, Germany in 1921, Friedlander was the only one to remain by 1925, when she completed the program at the Bauhaus and became the first woman to earn the title of Master Craftsman in art and craft.⁶⁹

Friedlander began to teach ceramics six to eight months before her graduation. She taught at *Burg Giebichenstein*, a school of fine arts, in Halle, Germany and produced industrial models for the Royal Berlin Porcelain Factory in Berlin. Friedlander taught nine to ten students at a time. She also became reacquainted with Bauhaus trained potter and sculptor Frans Wildenhain while teaching at *Burg Giebichenstein*. Wildenhain became a student of Friedlander's after the closure of the Bauhaus Pottery Workshop, earning his degree in 1929 before marrying Friedlander in 1930.⁷⁰ Friedlander took her husband's last name after her marriage and used it professionally for the rest of her life, even after their divorce in 1955.⁷¹

In 1933, the Wildenhains moved to Putten, Holland to escape the growing power of the Nazi Party in Germany. In 1938, they met Gordon and Jane Herr who were traveling Europe in search of artists for an art colony they envisioned on a rural property outside of Guerneville, California. The Herrs envisioned a community-based workshop and colony that supported talented artists and craftsmen while providing artistic education. They extended an invitation to Marguerite Wildenhain after they learned of her skill in pottery and Bauhaus training.⁷² By this time, she had already established a reputation as a potter of remarkable skill in Europe. In 1937, two of her sets, titled "Five O'clock" and "Paris" won the Grand Prix at the World Exhibition in Paris. The sets clearly represent her work in the *Hallesche* style she perfected while working at *Burg Giebichenstein*. Rendered in sleek, unadorned white porcelain, her *Hallesche* style showed a clarity and integrity of form to

⁶⁵ Bray, "Oral History Interview with Marguerite Wildenhain," 4-6; Gropius, "The Bauhaus," 406-407.

⁶⁶ Ulrike Müller, *Bauhaus Women: Art, Handicraft, Design* (Paris: Flammarion, 2009), 10.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁶⁹ Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 25-26.

⁷⁰ Garth Clark, *American Ceramics: 1876 to the Present, Revised Edition* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1987), 308.

⁷¹ Divorce Decree Photocopies from Smithsonian Institution, 1955, Series 1: Biographical Files, 1896-1985, Box 1, Folder 5, The Papers of Marguerite Wildenhain, Luther College Archives, Decorah, Iowa.

⁷² Natalie Robb-Wilder, "Pond Farm Pottery and Marguerite Wildenhain: Transformations Over Time," in *Pond Farm Docent Manual*, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods (Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods: Guerneville, CA 2015), 23.

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which she would remain devoted for the rest of her life, even as she moved away from the austerity of a Bauhaus aesthetic.⁷³

Marguerite Wildenhain fled Europe for the United States shortly before the Nazi invasion of Holland. She applied for her visa as a French citizen and arrived in New York City in March of 1940. She accepted a teaching position at the California College of the Arts in Oakland, California and secured a position for her husband while waiting for his arrival.⁷⁴ Frans Wildenhain, unable to immigrate to the United States due to his German citizenship, remained in Europe, eventually being drafted into the Nazi army in 1943.⁷⁵

Wildenhain taught at the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, California from 1940 to 1942. She did not enjoy teaching at the college because she believed that American ceramics students lacked the rigor, discipline, and commitment necessary to produce truly good pottery. After two years, she left the college and accepted the Herrs' offer to participate in Pond Farm Workshops, in Guerneville, California. She moved to the property in 1942 and built her home with assistance from Gordon Herr. Wildenhain worked with Herr to modify the existing barn into a pottery studio in preparation for the workshops. She also engaged in significant landscaping on the property, constructing garden terraces and planting trees that would become significant to her pedagogy in conjunction with the surrounding hills and forests. In 1943, she began to sell Pond Farm ceramic pieces marked with a symbol in the shape of a "little jug," a nod to her former shop in Holland. In 1947, Marguerite Wildenhain became a United States citizen, the same year Frans Wildenhain arrived in the United States from Germany.⁷⁶

Pond Farm Workshops opened in 1949. The Herrs ran the colony while individual artists led their workshops. Gordon Herr built his studio on the upper floor of the barn while Marguerite Wildenhain shared the downstairs barn/studio with metal worker and jeweler, Victor Ries. Frans Wildenhain also occasionally used the barn/studio for his workshops but never felt comfortable at Pond Farm, in part because Marguerite had so thoroughly shaped the property to her own philosophy and established herself within the American ceramics community. Their marriage, already strained after their seven-year separation, ended when Frans accepted a job at an art school in Rochester, New York in 1950 and left Pond Farm Workshops with the workshops' secretary in 1951. Marguerite remained at Pond Farm Workshops and they officially divorced in 1955.⁷⁷

When Jane Herr died of cancer in 1952, Gordon Herr lost interest in the Pond Farm Workshops. With the loss of the Herrs' leadership, Frans Wildenhain's departure, and conflict between other artists, Pond Farm Workshops dissolved within the year. Marguerite Wildenhain continued to live and work on the property. She began to advertise her own workshops in 1952 and held the first of her summer sessions the following year.⁷⁸ In 1956, Wildenhain purchased the property from Gordon Herr and changed the name from Pond Farm Workshops to Pond Farm Pottery.

⁷³ Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus*, 176.

⁷⁴ Levin, "The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain," 70-75; Billie Sessions, Elaine Levin, and Richard Johnston, *Ripples: Marguerite Wildenhain and Her Pond Farm Students*, (San Bernardino: California State University, San Bernardino, 2002), 23.

⁷⁵ Jenni Sorkin, *Live Form: Women, Ceramics, and Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 79-81.

⁷⁶ Mel Buchanan, *Personalities in Clay*, American Studio Ceramics from the E. John Bullard Collection, (New Orleans: New Orleans Museum of Art, 2017), 15.; Marguerite Wildenhain, *Ripples*, Oral History Transcript, 1982, 37; Sessions, Levin, Johnston, 23.

⁷⁷ Levin, "The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain," 70-75; State of California, Superior Court, County of Sonoma, Final Judgement of Divorce, August 4, 1955; Suzanne B. Reiss, *Renaissance of Religious Art and Architecture in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1946-1968*, (Berkeley: University of California Berkeley, 1985), 535.

⁷⁸ Bray, "Oral History Interview with Marguerite Wildenhain," 36-37; Levin, "The Legacy of Marguerite Wildenhain," 70-75.

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Wildenhain ran the summer sessions in a style similar to the training she received at the Bauhaus. She encouraged students to understand the fundamental forms of pottery, discover a balance between art and craft, and ensure that artistic expression and experimentation came after the establishment of technical proficiency.⁷⁹ Wildenhain taught that formal recognition of art education was secondary to developing a mastery of pottery and maintaining an eagerness to learn. Her pedagogy went beyond developing her students' technical skill to encouraging their growth as complete artists and human beings through philosophical discussion and study of the natural landscape. The deep value Wildenhain placed in the cultivation of the individual mind stemmed in part from her admiration for Socrates. She stated that Socrates "never wrote a book, he never gave a class, he never got a salary," but inspired students like Plato and Aristotle to learn from the human experience.⁸⁰ Like Socrates, the Bauhaus did not award degrees or diplomas but instilled knowledge far more valuable. Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius argued, "If what we taught was right and they do a good job, they won't need a diploma."⁸¹ Pond Farm Pottery alumni, commonly called Pond Farmers, left Wildenhain's summer sessions with a strong sense of self exhibited through their elevated art and craft. Wildenhain's goal in the creation of Pond Farm Pottery was a fusion of masterful technique, artistic beauty, and personal character inspired by her training at the Bauhaus.⁸²

Outside of the Pond Farm Pottery summer sessions, Wildenhain worked at her own artistic production while actively participating in the ongoing discourse of the American Studio Pottery Movement. She attended conferences, exhibited pottery, won awards, led seminars and guest lectures at universities across the nation, and published three books, including her autobiography. In 1946 and 1947, New York's Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) exhibited and sold several of Wildenhain's pieces in two exhibits titled, "Useful Objects, 1946" and "100 Useful Objects of Fine Design, 1947." MoMA intended the exhibit to introduce fine art and craft into the common American household. In 1948, MoMA accessioned two of Wildenhain's bowls that remain today in their permanent collection. In 1952, Wildenhain spoke at the International Conference of Potters and Weavers, alongside famed English potter, Bernard Leach. Wildenhain's lecture at the conference was a powerful statement about her belief that American pottery's contribution and value was its evolution and newness. This message resonated with American artists and is considered an early milestone of the American Studio Pottery Movement.⁸³ The de Young Museum in San Francisco, California exhibited a bowl Wildenhain submitted in 1953. Local San Francisco potters judged the exhibition, titled "Western Living Exhibition," and awarded Wildenhain a general excellence award.⁸⁴ In 1954, the Crocker Art Museum in Sacramento, California exhibited Wildenhain's work in an exhibition titled, "Clay Form, and Expression." The exhibit highlighted photographic examples of the Bauhaus influenced techniques in Wildenhain's pottery alongside physical examples of her work.⁸⁵ Wildenhain's professional work outside the Pond Farm Pottery summer sessions attested to her dedication as an artist throughout the year. Pond Farm Pottery therefore not only acted as her classroom, but also her home and studio from which she projected a national voice within the American Studio Pottery Movement.

⁷⁹ Harrison and Marguerite McIntosh, Oral Interview, April 24, 1997, Luther College Archives, Decorah, Iowa, 4.

⁸⁰ Morteza Rezvani, "Marguerite Wildenhain by Rollie Younger," (YouTube video), 2:13. posted on March 12, 2018, accessed November 2, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSuGNz5Uiko&t=3s>.

⁸¹ Morteza Rezvani, "Marguerite Wildenhain by Rollie Younger," 7:06.

⁸² Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 63.

⁸³ "Open Letter to Bernard Leach," 1953. Marguerite Wildenhain papers, 1930-1982, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁸⁴ "Mrs. Wildenhain Among Award Winners at Ceramic Exhibit," June 28, 1953, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

⁸⁵ "Works in Clay," March 26, 1955, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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Wildenhain held her last summer session in 1980. That same year, the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art in Ithaca, New York; the Oakland Museum in Oakland, California; and the Mint Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina held a year-long exhibition commemorating her productive career. The exhibition was titled, "Marguerite: A Retrospective Exhibition of the Work of Master Potter Marguerite Wildenhain."⁸⁶ The exhibit highlighted Wildenhain's professional career as not only a teacher of Pond Farm Pottery, but an active Master Craftsman of the Bauhaus and leading potter of the American Studio Pottery Movement. Wildenhain fired the kiln for the last time in 1981 and died of heart failure at Pond Farm Pottery in 1985.⁸⁷

Pond Farm Pottery

Leonidas Walker established Walker Ranch in 1872 on 160 acres near the Russian River and the town of Guerneville, north of San Francisco. Walker operated the property as a farm and raised cattle and sheep. In 1939, the Walker family sold the land to Jane and Gordon Herr who renamed the property Pond Farm and established Pond Farm Workshops in 1949.⁸⁸ Shortly after arriving in 1942, Wildenhain assisted Gordon Herr in remodeling the barn, originally built in the 1870s, into a studio and constructing her private residence.⁸⁹ Wildenhain terraced land between the barn and residence to plant a vegetable garden and cacti. She planted shade, fruit, willow, and eucalyptus trees to help prevent landslides and erosion.⁹⁰ She also constructed fences to keep animals out of her garden.

Gordon Herr opened Pond Farm Workshops in 1949. The workshops were led by artists in multiple disciplines, including Gordon Herr himself, Trude Guermonprez, Victor Reis, and Wildenhain. Herr taught architecture, Wildenhain led the instruction in pottery and ceramics, Guermonprez taught weaving, and Reis trained students in handcrafted jewelry and metalwork. Pond Farm Workshops also hosted artists who taught once a week like Jean Varda, a Greek immigrant and collage artist who taught previously at Black Mountain College, and San Francisco based sculptor Clare Falkenstein.⁹¹

Wildenhain began holding her own summer sessions shortly after the collapse of the Pond Farm workshops in 1952. Pond Farm Pottery students lived in rustic conditions, camping or renting small cottages nearby as Wildenhain did not provide lodging. Gordon Herr owned a number of these small cottages, known as the Butterfly Cottages, in the redwood forest near the base of the hiking trails to the Pond Farm property. In 1956, Wildenhain purchased a portion of the Pond Farm property from Gordon Herr, including the barn/studio and her residence.

Wildenhain's Bauhaus training heavily influenced the philosophy and curriculum of Pond Farm Pottery, as did the natural landscape in the hills outside of Guerneville, California. Wildenhain enforced Bauhaus practices like creating one hundred examples of a basic form before learning a new technique. This allowed her to further cement the importance of functionality and aesthetics in her students.⁹² Wildenhain required Pond Farm Pottery students to spend eight hours a day perfecting their craft. When summer sessions ended, students were not

⁸⁶ Exhibitions in Chronological Order, Box 2, Folder 1, Papers of Marguerite Wildenhain, Luther College Archives, Decorah, Iowa.

⁸⁷ Shwartz, 729.

⁸⁸ Herr, Jonathon Guthrie. "Love, Because Nothing Else Matters." In *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus: An Eyewitness Anthology*, eds. Dean Schwarz and Geraldine Schwarz, (Decorah, IA: South Bear Press, 2007), 314.

⁸⁹ Alice Z. Cuneo, *Horizons West*, 1976, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, microfilm, roll no. 5047.

⁹⁰ Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 79-80.

⁹¹ Elaine Auther and Adam Lerner, *West of Center: Art and the Counterculture Experiment in America, 1965-1977* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 131.

⁹² Auther and Lerner, *West of Center*, 135.

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allowed to leave with samples of their work. All pottery pieces created by students were melted and the clay was reused. Preventing students from leaving with their work reinforced the importance of mastering form and technique as a precursor to individual artistic production.⁹³

The landscape of Pond Farm Pottery was essential to Wildenhain's summer sessions and shaped her artistic philosophy and style of teaching. She often had students analyze individual blades of grass to expand their artistic vision.⁹⁴ She held informal outdoor classes involving discussion of noteworthy artists and their values. Former students Julie Dickinson and Janet Dodge remembered the outdoor sessions where Wildenhain instructed her students to "observe how nature solves its many problems, and you will learn more about pottery, more about form than I can ever teach you."⁹⁵ Once a week, students dedicated a day to drawing natural forms. They sat on benches beneath the walnut tree to draw rocks, leaves, flowers, and each other.⁹⁶

Wildenhain's artistic style shifted following her move to Pond Farm from a regimented Bauhaus style of plain and functional wares for mass production to an aesthetic and naturalistic style.⁹⁷ Her earlier style is portrayed in her 1928 teapot created at the Royal Berlin porcelain factory. The teapot is smooth, stark white and exhibits form and ornament dictated by function. During her early years at Pond Farm, Wildenhain adopted a more naturalistic style that emphasized aesthetics without sacrificing function. Drawing on inspiration from the rural environment, Wildenhain increasingly relied on the natural colors and textures of unglazed clay.⁹⁸ In 1946, she entered a Pond Farm-inspired stoneware tea set into the eleventh annual Ceramic National Competition and won. While the 1928 teapot showcased a Bauhaus aesthetic of "form follows function," her 1946 tea set displayed a style of form and ornament more closely associated with nature in color and texture, which was reflective of the environment at Pond Farm Pottery.⁹⁹

From the 1950s to her last firing in 1980, Wildenhain's production style continued to evolve. She became less interested in glazing and opted for more rough, natural looks. In an interview with Hazel Bray, she discussed a general disinterest in glazing and this is seen in her work at Pond Farm.¹⁰⁰ Wildenhain's palette became more earthy. Background colors were brown and rustic with black or beige complementary colors. The designs became geometric or patterns based on natural objects such as flowers or leaves.¹⁰¹ An illustrated example of this style is her 1957 Beaker Vase with plant forms in the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's permanent collection. Wildenhain's turn to nature as a source of inspiration is further captured in her 1973 book, *The Invisible Core*, in which she argued "nature can, in fact, become the main source from which our activity and our development as an artist grow to maturity and fulfillment, and with personal and artistic expression and style."¹⁰²

Comparative Analysis: Properties Associated with Marguerite Wildenhain and the American Studio Pottery Movement

⁹³ Ibid., 134.

⁹⁴ Alice Z. Cuneo, *Arizona Republic*, Smithsonian Institution.

⁹⁵ Lyn Kidder, "Pioneer Pottery," *Ceramics Monthly* 46, no. 6 (June-August, 1998): 79.

⁹⁶ Sessions, Levin, and Johnston. *Ripples*, 84-85.

⁹⁷ Koplos and Metcalf, *Makers*, 22.

⁹⁸ Elaine Levin. "Marguerite Wildenhain, Craftsperson, and Mentor," *Studio Potter* 31, no. 1 (Dec 2002): 71.

⁹⁹ "A Potter's Life, Marguerite Wildenhain at Pond Farm," San Francisco International Airport, last modified 2015,

<http://www.flysfo.cn/node/21344>.

¹⁰⁰ Bray, "Oral History Interview with Marguerite Wildenhain," 55.

¹⁰¹ Sonoma County Museum, "Marguerite Wildenhain: Bauhaus to Pond Farm," 2007,

<https://www.stewardscr.org/pdf/Wildenhain%20educator%20guide.pdf>.

¹⁰² Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 39.

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Pond Farm Pottery occupied a distinctive role in the American Studio Pottery movement in the mid-twentieth century, and is the property most closely associated with the life of influential twentieth-century ceramist Marguerite Wildenhain. Wildenhain established Pond Farm Pottery as the foundational setting in the United States for her commitment to life as an artist, teacher, and ceramist. She traveled to other sites to evaluate the possibility of establishing a location where she could teach and create, but it was Pond Farm's beauty, isolation, and promise that matched her vision. Wildenhain loved the simplicity of Pond Farm and capitalized on its rustic, minimalist setting, as well as the independence it allowed her. She explained in her work, *The Invisible Core*, "I found it absolutely thrilling and no words can explain the intensity of wanting to build something there myself, maybe something that might have permanent human value."¹⁰³ Pond Farm Pottery's isolation, rustic simplicity, and high level of integrity set it apart from comparable properties. While other locations had an impact on the trajectory of Wildenhain's life and art, none were as enduring as Pond Farm. Ultimately, Pond Farm Pottery was the only place in the United States where she could create and live a productive, self-sufficient artistic life because everything she deemed necessary to create great art was on the property.

College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, California

The School of the California Guild of Arts and Crafts opened in 1926. The name changed to California College of Arts and Crafts (CCAC) in 1936. The College of Arts and Crafts was the dream of German immigrant and cabinetmaker Frederick Meyer.¹⁰⁴ Meyer wanted to develop a "practical art school" where students could choose their artistic focus selecting from fields such as sculpture, mechanical drawing, and teacher training.¹⁰⁵

Wildenhain taught at CCAC between 1940 and 1942.¹⁰⁶ The clash of her exacting Bauhaus teaching style with the far less rigorous faculty and student expectations at CCAC defined her short time there. Both teachers and pupils there adopted a lax approach to their daily schedule, a practice at odds with Wildenhain's work ethic.¹⁰⁷ One of the conditions of her working there included the allotment of a small workspace she could use when not teaching. The position was a means to an end, Wildenhain did not have the kind of students she wanted, but she did have a space for her own artistic production. Her teaching hours only allowed for "dabbling" and not the immersion Wildenhain was prepared to guide students through. Wildenhain referred to the "young California college student" in *The Invisible Core* who wants instructions for "Step 2" when "Step 1" has not yet been mastered. This summarizes her experience at CCAC. She wanted students to learn discipline to access their abilities but CCAC pupils operated from a contrasting paradigm.¹⁰⁸

Wildenhain sought an environment that would allow for the observation of nature and the incorporation of nature's imagery and proportions, which was not to be found at CCAC. She felt discipline in "life as a whole" was necessary for all artists, but especially beginners, and the setting at CCAC was far from the embodiment of Wildenhain's philosophy of the seamless commingling of art and life.¹⁰⁹ Her writings specify the need to develop the skill of observing and seeing; the setting at Pond Farm Pottery was the superior environment for this instruction and to illustrate her life, work, and philosophy.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 61.

¹⁰⁴ California College of the Arts, *Artists of Invention: A Century of CCA* (San Carlos, CA: Hatcher Press, 2007) xvi-xvii; "History," California College of the Arts, <https://www.cca.edu/about/history>.

¹⁰⁵ California College of the Arts, *Artists of Invention*, 4.

¹⁰⁶ Schwarz, *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus*, 261.

¹⁰⁷ Bray, "Oral History Interview with Marguerite Wildenhain," 33.

¹⁰⁸ Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 59-60, 103-104.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 65.

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Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

Wildenhain began visiting Luther College in Decorah, Iowa in 1965 due to her close relationship with her former student, Dean Schwarz, who spent many summers at Pond Farm Pottery. As a member of Luther College's Art Department, Schwarz knew his students would benefit from Wildenhain's teaching. Over the course of eight visits, Wildenhain taught, lectured, and installed several of her distinctive kick wheels in Luther College's pottery studio.¹¹¹ Students at Luther College demonstrated commitment and dedication that contributed to Wildenhain's lasting affection and affinity for the campus. Wildenhain bequeathed parts of her collection to Luther College where she knew they would be cared for, learned from, and appreciated.¹¹²

Luther College figured prominently in Wildenhain's career and influence in the American Studio Pottery Movement. Her lectures and kick wheels influenced many Luther College art students. Several Luther College ceramic alumni were also Pond Farm Pottery alumni, as many chose to continue their ceramic education in the summer sessions at the encouragement of Dean Schwarz. While Wildenhain taught and contributed to the ceramic collections at Luther College, it was not a location of her artistic production. By her first visit in 1965, Wildenhain had already firmly established her life at Pond Farm Pottery. Her summer workshops began in 1953, and by her first visit to Luther College, Wildenhain had set down literal and figurative roots that nourished and stabilized her artistic life in Guerneville, California. Luther College served as a welcoming environment for Wildenhain and later as a repository for her papers and many of her artistic works. Her presence is still apparent in the art and archival materials she left there but the ceramics lab no longer uses her kick wheels, opting instead for electric wheels. Luther College is a site important to Wildenhain's life and work, but it is not the property most associated with her life, philosophy, or her work as a ceramist that influenced the American Studio Pottery Movement.

Black Mountain College

Black Mountain College in Black Mountain, North Carolina, east of Asheville, was an experimental school of the arts founded in 1933 by John A. Rice, a professor of classics whose disdain for the concept of lecture, the dependency on "great books" and the counting of credits in education drove him to found a new school. Along with several of his students and colleagues, Rice and his students put their ideas into practice by developing a college that concentrated on student-driven curricula and advocated for a classroom community.¹¹³ Students and faculty shared living quarters and students helped pay their tuition through work at the college.

Though Rice was a classicist and none of his colleagues were involved in artistic work, his goal was the creation of a college with a curriculum centered on the arts. Upon learning of his artistic aspirations for the school, professional acquaintances put Rice in contact with former Bauhaus painting master Josef Albers and his wife Anni, a Bauhaus weaver whose Jewish heritage made their need to leave Europe all the more urgent. Together, the Albers instituted Black Mountain College's first art curriculum, drawing heavily upon their Bauhaus roots.¹¹⁴

Though the college was renowned for its groundbreaking format and curricula, its pottery program was embattled from the beginning. Initially opposed as "ashtray art" by Josef Albers, the pottery program only began after he resigned in 1949. In 1949, Robert Turner, painter and ceramist, established the studio pottery program at Black Mountain College and taught until he left in 1951 to pursue independent work.¹¹⁵ In 1952 and

¹¹¹ Schwarz, *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus*, 627.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 622.

¹¹³ John Andrew Rice, *Fundamentalism and the Higher Learning*. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1937).

¹¹⁴ Helen Molesworth and Ruth Erickson, eds., *Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933-1957* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 30-33.

¹¹⁵ "Robert Turner," Smithsonian American Art Museum, accessed October 4, 2020, <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/robert->

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1954, Black Mountain College hosted a potter-in-residence program and invited ceramist couple, Karen Karnes and David Weinrib.¹¹⁶ However, campus faculty continued haltingly for the next few years due to staffing difficulties. The college's administration contacted Marguerite Wildenhain along with Bernard Leach and Charles Harder for advice on finding a suitable replacement. After the installation of new pottery faculty, Black Mountain College invited Wildenhain to host a seminar featuring fellow prominent studio potters Bernard Leach, Shoji Hamada, and Soetsu Yanagi. In her essay on the ceramics program at Black Mountain College, Cindi Strauss, a curator in the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, stated that the seminar Wildenhain hosted "endowed the ceramics program with a national identity." After the seminar, rector Charles Olson offered Wildenhain a teaching position, but she declined, preferring to remain at Pond Farm Pottery.¹¹⁷ Black Mountain College closed in 1957.¹¹⁸

Though Black Mountain College hosted and influenced ceramists within the American Studio Pottery Movement, the struggles and short life of its pottery program along with its philosophical focus on other arts make it difficult to designate it as the site most associated with Wildenhain's contribution to the American Studio Pottery Movement. Wildenhain's seminar at Black Mountain College was an important point in both her career and the American Studio Pottery Movement; however, her decision to decline a teaching position there in favor of her life at Pond Farm Pottery illustrates her deeper connection to the isolated, natural environment of Northern California.

Many of these locations also played important roles in the American Studio Pottery Movement, and were sites of interaction between Wildenhain, colleagues, and pupils, as well as locations where she created pottery. Still, none of these properties reflect her philosophy and distinctive contributions to the same degree as Pond Farm Pottery. Wildenhain transformed Pond Farm as an extension of her life, which gave the property a unique role in the American Studio Pottery Movement. Every aspect of Pond Farm Pottery supported her as an artist. Her Bauhaus training blended with the natural setting of the Northern California landscape to create something uniquely American and significant to the American Studio Pottery Movement. Unlike CCAC, Luther College, or Black Mountain College, Pond Farm Pottery bears Wildenhain's physical presence in the form of the extant buildings, terracing of land, pottery shards, and garden space. Wildenhain offered a new, transformative potential to her students through the nature of who she was, who the students wanted to be, and through engagement with the physical nature of the Pond Farm landscape. Pond Farm Pottery is the site most closely associated with the life of Marguerite Wildenhain and with events that reflect her distinctive contributions to the American Studio Pottery Movement.

Comparative Analysis: Significant Persons in the American Studio Pottery Movement

Marguerite Wildenhain was one among many ceramists who contributed to the development of the American Studio Pottery Movement during the mid-twentieth century. However, certain factors separated Wildenhain from this field of fellow artists. Wildenhain famously contested Bernard Leach's claim that the absence of a "taproot" in American culture was the source of the craft's shortcomings in the United States. Leach, known as the founder of the British Studio Pottery Movement, believed that the solution to technical problems in American pottery could be solved by using the ancient techniques of Japanese and Chinese ceramics to anchor an underdeveloped pottery tradition. Wildenhain countered this approach and argued that because the roots of American people came from all over the world, from all races, its diversity contributed to the "grand

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¹¹⁶ "A Dialogue with David Weinrib: Black Mountain College Potter," Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center, Accessed October 4, 2020, <https://www.blackmountaincollege.org/a-dialogue-with-david-weinrib-black-mountain-college-potter/>.

¹¹⁷ Cindi Strauss, "Ceramics at Black Mountain College, 1949-1956" in *Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933-1957*, ed. Helen Molesworth and Ruth Erickson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015) 261-262.

¹¹⁸ "Attend," Blue Ridge Assembly, accessed February 21, 2019, <https://blueridgeassembly.org/attend>.

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uniqueness” of American studio pottery and served as a source for the creation of a living pottery tradition which would have no need to imitate the ancient crafts of other cultures. She harnessed this belief to inspire her students and herself, to produce honest and personal pottery in the deepest sense. She argued that “a country like America cannot have just one expression, it forcibly must have as many forms of expression as total life has.”¹¹⁹ She produced and refined her artistic vocabulary, established an artistic lineage through teaching, lead lectures and seminars throughout the United States, and wrote two influential books, all while remaining fully committed to art and craft in the unique and challenging setting of Pond Farm Pottery.

Wildenhain threw pottery in a number of styles and materials throughout her career, demonstrating an evolution in style that reflected changes in her philosophy and environment. A consistent factor in her work from the time she finished her training at the Bauhaus’ pottery workshop was a remarkable precision in the form of the work she produced. The vessels she created during the years following her recognition as a master potter display an austere simplicity in their clean lines rendered in pure white, unadorned or simply decorated porcelain. Following her move to Holland, her art generally shows a greater range of experimentation in texture and color than her earlier work while maintaining a masterful control over the form of each piece. Most often executed in stoneware, they have an earthiness and an organic feel that her earlier work did not. Work produced after her arrival at Pond Farm shows the continuation of this trajectory as she immersed herself completely in the natural beauty of the site. She drew upon shapes and textures she encountered in this new environment in the design of new works. She enhanced the natural colors of her stoneware through the use of incising and though she glazed some of her work, considered glazing and color to be secondary to a vessel’s form.¹²⁰ In the decades following her arrival in the United States, she exhibited her art throughout the country in some of its most prestigious museums, received a number of awards and appointments, and established herself as a prominent voice within her field.¹²¹ Additionally, unlike many of her contemporaries discussed below who taught and produced art within an institutional environment, Wildenhain made her vision a concrete reality entirely on her terms, independently, close to nature, and with integrity demonstrated through her consistent commitment to precision in form, training, and teaching methods.

Gertrud Natzler (1908-1971) and Otto Natzler (1908-2007)

Otto and Gertrud Natzler, an Austrian Jewish couple, cultivated a well-respected artistic reputation in Europe, particularly after they earned a silver medal at the 1937 World Exhibition in Paris, a year before the Nazi annexation of Austria forced their emigration to the United States. Despite this considerable disruption to their careers, the Natzlers quickly established themselves in Los Angeles and won first place in the 1939, 1940, and 1941 Ceramics Nationals in the United States. The Jewish Museum in New York, Bezalel National Museum in Jerusalem, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art all exhibited work by the acclaimed husband and wife duo.¹²²

Like many of their contemporaries, the Natzlers introduced European techniques and technologies to the United States. Gertrud Natzler’s wheel, which utilized a flywheel with a treadle base, allowed the potter to work while

¹¹⁹ "Open Letter to Bernard Leach," 1953. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

¹²⁰ Bray, "Oral History Interview with Marguerite Wildenhain," 56, 55.

¹²¹ "Marguerite Wildenhain," Museum of Modern Art, <https://www.moma.org/artists/6366>.; "San Francisco Museum of Art Announces an Exhibition of Ceramics by Franz and Marguerite Wildenhain," 1940, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.; Reginald Sweetland, "Woman’s Pottery Shown Here Hailed as Finest in History," *Chicago Daily News*, March 1, 1941; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, "The Collection," <https://www.artic.edu/collection?q=wildenhain>.

¹²² Sylvia Moore, *Yesterday and Tomorrow: California Women Artists* (New York, Midmarch Arts Press, 1989), 308-309; Koplos and Metcalf, *Makers: A History of American Studio Craft*, 197; Penelope Rowlands, "Feat of Clay," *The New York Times Home Design Magazine*, April 5, 1998; Nancy L. Barth, "Gertrud Amon Natzler: 1908-1971," Jewish Women’s Archive, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/natzler-gertrud-amon>.

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seated in sharp contrast with the contemporary American style, which required the potter to stand on one foot and propel their wheel with the other.¹²³ She was also known for her masterful throwing and creation of thin, delicate vessels. Otto developed glazes of varying colors and textures, some of which he called “crater” and “lava” forms, inspired by natural forms. He kept a detailed record of his glazing chemistry and marked a number and letter on the bottom of each glazed vessel. Otto crafted over twenty-five hundred glazed experiments, each recorded within his meticulously organized numbering system.¹²⁴ The couple were extraordinarily prolific and created nearly 25,000 pieces together.¹²⁵ Of their artistic expression, Otto wrote, “Our aim has been purist: we limit ourselves to form and its organic integration with the glaze.”¹²⁶ The Natzlers did not pursue the idea of function as being of utmost importance but argued that “in pottery, form is the content,” a stark difference from Wildenhain’s philosophy which dictated that form follows function.¹²⁷

Both the Natzlers and Marguerite Wildenhain played a significant role in raising the level of technical skill among American potters.¹²⁸ While the Natzlers were remarkable in their prolificacy, their teaching was more limited in duration and scope. They did not significantly vary their work from the 1930s and 1940s, until 1971, when Gertrud passed away. Two years after her death, Otto began glazing the two hundred unfinished pots she left behind, ensuring that their creative partnership lived on.¹²⁹ The Natzlers’ influence was primarily through their high level of craftsmanship and the introduction of Gertrud Natzler’s kick wheel which offered a new freedom for American students in Southern California.

Wildenhain’s impact not only stemmed from her introduction of her own modified Bauhaus-style kickwheel, but through teaching sessions with students over many years and her emphasis on a humanistic approach to pottery. Many of Wildenhain’s students later became, or were at the time, teachers themselves. In addition, though the Natzlers each had mastery of their respective role in the creative process, their output was based on the combined efforts of two individuals whereas Wildenhain worked independently.

Peter Voulkos (1924-2002)

Peter Voulkos, born to Greek immigrant parents in 1924, grew up in Montana before the United States Army drafted him in 1941. After leaving the army, he completed undergraduate work at Montana State University under the mentorship of Wildenhain’s student, Frances Senska, and arrived in California an expert production potter. He began pursuing a master’s degree at the California College of Arts and Crafts in 1951.¹³⁰ During the summer of 1953, he taught a ceramics course at Black Mountain College, where he produced Japanese style vases. During this period, exposure to abstract art styles and interaction with avant-garde artists led to a pronounced shift in his aesthetic. In 1954 he joined the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles (now Otis College of Art and Design) and brought avant-garde ideas from his time at Black Mountain College, sharing them with students as a faculty member at Otis. His rejection of pottery as functional art in favor of an abstract

¹²³ Koplos and Metcalf, *Makers*, 59.

¹²⁴ Martha Drexler Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics: Innovation and Identity, 1940 to 1979*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 59-60.

¹²⁵ Moore, *Yesterday and Tomorrow*, 308-309; Rowlands, “Feat of Clay,” April 5, 1998; Nancy L. Barth, “Gertrud Amon Natzler: 1908-1971,” Jewish Women’s Archive.

¹²⁶ Koplos and Metcalf, *Makers*, 198.

¹²⁷ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 60.

¹²⁸ Moore, *Yesterday and Tomorrow*, 309.

¹²⁹ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 60.

¹³⁰ California College of the Arts and the Oakland Museum of California, *Artists of Invention: A Century of CCA* (San Carlos, CA: Hatcher Press, 2007), 25, 33; Moore, *Yesterday and Tomorrow*, 310.

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expressionist style led to his rise as a driving force in the Los Angeles Clay Movement, a smaller local movement of the 1950s that was a subset of the larger American Studio Pottery Movement.¹³¹

By 1960, the University of California, Berkley hired Voulkos as faculty where he remained for thirty years. During this period, he created with bronze while he continued to experiment with clay. He emphasized the expressive purpose of his work, rather than utility or craftsmanship. The Museum of Modern Art Los Angeles and Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1978, Sezon Museum of Art, and Oakland Museum of California in 1995 all exhibited Voulkos' artistic pottery.¹³²

Peter Voulkos's artistic transformation took different forms over time and included the use of media other than clay. Voulkos was influential in the shift to abstract expressionism, marking a turn away from functionality and craft, a phenomenon which manifested later within the Funk Art Movement. Eventually Voulkos vocally countered Wildenhain's philosophy and teaching approach. Wildenhain emphasized a rigid simplicity in life and the production of pottery that Voulkos did not. However, the standard from which abstract expressionist and later Funk potters began was craft, consistent with Wildenhain's philosophy of integrating craft and art despite Funk Art's rejection of the necessity of functionality.

Laura Andreson (1902-1991)

Laura Andreson was born in San Bernardino, California in 1902.¹³³ She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1932 and accepted a teaching position in their art department the following year. In 1937, she earned a Master of Fine Arts from Columbia University and held her first exhibition later that year. During this early period of the American Studio Pottery Movement, chemical and technical knowledge were not widely accessible, and Andreson shared the experimental tendencies of her contemporaries. Glen Lukens was a particularly notable example as a potter and glassmaker known for his glazes before the 1940 publication of Bernard Leach's *A Potter's Book*, which became an industry standard in both the United States and Great Britain.

Like other American potters at the time, Andreson crafted her early work through slip casting and hand building, a technique that used a mold to cast and form odd and inconsistent shapes difficult to form on a kick wheel. However, Gertrud Natzler taught her how to throw at the wheel in 1944. Andreson is widely known for earthenware pottery, clay fired at a low heat and often porous, and stoneware pottery, clay fired at a high heat and nonporous. In 1957, she began to work with porcelain, a different material used in pottery, that earned her national acclaim.¹³⁴ The New York Museum of Modern Art recognized her proficiency as a potter when they accepted her gift of an earthenware bowl as part of their permanent collection.¹³⁵ Additionally, Andreson was among five "special prize" recipients for her entry of a porcelain bowl in the first California craft show held by the Creative Arts League at the Crocker Art Gallery in 1959.¹³⁶

Throughout her career, Andreson focused on the creation of functional pieces regardless of her chosen medium.¹³⁷ She was an early leader of the American Studio Pottery Movement and contributed to the

¹³¹ Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1987), 234; Vincent Katz, ed., *Black Mountain College: Experiment in Art* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), 162.

¹³² California College of the Arts, *Artists of Invention: A Century of CCA*, 26-27, 33.

¹³³ Sarah Mundy, "A Finding Aid to the Laura Andreson Papers in the Archives of American Art," Smithsonian Archives of American Art, last modified June 19, 2018, <https://sirismm.si.edu/EADpdfs/AAA.andrlaur.pdf>.

¹³⁴ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 56-57.

¹³⁵ "Laura Andreson. Bowl. 1943," Museum of Modern Art, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/3355>.

¹³⁶ Yoshiko Uchida, "California Crafts," *Craft Horizons* 19, no. 3 (May 1959): 42.

¹³⁷ Koplos and Metcalf, *Makers*, 200-201.

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experimental techniques of earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain pottery with students and fellow craftsmen. Many of the glazing and throwing techniques she experimented with in the early years of the movement are the same that students carried to Pond Farm Pottery where Marguerite Wildenhain elevated and solidified this knowledge.

Frans Wildenhain (1905-1980)

Frans Wildenhain was born in Leipzig, Germany to a poor family and found inspiration from a lecture by Bauhaus director and founder, Walter Gropius. In 1924, he earned a scholarship that allowed him to attend the Bauhaus. He attended the Bauhaus School of Pottery in Dornburg, Germany, an extension of the main campus, and met his future wife, Marguerite Friedlander, along with master artist Gerhard Marcks and master craftsman Max Krehan.

Following the closure of the Dornburg pottery workshop upon Krehan's death, Frans Wildenhain attended Burg Giebichenstein, the Halle art school at which Marguerite Friedlander served as the head of the ceramics department. They married in 1930 and remained in Halle until 1933, when Nazi pressure cost Marguerite her teaching position and they emigrated to Holland.

The Wildenhains operated a pottery shop called Het Kruikje, translated to "the Little Jug," until 1940 when continued Nazi expansion forced Marguerite to flee to the United States. Frans Wildenhain moved to Amsterdam in 1941, unable to join Marguerite in the United States because of his German citizenship, and taught at the School for Applied Arts. Germany drafted him into the army in 1943, and he served until 1945. Wildenhain secured a visa in 1947 and spent the next three years with his wife at Pond Farm Workshops in Guerneville, California. He found the artist colony bore the indelible impressions of Marguerite's presence, a fact which he grew to resent. In 1950, Frans left Pond Farm Workshops, and Marguerite, to accept a teaching position at the School of American Craftsmen (SAC), offered by the Rochester Institute of Technology. He remained at SAC as a professor of pottery and sculpture for over twenty years.¹³⁸

Frans Wildenhain's honors included awards from the International Exposition in Paris (1937), the Albright Art Gallery (1952), and the Brussels World's Fair (1958). Over two hundred exhibitions from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), San Francisco Museum of Art, UCLA, the Des Moines Art Center, and the Baltimore Museum of Art contained his work. The Smithsonian Institution, Seattle Art Museum, and the Art Institute of Chicago also accessioned examples of Frans Wildenhain's work for their permanent collections. In 1958, he received a Guggenheim fellowship and recognition as a member of the American Craft Council's College of Fellows.

Frans Wildenhain created functional pottery that exhibited the clean, simple lines associated with Bauhaus design. However, he also sculpted in both "abstract and allusive forms" with equal facility. Like Marguerite, Frans Wildenhain took inspiration from nature's forms and proportions. His productions expressed different glazing treatments, from smooth color to poured effects in a range of colors. In their book, *Makers: A History of American Studio Craft*, authors Janet Koplos and Bruce Metcalf asserted that even though Frans Wildenhain had a rewarding teaching career, produced many functional and sculptural forms, and could boast faithful friends and collectors, he still "was not really part of the public dialogue." They also surmise that his career ended "before the craft field offered substantial documentation and analysis, so his life work seems inaccessible today."¹³⁹ Frans' limited presence in both contemporary dialogue within his field and the historiography that

¹³⁸ Bruce A. Austin, *Frans Wildenhain 1950-1975: Creative and Commercial American Ceramics at Mid-Century* (Rochester, NY: Printing Application Labs, 2012), 17-36.

¹³⁹ Koplos and Metcalf, *Makers*, 298.

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followed illustrates the fact that despite the respect he garnered among his students, close peers, and to a limited extent the art world, he did not achieve the level of influence held by his first wife during her career. His relative absence from the field's public dialogue contrasted sharply with Marguerite Wildenhain's vocal and active presence from the beginnings of the American Studio Pottery Movement. His exploration of ceramic art outside the creation of functional vessels highlighted an element of artistic seeking that opposed Marguerite's concrete and focused vision firmly rooted in the Bauhaus philosophy which demanded that artistic form be subordinate to function.

Maija Grotell (1899-1973)

Maija Grotell was born in Helsinki, Finland in 1899. She attended the Central School of Industrial Arts and completed six years of graduate work. Upon graduation, she realized Finland limited her opportunities as an independent artist and she immigrated to the United States in 1927.

During the late 1920s, throwing was a rarity in the United States because potters produced almost exclusively with hand-building. Grotell's skill with throwing and glazing allowed her to stand out among other American potters during a period pre-dating the emergence of the American Studio Pottery Movement. In 1936, the School of Ceramic Engineering at Rutgers University hired Grotell as their first instructor. In 1938, she left Rutgers University and accepted a position at the Cranbrook Academy of Art as head of the ceramics program. Under her leadership, Cranbrook's ceramics department became one of the leading centers of pottery in the United States. That same year, the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston awarded her the title of "master craftsman."¹⁴⁰

At the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Grotell taught an extraordinary number of potters who became influential. Artists such as Toshiko Takaezu and Pond Farmer Frances Senska, who later taught Peter Voukos, benefited from her mentorship. She developed her teaching style to cultivate individual creativity in her students, so much as to not allow the viewing of her own work for fear of imitation and excessive influence, though she would critique her students' work thoroughly, but only upon request.¹⁴¹

Maija Grotell played a crucial role in the earliest years of the American Studio Pottery Movement. She introduced new techniques of throwing and glazing prior to Marguerite Wildenhain's introduction of her modified kick wheel. She pushed ceramics to move beyond "hobby status" and focused on vessel making through low-fired red earthenware influenced by Art Deco elements. Grotell also influenced several potters who became studio pottery leaders on their own and encouraged students to find a sense of individualism and creativity within their work, like that of Wildenhain's philosophy.

Although she made vast contributions and played an early leading role in the American Studio Pottery Movement, her story does not convey the same significance as does Wildenhain at Pond Farm Pottery. Grotell introduced new techniques of throwing during a time when some considered it too close to "machine production," evidence that the American Studio Pottery Movement had not yet fully taken off.¹⁴² It was Wildenhain who helped revamp American techniques of throwing and glazing during her summer sessions, and installed her modified kick wheels in American universities.

¹⁴⁰ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 50.

¹⁴¹ Toshiko Takaezu, interview by Gerry Williams, 1982, transcript, Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 11; Lynn, 159-160.

¹⁴² Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 50.

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Vivika Heino (1910-1995) and Otto Heino (1915-2009)

Vivika Heino was born Vivian Place in Caledonia, New York in 1910. She grew up with exposure to the arts from a young age by a mother whose family health problems curtailed her professional artistic ambitions. Though Place had an interest in art from an early age, she lacked access to formal art education until she attended a three-year program at Rochester Normal School. After completing the program, she enrolled in a bachelor's program of fine arts at the Colorado College of Education and graduated in 1933.¹⁴³ Upon earning her bachelor's degree, Place moved to California and began to train in ceramics. In the 1940s, while working as a schoolteacher, Alfred University offered her a teaching fellowship. Place became the second graduate from their Master of Fine Arts program.¹⁴⁴

Place met Otto Heino, a World War II veteran, while working as assistant director at the League of New Hampshire Arts and Crafts in 1949.¹⁴⁵ Heino's exposure to pottery began during World War II when he attended a wheel throwing demonstration hosted by Bernard Leach, the potter who organized the International Conference of Potters and Weavers in 1952.¹⁴⁶ Heino and Place married the following year, established a collaborative partnership, and marked their pots Vivika + Otto, regardless of which of them made the individual pieces. Vivika and Otto Heino moved between Southern California and the east coast until they opened a pottery studio in Ojai, California in 1973. Vivika Heino continued to teach throughout her life and Otto Heino dedicated himself fully to clay.

The Heinos became widely recognized for their work in the development of clays and glazes, influenced particularly by Scandinavian and Asian pottery.¹⁴⁷ They focused on functionality in their work and created pieces marked by simplicity of form and often enhanced by brushwork.¹⁴⁸ They contributed experimental techniques to the movement like clay formulations, glaze chemistry, and modified kilns.¹⁴⁹ Their principles of pottery, functionality of craft, and form, proved consistent with the direction of the American Studio Pottery Movement, however they did not fully shape the conversation of the movement itself as Wildenhain did at Pond Farm Pottery. They focused more on their own institutional teaching and personal work rather than a larger public dialogue.

¹⁴³ Otto and Vivika Heino, interview by Elain Levin, 1981, transcript, Save America's Treasure Program, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, 13-15, 66.

¹⁴⁴ Otto and Vivika Heino, Oral History Interview, Smithsonian Institution, 14.; Koplos and Metcalf, *Makers*, 221.

¹⁴⁵ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 148.

¹⁴⁶ Otto and Vivika Heino, Oral History Interview, Smithsonian Institution, 4, 6.

¹⁴⁷ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 149.

¹⁴⁸ Koplos and Metcalf, *Makers*, 221.

¹⁴⁹ Lynn, *American Studio Ceramics*, 149

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6. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AND STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

Ownership of Property

Private:
Public-Local:
Public-State: X
Public-Federal:

Category of Property

Building(s):
District: X
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Boundary of Property:

Contributing

Buildings: 3
Sites: 1
Structures: 1
Objects:
Total: 5

Noncontributing

Buildings:
Sites: 2
Structures:
Objects:
Total: 2

PRESENT AND PAST PHYSICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF PROPERTY

Property Description- Summary

Located in Austin Creek State Recreation Area about four miles from Guerneville, California and the Russian River, Pond Farm Pottery sits among grassy, tree-covered hillsides above the adjacent Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve. The secluded property occupies a grassy clearing with scattered stands of California native oak, chapparel, mixed evergreens, Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), and some Pacific madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*). Pond Farm Pottery's eastern edge is bounded by the bank of Fife Creek. The creek, together with the pond and nearby natural springs, provided water to the site during its period of significance. Totalling 34.35 acres, the nominated parcel consists of an approximately 1.3-acre developed area inside a fenced space as well as the natural landscape surrounding the fenced area.¹⁵⁰

Pond Farm Pottery contains three contributing buildings, one contributing structure, and the surrounding cultural landscape, a contributing site. A driveway connects the property to Armstrong Woods Road and arcs in an oval shape to the west of the barn/studio and the south of the guest house. All three contributing buildings are within the fenced area. The barn/studio is the center of the site. The original structure dates to the 1870s, when the Walker family built it to store hay. Wildenhain and Herr modified the building to serve as a pottery studio in 1942. In 2016, the NGO Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, in partnership with California State Parks, conducted an extensive stabilization project to preserve the barn/studio and Wildenhain's residence located south of the barn/studio. Wildenhain and Herr built the residence in 1942 and constructed an addition to the building in 1948. Wildenhain further renovated and expanded her house in the 1960s with San Francisco architect Albert Lanier.¹⁵¹ The guest house to the northwest of the studio was built for a visit by Gerhard

¹⁵⁰ Janet Gracyk, "Pond Farm Pottery (Pond Farm Workshops)," Written Historical and Descriptive Data, Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2013, 7. (HALS No. CA-95), <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/ca/ca4100/ca4117/data/ca4117data.pdf>.

¹⁵¹ Page & Turnbull, California Department of Parks and Recreation, "Pond Farm Pottery Studio," Historic Structure Report,

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Marcks in 1962.¹⁵² The guest house is the most heavily modified structure with interior renovations conducted in the 1990s to make the house suitable for occupation by park rangers. Additional interior renovations and the addition of a ramp and porch to meet ADA standards were completed in 2018.¹⁵³ Wildenhain's kiln enclosure on the southeastern side of the barn is the one contributing structure. The area with the barn/studio and guest house retains a visual connection between its resources and is connected by a north-south foot path to Wildenhain's residence though the visual connection present during the period of significance is partially obstructed by vegetation. Each of these buildings and structures, taken together with the surrounding landscape, are necessary to tell the complete story of Marguerite Wildenhain and Pond Farm Pottery. Each illustrates her life, her teaching style, and the deep connection to nature which informed both.

In addition to the contributing resources, there are two known noncontributing archaeological sites within the boundaries of Pond Farm Pottery. These sites are associated with Kashia Band (Kashaya) and Southern Pomo occupation of the area which dated from prehistoric times into the nineteenth century. Both are listed on the California Register of Historic Resources.¹⁵⁴ The first of these sites designated CA-SON-18S2/H is a place at which native groups crafted tools from local stone. The second, designated CA-SON-1855 is an obsidian lithic scatter and marks a point at which traveling Pomo camped temporarily.¹⁵⁵

Contributing Site

Pond Farm Landscape

Wildenhain developed and utilized the landscape of Pond Farm Pottery to sustain her livelihood as well as provide beauty, function, and form to the property. The site exhibits a high degree of integrity despite deterioration of some landscape features and vegetation overgrowth since the period of significance. Many character defining features remain in their original locations from the period of significance. Inclusion in Austin Creek State Recreation Area has ensured preservation of the rural nature of the site's setting, which was essential to Wildenhain's teaching philosophy. While many historic views are obstructed by the growth of trees in the decades since Wildenhain's death, the site retains its sense of isolation and connection to nature. Wildenhain was largely responsible for the site's design and created a series of terraces for her garden to create a degree of self-sufficiency that allowed her to work with as little compromise as possible in her chosen art and lifestyle. Though her garden no longer exists, the terracing is still visible. The deaths of many of the plants in Wildenhain's garden constituted the loss of some of the landscape's original materials but character defining features such as the pottery shards embedded in the walkways and benches remain. Workmanship from the Walker period, Wildenhain and Herr's original construction, and later remodels during the period of significance, are visible in the barn/studio. Wildenhain's residence and the guest house both display construction from Wildenhain and Herr's original work and later remodels. Their composition makes apparent Wildenhain's preference for straightforward simplicity in design and construction. The site's feeling is one of peaceful isolation with the possibility of immersing oneself in nature and work. The presence of the original workstations and kick wheels enhance this feeling significantly, as do features like Wildenhain's drawings on the wall of the kiln room. Changes in materials have little effect on the feeling of the site which looks much as it

(March 3, 2003), 25.

¹⁵² Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 78-80.; "Pond Farm Pottery," Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods (Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, 2018), <https://www.stewardscr.org/pond-farm-pottery.html>.

¹⁵³ "Pond Farm Pottery," Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods.

¹⁵⁴ Janet Gracyk, "Pond Farm Pottery Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Terra Cognita Design and Consulting, Petaluma, CA, December 2013, 54.

¹⁵⁵ Schwarz, *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus*, 28, 29.

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did during the period of significance. All of the aforementioned factors make the site's association with master potter Marguerite Wildenhain readily apparent.

Spatial Organization

The spatial organization of Pond Farm Pottery includes an enclosed area wherein most activity occurred as well as the natural area outside the enclosure, including the road, trail, pond, and meadow. The enclosed area is bounded by fencing and a gate on all sides but the eastern side, which is bounded by the steep drop-off to the bank of Fife Creek. Dense vegetation is slowly encroaching onto the property including groves of tall oak trees (*Quercus*). The site is characterized by natural systems and features, variable topography, the buildings and structures associated with the pottery, circulation (roads and paths), native and introduced vegetation, constructed water features, and the small-scale features detailed below (see page 5 in maps/figures/photos document).

Setting

Pond Farm Pottery includes acreage outside of the fenced area. East of the barn, beyond the fence, the terrain dips sharply down to Fife Creek and then rises on the other side. Northeast of that slope, the ground declines into the pond which gives the site its name. Depending on the season and water level, an island rises in the middle of the pond. Northeast of the pond, the terrain rises up to a trail that exits into the woods. Northwest of the pond lies a relatively flat meadow area. North of the pond sits a hill with a single oak tree at the apex. The pond, island, and tree all inspired art created at Pond Farm Pottery and are a significant part of the cultural landscape dating back to Wildenhain's residence at the property.¹⁵⁶ The site of the former Walker residence, no longer extant, is located northwest of the fence and is obscured by heavy vegetation.

Topography

The natural elevations of Pond Farm Pottery were altered minimally from the period of significance into the topography that exists today. Wildenhain's residence, located south of the barn, sits on a downhill slope. Wildenhain terraced this downhill slope with low rock walls that are extant. Four rock terraces descend from the barn to the residence. The rock walls descend south; one retaining rock wall is perpendicular and faces east to the four descending terraces. Rough pathways from Wildenhain's residence are well-worn and studded with rocks and pot shards.

Buildings and Structures

Pond Farm Pottery has three contributing buildings and one contributing structure that includes the barn/studio, Wildenhain's residence, the guest house, and the kiln structure.

Pond Farm Pottery is organized around the focal point of the barn/studio. In 1942, the barn/studio was the only extant building inside what would become the fenced area. Wildenhain and Herr built Wildenhain's residence in 1942 and expanded it in 1948.¹⁵⁷

A small monument dedicated to Marguerite Wildenhain is located in front of the barn/studio near the site of the peach tree under which she gave lectures. The memorial consists of a rock with a square bronze plaque which reads: "In memory of Marguerite Wildenhain, Born Oct. 11, 1896, Died Feb. 24, 1985. Artist, Potter, Friend. Teacher at Pond Farm Pottery, 1949-1980." The area behind the barn provides space for group activities, including stone benches (one semi-circular and one L-shaped) and a brick barbecue. This area also houses two wooden water tanks, both of which are significantly deteriorated, one to the point of collapse. Between the east

¹⁵⁶ James D. Houston "Marguerite Wildenhain & Pond Farm." *Per/Se*, Summer (1968): 48.

¹⁵⁷ Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 78-79.

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side of the barn/studio and the west side of the guest house, two non-historic wooden picnic tables and a California State Parks camp cabinet reflect the history of State Park's ownership of the property. Two grey cement troughs, possibly once used for washing pottery, now hold dirt as planter boxes north of the barn. A sprinkler control system is hidden behind a large shrub and an agave. The infrastructure added by State Parks does little to detract from the feel of the site, particularly as many are concealed and features like picnic tables were present during the period of significance.

The guest house marks a second focal point in the main area. The house sits in the northernmost part of the fenced-in area of Pond Farm Pottery and is the area furthest from Wildenhain's private residence and space. This area is small, as it was reserved for Wildenhain's rare guests. North of the guest house, a white water tank and a white cylinder gas tank provide water and gas to the building. These tanks are recent additions and do not date to the period of significance.

The third focal point of the fenced-in property is Wildenhain's private space: the terraced hill, garden, and rough path that slope downward toward her residence, the residence itself, the arbor, the greenhouse, a personal barbeque, and an extensive yard bounded by the bank of Fife Creek on the east and by Armstrong Woods Road and fencing on the west.

The buildings retain a significant amount of historic fabric with the exception of changes made during rehabilitation and stabilization projects in 2016 which included new asphalt shingle roofs for the barn/studio and residence, the replacement of some deteriorating redwood shingles with cedar, and the replacement of sections of the barn/studio's rock and wood foundation with cement.¹⁵⁸

Circulation

Within the gated area, Pond Farm Pottery includes several circulation features that mediate human movement across the landscape. First and foremost, the driveway into the property leads to the barn/studio and guest house. This reinforces the barn as the focal point of the property. A rough path from the barn/studio leads downward and south toward Wildenhain's residence, which is only accessible from this rough path and a secondary rough path from the western side of her residence, leading to the road outside of the gated area. These paths date to the period of significance and circulation remains unchanged.

Outside the gated area, Armstrong Woods Road leads from the town of Guerneville up to the entrance of Pond Farm Pottery and beyond. Additionally, a rough trail leads from the entrance of the Austin Creek Recreation Area, around the pond, to Pond Farm Pottery. These trails were used by students staying below the site to access the studio each day by hiking, creating more opportunities for engagement with nature, a factor vital to Wildenhain's teaching.¹⁵⁹

Views and Vistas

The views and vistas of Pond Farm Pottery's period of significance are largely obstructed by the growth of trees in the decades since Wildenhain's death. During the period of significance, many of the views from the core of the site consisted of the rolling hills that surround it. Currently, the view consists primarily of trees but retains the sense of isolation apparent in historic photos of the site.

¹⁵⁸ California Department of Parks and Recreation, "Pond Farm Stabilization Scope of Work," (California, 2015), 1.

¹⁵⁹ Lynn Zimmer, interview by Cecile Caterson and David Washburn, 2016, transcript, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, Guerneville, CA.

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Vegetation

Vegetation throughout the area is fairly overgrown, dominated by shrubs and trees. The area near the pond is dominated by tall grass. A trail cuts through this grass connecting with Armstrong Woods Road to Pond Farm Pottery. Northeast of the pond and adjacent to the trail is a bench that faces toward the pond. This bench served as a vista point for the pond, meadow, and the hill with the oak tree. Nearby, a tall palm tree marks the site of the former Walker residence.

Inside the fenced property large pampas grass clumps, a cluster of agaves (blue form, *Agave americana*) plants, bamboo trees, and two prickly pears (*Opuntia spinosbacca*) dominate the vegetation. A large chinquapin tree (*Castanea dentata*) faces the fence line, east of the guest house. This tree was the subject of some of Wildenhain's sketches. Century plants (*Agave americana*) located near the entry drive were always part of Pond Farm Pottery including during the period of significance.¹⁶⁰

A large oak tree grows between the barn and the residence. The peach tree under which Wildenhain gave lectures, now dead, is located to the east of the barn/studio. A medium fig tree resides east of the barn/studio and west of Wildenhain's residence. Behind the barn/studio, there are Carolina jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) and montbretia (*Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora*). Wildenhain planted all non-native plant species during the period of significance.

Dense vegetation creates a visual separation between Wildenhain's residence and the barn/studio, a condition which was not present during the period of significance. Wildenhain's overgrown garden is located along the rock terraces north of the residence. The garden contains common fig, (*Ficus carica*), mimosa tree (*Acacia baileyana*), flowering quince (*Chaenomeles speciosa*), Lagerstroemia (crape myrtle), and fruit trees.¹⁶¹ East of the residence, a cluster of plants consists of shrubs, irises, and succulents. West of the house, a meadow of native tall grass, pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), and three large agave (*Agave tequilana*, *Agave americana*) separates the residence from the road and the other buildings.

In front of Wildenhain's residence facing north is a single rock wall terrace. Succulents grow on top. To the west of the arbor a rock wall terrace faces west. A modern green metal wire wrapped fence marks the edge of the residence. Behind the barn/studio, Wildenhain planted eucalyptus trees. These were removed by State Parks as a fire safety measure.

Fruit trees were once an important part of Wildenhain's property, but only a few fruit trees remain. A Japanese plum (*Prunus mume*) that Wildenhain wrote and drew extensively about grew outside of her south window and is no longer in existence. In front of Wildenhain's house, below her kitchen window, Wildenhain kept a compost pile and a rose garden that are no longer extant.¹⁶²

Constructed Water Features

Located in the northeast corner of the enclosed area of the property, alongside the fencing and the bank of Fife Creek, a wood water tank provided water for living and working at Pond Farm Pottery. There are two other metal water tanks. One is located behind the barn. Behind the guest house, a white metal water tank and a white cylinder gas tank provide water and gas to the guest house.

¹⁶⁰ Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 79-80.

¹⁶¹ Janet Gracyk, *Historic American Landscape Survey, Pond Farm Pottery*, HALS NO. CA-95, 4.

¹⁶² Houston, "Marguerite Wildenhain and Pond Farm," 48-52.

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Small-scale Features

Pond Farm Pottery includes several small-scale features that contribute to the landscape. These include the “Pond Farm Pottery” sign and gate that signals the entrance to the property. The sign is a reproduction of the original produced by the Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods to maintain the site’s character. The original resides in the barn/studio

The sign and entrance gate are surrounded by simple wood post and wire fencing that surrounds the property on all sides, except for the eastern edge, defined by the steep slope of the bank of Fife Creek. The fence that originally surrounded Pond Farm Pottery during the period of significance and built by Wildenhain is no longer in existence. The modern fence consists of a mix of metal stakes, wire, and wooden slats. The front gate is not the original gate from Pond Farm Pottery’s period of significance; the original gate no longer exists. A modern gravel parking spot was added to the left side of the guest house.

The semicircular bench, dating to the period of significance and located behind the barn/studio, is composed of rocks, cement, broken pottery plates, and bowls. A prominent teal pottery plate, another full pottery plate with teal and grey glazing, and a broken pottery vase with “Pon Fa” inscribed on the bottom are visible. Several of these pottery pieces are works of Wildenhain and her students. A carved wood bear statue is located behind the bench. The bench is also associated with a square-shaped barbeque, with corners anchored by stacks of red bricks. The section between the red brick corners are composed of concrete and stones, along with glazed and fired ceramic pieces. A unique plate on each side of the fire pit, located at the top, shows a handprint, the finger tips glazed light blue.

The historic path leading to the residence and the area near the residence’s entrance underneath the arbor are also embedded with pottery shards. The pathway leading to the residence is comprised of concrete, stone, brick, flat stones, seashells, and shards of pottery, ending at the front entry to the residence. A ceramic piece with Wildenhain’s “little jug” mark is set in the path, centered at the front entry.

The arbor, where Wildenhain hosted private guests in the evenings on occasion, is another small-scale feature dating to the period of significance.¹⁶³ On the ground underneath the arbor, a mosaic of broken pottery provides evidence of the work of the site. Also underneath the arbor is Wildenhain’s private barbeque. It is brick and rectangular, with metal grates on top.

Contributing Buildings

The three contributing buildings at Pond Farm Pottery are the barn/studio, Wildenhain’s house, and the guest house. Armstrong Woods Road provides access to the property and the three buildings. The buildings were all constructed or renovated by Wildenhain during the period of significance. The guest house is northwest of the barn and the two buildings are in close proximity to one another. Wildenhain’s house is located south of the barn and guest house and down a slight hill. The buildings were the focal points of Wildenhain’s personal and professional lives.

Barn/Studio

The barn/studio was the center of activity and life at Pond Farm Pottery. It was where Wildenhain taught lessons such as how to throw clay, fire pottery, and use kick wheels. The barn served as a studio and showroom for Wildenhain. The barn originally had a rectangular shape measuring 45’4 ¼” on its north-south axis and

¹⁶³ Houston, “Marguerite Wildenhain and Pond Farm,” 54-55.

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44'5" on its east-west axis.¹⁶⁴ The kiln room, added by Wildenhain in 1942 measures approximately 10' on its north-south axis and 13'-8 1/2" on its east-west axis. The packing shed, constructed about the same time measures 23'-3 1/4" at its eastern side, 17'-11" on its northern side, 11'-9 3/4" on its southern side, and 9'-8 1/4" on its western side. It retains a significant portion of its 1880s historic fabric including the framing of the structure and the orientation and structure of what became the south studio. Notable features from the period of Pond Farm Pottery, including the kick wheels of Wildenhain's design and her kiln also retain a high degree of integrity. The building was originally constructed in the 1870s. In 1942, Gordon Herr and Wildenhain built additions to the barn to convert it into a pottery studio. The barn is a two-story wood frame structure. The foundation consists of 8x4 wooden beams on rock. The gable roof is sheathed in gray asphalt shingles with skylights. California State Parks instituted a stabilization project on the structure in 2015 to halt further deterioration. This rehabilitation included the salvaging and reinstallation of the westernmost skylight and the easternmost of the northern skylights with new flashing, the installation of a new galvanized sheet metal roof with grey asphalt shingles, reinforcement of connections in the roof's frame, and the installation of new concrete foundations and concrete pier footing at the southern elevation. Additionally, it included repairs to the heads, sills, and jambs of all windows and exterior doors, and new systems of structural support with the installation of shear walls with sill bolts and hold-downs.¹⁶⁵

Barn – West Elevation

The west elevation is the façade of the barn and includes a symmetrical vestibule that functions as the entrance to the building. The two-story vestibule has a prow-front which is 20' tall at its highest point and projects forward 6'9".¹⁶⁶ Each side of the prow includes two vertical courses of short, narrow horizontal redwood slats. The slats are suspended by wire. The second story floor creates a horizontal band across the front. On both sides of the vestibule there are two doors that serve as entrances to the north and south studios. The walls to the north and south of the prow-front are sheathed in cedar shingles which replaced the original redwood shingles as part of the 2015 rehabilitation. The walls also received new underlayment as part of stabilization efforts. There is a vent on the southern wall which State Parks removed and reinstalled over the new shingles.

Barn – South Elevation

The south elevation of the barn is the one-story south studio. The foundation is composed of rock and wood. The walls are sheathed in three rows of vertical cedar shingles. State Parks replaced the original underlayment and redwood shingles in 2016. The eastern side of the southern elevation includes a 1942 addition. Originally sheathed in redwood, this addition also received new underlayment and cedar shingles as part of the 2016 stabilization effort. The south elevation includes four two panel three-light windows on the western side of the elevation and one two panel three-light window on the eastern side. A metal vent pipe rises from the roof.

Barn – East Elevation

The east elevation is two-story and primarily composed of additions Herr and Wildenhain made to the historic barn in 1942. A packing shed projects from the north side. The roof of the packing shed received new asphalt shingles during the 2016 stabilization project. It is sheathed by one row of redwood shingles on the bottom half. The top half is open with narrow wood pilasters and a flat roof. The kiln room projects from the south side of the east elevation. It is sheathed in board and batten siding with wide boards and very narrow battens. Between the kiln room and the packing shed, the one-story portion of the east elevation projects forward. It has wooden stairs leading to a wooden door and a metal framed three light window to left of the door. State Parks replaced

¹⁶⁴ California Department of Parks and Recreation, Austin Creek State Recreation Area, "Pond Farm Stabilization & Weatherization," (2015), 3.

¹⁶⁵ California Department of Parks and Recreation, "Pond Farm Stabilization Scope of Work," 1.

¹⁶⁶ California Department of Parks and Recreation, "Pond Farm Stabilization & Weatherization," 9.

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these stairs as part of the 2016 rehabilitation. The second story includes a three over three window covered over with boards.

Barn – North Elevation

The one-story north elevation is split into three sections. The east section includes the packing shed that continues to the east elevation. The shed is sheathed in two rows of vertical redwood siding and includes a horizontal opening in the top row.

West of the packing shed is the north studio. On the bottom half of the wall there is one row of vertical redwood siding. The top half is composed of nine two by two aluminum windows. There is a course of wood paneling between the windows and the roof.

The west side of the north elevation includes the north vestibule which projects forward from the barn. The vestibule is sheathed in two rows of vertical redwood siding. It features one metal frame single pane window which is currently boarded up.¹⁶⁷

Barn – Interior

The interior consists of the main studio, two smaller studios located on the north and south sides, the drying room in the southwest corner, the packing shed in the northeast corner, and the kiln room on the southeastern side. The historic fabric of the barn's interior remains intact with the exception of the installation of structural plywood in the north studio and toilet room and shear walls in the kiln room, toilet room, packing room, and drying room during the 2016 stabilization project.¹⁶⁸

Vestibule

The first story of the vestibule serves as the entrance to the barn. The floor is uneven and exposed rocks are embedded in the concrete flooring. The interior walls are constructed from vertical redwood shingles and the north wall features red rustic hooks. The east wall is composed of three wooden screens and a wooden screen door that opens into the main studio. The vestibule houses a replica kick wheel used for throwing demonstrations and a work table.

Main Studio

The main studio is a two-story rectangular room with wood floors. The interior walls are made of vertical redwood shingles. The east side is one-story and extends past the second story of the barn. The east wall of the one-story section includes a three-panel metal window. The ceiling of the barn is constructed from horizontal redwood shingles and exposed angled rafters. It includes three skylights. The east wall of the second story has four three over three aluminum windows. Alongside the north and south walls of the first floor of the main studio are workstations with kick wheels. Stairs on the western wall lead to the mezzanine and show room. Four light fixtures hang from the apex of the ceiling. Centered in the room, two wood beam supports extend from the ceiling to the floor.

Kick Wheels and Footrests

The majority of the kick wheels and footrests in the barn are located in the main studio. Four work stations with kick wheels and footrests are arranged on the north wall on the first floor. There are six workstations along the south wall. There are a total of thirteen original kick wheels in the barn. The vestibule contains a single replica kick wheel built for the purposes of demonstration. Of the original kick wheels, three are in the south studio and

¹⁶⁷ California Department of Parks and Recreation, "Pond Farm Stabilization and Weatherization," 5.

¹⁶⁸ California Department of Parks and Recreation, "Pond Farm Stabilization and Weatherization," 3.

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ten are in the main studio. Wildenhain had these workstations and kick wheels built to her specifications, which include a narrower than average head on the kick wheels.¹⁶⁹

Wildenhain based her workspace and kick wheel designs upon the ones used in the Bauhaus' pottery workshop. The workspaces took the form of a 3'x4' rectangle with a seat for the potter, two narrower boards on either side, and two stacked pine boards across from the seat to transport pieces to the drying area. The interior of the rectangle had room for the wheel, two footrests, and the potter's legs. To the left of each wheel was a box for scraps and slurry water. These boxes are no longer present. The kick wheels consisted of a 9 ½" oak head atop a 31 ¾" shaft positioned over a 30½" foot wheel. Each individual workspace was connected to the one next to it. The entire structure was 32 ½" high.¹⁷⁰ The boards are connected with nails and glue.¹⁷¹ The workstations retain a high degree of integrity and the imprints of students' legs are visible on some of the potters' seats.

Packing Shed

The packing shed covers portions of the north and east elevations. The bottom half of the shed is sheathed by vertical rows of redwood shingles while the top half is open. The floor consists of dirt and concrete. The exposed ceiling is constructed from horizontal redwood shingles and exposed flat rafters. Wood shelving is installed on the north and east walls. Currently, the shed is used for storage.

Mezzanine and Showroom

The mezzanine and showroom are located on the second story of the barn. The walls, pitched ceiling, and floors are constructed from redwood boards. The mezzanine runs along the north and south walls of the main studio and connects to the showroom. Both sides include wooden handrails. The mezzanine on the north wall houses a horizontal case made from wood, aluminum, and glass panels. The mezzanine along the south wall is currently empty.

The showroom is the second story of the vestibule. It is located in the front prow of the barn's façade. It is a triangular room. The walls, floors, and pitched ceiling are constructed from redwood paneling. The showroom includes wooden tables and shelving that were used to exhibit pottery pieces. The western wall is composed of two floor-length wood frame windows with wooden slats suspended from wire.

South Studio

From the main studio, three wooden steps lead to the south studio, which served as Wildenhain's personal workspace. Photographs spanning decades depict her here at work. The placement and spacing of the workstations provide optimum lighting. The floor, walls, and pitched ceiling are made from redwood paneling. The vertical paneling of the walls is painted white, marking it as the historic fabric of the Walker barn. The paint is peeling, revealing the natural color of the wood. The south wall includes four aluminum windows. Two pendant light fixtures hang from the ceiling. The room contains three workstations with kick wheels. The south wall includes shelves. There are two large sinks located on the western wall near the door to the drying room.

Drying Room

The drying room is accessible through wooden doors from the west elevation of the barn and from the south studio. The walls, ceiling, and floor are constructed from wood boards. The walls are painted white, the white

¹⁶⁹ Schwarz, *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus*, 396.

¹⁷⁰ Pond Farm bench wheels (after those of Weimar Bauhaus), Undated, Box 3, Folder 1, Papers of Marguerite Wildenhain, Luther College Archives, Decorah, Iowa.

¹⁷¹ Schwarz, *Marguerite Wildenhain and the Bauhaus*, 396.

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paint is peeling due to age. The ceiling is pitched with exposed rafters. There are wooden shelves lining all four walls of the room.

Kiln Room

The east wall of the south studio includes a door that opens into the kiln room. The room has a packed dirt floor and walls and ceiling composed of redwood boards. The east wall is painted white, however over time the paint partially deteriorated to reveal the wood. The room houses a red-brown kiln used by Wildenhain from the 1970s until she fired it for the final time in 1981 and sits on four-squared concrete posts.¹⁷² The walls of the kiln room include outlines of tools hand-drawn by Wildenhain.

Guest House

The guest house is a one story post-war vernacular single-family residence. It is square in plan with a concrete foundation and wood frame. The façade is symmetrical. The building is sheathed in wide vertical wood boards. The roof is sheathed in wood shingles with a low-pitched side gable and wide overhanging eaves. The roof includes a large shed dormer with two sliding aluminum windows. The building was designed by San Francisco architect Albert Lanier and originally constructed in 1962 for an upcoming visit by her friend and mentor Gerhard Marcks.¹⁷³ California State Parks renovated the interior of the building in 1985 and in 2016. Also in 2016, a ramp, porch, and parking space were added to the exterior to comply with ADA regulations.¹⁷⁴

Guest House - South Elevation

The south elevation is the façade of the guest house and faces the Pond Farm Pottery entry gate. The walls are sheathed in vertical redwood boards. A central bay projects forward and includes two sliding aluminum windows. The elevation includes a full width deck accessed via ramp on the western side and three wooden steps to the eastern side. The stairs include metal handrails. The additions for accessibility date to 2018. On the eastern side, a six-panel wood door provides entry to the building.

Guest House – East Elevation

The east elevation is sheathed in vertical wood boards. The roof includes overhanging eaves. There are two symmetrically placed sliding aluminum windows. On the southern side, three wood steps lead to the main door with two metal handrails on each side that were constructed by California State Parks as part of their ADA compliance measures in 2018. On the northern side of the elevation, there is a full height shed. The shed houses the building's water heater. It is sheathed in the same wood boards as the guest house. The door of the shed has two silver vents positioned at the top and the bottom. A metal cylinder shaped vent projects from the roof of the shed.

Guest House – North Elevation

The north elevation is sheathed in vertical wood boards and includes three windows. There is one small aluminum sliding window centered on the wall with two larger aluminum sliding windows on either side of it.

Guest House – West Elevation

¹⁷² Janet Gracyk, "Pond Farm Pottery (Pond Farm Workshops)", Written Historical and Descriptive Data, Historic American Landscapes Survey, U.S. Department of the Interior, HALS CA-95 (2013), 10.

¹⁷³ Page & Turnbull, Historic Structure Report, 35.

¹⁷⁴ Lauren Serena Wood, "Austin Creek SRA: Pond Farm Guest House Accessibility Improvement," (California Department of Parks and Recreation, 2016), 15.

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The west elevation is sheathed in vertical wood boards. There are two symmetrically placed sliding aluminum windows. The elevation includes a smooth concrete paved ramp with wood borders. The ramp was constructed by California State Parks in 2018.¹⁷⁵

Guest House – Interior

The guest house interior consists of a living room, bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. The space was utilitarian and unfinished during Wildenhain's time. After her death in 1985, California State Parks added interior finishes including gypsum wall coverings and carpeting to accommodate staff use. An extensive interior renovation was completed in 2016 to comply with the state accessibility code. Interior walls were removed to widen hallways and enlarge the bathroom and kitchen. State parks also decreased the number of bedrooms from two to one. Modern amenities including updated appliances in the kitchen and an accessible shower were added. The original wood ceiling was preserved and cleaned. The renovation introduced new materials including new plywood flooring and light fixtures. Plumbing throughout the building was also relocated.¹⁷⁶

Wildenhain Residence

This one story, wood frame, post-war vernacular contemporary structure is roughly L-shaped in plan with a stone foundation. It is sheathed in vertically oriented cedar channel siding in two to four horizontal rows, depending on the elevation. It has a skillion roof with composite shingles. The overhanging eaves reveal exposed beams. The house underwent a stabilization project in 2016 which included new concrete pier footings, new systems of structural support with the installation of shear walls with sill bolts and hold-downs, the removal, repair, and reinstallation of all windows, a new door, and a new asphalt shingle roof in addition to the replacement of some deteriorating redwood shingles with cedar shingles.¹⁷⁷ The residence was originally built as a cabin by Wildenhain and Herr in 1942, expanded by them in 1948, and remodeled under the direction of Albert Lanier in the 1960s.¹⁷⁸

Wildenhain Residence- North Façade

The northern façade includes the front entrance, which is accessed via four wood steps. The glazed door has five wood horizontal window panels. The north façade includes two rectangular horizontal aluminum sliding windows. These windows dated to the 1960s remodel and were restored in 2016. One is located to the right of the front door on the same elevation, the second is located in the center recessed elevation. Each window features a simple wooden windowsill below it. The eastern elevation that includes the front door has three horizontal rows of cedar channel siding and the shed roof slopes upward and to the right. The wing to the west has two rows of horizontal siding, as this elevation's roof is shorter; the shed roof slopes downward to the north. The western elevation projects forward furthest to the west, creating a recessed alcove in the center of the façade. The cedar siding on this elevation replaced the original redwood in the 2016 stabilization project.

Wildenhain Residence- West elevation

The western elevation has two distinct sections; the northern section projects forward. The roof on this section is pitched, sloping diagonally upward and to the south. This section of the elevation includes a side entryway. The door is no longer extant, and the opening reveals a small recessed entry or mudroom with an aluminum door dating to the 2016 rehabilitation project leading into the residence. This elevation includes a horizontal one-over-one sash aluminum sliding window.

¹⁷⁵ Wood, "Austin Creek SRA: Pond Farm Guest House Accessibility Improvement," 15.

¹⁷⁶ Wood, "Austin Creek SRA: Pond Farm Guest House Accessibility Improvement," 3-5, 15.

¹⁷⁷ California Department of Parks and Recreation, "Pond Farm Stabilization Scope of Work," 2, 11.

¹⁷⁸ Page & Turnbull, Historic Structure Report, 25.

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A deteriorating wooden pergola extends from the northern projecting elevation. This structure was Wildenhain's grape arbor and provided shade for a sitting area in her yard.¹⁷⁹ Adjacent to the pergola is a small brick barbecue. Pathways set with shells and pottery shards line the walkway into the side entrance and open vestibule. Wildenhain's "little jug" mark is visible on a shard in this elevation's doorway.

The second elevation facing west is deeply recessed to the south of the other distinct section. Its elevation is covered with four horizontal rows of channel cedar siding which replaced the original redwood as part of the 2016 stabilization project. It includes one aluminum horizontal sash window on the upper third of the elevation.

Wildenhain Residence- South Elevation

The southern elevation also includes two distinct sections. The section to the west is recessed. This section includes two shed roofs; one pitches upward and has a wide overhanging roof with exposed beams. Underneath the roofline, there are four rectangular aluminum windows. The second shed roof projects forward beneath those windows. This elevation has one rectangular horizontal sash window and one large rectangular window. One is small and is located in the western corner of the elevation. The larger window dominates the elevation. Both are aluminum. The larger has a wooden windowsill below.

The second distinct section of the elevation toward the east projects forward as its own wing. The roof slopes downward to the east and the eave overhangs moderately with exposed rafters. The elevation features five horizontal rows of redwood siding and one two-pane large rectangular aluminum window. On the bottom western corner of the elevation, there is a window opening, but the window is no longer extant.

A greenhouse projects outward from the second elevation. It is wood frame with a sheet metal shed roof. The roof slopes downward from the house, and the roofing is dilapidated. It appears that the greenhouse once featured windows all around, though only one six-paned window remains on the southern elevation of the structure. The east and west elevations of the greenhouse include openings to enter and exit, but no doors.

Wildenhain Residence- East elevation

The eastern elevation of the residence includes two aluminum rectangular sliding windows and a large open entryway. The roof of this elevation rises upward to the rear with wide overhanging eaves revealing exposed beams. The large entryway in the southern corner reveals an unfinished crawl space beneath the first floor of the residence. The elevation has five rows of horizontal redwood siding. This elevation is located on a hill which slopes upward to the north.

Wildenhain Residence- Interior

The interior of Wildenhain's residence consists of four distinct areas. The southern entrance opens on Wildenhain's living room in the southwest corner of the house. Her kitchen is to the east. North of these rooms are two bedrooms in the northern portion of the house with a single bathroom between them. The original structure built by Wildenhain and Herr in 1942 consisted of a single 12 x 20-foot room.¹⁸⁰ With the 1948 expansion designed by Gordon Herr, the house measures approximately 30'9" on its east-west axis and approximately 30'6 1/2" on its north-south axis.¹⁸¹ The interior has linoleum floors, paneling made of synthetic wood, and acoustic ceiling tiles. All doors are hollow-core and all windows are aluminum framed and date to

¹⁷⁹ Houston, "Marguerite Wildenhain and Pond Farm," 54-55.

¹⁸⁰ Wildenhain, *The Invisible Core*, 79.

¹⁸¹ California Department of Parks and Recreation, "Pond Farm Stabilization and Weatherization," 6.

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Wildenhain's 1960s renovation.¹⁸² The interior is in poor condition, having lost some of its historic fabric and currently inaccessible to visitors for safety concerns.

Contributing Structure

Kiln Enclosure

The kiln enclosure is a separate structure from the kiln room in the barn built by Wildenhain in the 1970s to house her second kiln.¹⁸³

The structure is located south of the east elevation of the barn/studio. It has a square plan and concrete foundation. It is sheathed in board and batten and includes two doors of the same material that open out. The flat roof has slight overhanging eaves. A small shed roof cover projects forward to shield the entry doors and is supported by four wood beams. The roof includes a covered vent.

Noncontributing

Archaeological Sites

Two designated archaeological sites from the prehistoric period feature lithic scatters on the property's grounds but are not contributing resources to Pond Farm Pottery since they are far outside the period of significance. They are designated on the National Register as CA-SON-1852 and CA-SON-1855.¹⁸⁴

Integrity Statement

Pond Farm Pottery is an embodiment of Marguerite Wildenhain's productive life. Wildenhain retreated to Pond Farm Pottery in order to focus on her craft; removed from the outside world's distractions. Along with the isolated nature of the property, Wildenhain divided her property into private space and areas accessible to her students.

Wildenhain's private residence, the barn turned studio, and guesthouse, as well as the natural and constructed setting, embody the deep artistic connections and influences that informed her personal development and professional practice. Pond Farm Pottery possesses the seven qualities of historic integrity- location, setting, feeling, association, design, materials, and workmanship.

The property maintains integrity of location as it stands on its original site outside of Guerneville, California. Further, its inclusion in Austin Creek State Recreation Area means that Pond Farm Pottery and its surrounding property have been protected from development. The land appears as it did during the stated period of significance, thus allowing for the intact integrity of setting.

Wildenhain modified the landscape of Pond Farm Pottery in ways still visible today that maintain integrity of design, materials, workmanship, and association. Physical character defining features of the property are the glazed and fired pieces of pottery, embedded into the ground, to form walking paths. Shards of pottery also decorate fixtures Wildenhain built into the landscape for her students.

Land south of the barn slopes downward toward Wildenhain's private residence. Wildenhain terraced the elevation and planted trees to prevent landslides. Each terrace is decorated with shards of pottery. At the crest of

¹⁸² Page & Turnbull, Historic Structure Report, 25.

¹⁸³ Gracyk, "Pond Farm Pottery (Pond Farm Workshops), Historic American Landscapes Survey, 10.

¹⁸⁴ Gracyk, "Pond Farm Pottery Historic District", #1024-0018, 22.

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the slope are stone benches and a brick barbecue for gatherings of Wildenhain and her students. These features are also decorated with pottery shards.

Pottery shards embedded into the landscape are evidential of the artistic work conducted on the site and contribute to integrity of design, materials, workmanship, association, and feeling. The bench behind the barn has teal pottery plates and a broken vase with “Pou Fa” inscribed on the side embedded into the structures. On the student’s barbecue is a plate with a handprint on it; the hand’s fingertips are glazed a light blue. On the path leading up to Wildenhain’s residence is a ceramic piece inscribed with her signature “little jug” mark. Near Wildenhain’s arbor is a mosaic of shattered pottery.

On the North side of the barn/studio are gray cement troughs. The troughs were once used to wash pottery but are now make-shift planters’ boxes. The presence of the troughs further illustrates the historic integrity of association and workmanship.

The guest house, built in 1962 to replace the earlier “shepherd’s cabin” exhibits a complementary style to the barn and Wildenhain’s private residence. Despite the many changes made to the interior and additions to the exterior for the purposes of accessibility, the original exterior design retains significant aspects of the overall design from the period of significance including the building’s general footprint and the shape, design, and orientation of the windows and the design and workmanship of the siding material. Despite losses to its integrity, it remains an integral part of the spatial organization of Pond Farm Pottery’s developed area as it was during most of the period of significance.

The barn/studio was the heart of Wildenhain’s professional and teaching careers and still reflects the dedication that she poured into her craft. It retains its central location in the property’s spatial organization and like the rest of the property, possesses continued integrity of setting due to the preservation of the surrounding cultural landscape. The barn retains character-defining features associated with its use as Wildenhain’s studio, showroom, and classroom during the period of significance. The barn’s redwood panel prow is the most prominent and readily recognizable character defining feature remaining from the period of significance and dates to Herr’s construction work on the barn.¹⁸⁵ The barn retains most of its historic materials. In the areas in which deterioration made replacement necessary, State Parks made replacements in a manner sensitive to the building’s original design in the replacement of window frames and using siding materials similar in workmanship to the original design. Most of the changes made to the barn were for structural support and did not affect the building’s design. The barn’s layout is unchanged from the period of significance. The barn retains significant evidence of workmanship from the period of significance and the earlier ownership of the Walker family. Most of the exterior redwood shingles remain. Sections replaced by cedar shingles as part of the 2016 stabilization and weatherization project share the design and workmanship of the original redwood materials. The concrete floors and room layout remain from Wildenhain and Herr’s early 1940s construction. The whitewashed boards present in the barn were repurposed from the original Walker building and help establish a sense of depth of time in the barn. The barn retains a strong degree of feeling and association from the period of significance. Though it no longer houses any of Wildenhain’s pottery, both the exterior and the interior of the building maintain much the same appearance and its association with Wildenhain remains strong due to her longstanding residency on the property and the presence of her personal workstation and kiln.

Wildenhain’s kiln and pottery wheels within workstations of her own Bauhaus inspired design remain within the barn’s studio spaces. There are fourteen kick wheels: one in the barn’s vestibule, three in the south studio, and ten in the main studio. Further evidence of Wildenhain’s summer sessions are the outlines of tools drawn on

¹⁸⁵ Hazel Bray, “Oral History Interview with Marguerite Wildenhain,” 36.

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the inside of the barn's kiln room. Wildenhain drew the tool's outlines to ensure that her students did not misplace her instruments. This is evidential of Wildenhain's attention to detail and dedication to every aspect of her craft. The barn/studio is well preserved and maintains all seven aspects of historic integrity.¹⁸⁶

Marguerite Wildenhain's residence retains a significant degree of integrity. The small house remains in its original location on the property and despite the surrounding overgrowth in vegetation, it retains integrity of setting within the property's natural surroundings. Though there was some loss to the building's original materials during State Parks' 2016 stabilization and weatherization project, the design is identical to the 1960s remodel and the workmanship on the cedar replacements for sections of redwood shingle siding is very similar to the workmanship of the original siding. The feeling remains very similar due to the similarity in design and the absence of any major further development in the area. The association is particularly strong as the house has had no resident other than Wildenhain since she and Herr built the original structure in 1942. In addition to the terracing, remaining plantings, and pottery-lined paths surrounding Wildenhain's residence, a pergola extends from the westward elevation of Wildenhain's residence that she used as a grape arbor. Wildenhain's small personal brick barbeque is located under the arbor. Tools such as the fruit drying racks and the greenhouse have deteriorated over time. The structure's original function remains clear and contributes to the property's integrity.

Wildenhain's gardens, left unmanaged, have overgrown. Wildenhain introduced pampas grass, three forms of agave (century, blue and, tequilana), bamboo, prickly pear, chinquapin trees, an oak tree, a fig tree, Carolina jessamine, montbretia, edible figs, mimosa trees, flowering quince, crepe myrtle, and fruit trees, into the area. Directly in front of Wildenhain's terrace is a single rock terrace where Wildenhain's prized succulents still thrive today.¹⁸⁷

Pond Farm Pottery possesses high level of historic integrity. Wildenhain's private residence, barn turned pottery studio, and the physical landscape of the property appear much as they did during the period of significance.

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¹⁸⁷ Hillinger, 14, Marguerite Wildenhain papers 1932-1980, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, microfilm, roll no. 5047; Houston, "Marguerite Wildenhain and Pond Farm," 55.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Previously listed in the National Register (fill in 1 through 6 below)
- Not previously listed in the National Register (fill in **only** 4, 5, and 6 below)

- 1. NR #: 14000307
- 2. Date of listing: 6/17/2014
- 3. Level of significance: National
- 4. Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D
- 5. Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A B C D E F G
- 6. Areas of Significance: Art, Education, Social History

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Previously Determined Eligible for the National Register: | Date of determination: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designated a National Historic Landmark: | Date of designation: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: | HABS No. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: | HAER No. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recorded by Historic American Landscapes Survey: | HALS No. CA-9 |

Location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office:

Office of History Preservation – State of California
1725 23rd Street
Sacramento, CA 95816

University:

Luther College Archives
Preus Library 310
Upper Floor
Luther College
700 College Drive
Decorah, Iowa 52101

Other (Specify Repository):

Stewards of the Coasts and Redwoods
17000 Armstrong Woods Road
Guerneville, CA 95446

The Archives of American Art
750 9th St NW
Washington D.C. 20001

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