

The Steve McCaffery Archive

The Archive offers a distinct opportunity for rich scholarly exploration into concrete, sound, and language poetry through published and unpublished manuscripts, correspondence, drawings, journals, sketchbooks, audio/video recordings and ephemera.



Photo illustration (not part of the archive) based on the poster “Four Horsemen Canadada,” shown below.

“Though he would be among the first people to point out the inherent problems with the terminology, poet and scholar Steve McCaffery is one of the major architects of postmodern Canadian literature and was a major player in the Canadian avant-garde of the 1970s. With fellow poet bpNichol, he formed the Toronto Research Group in 1973 ... With Nichol, Paul Dutton and Rafael Barreto-Rivera, McCaffery also formed the highly influential sound poetry collective, The Four Horsemen.

McCaffery’s writing, both creative and critical, is concerned to some extent with going beyond the sentence and the word, beyond syntax.”

— Ryan Cox, “[Trans-Avant-Garde: An Interview with Steve McCaffery](#),” Taxi Online Edition, Winter 2007/2008

Steve McCaffery (1947–)

Poet and scholar Steve McCaffery was born in Sheffield, England. He received his B.A. from Hull University, his M.A. from York University, and his Ph.D. from the program in poetics, English, and comparative literature at SUNY Buffalo. He is a scholar, poet, and performer whose wide-ranging influence is especially present in concrete and sound poetry.

His numerous books of poetry include the full-length collections *Modern Reading: Poems 1969–1990* (Writers Forum, 1991), *Seven Pages Missing: Selected Texts Volume One* (Coach House Press, 2001) and *Volume Two* (Coach House Press, 2002), *Verse and Worse: Selected and New Poems of Steve McCaffery 1989–2009* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010).

Together with bpNichol, he edited *Sound Poetry: A Catalogue for the Eleventh International Sound Poetry Festival* (Underwhich Editions, 1978) and *Rational Geomancy: The Kids of the Book-Machine: The Collected Research Reports of the Toronto Research Group 1973–1982* (Talonbooks, 1992).

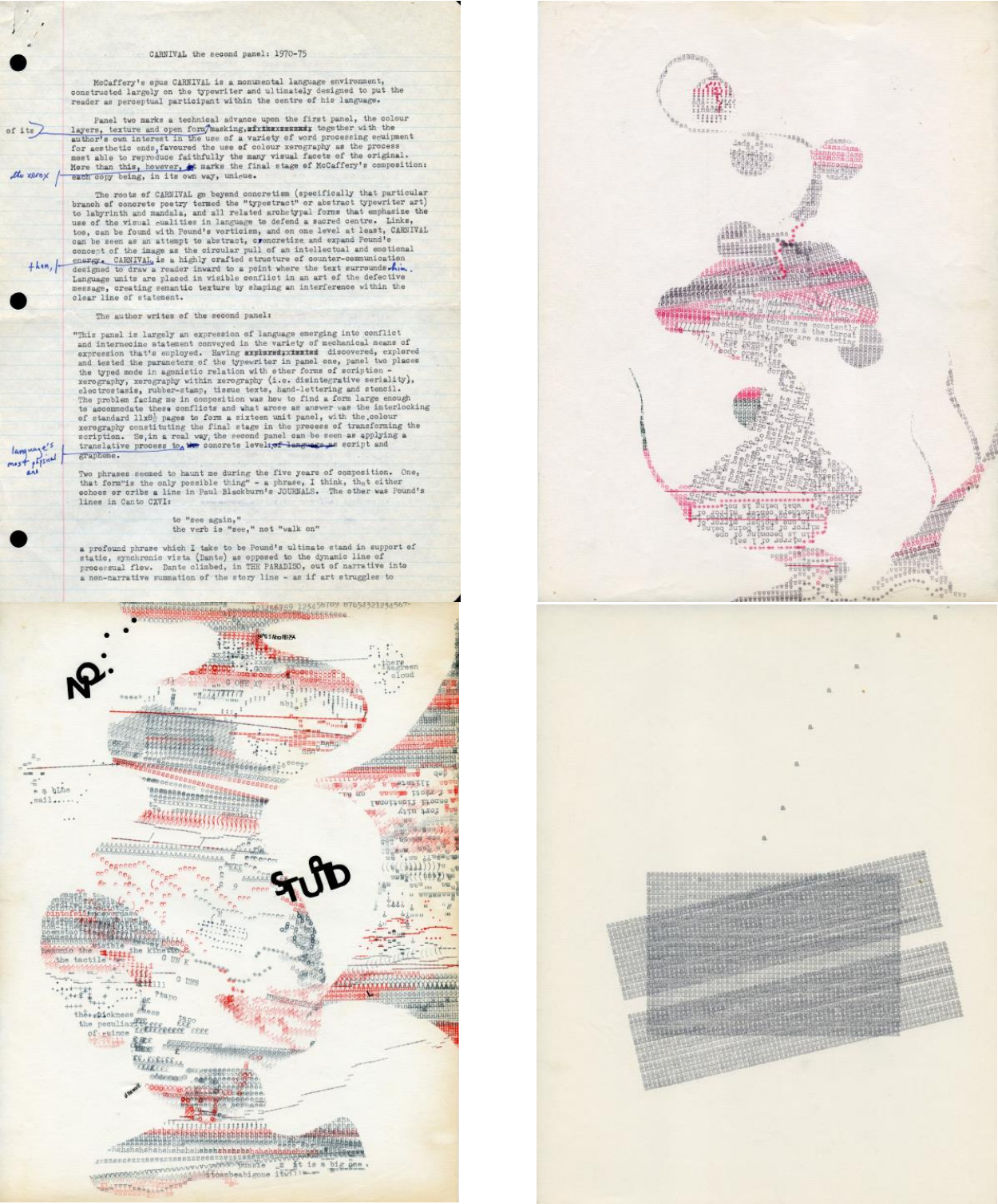
His extensive scholarship is represented in numerous publications, including the books *Imagining Language: An Anthology*, edited with Jed Rasula (MIT Press, 1998), *North of Intention: Critical Writings 1973–1986* (Roof Books, 1986), *Prior to Meaning: The Protosemantic and Poetics* (Northwestern University Press, 2001), and *The Darkness of the Present: Poetics, Anachronism and the Anomaly* (University of Alabama Press, 2012).

Among his many rewards and acknowledgements, McCaffery has twice received the Gertrude Stein Award for Innovative North American Poetry and been nominated twice for Canada's Governor General's Award. He is currently the David Gray Chair of Poetry and Letters at SUNY Buffalo.

The archive is housed at Granary Books in New York City. The archive is available; please contact sclay@granarybooks.com to inquire.

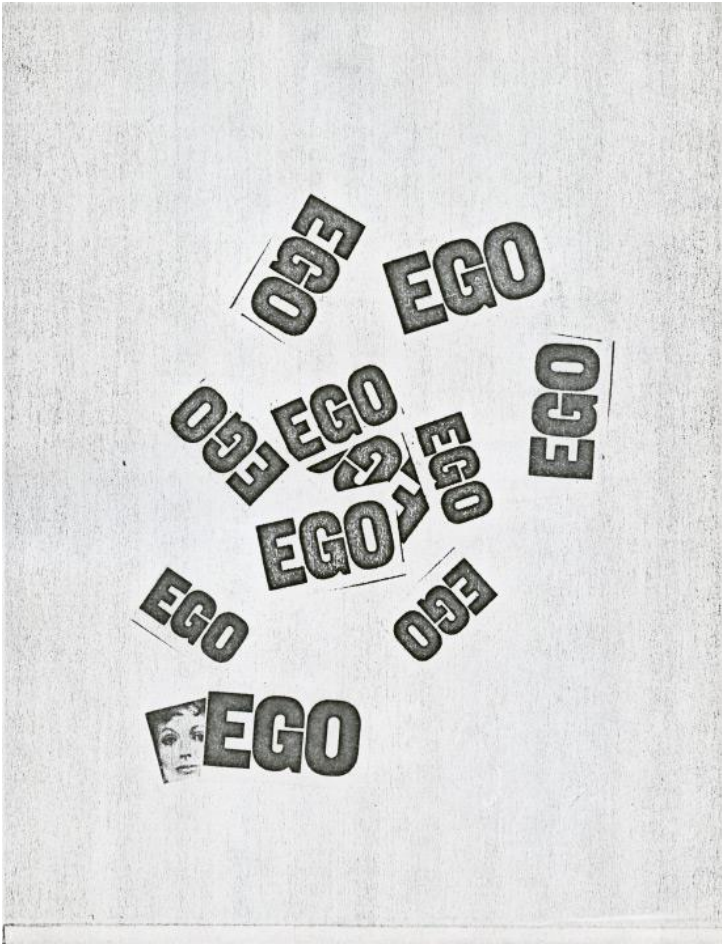
Selected Highlights from the Collection

Manuscripts



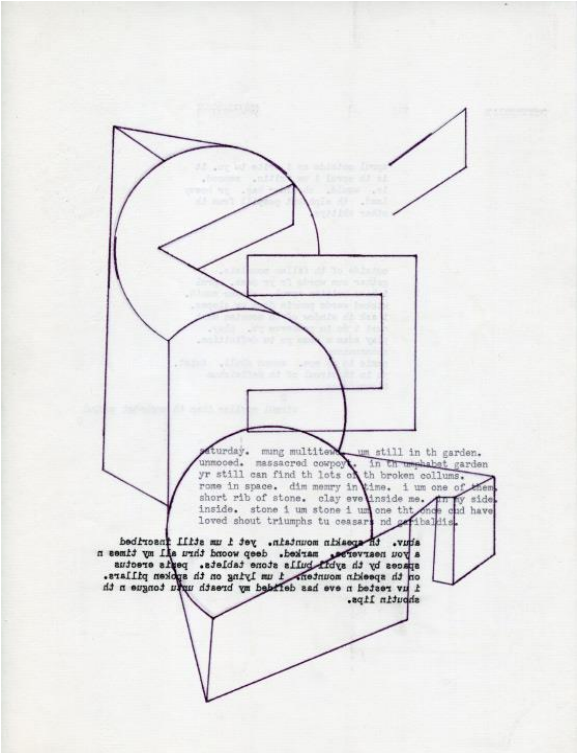
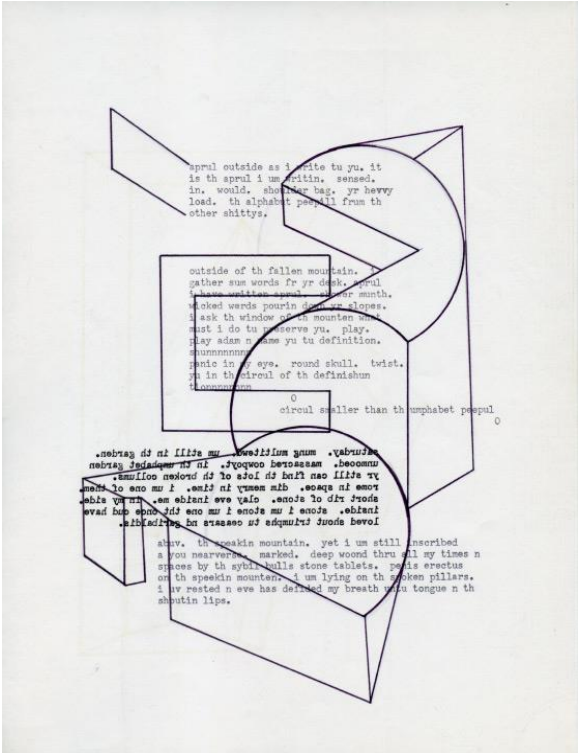
4 pages from a 110-page binder containing “Carnival” originals, notes on panels, and other “early related typestracts,” ca. 1970s.

Steve McCaffery kept 3-ring binders with originals of his concrete and visual poetry. Most of the poems are unique with an assortment of collage elements, colored and black pen drawings, and assorted typewriter (typestract) and type treatments.



“Ego: Version I” from “Ego: Three Variations,” December 1969, in an approximately 226-page 3-ring binder labeled “Trucage / Lhasa Frottages / Systemic Disintegrations.”

McCaffery’s notes in the binder explain: “These three related texts grew out of the earlier experiment of Mural Text. They were initially conceived as ‘kinetic ideogrammes.’ Version III, as well as newspaper clippings, incorporates an earlier tissue text Triple Random C Field. Like Mural Text, these three versions of Ego exist only in this present “duplicated” original. All original elements were deliberately destroyed.”



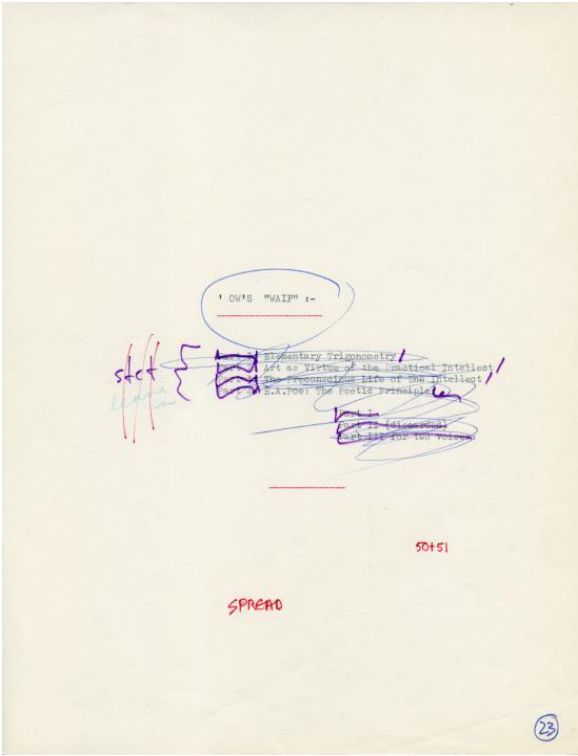
Front and back of a page from “Prototype Semiotic Novel,” 1969.

Front and back page from an approximately 52-page 3-ring binder labelled “Semiotic Poems and Prototype Semiotic Novel.”



Page from “Semiotic Poems,” 1969–74.

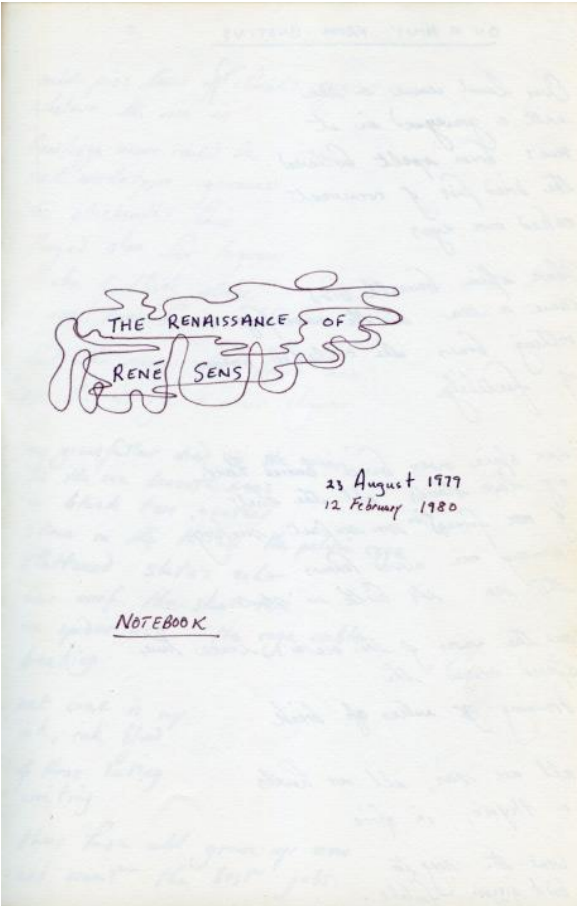
Page from an approximately 52-page 3-ring binder labelled “Semiotic Poems and Prototype Semiotic Novel.”



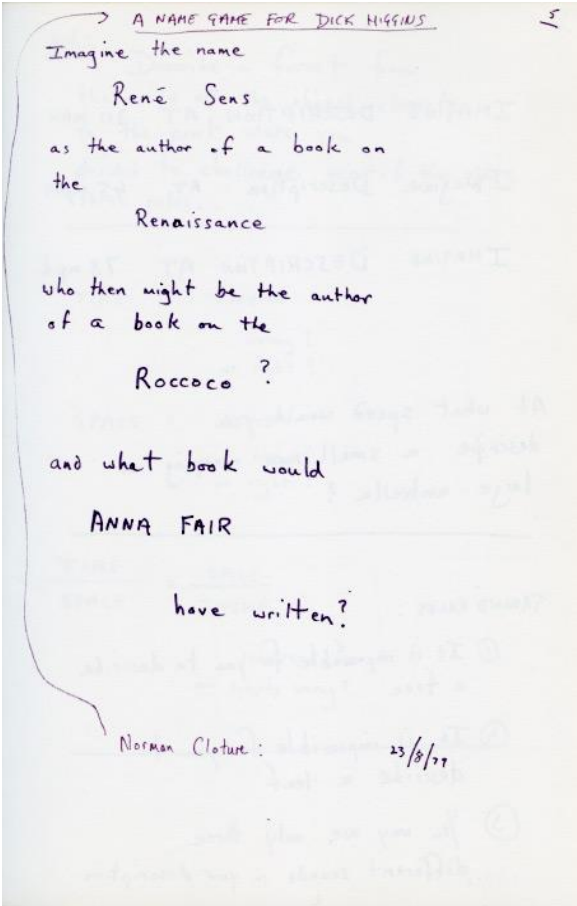
Original manuscript page from 'Ow's "Waif," 1973. Published by Coach House Press in 1975.

Journals/Sketchbooks

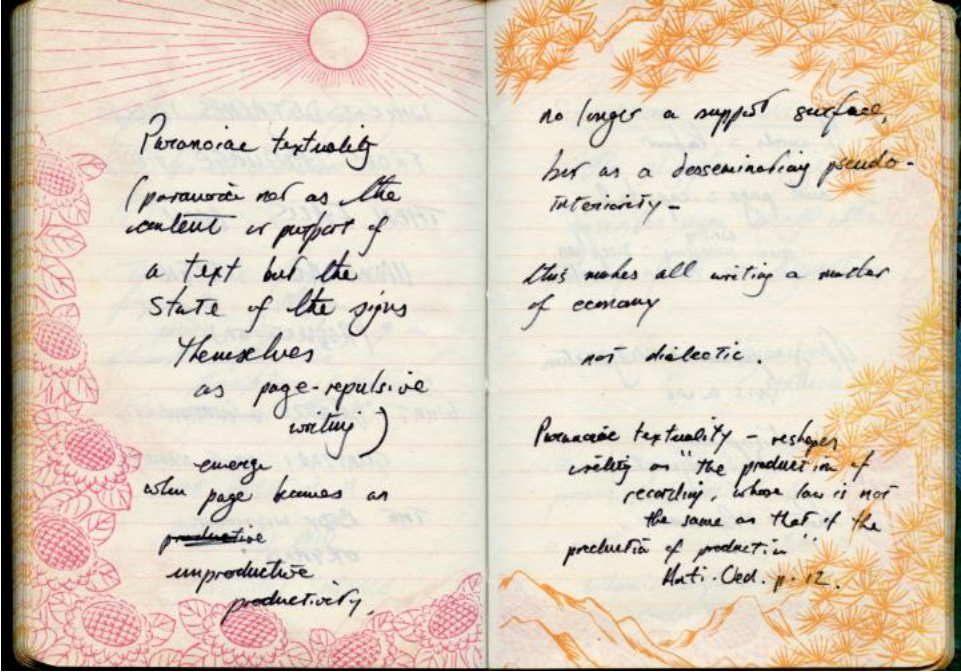
The archive contains 49 journals/sketchbooks from 1959–2010.



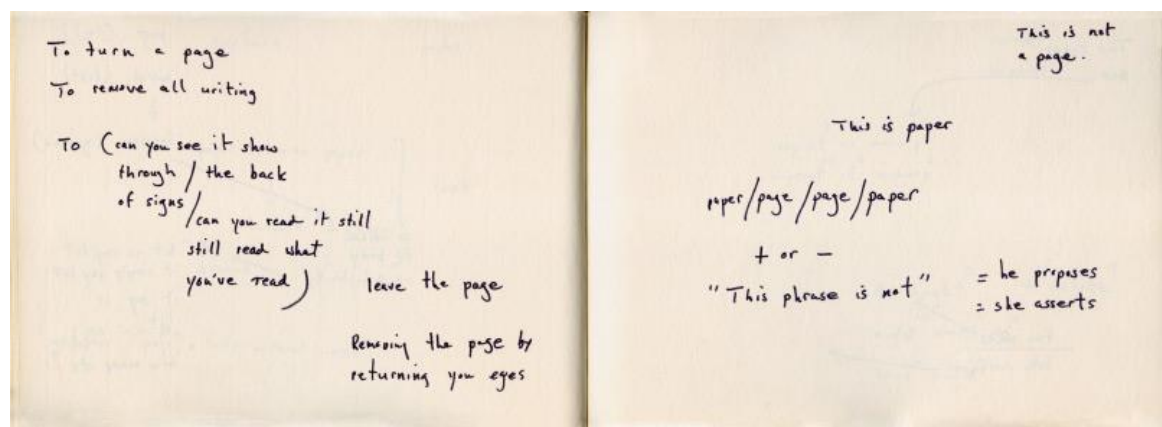
Title page from journal/sketchbook from August 23, 1979–February 12, 1980.



"A Name Game for Dick Higgins" from McCaffery's journal/sketchbook from August 23, 1979–February 12, 1980.

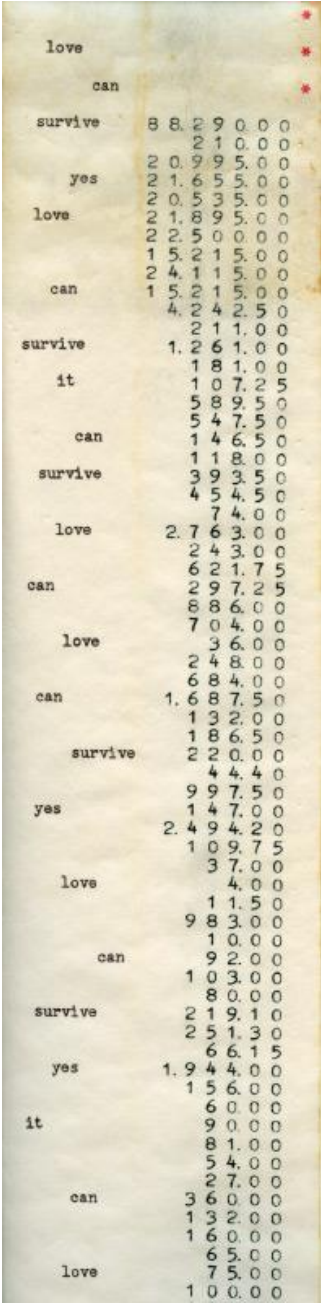


A spread from Steve McCaffery's journal/sketchbook from March 5–September 10, 1980.



A spread from Steve McCaffery's October–December 1980 journal/sketchbook.

Poem/Objects



The first foot of Steve McCaffery's "The Ari Tape," November 1969. This early scroll poem is created on a very long roll of adding machine tape.

The archive includes five of McCaffery's poem/objects including two original unpublished scroll texts.

Anemic Envelope

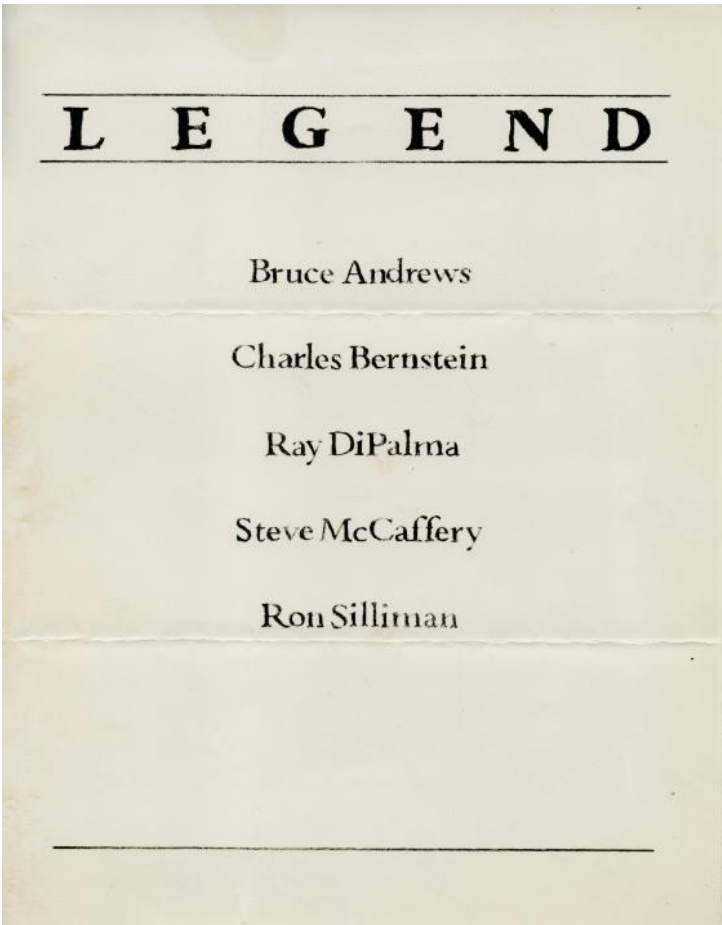


An original unbound page from *Anemic Envelope*, a magazine started by Steve McCaffery but never released.

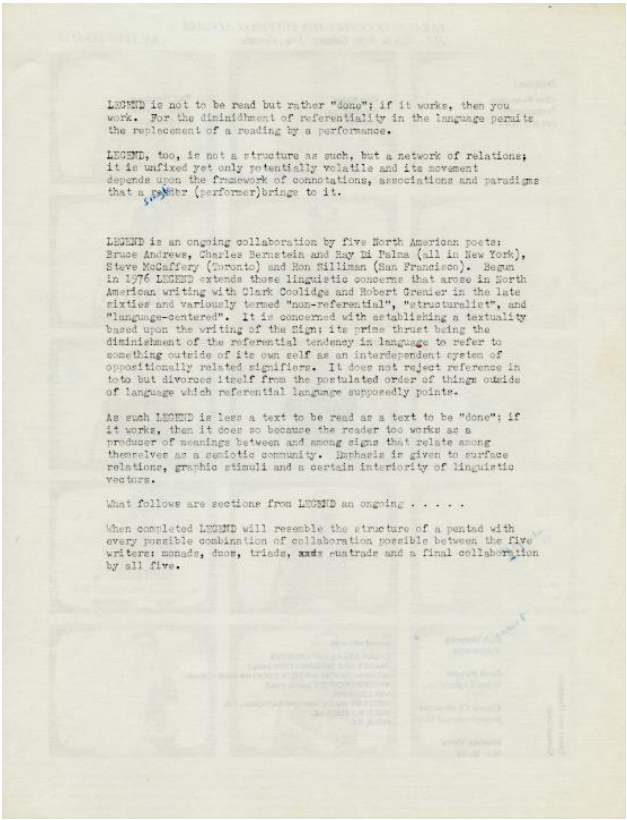
Contributors included Earle Birney, Brian Craig, Steve McCaffery, bpNichol.

The archive includes 7 original unbound pages.

Legend



Proof of an early version, on photographic paper, of the cover of *Legend* by Bruce Andrews, Charles Bernstein, Ray DiPalma, Steve McCaffery, and Ron Silliman (L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E, 1980).



Typescript instructions for *Legend* on back of stationery for Parachute Center for Cultural Affairs, Calgary.

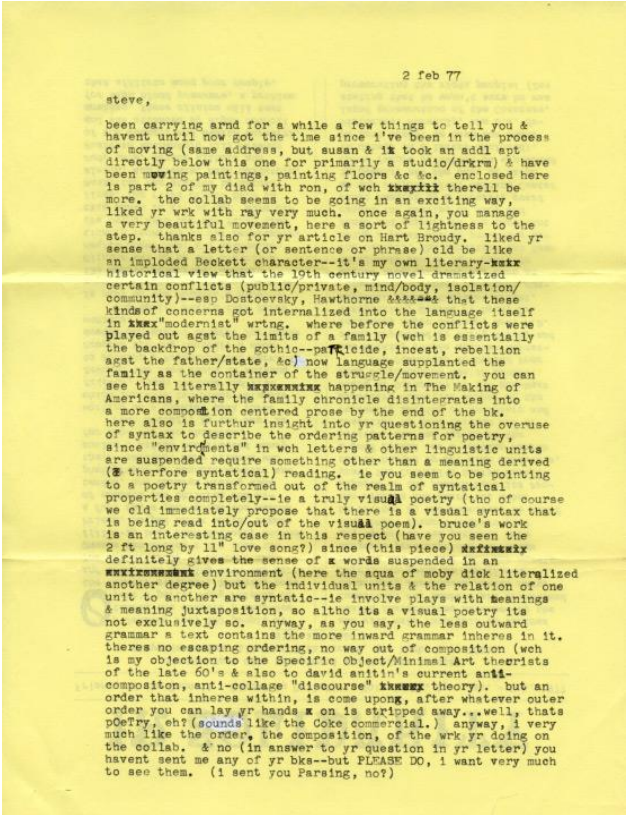
“LEGEND is not to be read but rather ‘done’; if it works, then you work. For the diminidhment [sic] of referentiality [sic] in the language permits the replacement of a reading by a performance.

“LEGEND, too, is not a structure as such, but a network of relations; it is unfixed yet potentially volatile and its movement depends upon the framework of connotations, associations and paradigms that a reader single (performer) brings to it.”



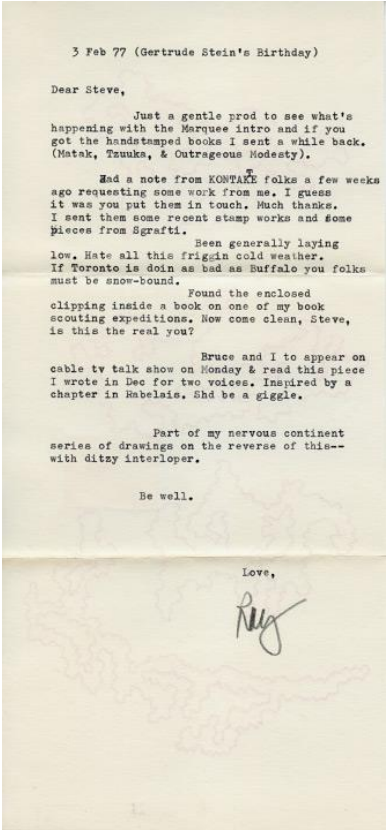
Bruce Andrews, front and back of postcard with original collage to Steve McCaffery, December 4, 1976.

“got Ron’s piece, or a draft thereof; works from Charles [Bernstein], & from Ray [diPalma] = fantastic energy. on both the theoretical & Language-centered planes!!”



Charles Bernstein, first of two page TLS, typed on the back of *In Solidarity* (the newsletter of the Friends of the Council New York City Unemployed and Welfare Council), to Steve McCaffery, February 2, 1977.

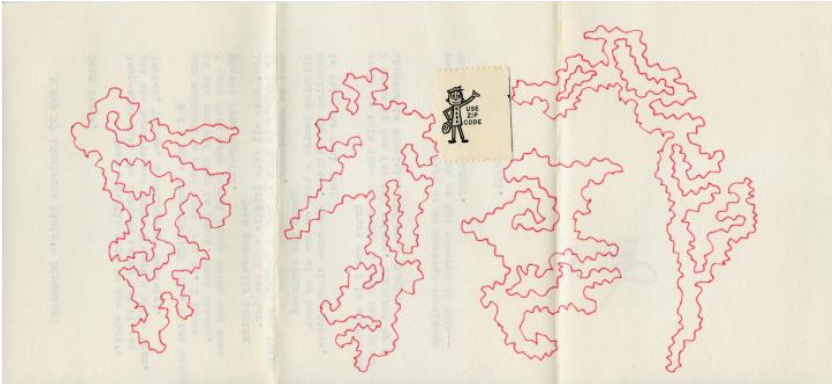
“enclosed is part 2 of my diad with ron [Silliman], of wch there'll be more. the collab seems to be going in an exciting way, liked yr wrk with ray [diPalma] very much. once again, you manage a very beautiful movement, here a sort of lightness to the step.”



Ray DiPalma, front (shown left) and back (shown below) of TLS to Steve McCaffery, February 3, 1977 (Gertrude Stein's Birthday).

“Bruce [Andrews] and I appear on cable tv talk show on Monday & read this piece I wrote in Dec for two voices. Inspired by a chapter in Rabelais. Shd be a giggle/

“Part of my nervous continent series of drawings on the reverse of this—with ditzzy interloper.”



11.22.76

Steve,

2 short thots re the collab.

1) on the principle of first reader ordering: I'm totally behind that idea, it's great. but i think its important to be sure to find the right reader. 4 names come to my mind & so I thot to throw them out (to the group as a whole, i'm writing 4 letters tonight):


Karl Young
Alan Davies
Michael Lally
Bob Perelman

2) on a title - i think we shld go slow on this until a consensus is had on something.

to date, my mail has suggested 3: Legend, N chotomies, and five pointed star in a three dimensional space.

of those, my bias is toward Legend

3 wch have occurred to me are

Cell
Cadre
& a nonverbal one: 

got yr monadt in the mail! plus a big package from Andrews, this thing is really off the ground (!)

read my monad at a reading w/ Bromige (who sez to say hello to you) the other night. it got a great response (specially from those who know my work best). had a chance to read w/ Duncan in the audience for the first time, wch was a kick.

didja get my openletter for O L7fon the Marxism & Language # for next year, it sounds good: I'd suggest to you these names as well: Rich Astle, UCLA English Dept, and Terry Rupers, Martin Luther King General Hospital, Los Angeles, CA (Käpers is a shrink working in the Black community whos has an extensive knowledge of Lacanian matters + a member of the New American Movement). Rich, who was Jameson's star pupil at UC San Diego (his ex-wife was part of the Bill & Emily Harris defense team), is also an old buddy of mine from wage labor days in the US Postal Service (1967) & haight ashbury era: his PhD orals team consisted of Jameson, David Antin & Manny Farber (!). He sez, by the way, that PJ is now at Yale (or will be soon), ah commoditization (Rich has had part of a novel published in the Eugene Wildman anthology on Experimental Fiction) -- more, later,

Ron

Ron Silliman, TLS to Steve McCaffery, November 22, 1976.

“on a title - I think we shld go slow on this until a consensus is had on something. / to date, my mail as suggested 3: Legend, N chotomies, and five pointed star in a three dimensional space. / of those, my bias is toward Legend / 3 of wch have occurred to me are / Cell / Cadre / & a nonverbal one: [a blue 5-pointed star].”

Assorted Correspondence

21 Dec. 86 -
Alison Knowles
also in contact with

Dear Stebhaan mqq quapherie,

an exquisite mailing regarding Eutichianus the Tuscan regarding grapes and beans and such like commodities but upon the Altar, really!

thought of you with this:

"Jesper Svenvros a friend of Goran Prins Pahlsson who suggests that a question mark should be made with a curve, so we don't loose track of the basis of the sign in wels and fishes. If you don't keep these lakes stocked with living things, the poets will die out for sure, he says."

he inclosed "S" is for Stephaan, or Stebhaan if ya like

Alison Knowles, TLS, December 23, 1986.

“Dear Stebhaan mqq quapherie, / an exquisite mailing regarding grapes and beans and such like commodities / but upon the Altar, really!”

THIS
Barrett Watten
2020-9th Avenue
Oakland, CA 94606

August 2, 1984

Dear Steve:

The next issue of Poetics Journal will be "Non-Narrative," which doesn't necessarily exclude discussions of narrative forms and which, I think, will end up as a discussion of the value of narrative as one of several temporal possibilities. Would you have a topic to propose for the issue? Interested in reviewing? Suggest a book(s) to deal with? Or would you be interested in writing for the "Symposium on Narrative" section, which will ask, "what is current value of narrative in your work"?


So far, some of the articles we expect to see will be on: narrative and dream in psychoanalysis, illusion, work processes and poetic form (Ed Friedman) (the first two are, Rick Flomblomno and Delphine Ferret), narrative vs. fiction (Silliman), supersubjective narrative (Peter Middleton), poet's theater (Robinson & Corder), reviews of Antin, Tuning, The L Book, Marjorie Perloff, Indeterminacy, etc. etc. That's just to suggest a range, which can be extended.

It would be good to hear what you've been doing. Here, there's often a great deal of dread but we keep things going on schedule.

All best,

Barry

↳ P.s. you had mentioned an article on Bakhtin earlier.
The Dialogic Imagination?
(last summer's reading - quite brilliant but admittedly needs editing as a book - reminded me (in substance) of Auerbach's Mimesis actually.)



Barrett Watten, TLS with holograph note on bottom to Steve McCaffery, August 2, 1984.

“The next issue of Poetics Journal will be ‘Non-Narrative,’ which doesn’t necessarily exclude discussions of narrative forms and which, I think, will end up as a discussion of the value of narrative as one of several temporal possibilities.”

BOB COBBING

89A PETHERTON ROAD LONDON N5 2QT

13th October 1990

Dear Steve

Unexpectedly printed your THE ENTRIFT for a Writers Forum launch last weekend. I've sent you two copies AIRMAIL Printed Paper rate, and I'll send some more surface mail on Monday.

It makes a nice little book. I read it at the launch and it went down well with the audience. Because I did it in a hurry, I didn't check for errors, apart from correcting the ones you had already marked - there are a few, I think, so I'll ask you to do a proof read and let me know what to correct, in time for the second edition (I did only 60 copies of the first edition, and they'll soon go).

One nice touch, I think, is in the Commonwealth section where you've got 'a missing part'. That's probably too good to correct. Or was it intentional?

Wish you'd been here for the launch. Would like to hear you read them. Will try to do the bigger book early in the new year.

Love & all best wishes
to you & Karen Bob

Bob Cobbing, ALS to Steve McCaffery, October 13, 1990.

"Unexpectedly printed your The Entrift for a Writers Forum launch last weekend...It makes a nice little book. I read it at the launch and it went down well with the audience. Because I did it in a hurry, I didn't check for errors, apart from correcting the ones you already marked — there are a few, I think, so I'll ask you to do a proof read and let me know what to correct, in time for the second edition."



From the hand of bpNICHOL

his left hand knows what his right hand is doing"

April 27/77

Steve

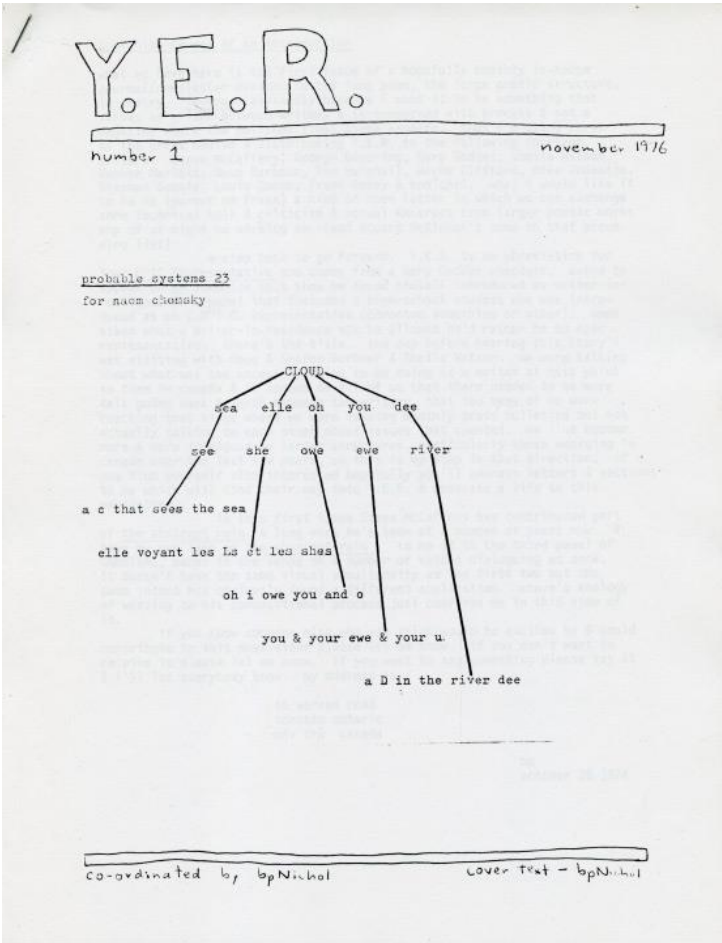
worth noting in regard to the CONTINUITY QUESTION is our long discussions about whether to put out an album (i.e. frozen state when what we deal with is shifting - our preference then for LIVE IN THE WEST as more obviously documentary of an occasion & time) & our ongoing discussion of electronic elements as it relates to this question of energy interface. i.e. its human energy not electric we're dealing with

bp

bpNICHOL/46 WARREN RD/TORONTO/CANADA/M4V 2R3

bpNichol, ALS to Steve McCaffery, April 27, 1977.

"worth noting in regard to the CONTINUITY QUESTION is our long discussions about whether to put out an album (i.e. frozen state when what we deal with is shifting — our preference then for LIVE IN THE WEST as more obviously documentary of an occasion & time) & our ongoing discussion of electronic elements as it relates to this question of energy interface. i.e. its human energy not electric we're dealing with[.]"



Y.E.R. 1 (November 1976).
Coordinated by bpNichol.

“what we have here is the first issue of a hopefully monthly in-house journal/newsletter devoted to the long poem, the large poetic structure, in poetry. in-house advisedly because i want it to be something that serves as a link between writers & is concerned with process & not a magazine where the polished final piece appears. thus i'm using xerox as the print medium & distributing Y.E.R. to the following fourteen writers: Steve McCaffery, George Bowering, Gary Geddes, Sheila Watson, Daphne Marlatt, Doug Barbour, Tom Marshall, Wayne Clifford, Mike Ondaatje, Stephen Scobie, Louis Dudek, Frank Davey & bpNichol.”



Jackson Mac Low, 2 page TLS,
January 7–8, 1986.

This is one of several long letters from Mac Low that aim to correct McCaffery's understanding of his work.

“The reader of an Asymmetry has exactly the same freedom (as a reader of a poem by Creeley) to experience time—AND MUST EXERCISE THIS FREEDOM WHEN PUBLICLY PERFORMING IT, since profoundly experiencing the aural situation (i.e., time as perceived through the ears) is essential to the performance of such pieces.”

17 FERRY PATH, CAMBRIDGE CB4 1HB
2nd January 1989

Dear Mr McCaffery,

Many thanks for your letter, and for the books which prevented it, safely and promptly delivered by David Marriott in person. As exchange I have sent off a copy of the slab you refer to, though by a less accelerated room service. Your writing I have indeed seen from time to time, and the ins and outs of double=hyphens through the credentials of text production. I suppose it will come as no large surprise if I say that the crossweave of theoretic debate and innovative performance has looked nothing like so intimate to me, from this outstation, as contention from within the fray has assumed; perhaps to clear the air I may say also that a fair amount of the writing I have seen contradicts directly in my experience of it exactly the claims made on behalf of its sponsorship of productive activity. Some texts which I have liked greatly seem to promote inferred relations well outside the schedule, whilst others (which I have not cared for) have seemed every bit as restrictive in their ideological conformity as the most bourgeois texts written to satisfy the expectations of a predefined market. However select and unestablished this new readership, the market-economy model seems to me to fit the case very well, and I am surprised to find that the basal analysis offered by the principal scribes (yourself included) should seem to me so radically flawed. Surprised, not out of any grandiose sense of superiority (I hope), but because the terms of the argument in its several versions come so close themselves to a position which I believe cannot be evaded, only then to veer off into defensive elaborations which strike me as both self-refuting and unsupported by the evidence of practice.

All this may seem just beginner's literalism, after the cantilevering modes and interventions of a theme with its own history, but an initial letter must risk the obvious if it's to avoid the merely courteous. In your two larger pieces at the start and end of *North of Iteration*, even though you might not hold either position now, I'd not myself dissent from the project to write out or over the precursory collusions of representation at the stage of the implied contract for acts of reading. To restore the frontal or phonic accidentalism of speech modalities is already a transferring act of intelligence, through use of the page rather than the air-stream, and to bring back the one across the generic grids of the other can be to set outer frames around conditions of astonishing concentration and transitivity. My own practice, however unstable and inconsistent, would scarcely allow me to deny this, though in fact I can think of instances where I'd still do what I'd also refute. But in the political question of reference to a world in which social action is represented linguistically and its consequences marked out by economic function and personal access to social goods (justice, freedom, brown bread), the ludic syntax of a language system is mapped on to determinations and coercions which by invasion cast their weights and shadows parasitically into the playing-fields. I do not believe that 'freedom' from this aspect of the social order is more than illusory, and this rather flimsy illusion I find in rather many texts included in, for example, the *American Tree* collection. No free signifiers: no unvalorised process: no free lunch!

Your own defence against this foreclosure upon a de-referenced sign system has been to argue ('a serious entailment',

J. H. Prynne, 5-page TLS, January 2, 1989. A salvo in what came to be known as “The McCaffery-Prynne Debate.”

“Your writing I have indeed seen from time to time, and the ins and outs of double=hyphens through the credentials of text production. I suppose it will come as no large surprise if I say that the crossweave of theoretic debate and innovative performance has looked nothing like so intimate to me, from this outstation, as contention from within the fray has assumed; perhaps to clear the air I may say also that a fair amount of the writing I have seen contradicts directly in my experience of it exactly the claims made on behalf of its sponsorship of productive activity.”

Steve:


does anything i ever send to you ever get there? i've sent piles of stuff down to no response. izzit me or izzit something else? for wh_t little it's worth: i can't stand having to use care-of addresses that belong to universities. the vast percentage of nonresponse i've gotten (uh...) through c/o addresses has been that addressed through universities. does the stuff ever get to the addressee? is there any point to my talking about this in a letter addressed to someone care of a university? all this to say: it'd be nice to know that at least the stuff's getting to you. i've sent numerous publications, the proposal for yr reading here ages ago, some random notes of inquiry, announcements; none of it's come back but that doesn't necessarily mean anything, either. i'd sure appreciate a real address for you, should you get to read this plea.

with luck, you'll've received this, then, & now have yr handful of copies of A LITTLE NASTINESS. yes, still selectively issuing reprints from the 5¢ Mini Mimeo Series in continuing homage & am gl'd to, so very many years later, be able to finally make the printing process match the series title (in part, anyway) with this one.

hope you enjoy what i've done with it.

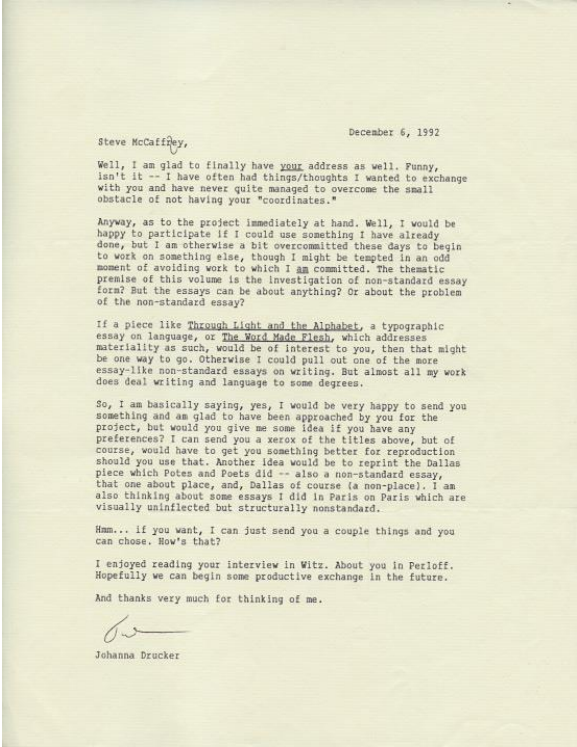
& please do send word &, if you'd not mind, a real address. attempting to communicate to people through their workplaces has never seemed like a good idea & nothing so far has convinced me otherwise even partially. let's hope this one makes it through.

cheers!!!!!!'



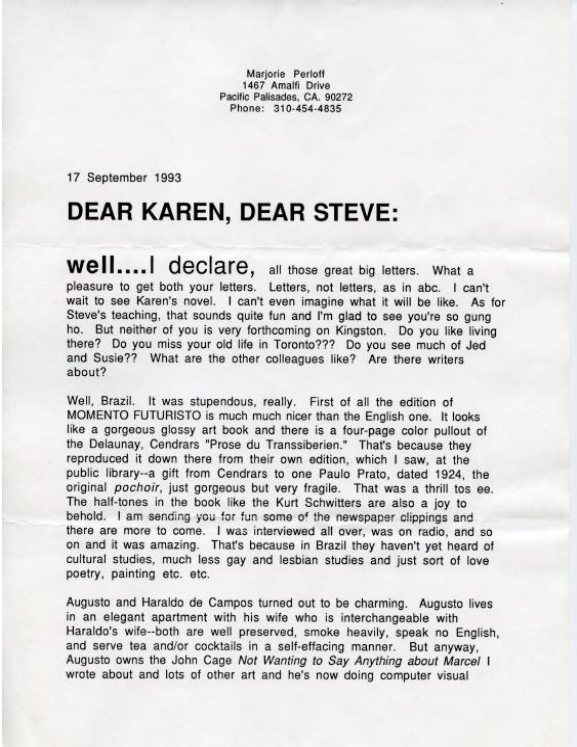
jw curry, TLS to Steve McCaffery, [2008].

Letter sent with curry's reprint of *A Little Nastiness* by the Four Horsemen, originally published by bpNichol as Ganglia 5¢ Mini Mimeo #57.



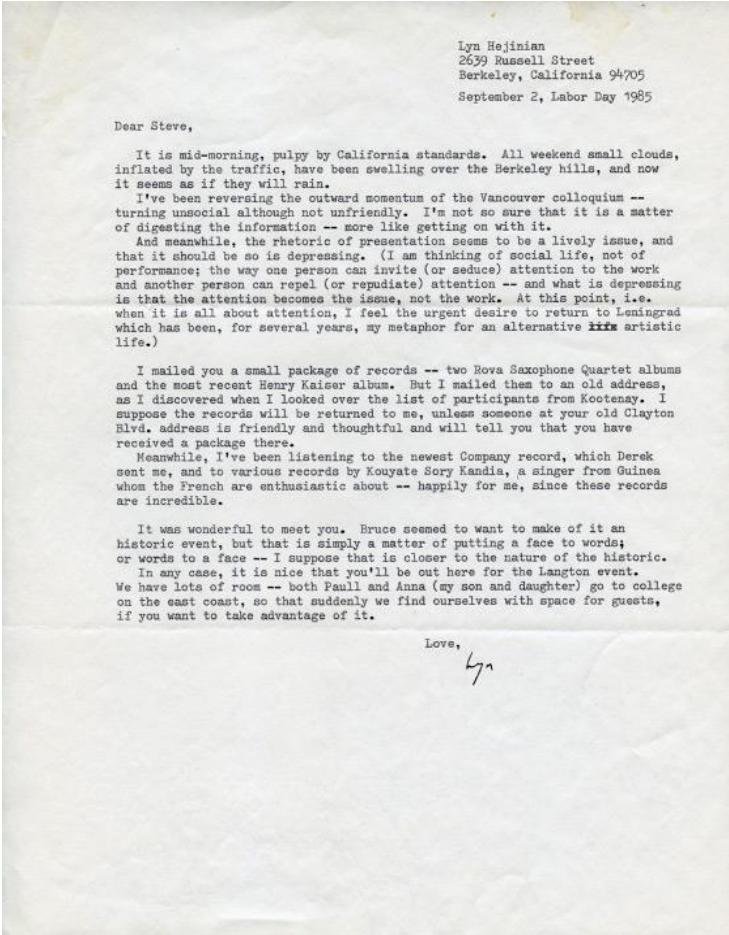
Johanna Drucker, TLS to Steve McCaffery, December 6, 1992.

“Well, I am glad to finally have your address as well. Funny, isn't it – I have often had things/thoughts I wanted to exchange with you and have never quite managed to overcome the small obstacle of not having your ‘coordinates.’ ”



Marjorie Perloff, 3-page TLS to Steve McCaffery and Karen Mac Cormack, September 17, 1993.

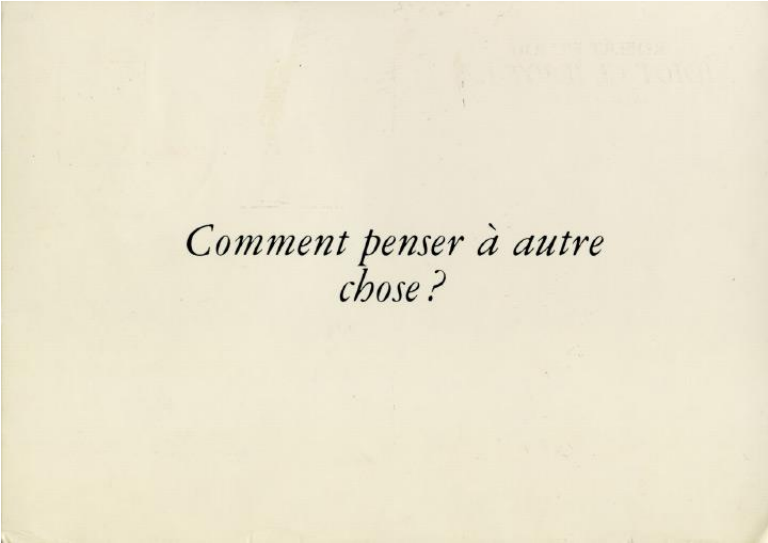
“well....I declare, all those big letters. What a pleasure to get both your letters. Letters, not letters, as in abc. I can't wait to see Karen's novel. I can't imagine what it will be like. As for Steve's teaching, that sounds quite fun and I'm glad you're so gung ho. But neither of you is very forthcoming on Kingston. Do you like living there? Do you miss your old life in Toronto??? Do you see much of Jed and Susie?? What are the other colleagues like? Are there writers about?”



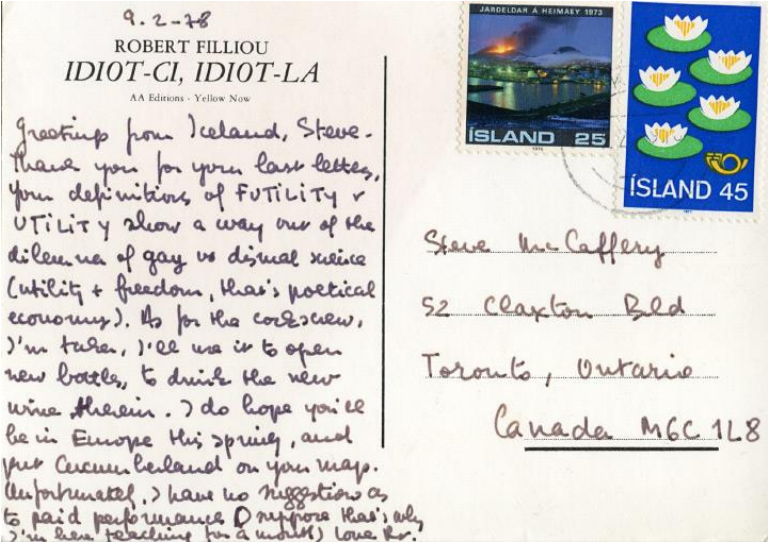
Lyn Hejinian, TLS to Steve McCaffery, September 2, 1985.

“[T]he rhetoric of presentation seems to be a lively issue, and that it should be so depressing. (I am thinking of social life, not of performance; the way one person can invite (or seduce) attention to the work and another person can repel (or repudiate) attention — and what is depressing is that the attention becomes the issue, not the work.”

“It was wonderful to meet you. Bruce [Andrews?] seemed to want to make of it an historic event, but that is simply a matter of putting a face to words; or words to a face — I suppose that is closer to the nature of the historic.”

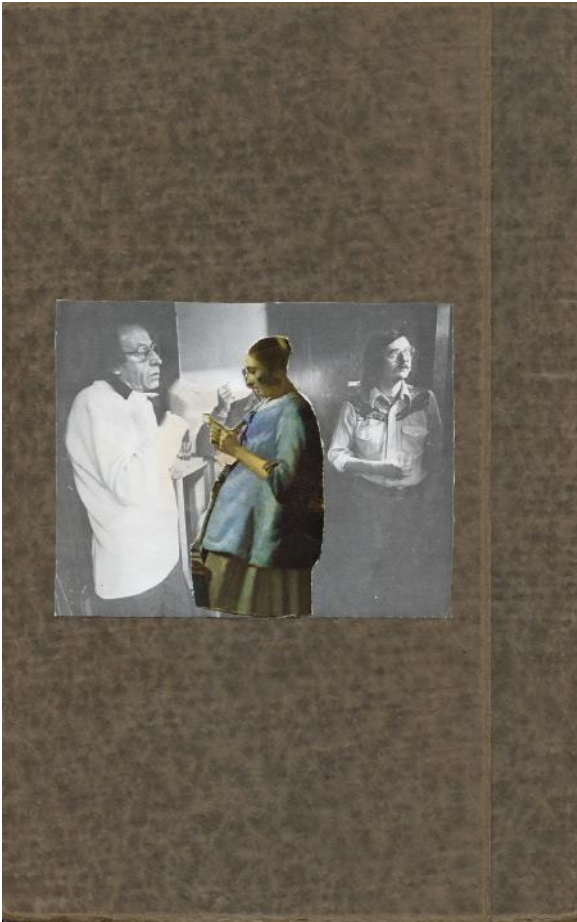


Comment penser à autre
chose ?



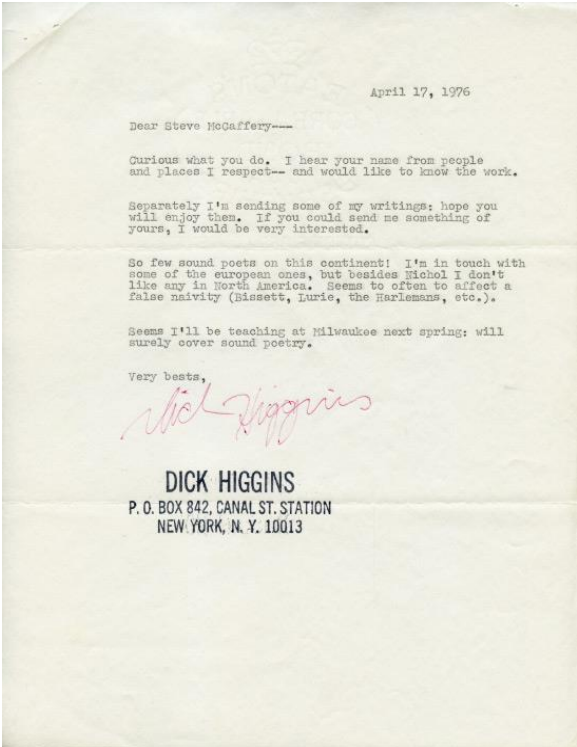
Robert Filliou, APCS to Steve McCaffery, September 2, 1978.

“Greetings from Iceland, Steve. Thank you for your last letter. Your definitions of FUTILITY & UTILITY show a way out of the dilemma of gay vs. dismal science (utility & freedom, that’s poetical economy).”



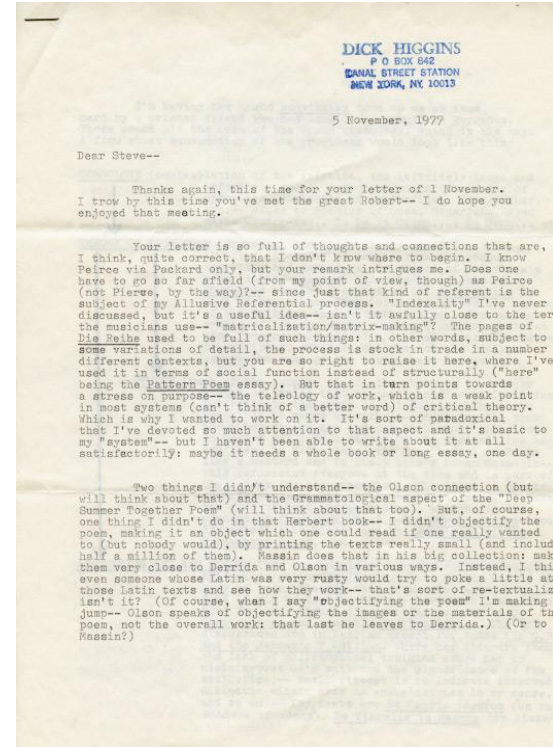
Robert Filliou [?], original collage, ca. late 1970s.

An original collage with one of the elements consisting of a photograph of Filliou and Steve McCaffery pasted on a photographer's paper photo folder, with a second collage on the inside. One of the elements consists of a photograph of Filliou and Steve McCaffery. (In personal conversation, McCaffery does not recall if the collage was a creation of Filliou, himself, or a collaboration between the two. He does date it to the late 1970s.)



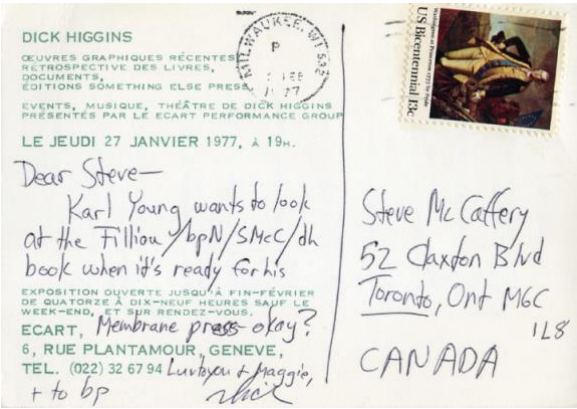
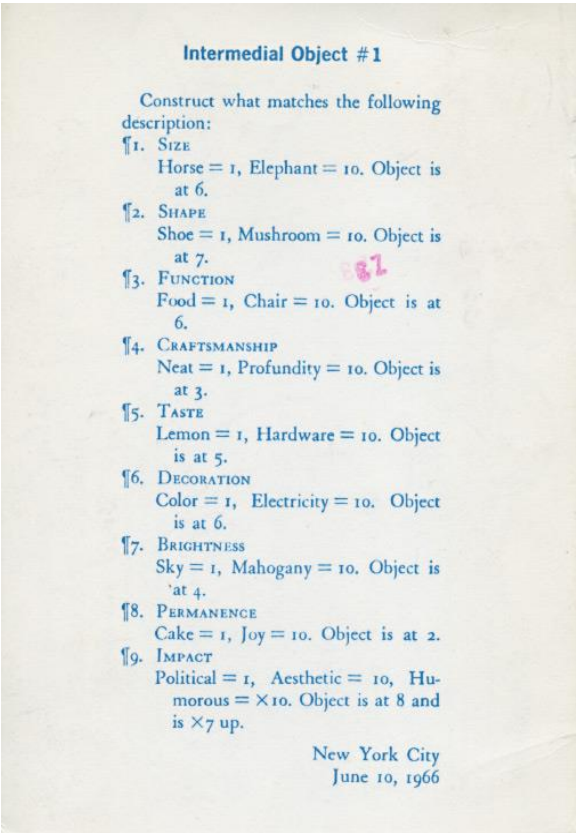
Dick Higgins, TLS to Steve McCaffery, April 17, 1976.

“So few sound poets on this continent! I’m in touch with some of the European ones, but besides Nichol I don’t like any in North America. Seems to [sic] often to affect a false naivty [sic] (Bissett, Lurie, the Harlemons, etc.).”



Dick Higgins, 4-page TLS to Steve McCaffery, November 5, 1977.

“Your letter is so full of thoughts and connections that are, I think, quite correct, that I don’t know where to begin. I know Peirce via Packard only, but your remark intrigues me. Does one have to go so far afield (from my point of view, though) as Peirce (not Pierce, by the way)?-- since just that kind of referent is the subject of my Allusive Referential process. ‘Indexality’ I’ve never discussed, but it’s a useful idea - - isn’t it awfully close to the term the musicians use-- ‘matricialization/matrix-making’?”

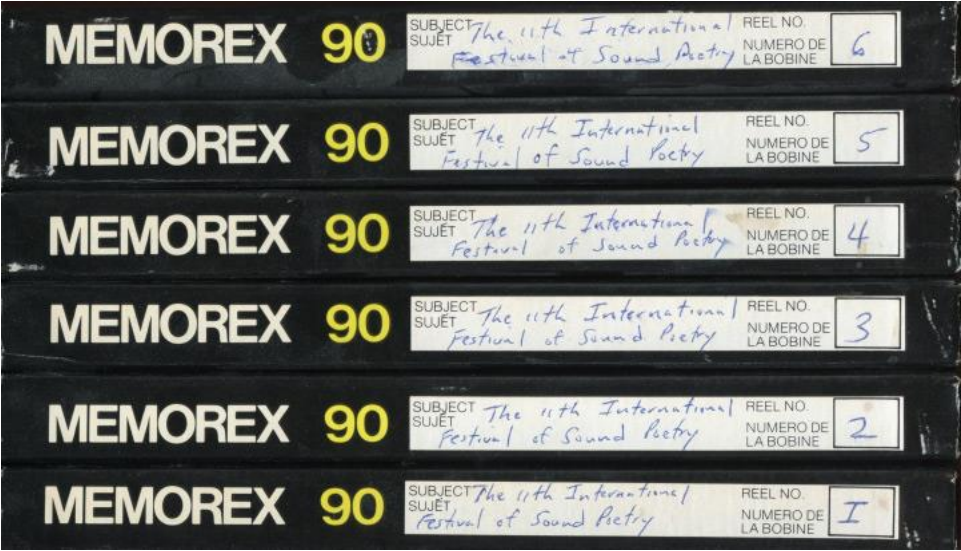


Dick Higgins, APCS (front and back) to Steve McCaffery, February 1977.

11th International Festival of Sound Poetry

Steve McCaffery, Sean O’Huigin, and Steven Ross Smith were festival coordinators for the 11th International Festival of Sound Poetry held in Toronto in October 1978. Festival participants included Henri Chopin, Jerome Rothenberg, Jackson Mac Low, Dick Higgins, Charles Morrow, Raôul Duguay, Bob Cobbing, bpNichol, bill bissett, John Oswald, and Maurizio Nannucci, among many others. The archive contains both print and audio documentation of the festival.

According to Pauline Butling and Susan Rudy’s *Writing in Our Time: Canada’s Radical Poetry in English (1957–2003)* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005), this was one of the first literary festivals of the times that acted to “disturb the social/literary norms. This was the first time the festival was held in North America; it was also the first time a significant body of collaborative performance poetry was presented.”



Reel-to-reel audio tapes documenting the festival.

The archive contains complete audio documentation of the festival on 22 reel-to-reel audio tapes.

Henri Chopin
The Gate House
Ingatstone
Essex
23 3 77

Dear Sean,

thanks for your letter from the 14 of March. Of course, I accepte your invitation for your festival in October 1978, for two reasons : 1) I never seen the Canada, and 2) your festival will be probably important.

Before these date, I met you in Amsterdam, the end of April.

Unfortunately the last periode in 1976 was very bad particullarly for Jean; she has had a ^{very big} accident on the road, and many fractures; she stayed in the hospital during 11 weeks, and now she is at home, with a long reeducation; any way, now the future is for us.

First we are the landlords for the gate house, and I'll prepare an annual festival for one or two weeks ^{each year} before, I want to do many restorations, in the Cottage and in the House, but after that I want an art center with international sound happenings.

Other news, my book about " the sound poetry in the world " is finish, and the publisher Jean Michel Place wants these for the next October. It has about 360 pages, and a large chapter concerning the Canada, with many reproduction of about you there is a large page and one photo + one text, for Burke a poem, and so on.

Any way, after a bad year in The Gate House, health for Jean, some difficulties about the property, now the situation is much better.

See you soon, best things

Henri Chopin

Your questions :
Can you attend? Yes.
The fee, yes, for 200 dollars, but I prefer 250 of course.
The three, alas no, I not British here, and in France my position is not clear. I propose in other things some articles in the big reviews in France, and some broadcasts in the French radio and in the danish radio, plus the belgium radio, francophone.
I believe will be good publicity for your festival. What do you thing about that?

Henri Chopin, ALS to Sean O’Huigin, March 23, 1977.

“thanks for your letter from the 14 of March. Of course [sic], I accepte [sic] your invitation for your festival in October 1978, for two reasons: 1) I never seen the Canada, and 2) your festival will be probably important.”

konkrete konkrete Cannicle

The POSTREUSIC group known as
K O N K R E T E C A N N I C L E
made its debut on the occasion of
the recording of material for a
record put out by the Arts Council
of Great Britain, entitled
EXPERIMENTS IN DISINTEGRATING
LANGUAGE / KONKRETE CANNICLE
The lineup then was Bob Obbing,
Paula Claire and Michael Chant,
the date 6th July, 1971

A fascinating record, with a fine range of effects, all guaranteed
to be a most pleasant counterpoint to ears overfused with the
usual treashy holiday sponge music (Sunday Times, Christmas 1971)

After that recording, the group performed many times together -
at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford; the Walker Art Gallery,
Liverpool; the National Poetry Centre, London; and most notably
at the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations held in Southwark
Cathedral in 1972 -

...only Bob Obbing performing his sound-poems as part of the
KONKRETE CANNICLE, reflected the boisterous hilarity that is surely
no less a part of Shakespeare than black Jacobean melancholy
(Financial Times, 24th April 1972)

Since then, Michael Chant has gone his own musical way, and
Bill Griffiths, who is both a fine musician and an extraordinarily
exciting and versatile poet has taken his place. The birth of the
NEWM KONKRETE CANNICLE was at a performance in the great hall of
the Akademie der Künste to celebrate the 150th aspects of
contemporary sound-poetry as part of the 27th Berlin Festival
(18th September 1977)

Bob Obbing... with his three-headed group here enacted such
childgames and primordial events as Alphabet of Fishes and
Fibble Improvisations. Pivinnabulations with chains and chimes
finally banished the last remnants of recognisable speech.
That remained was a liberation of primitive sound, whose surprise
effects quickly became a familiar mode (Der Tagespiegel, Berlin)

What is unique about KONKRETE CANNICLE is the blending of so many
elements - visual, sound and semantic poetry, music, movement and
dance; from child games to sophisticated word-play; verbal through
abstract to total concrete sound.

It is a strange ritual... a group expression of rhythms, voices
and instruments moving together and apart in imitation, contrast
and contact, with fine receptivity within the score of the poem
offered by the poet.

KONKRETE CANNICLE performs poems by Bob Obbing, Paula Claire and
Bill Griffiths, and occasionally poems by other international
sound-poets.

Page one of the 4-page publicity packet for
Konkrete Canticle (Bob Cobbing, Paula Clair,
and Bill Griffiths).

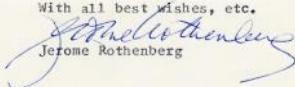
430 Naiad Street
Encinitas, Calif. 92024
22 March 1977

Dear Sean O'Huigin,

Many thanks for the invitation to the Sound Poetry Festival, in which I'd be most happy to participate & for the pleasure of which the fee you mention will be perfectly satisfactory. As far as I know there's no U.S. money around for this, but should I hear of anything, I'll pass the information along. It would, by the way, be useful to get the exact dates as soon as possible, since I'll be coming off a 3-week trip to Sweden at just about the beginning of October & may also want to set up a few readings, etc. in the western N.Y. area. So, as soon as you can let me know...

The enclosed will give you information on the Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble that Steve McCaffery referred to. I assume you'll be looking into the work of other musicians that overlaps with the sound poetry of poets. Cage would be an obvious example--most of his recent work being fairly directly off that of Jackson Mac Low--or LaMonte Young, say, among the more obvious ones. The New York scene in fact would be full of such (Charlemagne Palestine, Steve Reich, etc.) & one I would suggest directly is Charlie Morrow (365 West End Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10024), particularly in the area of personal chants & animal language pieces. The American poets who come immediately to mind are Mac Low, John Giorno, Richard Kostelanetz, but McCaffery & the other Horsemen can fill you in as well as I can.

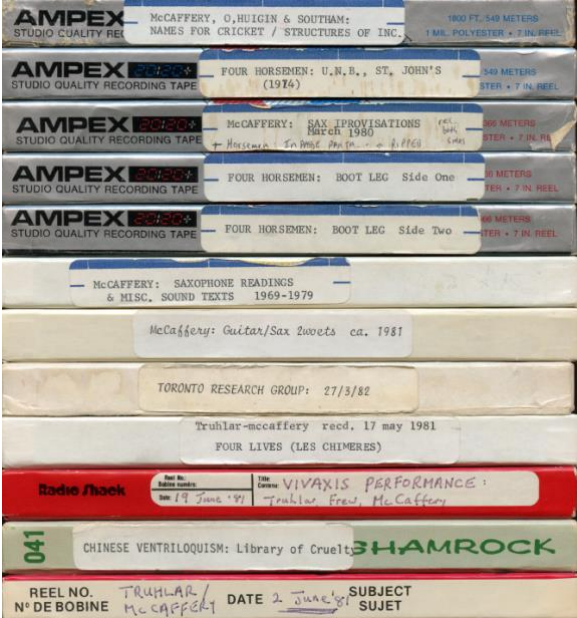
Anyway do let me know about the dates & other information as it develops.

With all best wishes, etc.

Jerome Rothenberg

P.S. The address, above, is the quickest way to reach me.

Jerome Rothenberg, ALS to Sean O'Huigin, March 22, 1977. Rothenberg's acceptance to the festival along with recommendations of other poets from the New York scene.

Audio and Video

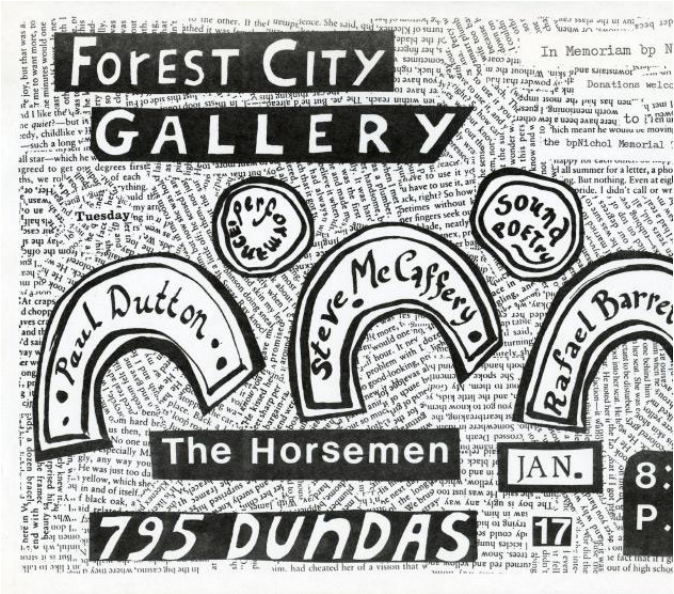


A small sample of the over 490 audio and video items in the archive.

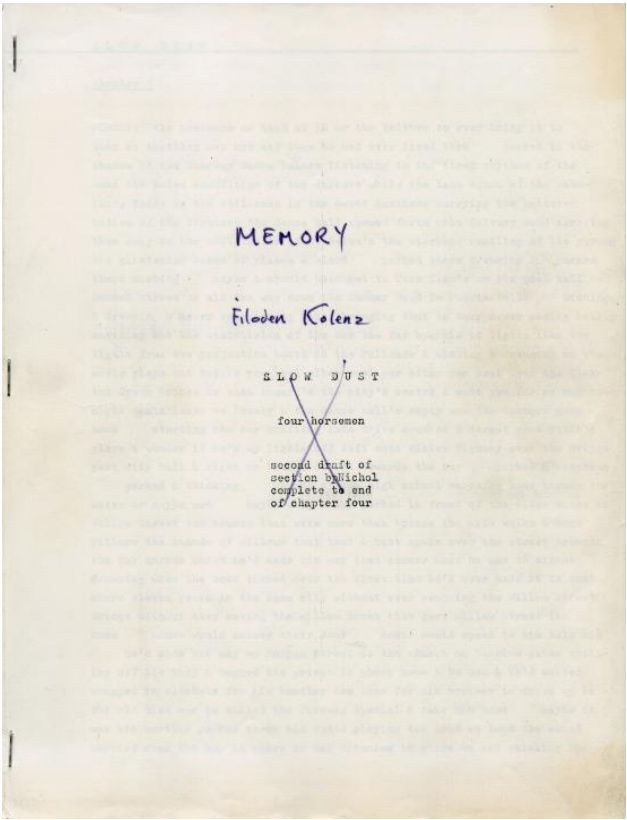
Many are unique recordings and are in a wide assortment of formats, including reel-to-reel audio tapes, cassette audio tapes, vinyl records, CD-Rs, 8mm film, VHS video tapes, U-Matic video cassettes, and mini digital video cassettes. Many of the recordings are unique or rare. Included is documentation of live events, performances, interviews, radio programs, seminars, readings, class recordings, musical performances, master tapes, commercially produced recordings, dubs of recordings, and other recordings. The earliest recordings appear to be reel-to-reel recordings of bpNichol in 1966.

A few of the poets/performers represented: Bruce Andrews, David Antin, Charles Bernstein, Bob Cobbing, Craig Dworkin, Robert Filliou, Gerry Gilbert, Four Horsemen, Bernard Heidsieck, Karen Mac Cormack, Steve McCaffery, Charlie Morrow, Opal L. Nations, bpNichol, John Oswald, Leslie Scalapino, Owen Sound, Michael Palmer, R. Murray Schafer, Whitney Smith, Michael Snow, Richard Truhlar, Erica Van Horn, and Barrett Watten.

Four Horsemen



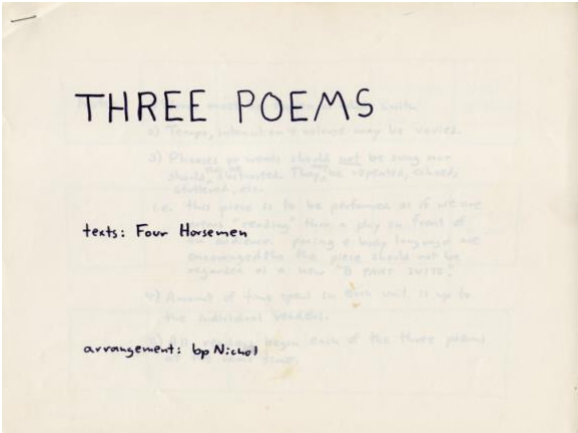
Flyer for a performance by the Horsemen at Forest City Gallery, January 17, [1989], London, Ontario, Canada.



Page from “Memory” by Filoden Kolenz
part of the *Slow Dust* manuscript.

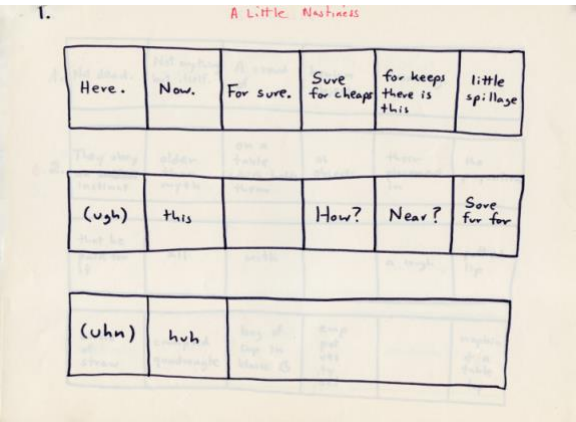
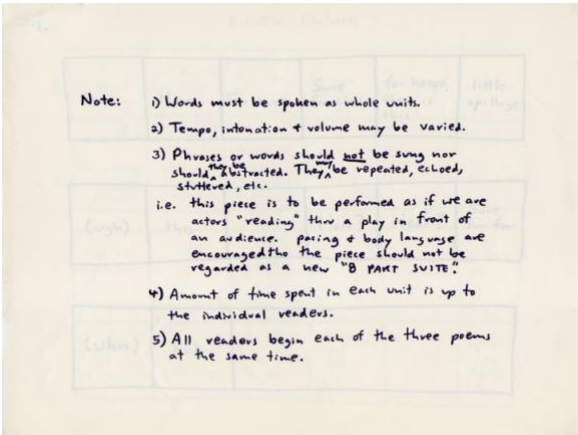
Crossed out is the manuscript’s title *Slow Dust* and authors the Four Horsemen along with “second draft of section bpNichol complete to end of chapter four.”

The archive contains over 500 pages of typescript and holograph drafts and notes for the unpublished Four Horsemen (bpNichol, Paul Dutton, Rafael Barreto-Rivera, and Steve McCaffery) collaborative novel *Slow Dust*.



“Three Poems” text by the Four Horsemen,
arranged by bpNichol, February 28, 1981, 6
pages with cover.

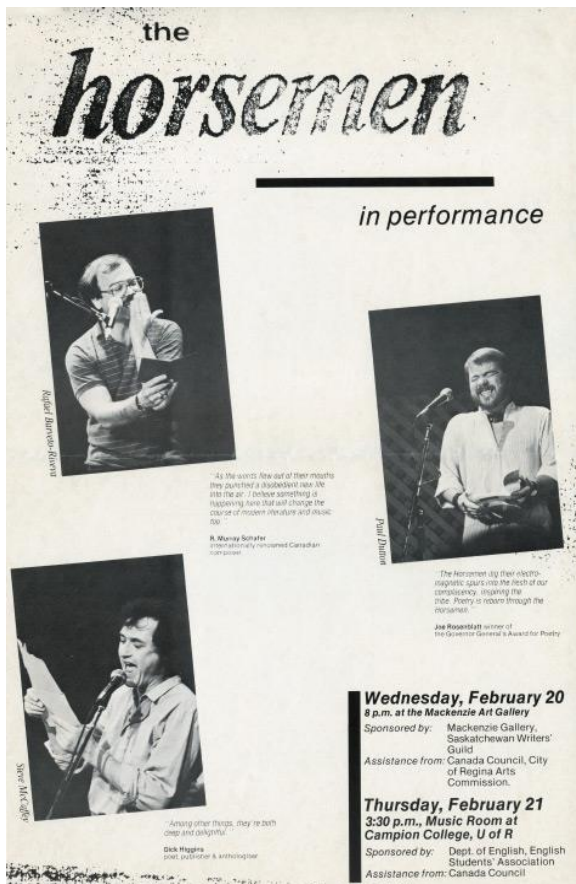
Found among the Four Horsemen *Slow Dust* items.





Poster for a performance by the Four Horsemen
at Erindale College, University of Toronto, March
6, [ca. 1973].

The Four Horsemen performance at Erindale College was in support of the release of their Canadadada LP (Griffin House, 1973).



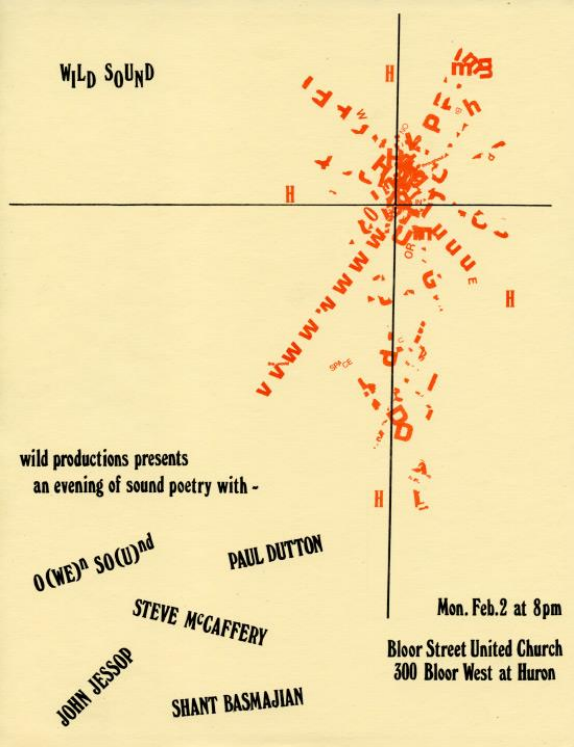
Poster for two performances of the Horsemen,
Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Canada,
February 20 and Music Room at Campion
College, University of Regina, February 21, [no
year].



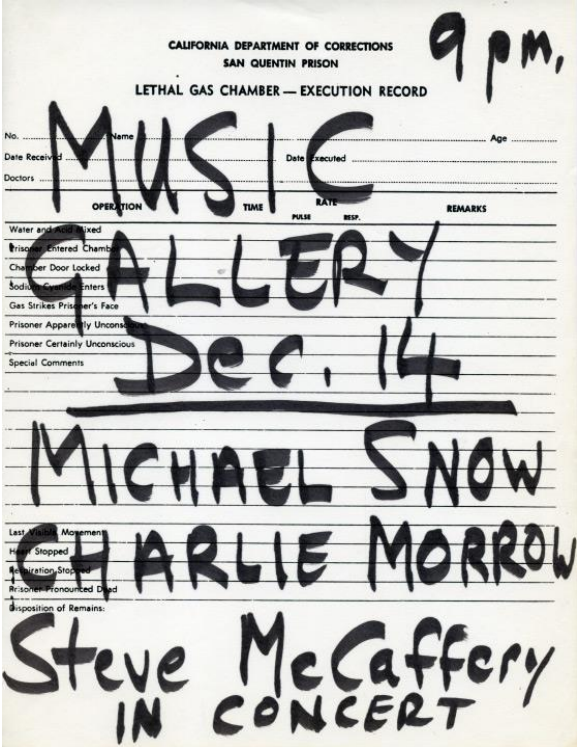
**Program for the West Coast
International Sound Poetry
Festival at La Mamelle, San
Francisco, November 18–20,
1977. Single sheet folded once
to make four pages.**

Steve McCaffery and the Horsemen presented a sound performance. Other participants included Jerome Rothenberg, Charles Amirkhanian, Laurie Anderson, and Pauline Oliveros among many others.

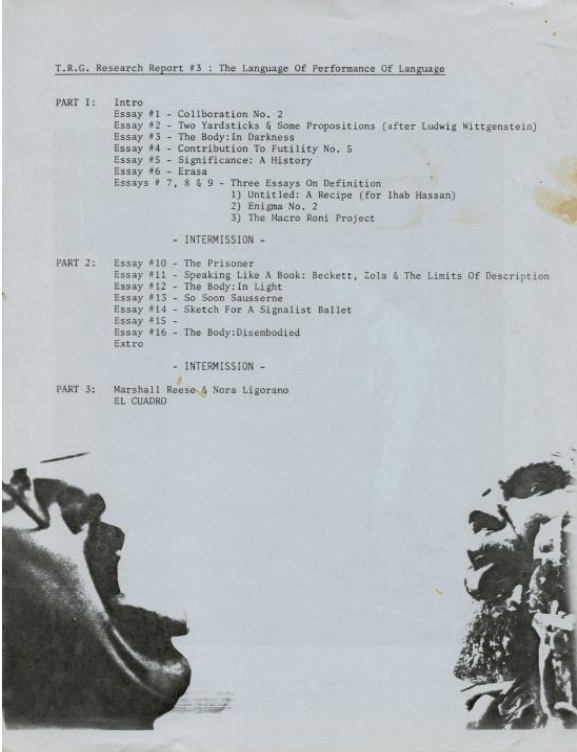
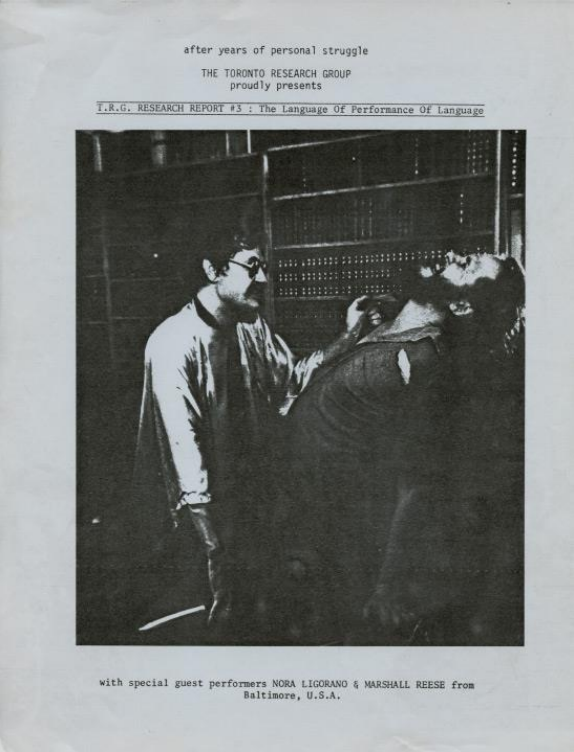
Flyers



Flyer for Wild Sound, an evening of sound poetry with O(we)n So(u)nd, Paul Dutton, Steve McCaffery, John Jessup, and Shant Basmajian at Bloor Street United Church, Toronto, February 2, [no year].



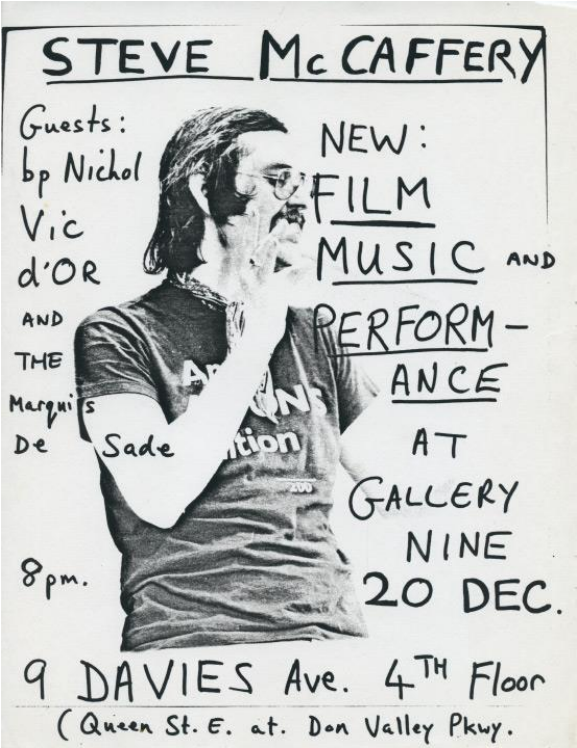
Flyer for a performance by Michael Snow, Charlie Morrow, and Steve McCaffery, Music Gallery, Toronto, December 14, [1980]. Black felt marker on San Quentin Prison Lethal Gas Chamber Execution Record.



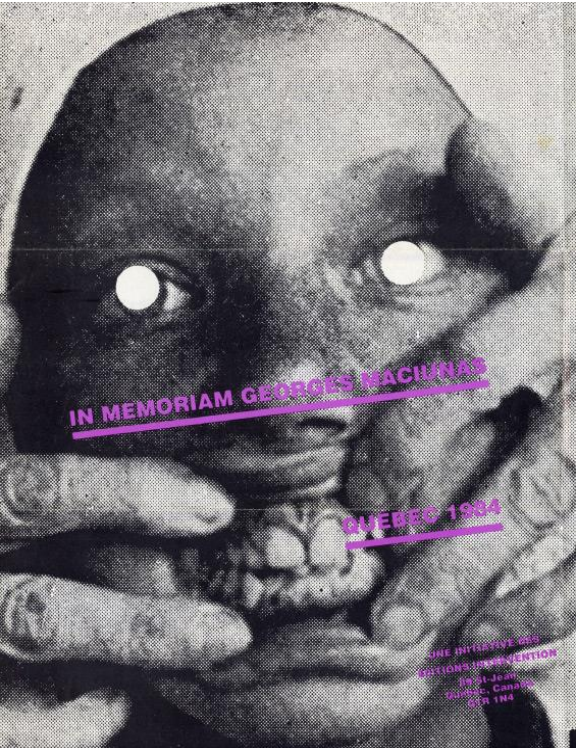
“The Toronto Research Group proudly presents T.R.G Research Report #3: The Language of Performance of Language with special guest performers Nora Ligorano & Marshall Reese,” [Gallery Nine, Toronto, March 27, 1982].



Flyer mounted on cardboard for “The Cloud of Uncertainty” exhibition with a concert of improvised music featuring David Lee, Steve McCaffery, Bill Smith, and Susan Ferrer, Studio 620, Toronto, August 18, [1984].



Flyer for Steve McCaffery presenting film, music, and performance with bpNichol, Vic d’Or (Victor Coleman), and the Marquis de Sade, Gallery Nine, Toronto, December 20, [no year].



Front of announcement for “In Memoriam Georges Maciunas,” a series of events presented by Éditions Intervention at Galerie Motivation V, Montreal, Canada, March 7–May 6, 1984.

Participants included Julien Blaine, Jean-François Bory, Jean Jacques Lebel, Dick Higgins, and the Four Horsemen among others.

Summary of the Steve McCaffery Archive

Correspondence

The archive contains expansive correspondence with more than 500 people. Primary correspondents include: Bruce Andrews, Charles Bernstein, Colin Browne, Michael Davidson, Alan Davies, Ray DiPalma, Johanna Drucker, Jean Dupuy, Fred Garber, David UU (Harris), George Hartley, Lyn Hejinian, Dick Higgins (1/2 box), Stephen Joyce, Jean-Jacques Lecercle, David Lee, Jerome McGann, Roy Miki, Opal L. Nations, Marjorie Perloff, Peter Quartermain, Tom Raworth, Jed Rasula, Jerome Rothenberg, James Sherry, Ron Silliman, Steven Smith, Barrett Watten, and Karl Young. (7 bankers boxes)

Manuscripts

The archive contains both unpublished and published manuscripts of books, essays, concrete/visual poetry, notes/jottings, and other work. In addition to items in folders (27 bankers boxes) there are 8 binders (approx. 930 pages) with many originals of McCaffery's concrete/visual poetry. Most of the poems are unique with an assortment of collage elements, colored and black pen drawings, and assorted typewriter (typestracts) and type treatments. Included are all drafts, abandoned sections, and some production masks of his internationally acclaimed *Carnival*. (31 bankers boxes)

Miscellaneous

These files contain a wide variety of items, including manuscripts by others, photocopies of articles, and grant applications, among other items. (4 bankers boxes)

Journals/Sketchbooks, Account Books, Address Books, and Calendars

There are 49 journals/sketchbooks from 1959–2010, 3 address books, 10 account books from 1981–88, and 37 calendar/appointment books from 1976–2013. (3 bankers boxes)

Audio and Video

The archive contains extensive audio and video. Many of the recordings are unique or rare. Included is documentation of live events, performances, interviews, radio programs, seminars, readings, class recordings, musical performances, master tapes, commercially produced recordings, dubs of recordings, and other recordings. Also included is complete audio documentation of the 11th International Sound Poetry Festival held in Toronto in October 1978 (McCaffery was a festival coordinator). The earliest recordings appear to be reel-to-reel recordings of bpNichol in 1966. (more than 490 items in 10 bankers boxes)

Conferences and Festivals

In addition to one box of print documentation of the 11th International Sound Poetry Festival there is one box of documentation and notes for conferences and festivals in which McCaffery participated. (2 bankers boxes)

Teaching and Academics

Included are lecture and teaching notes, and other items related to McCaffery's teaching career, especially at York University and the University at Buffalo. (2 bankers boxes)

Assorted

Included are flyers, programs, and ephemera for conferences, readings, and other activities in which McCaffery participated. Also included are 5 of McCaffery's poem/objects, including 2 original scroll texts. (2 boxes)

The Steve McCaffery archive comprises approx. 61 boxes (approx. 81 linear feet) and is housed at Granary Books in New York.

For complete inventory and price, please contact [Steve Clay](#).