

Singing Horse Press records

Ms. Coll. 389

Finding aid prepared by Patricia Hopkins.

Last updated on July 25, 2017.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2001

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Summary Information

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|-------------------------|--|
| Repository | University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts |
| Creator | Singing Horse Press. |
| Title | Singing Horse Press records |
| Call number | Ms. Coll. 389 |
| Date [inclusive] | 1974-1992 |
| Extent | 21 boxes |
| Language | English |
| Abstract | The collection comprises correspondence (485 folders in 20 boxes) and production materials related to <i>Paper Air</i> (23 folders in one box). The correspondence includes solicitations for poetry from Gil Ott and the responses that he received. The poets' works were either published as books by Singing Horse Press or in the magazine <i>Paper Air</i> . |

Cite as:

Singing Horse Press records, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Gil Ott founded Singing Horse Press in 1976 to publish the kinds of innovative writing all too often overlooked by mainstream trade and academic presses. In his tenure as director of the press, Ott produced a wide-ranging list of titles by a diverse group of authors, including Charles Bernstein, Harryette Mullen, Norman Fischer, and Rosmarie Waldrop, among others. Singing Horse Press publishes four books per year, one or two of which are unsolicited; moreover, these books comprise of a diverse range of experimental poetry and prose.

The journal *Paper Air*, which Singing Horse Press published from 1976 through 1990, was the recipient of an Editors' Fellowship from the Council of Literary Magazines and presses in 1985. *Paper Air's* history spans two important schools of poetics during Ott's reign, with a strong base in poets associated with later objectivism, and providing a forum for those who subsequently founded the language school in the late 70s and 80s. Special issues of *Paper Air* brought the first thorough critical attention to the work of John Taggart (1979) and Jackson Mac Low (1980), and one entire issue was devoted to the groundbreaking essay-in-verse "Artifice of Absorption", by Charles Bernstein (1987). Three issues in the mid-80s focused on contemporary poets in France, Japan, and England.

Ott was not satisfied with the limits of *Paper Air*. You can do more for the poet with books, he argued. "Magazines have a very short shelf life, usually about three months. Unfortunately that's true for all magazines . . . it's the same situation with poetry magazines, although you don't find them in dentist's waiting rooms. I have boxes of them in my basement, which I've been trying to pawn off for years. Poetry magazines which, to me, have value. But to librarians, even rare book librarians, they have no value. Publishing a magazine is ultimately futile, if you're looking for some kind of permanence for the poet. You have to do books. Even smaller books have greater impact than magazines" (Ott).

Paper Air magazine comprises a significant period in the history of Singing Horse Press, however, it was by no means the only publication put out by the Press. Published copies of Singing Horse Press texts include, Leslie Scalapino and Kevin Killian's *Stone Marmalade*, Ammiel Alcalay's *The Cario Notebooks*, Harryette Mullen's *Muse & Drudge* and *S*PeRM**K*T*, Rachel Blau DuPlessis' *Draft X: Letters*, Julia Blumenreich's *Meeting Tessie*, and Karen Kelley's *Her Angel*, and many others. Peer Journals comprise an excellent collection of the small, literary magazines and books representative of this period.

In 2004, Ott turned the press over to Paul Naylor.

Scope and Contents

The collection is comprised of correspondence and production materials related to its journal *Paper Air*. The correspondence includes solicitations for poetry from Gil Ott and the responses he received. The poets' works were either published as books by Singing Horse Press or in *Paper Air*.

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

2001

Finding aid prepared by Patricia Hopkins.

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Source of Acquisition

Purchase from Gil Ott, 2001

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Correspondence
- Manuscripts for publication

SUBJECT(S)

- American poetry--20th century--Periodicals
- Book industries and trade
- Poetry
- Poetry, modern--20th century--History and criticism--Periodicals
- Poetry--Collections--20th century
- Publishers and publishing

Other Finding Aids

For a complete listing of correspondents, do the following ns2:title search in Franklin: Singing Horse

Press Records

Collection Inventory

I. CORRESPONDENCE.

| | Box | Folder |
|-----------------------|-----|---------|
| Abbott-Barnett. | 1 | 1-23 |
| Barone-Benson. | 2 | 24-43 |
| Benveniste-Butterick. | 3 | 44-66 |
| Byrd-Corman. | 4 | 67-92 |
| Cory-DuPlessis. | 5 | 93-119 |
| Edwards-Frazer. | 6 | 120-149 |
| Frederick-Grilikhes. | 7 | 150-173 |
| Hale-Kimmelman. | 8 | 174-208 |
| Kondo-Leon. | 9 | 209-225 |
| Levy-Messerli. | 10 | 226-247 |
| Metcalf-Mondale. | 11 | 248-270 |
| Moskowitz-Ott. | 12 | 271-299 |
| Owens-Pohlman. | 13 | 300-326 |
| Pommy-Vega-Sheppard. | 14 | 327-365 |

| | | |
|------------------|----|---------|
| Sher-Simas. | 15 | 366-379 |
| Simon-Stone. | 16 | 380-399 |
| Strauss-Towells. | 17 | 400-417 |
| Trantino-Ward. | 18 | 418-441 |
| Watson-Wellman. | 19 | 442-463 |
| Wemara-Zambaras. | 20 | 464-485 |

II. PAPER AIR.

| | Box | Folder |
|---|-----|---------|
| Manuscripts/Proofs, 1976-1985, undated. | 21 | 486-508 |
| Reviews/Articles, 1987. | 21 | 494 |
| Journals, 1976-1990. | 21 | 495-499 |
| Business, 1985-1986. | 21 | 500 |
| Business/Correspondence, 1985-1986. | 21 | 501-502 |
| Sales, 1987-1988. | 21 | 503 |
| Solicitations, 1988. | 21 | 504 |
| Correspondence A-O, 1979-1991. | 21 | 505 |
| Correspondence P-Z, 1977-1989. | 21 | 506 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----|-----|
| Orders and Receipts, 1977-1990. | 21 | 507 |
| Solicitations, 1987. | 21 | 508 |
