

Don Stacy correspondence with Vilém Flusser

Ms. Coll. 1261

Finding aid prepared by Alexandra M. Wilder.

Last updated on February 06, 2017.

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

2017 January 25

Table of Contents

Summary Information.....	3
Biography/History.....	4
Scope and Contents.....	4
Administrative Information.....	5
Related Materials	6
Controlled Access Headings.....	6
Collection Inventory.....	7
I. Correspondence.....	7
II. Writings.....	9

Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Flusser, Vilem, 1920-1991
Creator	Stacy, Don, (Donald L.)
Title	Don Stacy correspondence with Vilém Flusser
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1261
Date [bulk]	1973-1976
Date [inclusive]	1966-1976
Extent	0.2 linear feet (1 box)
Language	English
Abstract	<p>Donald L. Stacy (1925-2008), known primarily as Don Stacy, was an artist and art teacher born in New Jersey, who lived and worked for most of his life in New York City. Vilém Flusser (1920-1991)-- a Czech-born philosopher who lived for a long period in Sao Paulo, and later in France-- wrote on media and technology, and on communication and artistic production, among other concepts. The correspondence between Don Stacy and Vilém Flusser in this collection was collected by Don Stacy and takes place primarily between 1973 and 1976. The letters from Don Stacy are either handwritten draft letters to Flusser or reprographic copies of the sent letters, while the letters from Flusser are originals. The two men discuss art and philosophy, taking pleasure in sharing ideas and theories and debating opposing positions, and also address issues surrounding their</p>

friendship.

Cite as:

Don Stacy correspondence with Vilém Flusser, 1966-1976, (bulk 1973-1976), Ms. Coll. 1261, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania

Biography/History

Donald L. Stacy (1925-2008), known primarily as Don Stacy, was an artist and art teacher who lived and worked for most of his life in New York City. Stacy grew up in New Jersey, where his parents were farmers and first generation Americans, his grandparents having migrated from Ireland. Stacy served in the U.S. Navy and was stationed in Okinawa, Japan, during World War II. After the war, he studied art on the GI Bill in New York City and met his future wife, Bernice, in the Art Students League when she was 17 and he was 27. Don and Bernice married one year after they met and went to France, supported by two Fulbright grants in painting which enabled the Stacys to stay one year in Paris and one year in Aix-en-Provence. In 1959, Don Stacy took part in II. documenta, the second edition of documenta, a quinquennial contemporary art exhibition, held between July 11, 1959 and 1 October 1, 1959 in Kassel, Germany. From 1957 to 1969, he taught at the Museum of Modern Art and the School of Visual Art in New York City, as well as at the New School from 1969 to 1994. In 1962, Don and Bernice had a daughter. For the last 35 years of his life, Don Stacy and his wife lived in a loft in Manhattan that was divided into living space and work space, where they taught art classes as Stacy Studio Workshop. The psychoanalysis of C. G. Jung was a major influence on Don Stacy's life and work.

Vilém Flusser (1920-1991) was a philosopher whose early theories are considered prescient in light of the role of media and technology in today's society. His early work was marked by discussion of the thought of Martin Heidegger, and by the influence of existentialism and phenomenology. In his later work, he turned his attention to the philosophy of communication and of artistic production. Flusser was born into a Jewish family in Prague. His father, Gustav, was a member of the Socialist Party and a professor of mathematics at the Karls-Universität. In 1939, shortly after the Nazi occupation, Flusser fled Prague through England to Brazil, first to Rio de Janeiro, then settling in Sao Paulo, where he continued his studies in philosophy. Flusser's entire family-- his mother, father, sister, and grandparents-- died in German concentration camps. Later, Flusser and his wife Edith (1920-2014) had three children together-- Dinah, Miguel, and Victor. In addition to Don Stacy, Flusser corresponded with such figures as Vicente Ferreira da Silva, Milton Vargas, and Alex Bloch. Flusser lived the latter years of his life in France and published more than 30 books, translated into over 20 languages. He died in 1991 in a car accident, while visiting his native Prague to give a lecture.

Scope and Contents

The correspondence between Don Stacy and Vilém Flusser in this collection was collected by Don Stacy and takes place primarily between 1973 and 1976. The letters from Don Stacy are either handwritten draft letters to Flusser or reprographic copies of the sent letters, while the letters from Flusser are originals. Stacy makes the first connection between the two men by writing to Flusser in response to Flusser's article, "Bottles," published in *Main Currents of Modern Thought* in 1972. This first letter from Stacy to Flusser, dated February 12, 1973, sets off ten years of correspondence between the two men, though only the years between 1973 and 1976 are represented in this collection. The two men discuss art and philosophy, taking pleasure in sharing ideas and theories and debating opposing positions, and also address issues surrounding their friendship. Notable with regard to the development of their friendship is an exchange in 1974, when Stacy writes to Flusser to express his displeasure at their first in-person encounter; Flusser had asked Stacy to set up contacts for him in New York City so that he could give lectures (letters in this collection show Stacy's efforts to secure lecture dates for Flusser), and Stacy reveals in his letter dated March 11, 1974, that he felt used by Flusser as a result of Flusser's time in New York City. The two men work through this disagreement, with Stacy appealing to Flusser on an emotional level and Flusser maintaining an intellectual stance, and go on to share further ideas regarding art and philosophy and develop their friendship over the years to come.

Of the 34 letters between Stacy and Flusser in this collection there are 7 reprographic copies and the rest are originals; i.e. original letters from Flusser, or original drafts of letters to Flusser from Stacy. The sent versions of the draft letters from Stacy are most likely in the collection of the Flusser Archives at the Universität der Künste Berlin in Germany. The letters housed at the Kislak Center are arranged chronologically. Note that Flusser erroneously refers to Stacy as "Dan" instead of "Don" throughout most of the letters.

The collection also contains a few published and unpublished writings by Vilém Flusser, as well as a published article by Don Stacy. Also contained in the collection are letters that Don Stacy received from New York University, Fairleigh Dickinson University, and the International Library of Systems Theory and Philosophy in his efforts to secure lecture dates for Flusser in New York City.

Administrative Information

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

2017 January 25

Finding aid prepared by Alexandra M. Wilder.

Access Restrictions

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Related Materials

Related Archival Materials note

At the Universität der Künste Berlin: Vilém Flusser Archive (<http://www.flusser-archive.org>)

Controlled Access Headings

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Correspondence
- Writings (document genre)

SUBJECT(S)

- Art
- Friendship
- Philosophy--Study and teaching

Collection Inventory

I. CORRESPONDENCE.

A. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DON STACY AND VILÉM FLUSSER, 1973 FEBRUARY 12-NOVEMBER 7.

	Box	Folder
Draft letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser, 1973 February 12.	1	1
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1973 March 3.	1	1
Letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser (reprographic copy), 1973 March 11.	1	1
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1973 March 16.	1	1
Draft letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser, 1973 March 25.	1	1
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1973 April 11.	1	1
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1973 May 22.	1	1
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1973 June 13.	1	1
Draft letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser, 1973 June 19.	1	1
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1973 September 13.	1	1

B. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DON STACY AND VILÉM FLUSSER, 1974 FEBRUARY 25-DECEMBER 29.

	Box	Folder
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1974 February 25.	1	2
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1974 April 26.	1	2
Draft letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser, 1974 May 1.	1	2
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1974 May 12.	1	2
Draft letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser, 1974 May 19.	1	2
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1974 May 30.	1	2
Letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser (reprographic copy), 1974 June 14.	1	2
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1974 June 28.	1	2
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1974 August 12.	1	2
Draft letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser, 1974 November 4.	1	2
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1974 December 29.	1	2

C. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DON STACY AND VILÉM FLUSSER, 1975 JANUARY 26-DECEMBER 26.

	Box	Folder
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1975 January 26.	1	3
Draft letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser, 1975 May 5.	1	3
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1975 May 28.	1	3

Letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser (reprographic copy), 1975 June 8.	1	3
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1975 June 15.	1	3
Letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser (reprographic copy), 1975 June 26.	1	3
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1975 July 7.	1	3
Letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser (reprographic copy), 1975 October 6.	1	3
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1975 October 28.	1	3
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1975 November 20.	1	3
Letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser (reprographic copy), 1975 December 26.	1	3

D. CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN DON STACY AND VILÉM FLUSSER, 1976 MAY 1-DECEMBER 12.

	Box	Folder
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1976 May 1.	1	4
Letter from Vilém Flusser to Don Stacy, 1976 October 25.	1	4
Letter from Don Stacy to Vilém Flusser (reprographic copy), 1976 December 12.	1	4
LETTERS TO DON STACY FROM LECTURE ORGANIZERS (NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, FAIRLEIGH DICKINSON UNIVERSITY, THE INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY OF SYSTEMS THEORY AND PHILOSOPHY), 1973 JUNE 20-OCTOBER 24.	1	5

II. WRITINGS.

	Box	Folder
A. WRITINGS BY VILÉM FLUSSER, 1973 FEBRUARY-1975 JULY 16, UNDATED.	1	5

	Box	Folder
"Line and Surface," <i>Main Currents in Modern Thought</i> , volume 29, number 3, 1973 February.	1	6
"'Battlefields,' by Antonio Amaral" (Flusser writing on Amaral), circa 1974.	1	6
"The Gesture of Painting", 1975 June 6.	1	6
"Photography as a Gesture", 1975 July 16.	1	6
"Scribere necesse est vivere non est" [Writing is a necessity, living is not], undated.	1	6

B. WRITINGS BY DON STACY, 1966 SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER.

	Box	Folder
"Transitional Images in Painting," <i>Main Currents in Modern Thought</i> , volume 23, number 1, 1966 September-October.	1	7