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**Petra Vogt Archive
with Bardo Matrix Press and Ira Cohen
in Kathmandu, Nepal,
ca. 1970s**



Photograph of Petra Cohen attributed to Ira Cohen. Kathmandu, Nepal. [ca. 1970s].

Description of the Collection

Petra Vogt (b. Nov. 7, 1943 in Berlin, Germany) is a poet, actress, artist, and model, known for her involvement with The Living Theatre, Ira Cohen, and Bardo Matrix Press during the 1960s and 1970s. Living in Kathmandu from approx. 1972 to 1978, Vogt pursued her art and poetry, while participating in creative work with partner Cohen as well as Nepali hippies including Jimmy Thapa and Trilochan Shrestha, and the Kathmandu expatriate community including Angus and Hetty MacLise, Dana Young, John Chick, Charles Henri Ford, and others.

While Vogt illustrated works for Starstreams and Bardo Matrix, and published her poetry in magazines like Angus MacLise's *Ting Pa*, her creative output in this era far exceeds her publications. This is the first archive with significant materials that illuminate her own life and work, as well as provide important insights into the Kathmandu scene—including Bardo Matrix Press and the Spirit Catcher Bookshop. The collection features approx. 34 journals,

150 artworks, 864 photographs by Ira Cohen, and over 60 items of correspondence, offering us substantial perspective on her creative practices and participation within the community.

Photographs of her in Nepal in the 1970s were featured in a recent Photo Kathmandu festival in 2018. She continues to participate in creative and spiritual life today with various theater-oriented, poetic, and artistic projects under a different name.

Books and Websites Cited

Works are cited parenthetically by author last name.

Ira Cohen. "[The Great Rice Paper Adventure: Kathmandu, 1971–1977.](#)" *New Observations*, no. 106. May/June, 1995. Published online as *Big Bridge*, no. 5.

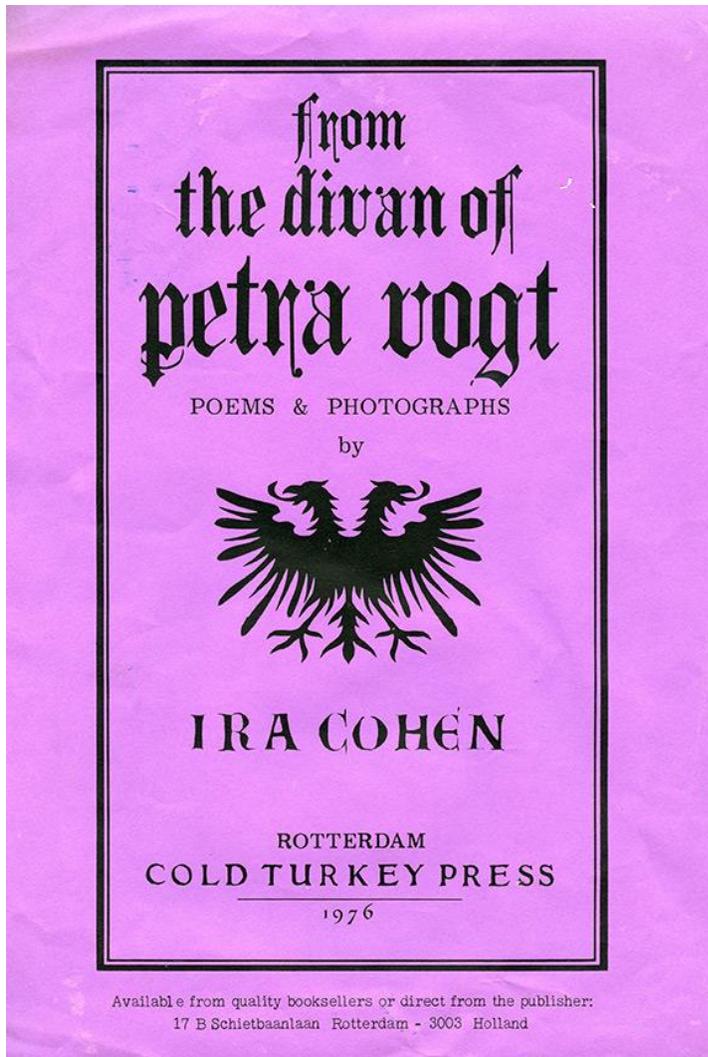
Lucia de Vries. "[Hippinis: How two female flower children joined East and West in the streets of Kathmandu 50 years ago.](#)" *Nepali Times*, Oct. 12, 2018.

Prawash Gautam. "[How a used bookstore in Kathmandu's Jhochhen captured the spirit of the hippie movement.](#)" *The Kathmandu Post*, Dec. 18, 2018.

Mark Liechty. *Far Out: Countercultural Seekers and the Tourist Encounter in Nepal*. University of Chicago Press, 2017.

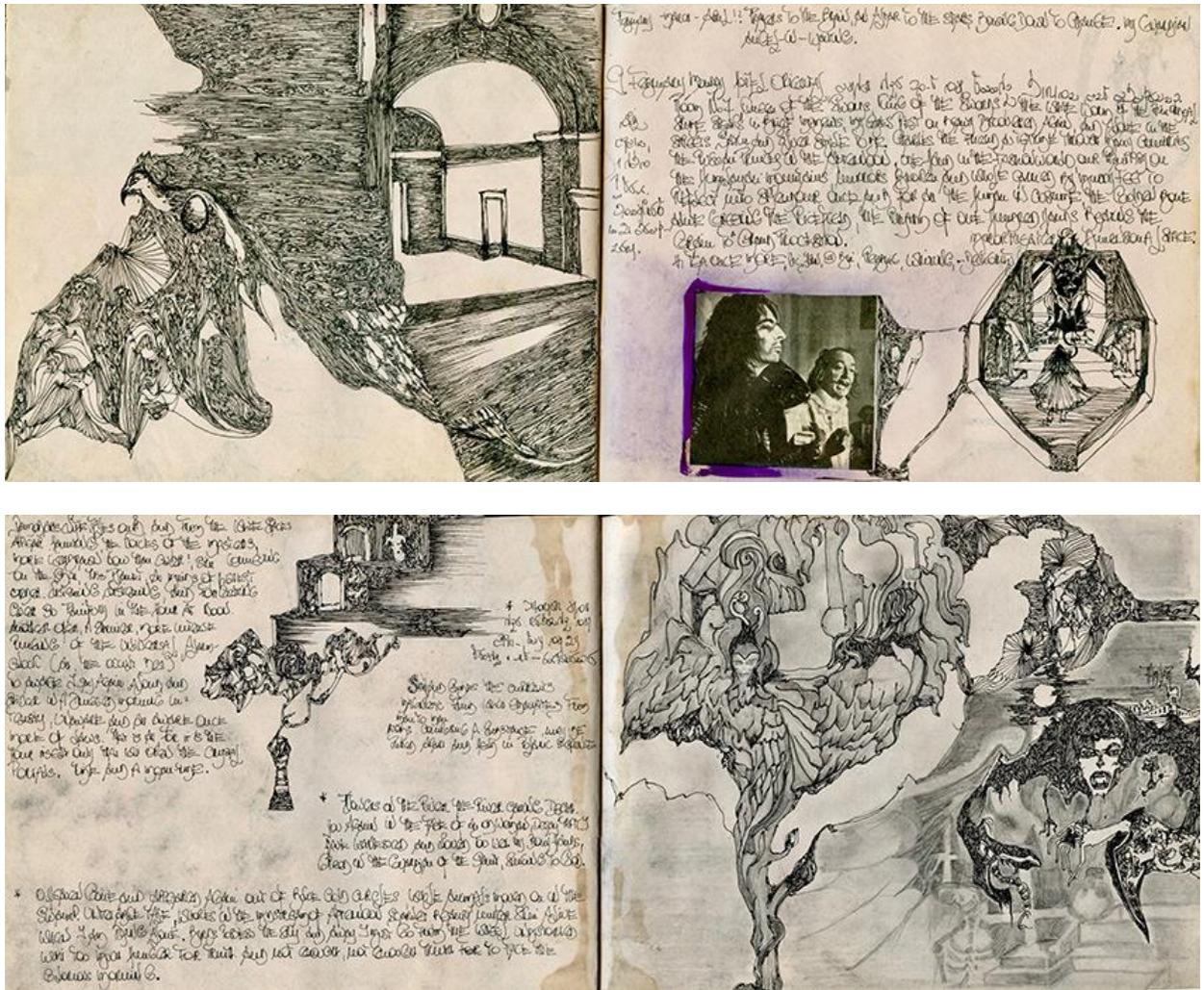
Carey Loren. [Phone conversation with Ira Cohen.](#) *Blastitude*, Eternity Blast Special, no. 13. Aug. 2002.

Selected Highlights from the Collection



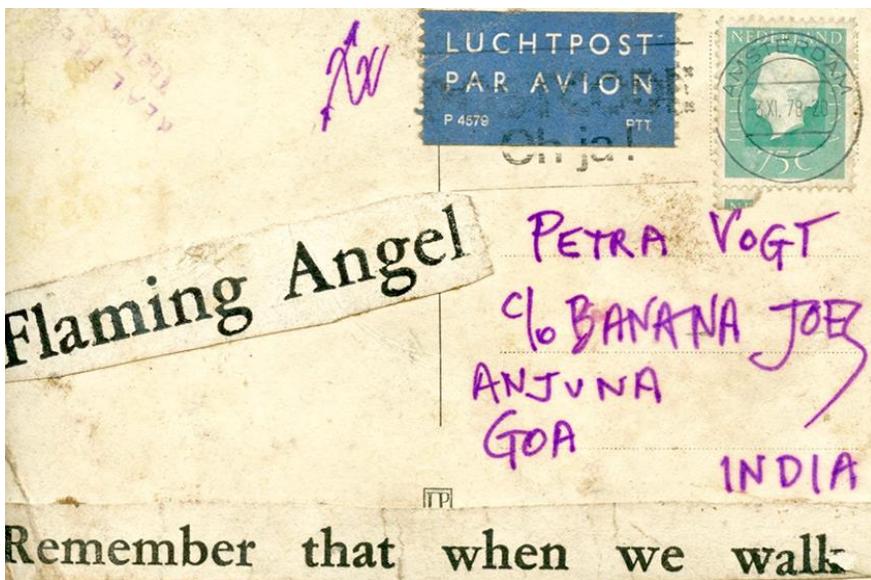
***From the Divan of Petra Vogt.* Cold Turkey Press, Rotterdam, Holland, 1976. Broadside on purple paper with gothic font.**

In 1971, Vogt and Cohen landed in Nepal after extensive traveling through Morocco, Tunisia, Afghanistan, and India. While Vogt did not publish a book of her work, she wrote numerous notebooks of poetry, diaries, and artworks. She illustrated Bardo Matrix Starstreams publications, including Cohen's work, *Poems from the Cosmic Crypt*. Her role as muse is cemented in the title of his work, *From the Divan of Petra Vogt*.



Petra Vogt. Openings from notebook no. 29. [1973]. With writings, pen and ink drawings, watercolor, and Alice Cooper collage.

This archive contains approx. 34 notebooks/diaries created by Vogt during her time in Kathmandu, most all of which feature a combination of poetry, prose, and diaristic entries, accompanied by collage, pen (usually rapidograph), and watercolor illustrations throughout. This notebook begins in Feb. 1973, and is one of the most richly and creatively designed items in the collection. It includes many multi-page works and completed, titled poems. On inside back cover, notes specify Dr. P.H. Martin transparent watercolors, likely used in Vogt's work: "Cherise, Prussian Blue, Red, Cadmium Orange." 44 pp. (10 x 8 1/2 in.)



The collage reads: "Flaming Angel / Remember that when we walk," and is signed in the top middle of the card with Cohen's glyphic signature. Correspondence series in the archive reflects multiple places for receiving letters, including New York City, Kathmandu, Anjuna Goa, Bombay, and Germany.

Ira Cohen. Autograph postcard signed with collage to Petra Vogt, "c/o Banana Joel." N.d.

Harold Norse
1200 Fulton St.
San Francisco, CA
94117

POSTAGE PAID
PORT PAYE



Ira Cohen
c/o American Embassy
Kathmandu
NEPAL

Harold Norse.
Autograph postcard
signed to Ira Cohen.
1976.

Harold Norse, a writer of the Beat generation who lived in Italy, France, and Morocco before settling in San Francisco in the early 1970s, writes Ira Cohen at the American Embassy in Kathmandu, Nepal. Norse writes: "Dear Ira, Snowed under w/ writings & movings— new address en face. Many thanks for beautiful DIVAN [From the Divan of Petra Vogt, by Ira Cohen] & others... Am collecting 164 page book of my gay poems 1941-1976 to be published by Gay Sunshine Press, Spring 77 (Panic Ritual). Namaste, Harold."

27. x-76
Dear Ira, Snowed under w/ writings & movings - new address en face. Many thanks for beautiful DIVAN & others. So far no sign of surprise person you sent! Is it Mel Clay? My new phone no. is: (415) 922 0247. Am collecting 164 page book of my gay poems 1941-1976 to be published by Gay Sunshine Press, Spring 77. (Panic Ritual) Namaste, Harold



Photograph of Julian Beck and Petra Vogt. N.d.

This photograph is included in a file of materials related to The Living Theatre, a group founded by Judith Malina and Julian Beck that Petra Vogt joined in 1962—after she saw the group for the first time at a Berlin performance. Vogt had trained as an actress in Munich; with The Living Theatre, she traveled and performed in the performance *Paradise Now*, where she met Ira Cohen at its New Haven show (Loren).

Dana Young.
Autograph
manuscript of
visionary poem. N.d.

The Bardo Matrix Press began as a collective in Boulder, Colorado, known as The Experimental Cinema Group. Bardo Matrix included Angus MacLise, John Chick, Ira Cohen, and Dana Young, all of whom would spend time in the Kathmandu expatriate scene.

This manuscript is included along with 2 autograph postcards signed, that read "offering of the opium embryo" and "from the alchemical wing," as well as three autograph postcards signed to Ira Cohen, which have been cut to collage the images on the postcards (much text still visible). Young visited Vogt and Cohen during their time in Kathmandu, and is also represented in the photography series of the archive. For more information on Dana Young, please see the Granary Books prospectus for the Dana Young Archive.

A BLACK HAND WITH A GOLD BRACELET
CLANGING AGAINST THE SKY REACHED
DOWN TO WHERE THE PILGRIM PRAYED AND
MASHED IN HIS HEAD WITH GOD JUICE. EYES
FROM A TEMPLE SAW HIS SMILING END.
HIS SOUL FLASHED UP LIKE COKE THRU A
TUBE AND SPRAYED INTO THE GALAXIES
WHICH SWIRLED MYSTERIOUSLY BEHIND
AN OLD BRICK WALL. A LADY TURNED
TO ENERGY AND DANCED INTO A
MARLBORG SUNSET. THE GREAT WALL
OF CHINA LIFTED OFF THE GROUND
LIKE AN AMAZING SNAKE AND SLID
INTO THE STARS. CLOUDS BECAME
MOUNTAINS, THEN THE BIRDS CHANGED
INTO CLOUDS. THEY WERE SNIPPED WITH
SILVER SCISSORS AND PEELED FROM
THE SKY. A MIRROR OF GEODESIC
CONSCIOUSNESS WAS REVEALED,
CRACKLING WITH TRUTH WARM AS A
FIRE BEHIND A FROSTY WINDOW.
A HINGED STONE EGG WITH AN AMBER
YOLK APPEARED AS A GIFT OF LAUGHTER
AND MYSTERY TO THE GHOST OF BABY
JESUS. A MAN CLOTHED CROWN TO
SOLES IN JADE STOOD BY THE BRICK
WALL AND INHALED THE RAINBOW
VAPORS OF THE DISSOLVING PILGRIM.
FRANKENSTEIN AND BUDDAH CAME BY TO
SAY HELLO. ATOMIC THREADS WOVE ALL
EVENTS TOGETHER GOOD AS GLUE TO
EVERYTHING. THE BLACK HAND PLUCKED
THE SUN AND RINGED IT ON A FINGER
THEN WAIVED GOOD-BYE TO THE JADE
MAN WHO WAS SHARING HIS LUNCH OF
ROARING LION WITH A NAKED GIRL
FOREVER BEFORE WE EVER WILL
REMEMBER ★

Petra Vogt.
Drawing from
notebook no. 24.
[ca. 1970s].

This small artists' book contains ten heavily illustrated leaves in rapidograph, paint, and collage, including intricately dark characters that are a signature of Vogt's illustrative style. Her drawings of mystical and demonic characters were often used to illustrate Bardo Matrix publications. (6 x 5 in.)



Petra Vogt. Opening from notebook no. 17. [1976].

Begun on Sept. 30, 1976, this notebook is one of the most heavily annotated and collaged items in the collection. Writings within refer to "Black Ashram" (a possible publishing venture not realized for Vogt, who had astrologer A. T. Mann create a star chart for "Black Ashram," a name referenced often in her notebooks), notes on Gregory Corso, a holograph poem by Roberto Francisco Valenza (Bardo Matrix author) illustrated by Vogt, autograph poem by Iris [Gaynor] (another Bardo Matrix author), autograph poems by Ira Cohen, and autograph poems by others. Contains lengthy journal entries, extending over multiple pages, as well as anguished draft of letter about love and separation, as well as the nature of knowledge and truth. With poetry, songs and lyrics, collages, original artworks, and other writings. The opening pictured shows Vogt's color works, along with a collaged broadside from Cold Turkey press, who published *From the Divan of Petra Vogt* in 1976. (5 ¼ x 7 ¼ x 1 ½ in.)

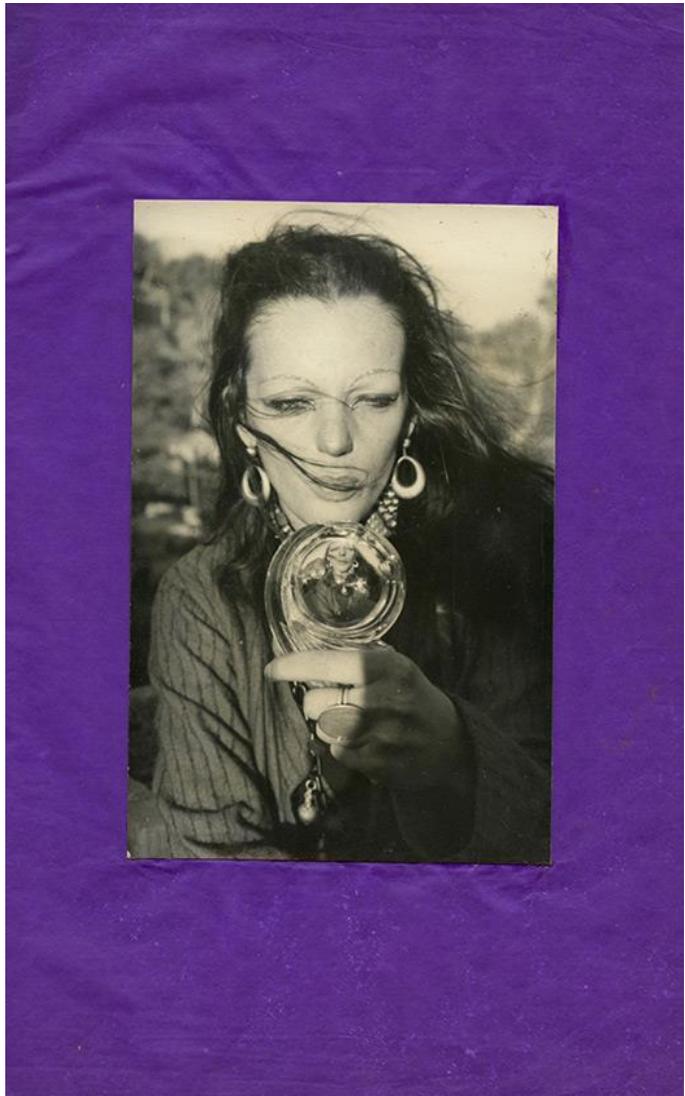


Petra Vogt. Artwork in white ink on black paper. [ca. 1970s].

From series of artworks enclosed in black lokta folder (23 ½ x 17 in.) with approx. 26 large artworks. Artworks include rapidograph drawings, paintings, and mixed media; with many oversize artworks on black paper in white ink or gouache, as shown here. Drawings contain Vogt's signature fine-line style, as well as fantastical and dark subject matter.

Photograph of Petra Vogt by Ira Cohen. In handmade book by Petra Vogt, with iridescent rice paper wrappers with purple, black, and silver leaves. [ca. 1970s].

This handmade book contains approx. 27 leaves with photographs mounted on colored papers, mostly of Vogt and likely by Cohen; includes Mylar photographs and a variety of posed portraits. Inside front cover contains contact sheets that may either indicate work in progress, or that the sheets had been hidden in the pastedown that has loosened over time. Likewise, two photographs hidden in back cover are now laid in. A unique object that compiles many of the most striking photographs from the general photography series, as well as photographs not included elsewhere in the collection. (9 ½ x 11 in.)





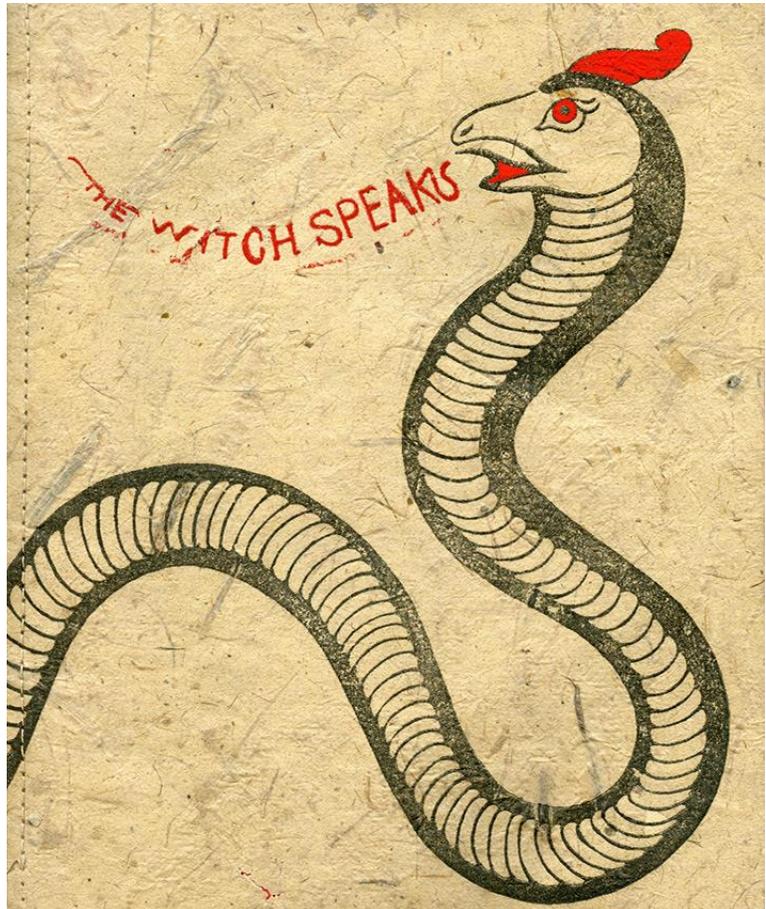
Petra Vogt. Untitled artworks in rapidograph, watercolor, ink, and gouache. [ca. 1970s].

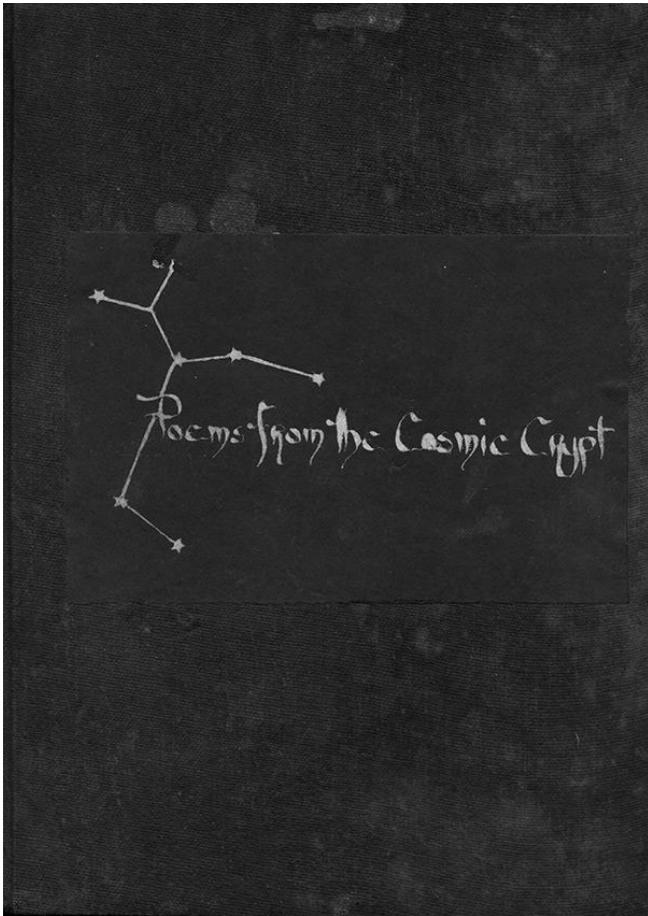
These artworks are from a file of approx. 70 smaller artworks, including rapidograph drawings, pen and gouache artworks, woodcuts, collages by Vogt, and hand-colored photographs. There are numerous black and white works on white card (left image), as well as drawings on envelope with Bardo Matrix stamp and Starstreams stamp (right image); includes works that were printed to be tipped in to Cohen's *Poems from the Cosmic Crypt*.

Sagaraya, Snake Tongue. *The Witch Speaks*. Published by Bardo Matrix. Printed by Sharada Printing Press, Nhusal (Dharmapath) in Kathmandu, Nepal, 1976.

Before 1971, a small group of expatriates in Nepal had already become involved making woodblock prints to sell to tourists. Cohen remembers, it was Angus MacLise who, "working with local craftsmen and woodblock artists, really began the great rice paper adventure" (Cohen).

Cover design by Chandra Man Maskay, drawings by the author. 21 leaves, including loose red endpapers, in handmade paper wrapper. Woodcuts printed in black and red throughout. This is no. 55 of an edition of 230 copies, numbered and signed by author. (7 x 8 ¼ in.)





Ira Cohen. *Poems from the Cosmic Crypt*. Drawings by Petra Vogt. Published by Kali Press and Bardo Matrix. Printed by Sharada Printing Press, Nhusal (Dharmapath), in Kathmandu, Nepal, 1976.

With black pastedowns and purple endpapers, including silver print on black paper in cover. Drawings by Vogt printed on glossy paper and tipped in; many of these drawings on similar paper are included in the archive. Book designed by Cohen, with portrait of the poet on title page from a photograph by Dana Young. In black cloth over boards, with holograph silver inked title on cover; silver calligraphy by the Protector of the Culture from the Lung Men Caves in Honan. This is no. seven of an edition of 500 copies, inscribed thusly:

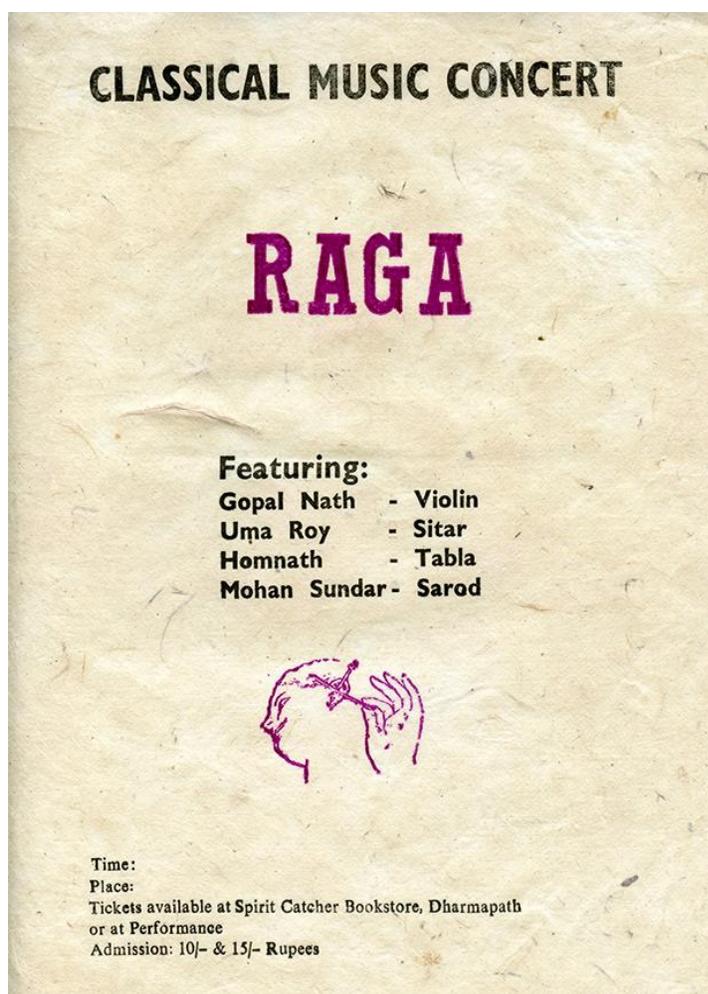
“Sept. 3, 1976, Saturday. For P.V., this is the master copy from which all others come and so I will always remember to remember how the Poetry River describes from your source. For you my purple diamond, in exchange for your lightning, an offering of dry grass to your fierce flame again as always. I. C.”

The penultimate leaf contains holograph poem: “O Death offer your / laurel wreath / to Pride / in the light of / bold skeletons.” (7 ½ x 9 ¾ in.)



Petra Vogt. Opening from notebook no. 27. [1973–1974].

With purple, black, and silver artwork throughout, titled poems, and other writings. The collage pictured contains stamps used in Bardo Matrix publications, as well as alchemical, occult, and religious motifs. (5 x 7 ½ in.)



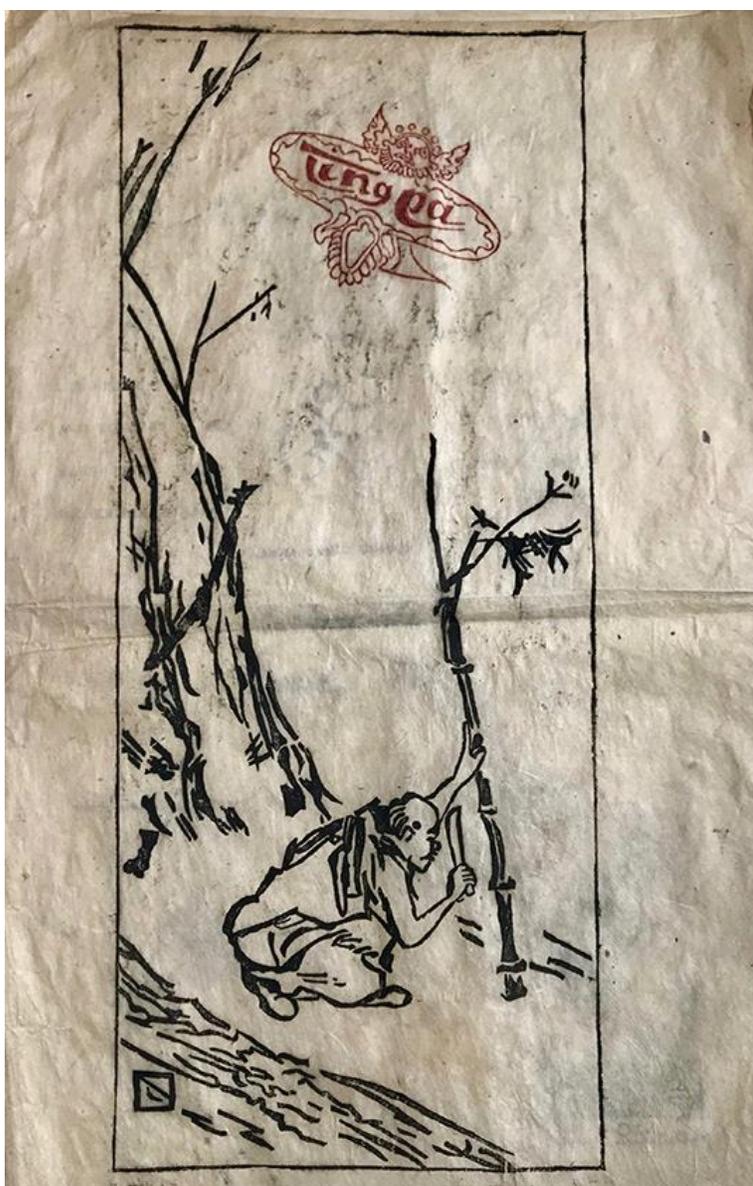
Flyer for "Classical Music Concert: Raga" at The Spirit Catcher Bookstore, Dharmapath. In purple and black ink, with woodcut image. Kathmandu, Nepal. [ca. 1970s].

In Kathmandu, on so-called "Freak Street" or Jhocchen Tole, John Chick (co-founder of Bardo Matrix from its Boulder, Colorado, days) owned a bookshop named The Spirit Catcher from approx. 1972–1979, which provided a weekly forum for poetry readings, music, and community. This shop cemented the centrality of Vogt, Cohen, Chick, and MacLise's roles in the countercultural community abroad, and became both a tourist and local destination (Gautam). The archive features many materials sold in the bookstore, as well as related ephemera; this broadside advertises a musical event. (8 ½ x 11 in.)

***Ting Pa*, no. 2. Edited by Angus MacLise and Francis Brooks. Printed in Kathmandu, Nepal. Spring, 1973.**

By editor MacLise's account, "ting pa" is the "Tibetan name for that special cloud that wraps itself around high peaks." This poetry magazine was printed on local papers, and published translated religious texts, translated works by Nepali poets, and works from the expatriate scene in Kathmandu. "Four or five issues" were produced, but copies are exceedingly rare (Liechty 254). This is from an edition of 150 copies. Contributors include Bill Barker, Petra Vogt (with two poems), Ira Cohen, and others.

From Vogt: "feel It now / dark forces moving somewhere / early morning vapours / silver hair / black tongues / agony / lust / foolish hunger for / horror creeping from under the door / spiderwebs / in the restless pit of sleep / love, after all."

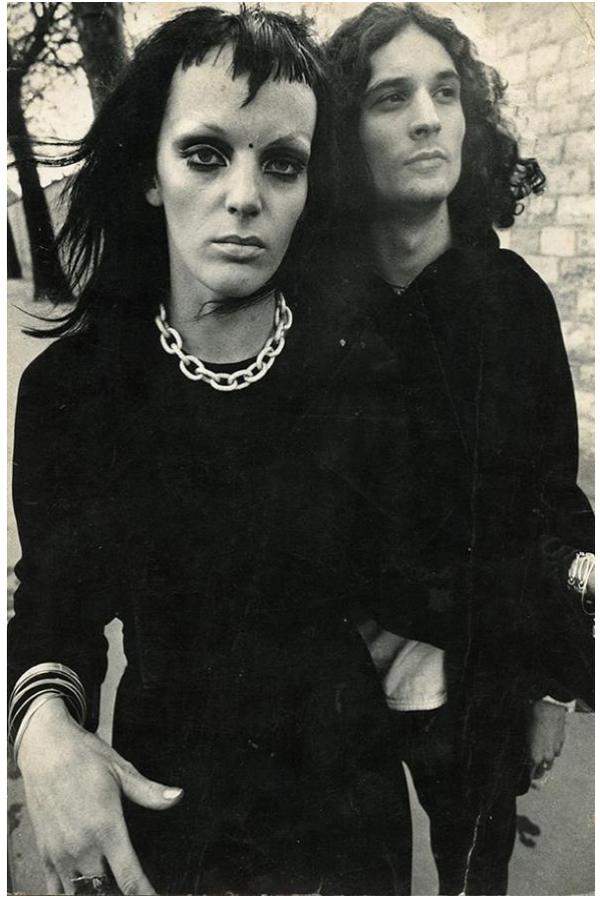




The archive contains a file with small reference clippings, as well as the Silver Surfer Marvel Comics character printed on orange silk cloth (9 x 12 in.), lokta paper (9 x 12 in.), and in three additional woodcuts on lokta paper that use Silver Surfer references (10 x 15 in.). Ira Cohen's *7 Marvels* (Bardo Matrix, 1975) used Marvel Comics superheroes as poetic inspiration, and had woodblocks prepared thusly:

"One day a Tibetan looking for employment as a woodblock artist came to a printshop where I was living and I gave him certain images from Marvel Comics which I wanted to prepare for printing: the Silver Surfer, Professor X, sleeping Atlanteans from Sub Mariner, etcetera. I began writing poems to accompany each print. After the images were printed in a variety of colors by Nawang Norbu, I paired them with the poems I had written, handstamped them with a set of magical symbols, and placed them in a specially designed folder with a stitched pocket." (Cohen)

Silver Surfer woodblock prints, created for Bardo Matrix Press. Kathmandu, Nepal. [ca. 1970s]. From drawings by Jack Kirby.



Photographs of Petra Vogt. Attributed to Ira Cohen. Kathmandu, Nepal. [ca. 1970s].

These prints are from a file of undated photographic materials (7 ½ x 11 ¾ in.). During the 1970s, Vogt was known for her foreboding dark outfits and makeup; her aesthetic marks her as an unheralded progenitor of goth style, which began to be codified in music scenes around the same time. These images highlight Petra Vogt's unique hair, makeup, and clothing, which she wore as costumes for Ira Cohen photoshoots and in her daily routines in Kathmandu.

Over his career, Cohen's subjects included Jimi Hendrix, William Burroughs, Jack Smith, Brion Gysin, Angus MacLise, Charles Henri Ford, Paul Bowles, and Petra Vogt, among many others.

The photography series of the archive contains approx. 864 photographs, stored in three binders with mostly images of Vogt taken by Cohen. It includes many dramatic, staged shots, as well as documentation of Kathmandu scene and also her artwork. While most photographs are undated, a handful are inscribed by Cohen or others, and most all are thought to have been shot in Kathmandu, Nepal, during the 1970s. The photography series also features well over 100 Mylar photographs by Cohen, many of Vogt. The Mylar style was inspired by Jack Smith and Bill Devore's black light experimentation in New York City, and features distortions and reflections of subjects on various surfaces



Photographs of Petra Vogt by Ira Cohen. Kathmandu, Nepal. [ca. 1970s].



Photographs of Petra Vogt by Ira Cohen. Kathmandu, Nepal. [ca. 1970s].

Of the photographic prints, approx. 150 are smaller sizes, mostly 3 ½ x 5 ½ in. or smaller, with a few larger prints. Contains a staged group photo shoot with sword props and costumes; staged photo shoot of Vogt in thick black lipstick with another model; various photo shoots of Vogt in dramatic eye makeup, wigs, headdresses, costumes, and with props including skulls, sculptures, and other items. Also includes Polaroids of Vogt eating, sitting in bed, or on the telephone, or with friends. Undated, but were all taken during time in Kathmandu in the 1970s. One photograph features a drawing by Vogt on the back.

Collection Inventory

Complete inventory available as a PDF upon request.

Extent: 2 cartons (2.2 linear feet) and 2 oversize flat boxes, plus 3 binders of photographs (850+ items).

Date: Bulk 1970s, in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Collection Highlights

Core features of collection include:

- 34 journals by Petra Vogt, with poetry, prose works, diary entries, and intricate rapidograph drawings along with collage, paintings, and other artworks within. Journals contain holograph works by others, including Ira Cohen, Iris Gaynor, and Roberto Valenza.
- Approx. 150 artworks by Vogt, as well as handmade book of Ira Cohen photographs and collage.
- Over 850 photographs by Ira Cohen, including those from his Mylar photography series, as well as photographs inscribed to/by Dana Young, John Chick, and others.
- Over 60 ALS, APC, TLS, and other notes of incoming correspondence to Petra Vogt and Ira Cohen, with Dana Young, A. T. Mann, and others from 1966–1978.

The archive is accompanied by numerous printed materials related to Bardo Matrix Press. Additional highlights include:

- Copy of *Poems from the Cosmic Crypt* inscribed from Ira Cohen to Petra Vogt: “this is the master copy from which all others come” along with other Bardo Matrix publications and woodblock prints.
- Many broadsides, pamphlets, and sample prints on rice paper, including the *Bookshop Broadsheet* published for Spirit Catcher Bookshop, July 1975, with advertisements for exhibitions, publications, poems (including “For Petra” by John Fungi), and poems by Ira Cohen, Angus MacLise, Sagaraya, and others.

Description of Archival Series

SERIES I: CORRESPONDENCE

Includes file of The Living Theatre documentation and personal ephemera

SERIES II: PETRA VOGT FILES

With journals, artworks, and artist files

SERIES III: IRA COHEN + BARDO MATRIX

Handmade book objects, Bardo Matrix printings, broadsides, and publications

SERIES IV: PHOTOGRAPHS

Mostly by Ira Cohen, with files for subjects and themes
