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# **Dana Young Archive**

Featuring Brion Gysin, Charles Henri Ford, Ira Cohen, Ray Johnson, David Rattray, Harold Norse, and the Bardo Matrix.







[top] A portrait of Dana Young in front of an altar of candles, Kathmandu (date and photographer unknown). [bottom] Detail of Dana Young cover for Ira Cohen's *Poem for La Malinche* (Bardo Matrix, ca. 1974) and [right] Dana Young print of Ira Cohen, "The Master & the Owl," (date unknown).

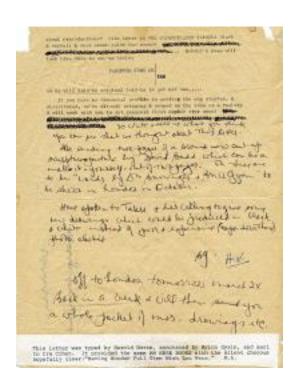
# Dana Young (ca. 1948-1979)

Dana Young was an essential member of the Kathmandu psychedelic expatriate community of poets, musicians, artists, and spiritual seekers in the 1970s. His poetry and shamanic art blended Eastern spiritual imagery with American pop and consumer culture. He was an active member of the Bardo Matrix collective and is best known for his book *Opium Elementals* (Bardo Matrix, 1976) that features his beautiful woodblock prints along with two poems by Ira Cohen. He contributed to several other Bardo Matrix publications including Cohen's *Blue Oracle* broadside (1975), the frontispiece to Paul Bowles' *Next to Nothing* (1976), and Ira Cohen and Roberto Francisco Valenza's *Spirit Catcher!* broadside (1976). His artwork also appears in publications such as *Montana Gothic* (1974) and *Ins and Outs* (1978). Dana designed the logo (included in the archive) for John Chick's Rose Mushroom club located at the end of Jhochhen Tole, known as "Freak Street," in Kathmandu. Most recently, one of Dana Young's wood block prints was featured on the album cover of the recent release of Angus MacLise's *Dreamweapon II*.

Materials in the present collection comprise the archive of Dana Young supplemented with letters, photographs, and assorted items from the Ira Cohen archive via Richard Aaron, Am Here Books.

### **Selected Highlights from the Collection**





2-page letter typed by Harold Norse, annotated by Brion Gysin (at the Beat Hotel in Paris), and sent to Ira Cohen, March 18, 1963.

Harold Norse and Brion Gysin share their excitement and ideas about Ira Cohen's proposed magazine, *Gnaoua*. They especially voice their concern about its title: "GENAOUA seems as a title hard to pronounce or spell after all it's the name of a specific sect -- it's the heavy black mammy deal drummed into people for ages -- a habit -- cut out the old habit is the message of cut-ups -- free us from words & images that condition us -- So Brion got out his whole library of books in search for new title. ... Then, to be quite honest, we poured all of these volumes thru Harold's eye in a twinkling. The title produced itself: AM HERE ... . The I said: AM HERE.

Which is what the whole thing is about. All right. BRION THEN VISUALIZES THE COVER HE WILL MAKE. ... AM HERE NO. 1 / with GENAOUA PORTFOLIO. He will give you Genaoua drawings & Cover as cut up: AM HERE / HAVING WONDER / FULL TIME / WISH YOU WERE / with little Moroccan dancing beansprout people saying AM HERE AM HERE AM HERE. "Ira rejected Harold and Brion's proposed title change, but according to Richard Aaron, proprietor of Am Here Books, the letter "provided the name AM HERE BOOKS with the silent chorus hopefully clear: 'Having Wonder Full Time Wish You Were.'"





Brion Gysin, envelope and letter sent to Dana Young, March 15, 1976.

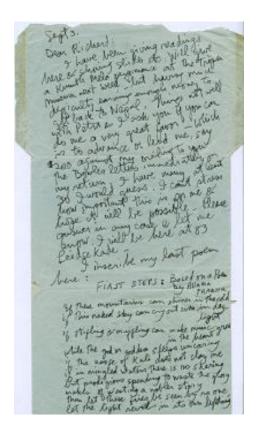
Brion Gysin writes to Dana Young from Paris: "At times I have thought of a trip to Kathmandu and Ira [Cohen] assures me I can score for anything there — even a funeral pyre."

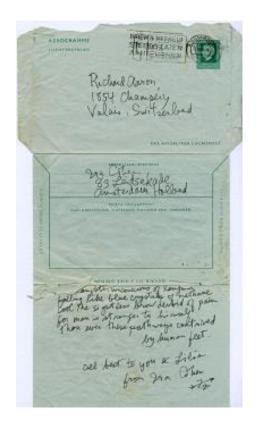




Brion Gysin, envelope and letter sent to Dana Young, October 12, 1976.

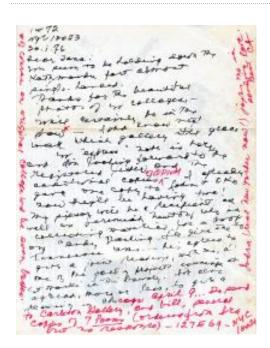
Brion Gysin writes to Dana Young from Paris: "Thanks for your simply resplendent letter with all the great visuals inside. It came like Xmas from Katmandu and delighted everyone to whom I showed it. I suppose the content of the Steel Strong Colored Bill Strap for mille bills got used up producing it if only rolled up as snorters for some of that Himalayan snow that clears your head right off."





Ira Cohen aerogramme to Richard Aaron, 2 pages, September 3, 1970.

Writing from Amsterdam to Richard Aaron, Ira Cohen says: "Things not well with Petra [Vogt] & ask you if you can do me a very great favor — which is to advance or lend me, say \$200 against my mailing to you the Bowles letters immediately upon my return. I have many, at least 30 I would guess. I can't stress how important this is for me & hope it will be possible." Ira also sends his most recent poem "First Steps: Based on a Poem by Allama Prabhu."

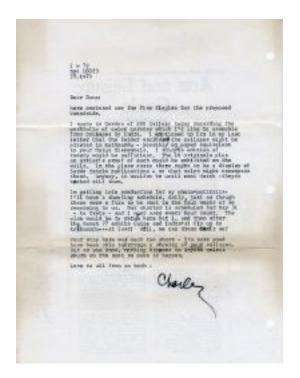


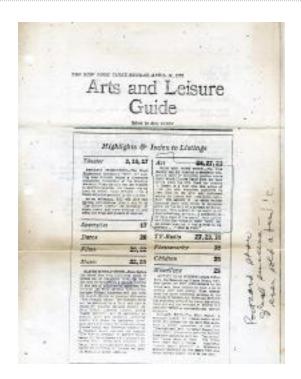


Front and back of Charles Henri Ford letter to Dana Young, January 30, 1976.

[left] "I'm looking forward to the registered letter and the additional copies of Opium [Elementals] — I already gave one copy to John & Yoko now they'll be having two! My sister [Ruth Ford] will be a recipient as well as Jeremiah Newton who is collecting material for a book on Candy Darling. I'll give one to Tennessee Williams he's agreed to give a joint reading, with me, at one of the Poetry Projects evenings at St. Mark's in-the-Bowery."

[right] Ford's letter was written on the back of a flyer for his 1971 pioneering experimental memoir film *Johnny Minotaur*. The film is considered an essential part of pre-and-early gay cinema.

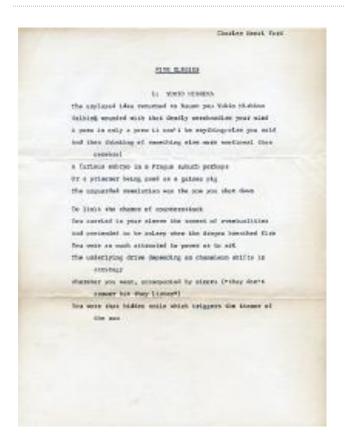




Front and back of Charles Henri Ford letter to Dana Young, April 29, 1976.

[left] "[H]ere enclosed are the Five Elegies for the proposed broadside." Charles Henri Ford's 7 *Poems* was published by Bardo Matrix in 1974, however the "Five Elegies" broadside was never realized.

[right] Charles Henri Ford's letter was typed on the back of a photocopy of the *New York Times* listing for his "Wish You Were Here" postcard show at the Iolas Gallery, circled with handwritten note from Ford: "Postcard show great success — even sold a few."



Charles Henri Ford, "Five Elegies," first page of 5-page typescript, [1976?].

"1: Yukio Mishima / The unplayed idea returned to haunt you Yukio Mishima / Walking wounded with that deadly merchandise your mind / A poem is only a poem it can't be anything else you said / And then thinking of something else more emotional than cerebral ..."

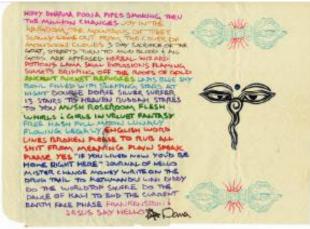




Front and back of Dana Young's artwork and layout for Charles Henri Ford's unpublished "7 Elegies," 1977.

Front and back of Dana Young's artwork and layout for Charles Henri Ford's "7 Elegies" to be published under the Bardo Matrix / Starstreams imprint in 1977. The book was never realized. Poem written in what is believed to be Ira Cohen's hand on the back of the artwork.





Front and back of aerogramme sent by Dana Young to Craig Love in Boulder, Colorado, ca. 1975.

[left] Sent from Kathmandu with the return address of "Hither & Thither Travels" by Dana Young to his close friend, artist Craig Love, in Boulder.

[right] "Happy dharma pooja pipes smoking thru the million changes / Joy in the kingdom, the mountains of Tibet slowly come out from the cover of monsoon clouds ..."

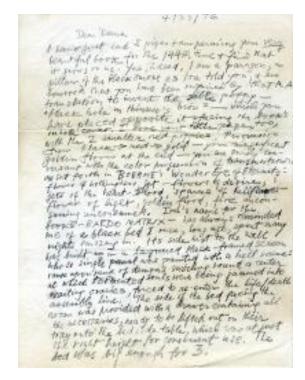




Front and back of postcard sent by Dana Young to Craig Love in San Francisco, March 27, 1977.

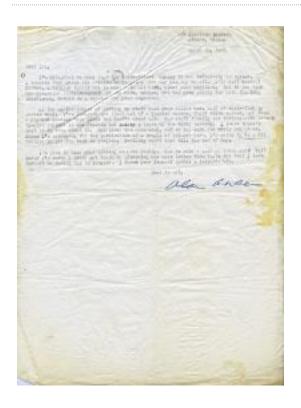
Postcard with a drawing and a photographic element collaged. "I'm in a silver condition centered between stars / there's a spot by the oil lamp for yr. lungs to dream in."





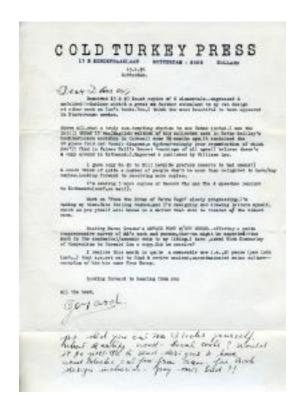
David Rattray, envelope and first page of 6-page letter to Dana Young, March 29, 1976.

Sent from his *Reader's Digest* office, David praises Dana's *Opium Elementals*: "I have just had 3 pipes & am perusing your very beautiful book for the 144th time & find that it grows on me. Yes, indeed, I am a paragon, a pillar of the black smoke as Ira told you ... Ira's name for the books — BARDO MATRIX — has always reminded me of a black bed I once, long ago, spent many nights smoking in. Its side next to the wall was built up in a lacquered black-framed screen whose single panel was painted with a hell scene: rank upon rank of demons swirling round a center at which tormented souls were being jammed into waiting ovaries, forced to re-enter the life/death assembly line."



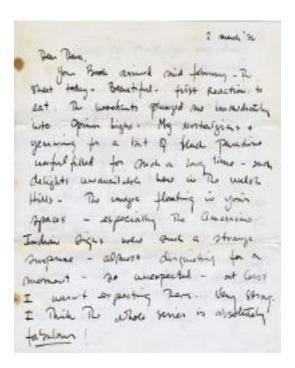
Alan Ansen letter to Ira Cohen, 1 page, March 20, 1963.

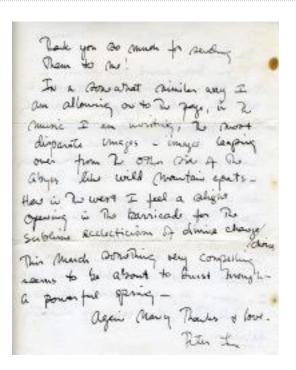
Some of Beat fiction's most flamboyant characters were modeled after Alan Ansen, including those in novels by Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs. The American poet, playwright, scholar and close friend to many of the Beats, writing to Dana Young about some of his woes with moving from Venice to Athens: "As for me the labors of getting my stuff back from Venice have kind of shriveled my poetic soul. I've finished the first act of a Tangier masque, first scene rather, and done a Raymond Roussel type piece but that's about all. The stuff finally did turn up with seventy-five percent of the records and a third of the books missing. I doubt there's much to be done about it. God bless the atom bomb, and so say each and every one of us."



Gerard Bellaart letter to Dana Young, 1 page, January 13, 1976.

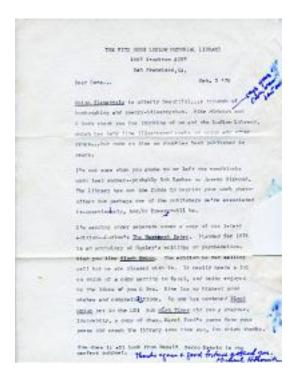
Gerard Bellaart, founder of Cold Turkey Press, writes: "Above all, what a truly awe-inspiring surprise to see B[o]ehme quoted [in *Opium Elementals*]. I saw the 1631 (I think it was) English edition of his collected work in Kevin Reilley's bookrestorers workshop in Cornwall some 2 1/2 months ago. It contained the 10 piece fold out Cosmic diagram, a dishearteningly poor reproduction of which you'll find in Palmer Hall's Secret Teachings of all ages (I believe there's a copy around in Kathmandu). Engraved & published by Williams Law."





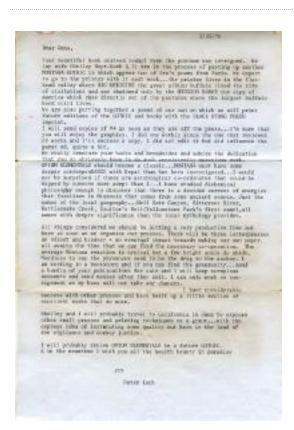
Peter Hartman letter to Dana Young, 2 pages, March 2, 1976.

Two-page letter from composer, musician and poet Peter Hartman writing from North Wales. "Your book arrived mid February — the sheet today — beautiful. First Reaction: to eat. The woodcuts plunged me immediately into opium highs — My nostalgia & yearning for a bit of black paradise unfulfilled for such a long time ... The images floating in your spaces ... In a somewhat similar way I am allowing on to the page, in the music I am writing, the most disparate images — images leaping over from the other side of the abyss like wild mountain goats ..."



Michael Horowitz letter to Dana Young, 1 page, February 5, 1976.

Michael Horowitz is a historian, author, and Timothy Leary's longtime archivist. He and his wife, Cynthia Palmer, "hippie intellectuals" (and the parents of Winona Ryder) were co-founders of the Fitz Hugh Ludlow Memorial Library. In addition to being a repository of psychoactive drug-related literature they also published books. "Opium Elementals is utterly beautiful ... a triumph of book-making and poetry-illustration ... Glad you like Black Opium. The edition is not selling well but we are pleased with it. It really means a lot to think of a copy getting to Nepal, and being enjoyed by the likes of you & Ira."



Peter Koch letter to Dana Young, 1 page, July 23, 1976

Letter from printer/publisher/editor, Peter Koch. "We really treasure your books and broadsides and admire the dedication that you so obviously have to do such consistently marvelous work, OPIUM ELEMENTALS should become a classic ... MONTANA must have some deeper corresponDANCE with Nepal than has been investigated ... I would not be surprised if there are astrological co-ordinates that could be mapped by someone more adept than I ... I have studied Alchemical philosophy enough to discover that there is a decided current of energies that focalizes in Missoula that comes from some ancient source ... Hell Gate Canyon, Bitteroot River, Rattlesnake Creek, Coulter's Hell (Yellowstone Park's first name), all with names with deeper significance than the local mythology provides."





[left] Dana Young lying on his side in a customary position for smoking opium. Polaroid SX-70 photograph, Kathmandu, date and photographer unknown.

[right] Believed to be Dana's pipes and other assorted opium paraphernalia, Polaroid SX-70 photograph, Kathmandu, date and photographer unknown.

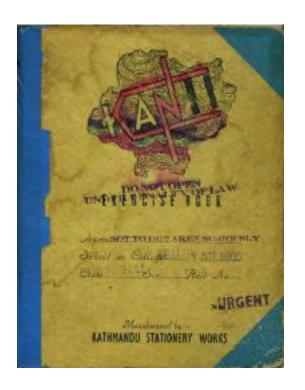




Two Dana Young wood block prints from *Opium Elementals*, Bardo Matrix, 1976.

Ira Cohen writes of Dana Young's *Opium Elementals* in "The Great Rice Paper Adventure Kathmandu, 1972–1977": "Among other books published around the same time [1976] was Dana Young's *Opium Elementals* in a large horizontal format with an original alphabet designed by the artist who, at my urging, turned one drawing into a series of seven based on traditional Nepali printing blocks intended for textile use. Dana extended the already existing animal figures and other shamanic shapes through his own imagination and created a floating dream world around the central Cocteau-like image of the opium smoker complete with a retinue of skeletons, pumpkins and ghostly tigers."

The present offer includes the very rare numbered and signed suite of eight prints, approx. 23 x 23 inches, described in the inventory below.



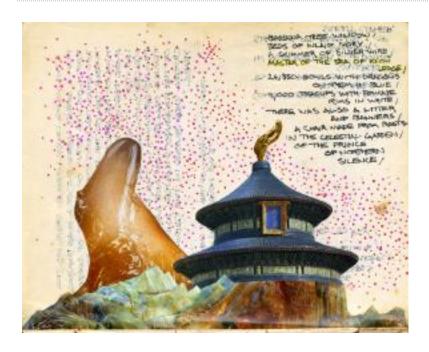
Cover of Dana Young journal, 6 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches, 1973.

Cover of Dana Young's Kathmandu "notebook #1," with poems, collages, drawings, sketches, and ephemera. Many assorted loose items also laid in. Dana has rubberstamped "NOT TO BE TAKEN SEROUSLY" as the journal owner's name, "REALITY STUDIOS" as the school or college, and "ORIGINAL" as the class.



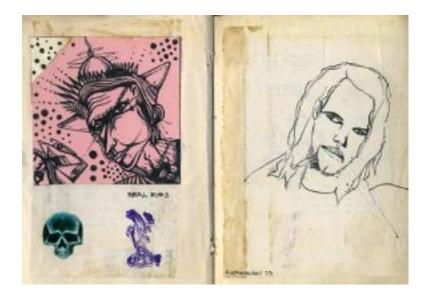
Dana Young journal page, "Word Made Flesh," 1973.

Page with collage from Dana Young's journal. The motif of faceless people is a recurrent one in Dana's work, also appearing in one of his contributions to *Montana Gothic* (Fall 1974).



Dana Young journal page with collage and poem, 1973.

"Banana tree window / beds of inlaid ivory / a skimmer of silver wire / master of the sea of knowledge ..."



Dana Young spread from Dana's Kathmandu "notebook #1," 1973.

On the left is a page with a drawing titled "Real Eyes" pasted in and on the right is what appears to be a self-portrait tipped in.





Spread from the second of two of Dana Young's journals with correspondence from Ray Johnson folded and unfolded, 1972–73. The journal unopened is 8 1/4 x 13 1/2 inches.

Dana Young pasted clippings and a folded photocopy mailing stamped "Original copy" from Ray Johnson on the left page. On the right page is another mailing from Ray Johnson to the Reality Studios, postmarked December 22, 1972. The journal contains poems, collages, drawings, sketches and ephemera. Loose items never pasted in are laid in, including postcards, drawings, clippings, 3 sheets with printed collages from The Northwest Mounted Valise, an origami-style folded Guerilla Art sheet, and an issue of the Dutch magazine Ins and Outs (vol. 1, no. 1, June 1978) featuring articles by Ira Cohen, Mel Clay, Simon Vinkenoog, and a collage by Dana Young.



Charles Gatewood, "Glad Blue Bird of Happiness," mounted photograph, 13 x 8 1/4 inches, date unknown.

"Glad Blue Bird of Happiness" is written in pencil on the back. "Photograph by Charles Gatewood ..." is also rubberstamped on the back.



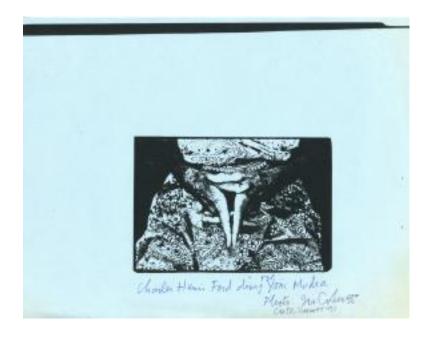
Dana Young, "The Master & the Owl," approx. 12 x 10 inches, date unknown.

Dana Young's signed print "The Master & the Owl" is a portrait of Ira Cohen. This image was also one of Dana's contributions to the first issue of Peter Koch's magazine *Montana Gothic* (Fall 1974).



Ira Cohen, "Sunset on the OMO (Ethiopia)," 10 x 8 inches, undated.

Inscribed by Ira Cohen to Richard Aaron.



Ira Cohen, print captioned "Charles Henri Ford doing the Yoni Mudra / Photo: Ira Cohen / Crete, Summer '91."

Ira Cohen sent this print of Charles Henri Ford to Richard Aaron.

# Collection Inventory

The Archive is organized into four sections:

- 1) Correspondence
- 2) Journals
- 3) Prints/Artwork/Photographs
- 4) Miscellaneous

#### 1) Correspondence

#### To Dana Young from:

Aaron, Richard, TLS, May 27, 1975 in envelope

Bellaart, Gerard, TLS, January 13, 1976 in envelope

Bellaart, Gerard, ALS, February 23, 1976 in envelope

Bellaart, Gerard, ALS, April 13, 1976 in envelope

Briskin, Jerry and Anne, ALS, January 20, 1976 in envelope

Cohen, Ira, ALS, aerogramme, n.d.

Grillo, Paul, ALS, August 2, 1976 in envelope

Ford, Charles Henri, envelope postmark January 21, 1976

Ford, Charles Henri, ALS, January 30, 1976 in envelope Ford, Charles Henri, ALS, Patti Smith newspaper article, January calendar of events at Anthology Film archive, magazine photo clipping, postmark March 9, 1976 in envelope

Ford, Charles Henri, TLS + 5 p. MS, April, 29, 1976 in envelope

Gysin, Brion, ALS, March 15, 1976, with envelope

Gysin, Brion, ALS, October 12, 1976, with envelope

Hartman, Peter, ALS, March 2, 1976 in envelope

Horowitz, Michael, TLS, February 5, 1976

Horowitz, Michael, TLS, August 1, 1976 in envelope Horowitz, Michael, TLS, September 13, 1976 in envelope

Koch, Peter, TLS, March 25, 1976

Levi, Louise Landes, TLS, March 27, 1976 in envelope

Plymell, Charles, TLS (photocopy), postmark August 1976 in envelope

O [?], Phyllis, TLS, postmark April 1976 in envelope

Rattray, David, ALS, April 29, 1976 in envelope

Singer, Robert [High Times], 4 TLS, January 28, March 12, June 15, June 30, 1976 in envelope postmark June 30, 1976

Sharits, Greg, ALS aerogramme, July 12 1975 [?]

#### **Dana Young to Craig Love**

ALS, aerogramme, January 1973 ALS, aerogramme, postmark 1973

ALS, aerogramme, postmark 1973

ALS, aerogramme, September 1, 1973

ALS, aerogramme, peetmork May 20, 10

ALS, aerogramme, postmark May 29, 1973

ALS, aerogramme, postmark 1974

ALS, aerogramme, March 1, 1974

ALS, aerogramme, April 8, 1974

ALS, aerogramme, October 27, 1974

ALS, aerogramme, January, 17, 1975

ALS, aerogramme, February 24, 1975

ALS, aerogramme, February 28, 1975

ALS, aerogramme, April 10, 1975

ALS, October 22, 1975

TLS + 3 p. MS, June 16, 1976

Postcard, March 27,1977

ALS, aerogramme, postmark November 29, 1977

#### 14 letters N.d.

1 aerogramme unsent7 ALS, aerogramme2 TLS, aerogramme1 ALS2 ALS in envelopes1 postcard

#### **Miscellaneous Correspondence**

Ansen, Alan to Ira Cohen, TLS, March 20, 1963

Cohen, Ira to Richard Aaron

ALS, aerogramme, September 3, [1977]
Postcard, December 20, 1991 with envelope
ALS, December 22, 1991 with envelope
MS, 1 p., postmark January 9, 1992 with envelope
ALS + 1 p. MS, February 15, 1992 with envelope
Postcard, undated

Gysin, Brion and Harold Norse to Ira Cohen. TLS, March, 18, 1963. Though not stated, this letter was written at the Beat Hotel, Paris. Richard Aaron has appended a typed note which reads: "This letter was typed by Harold Norse, annotated by Brion Gysin, and sent to Ira Cohen. It provided the name AM HERE BOOKS with the silent chorous [sic] hopefully clear: 'Having Wonder Full Time Wish YOU Were.' R.A."

Lykiard, Alexis to Ira Cohen, TLS, June 11, 1963 + 1 p. MS, with envelope

## 2) Journals

"Notebook #1," 6 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches, 1973. Approximately 80 pages (of over 350) have been extentively worked on by Dana Young

"The Travel Notes of Hello Mister Change Money – 1972 73", 8 1/4 x 13 1/2 inches. Approximately 40 pages (of over 400) have been extensively worked on by Dana Young

# 3) Prints/Artwork/Photographs Dana Young Prints

Approximately 53 block prints made by Dana Young in Kathmandu in the mid-seventies. The prints range in size from approx. 4 x 7 inches to approx. 22 x 30 inches

Also included:

Original cover artwork by Dana Young for "7 Elegies" by Charles Henri Ford

Two black and white and two color SX-70 Polaroid photographs of Dana Young and opium paraphernalia

#### **Opium Elementals**

Suite of eight prints, this is no. 4 from an edition of 20 signed copies. Sheet size varies, approx. 23 x 23 inches. Image size varies, some vertical, some horizontal, approx. 6 x 6 inches to 7 x 7 inches. In addition, to the suite of prints, they were printed and published as a book with a series of poems by Ira Cohen.

Twelve proof pages approx. 6 x 6 inches to 23 x 26 inches

#### Ira Cohen photographs (8 1/2 x 11 inches unless noted otherwise)

"Sunset on the OMO (Ethiopia)," undated. 10 x 8 inches, inscribed by Ira Cohen to Richard Aaron

"Charles Henri Ford doing the Yoni Mudra" photocopy, captioned and signed by Ira Cohen "Crete, Summer '91"

"Happy New Year 1988" photocopy, captioned and inscribed by Ira Cohen "Richard Lilia w/ love from Ira Ethiopia '85"

"Unconventional Wisdom" photocopy, captioned and inscribed by Ira Cohen "This is a picture of Raphael Aladdin in London. Unconventional Wisdom is where it's at. Best from Ira the Cohen"

"Yang on the horizon?" photocopy, inscribed by Ira Cohen "For Richard – Yang on the horizon – Peace, Lila"

"Grand Illusion" photocopy, signed by Ira Cohen

Untitled, "Charles H. Ford published a magazine called Blues . . ." signed by Ira Cohen

"The Sibyl" photocopy signed by Ira Cohen and fragment of gelatin silver print, together with poem "I am a stranger unto myself" in typed MS and in photocopy

"Richard Hell" cover photograph signed by Ira Cohen, 15 Minutes, no. 11 (June 1992)

#### Other photographs

Charles Gatewood, "Glad Blue Bird of Happiness," mounted photograph, 13 x 8 1/4 inches, date unknown

Don Snyder, mounted photograph of Vali Myers, 13 ½ x 11 inches, date unknown

#### 4) Miscellaneous

Assorted items, including poetry manuscripts by Ira Cohen, a transcript of an Ira Cohen interview with Alejandro Jodorowsky, photocopies of several items related to Angus MacLise, and *Montana Gothic*, no. 1 (1974) with "Bureau of Surrealist Research / Ghost Smoke Cadre / Box 1005 / Kathmandu, Nepal" rubberstamped on f.f.e.