

Woodland Pattern Archive

Woodland Pattern Book Center has transcended its critical role in the arts ecosystem in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area to become one of the premier literary arts centers in America. The Archive is a comprehensive record of all aspects of Woodland Pattern's diverse programming and provides a rich opportunity for research and scholarship. Its holdings offer a unique insight into a wide range of topics from recent American literary performance and publishing to an in-depth view of the machinations of a grassroots non-profit arts organization.



Left: Photo of Woodland Pattern co-founders, Karl Young, Karl Gartung and Anne Kingsbury standing in the bookstore. The photo was taken for a Milwaukee Journal article that ran in 1980. Right: The 30 year anniversary mural outside of the Woodland Pattern Book Center.

History

Jerome Rothenberg has said that "[t]he reputation of Woodland Pattern is itself national in scope, and I know of no other center—anywhere in the U.S.—that has carried on a more intricate and demanding program in the literary arts." Founded in 1979, its first poetry reading was given by Paul Metcalf, its first book arts exhibition was by Karl Young, and its first performance artist was Laurie Anderson. After more than 30 years, Woodland Pattern has become an important anchor in the poetry economy of the United States.

For Woodland Pattern selling books has always been a form of activism. The bookstore sells small press, fine press, self-published books, and chapbooks; Native American, Hispanic, Asian and European literature; feminist literature; publications on contemporary music, film, photography, performance, theatre and art; and artist's books. Unlike other bookstores, unsold books are never returned and remain in the store until they are sold. The poetry collection is recognized as one of the best in the U.S.

Woodland Pattern is the fulfillment of Anne Kingsbury, Karl Gartung and Karl Young's vision for a cultural center to house multi-arts programming—one that encourages the discovery, cultivation and

preservation of contemporary literature. It is a home where books, performance art, sound works, readings, and visual art all live together.

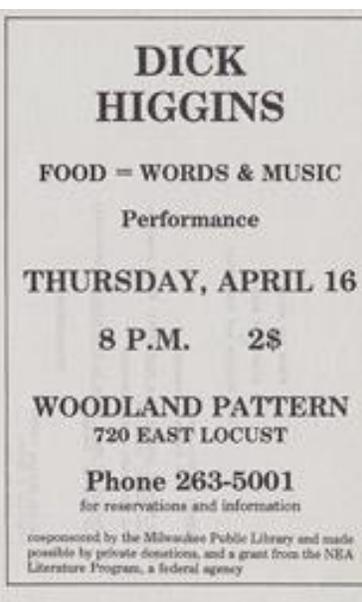
Selections from the Archive

Literary readings, concerts, performances, book art exhibitions and film and video screenings

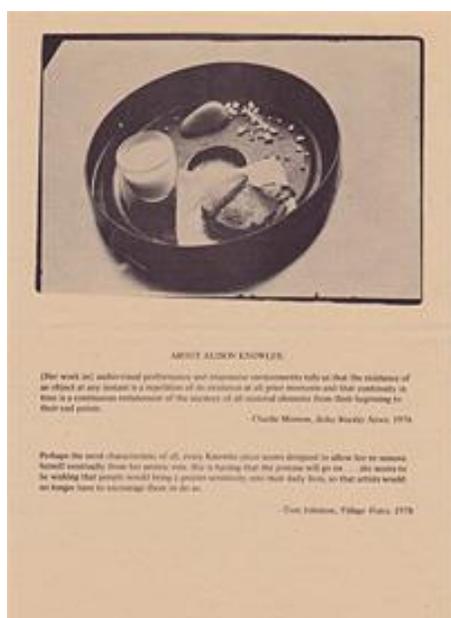
Woodland Pattern has hosted, documented and recorded many hundreds of writers, artists and musicians over the years including Derek Walcott, Walter Mosley, Anne Waldman, Michael Ondaatje, Wendell Berry, Lyn Hejinian, Maureen Owen and John Giorno. Among the musicians and composers presented are Laurie Anderson, Lou Harrison, Derek Bailey, Alvin Curran, Alison Knowles and Phillip Corner. Recent exhibits in the gallery have included George Schneeman, Gary Sullivan, Tom and Laurie Clark, Tom Raworth, Clarissa Sligh and Jonathan Williams. There are approximately 600 audio recordings of readings and performances in the archive.



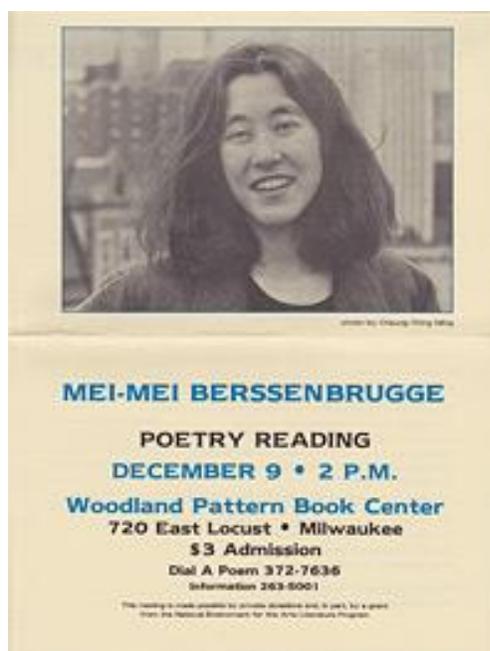
Photo by Jessie Higgins



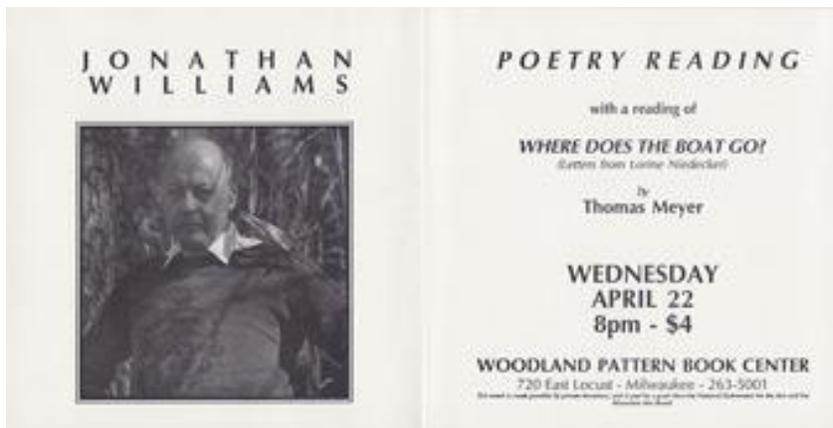
Flyer for Dick Higgins' "Food=Words & Music" performance, April 16, (1987?).



Flyer for Alison Knowles' "Identical Lunch" performance held at the Milwaukee Public Library on January 13, 1980. It was part of a series presented by Woodland Pattern that also included bpNichol, Paul Metcalf, David Meltzer, Diane Wakoski, and Rosemarie Waldrop.



Flyer for Mei-mei Berssenbrugge reading, December 9, 1984. Woodland Pattern also published her "Tan Tein" broadside (printed by Black Mesa Press) in 1984.



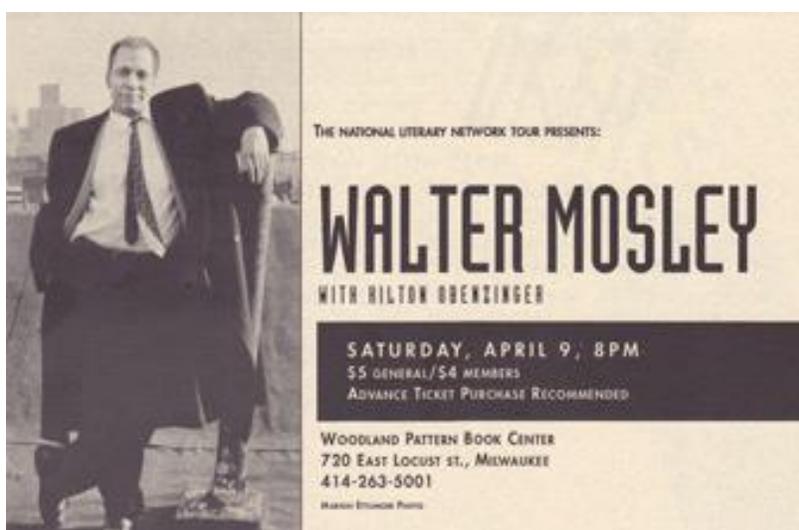
Flyer for a reading by Jonathan Williams and Thomas Meyer, April 22, 1987. Jonathan read poems and Tom read the letters of Lorine Niedecker. Woodland Pattern also published Williams' broadside (printed by Chax Press) "Week No. 5, from the Book of Days, an Enrichment of Asps" in 1987.



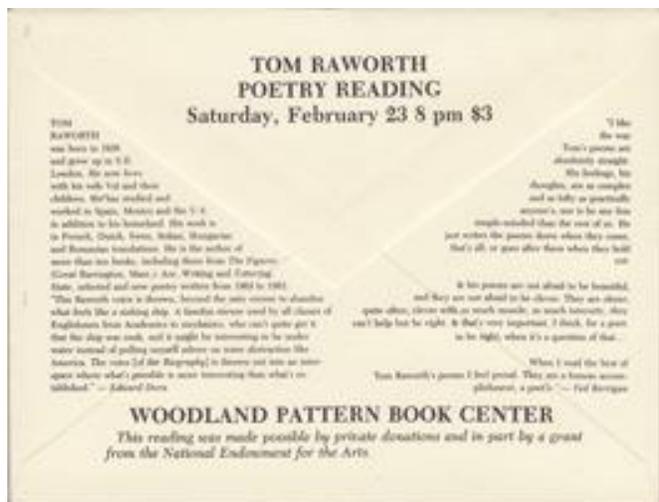
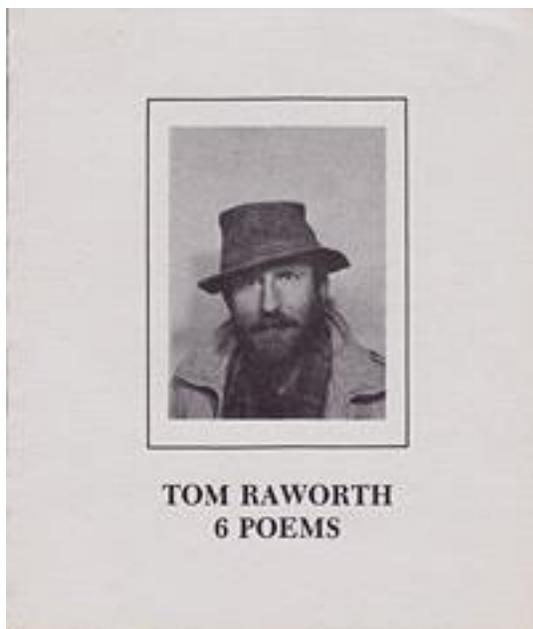
Letter from Jonathan Williams to Karl Gartung and Anne Kingsbury, in which he mentions that the Jargon Society's *From This Condensery: The Complete Writing of Lorine Niedecker* "serves Lorine Niedecker very well, I think. Bertholf may have made some errors, but it's approximately the right book..." December 3, 1985.



In this letter to Karl, Jonathan writes "Public readings of LN [Lorine Niedecker] remain ridiculously low. I've never heard anyone else read her aloud, except Tom Meyer during the three readings we've done together. I read the poems, he reads from the letters." June 14, 1986.



Flyer for Walter Mosley and Hilton Obenzinger's reading, April 9, 1994. The reading was the result of Woodland Pattern's participation in the National Literary Network Tour, a Lila Wallace Reader's Digest project.

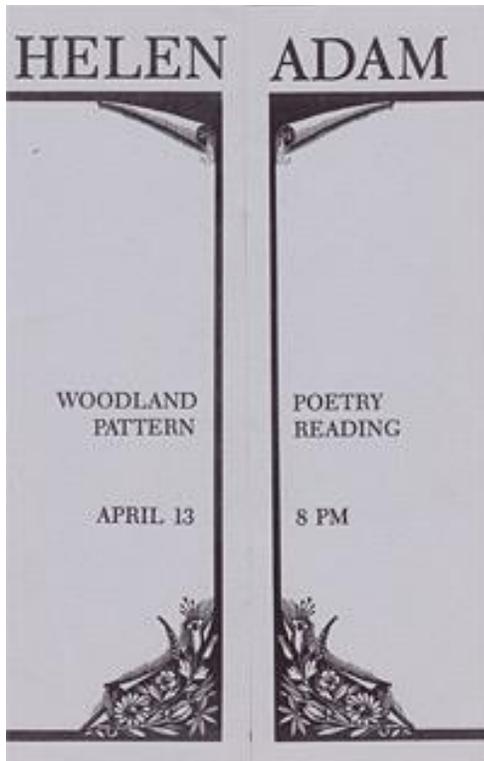


Folding broadside "Six Poems" published in honor of Tom Raworth's February 23, 1985 reading. The broadside was sent to Woodland Pattern members in this envelope to promote the reading.



Flyer for the Four Horsemen's reading, April 28, 1981.

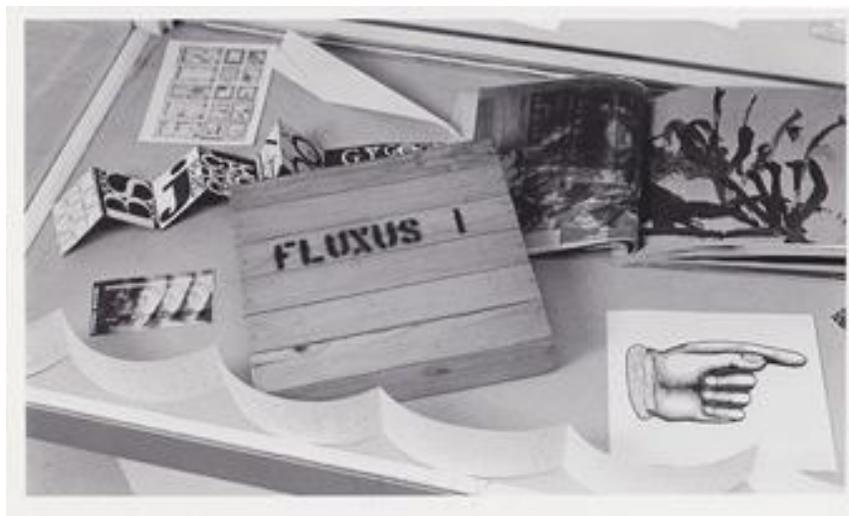
The Four Horsemen performing at Woodland Pattern, April 28, 1981.



Announcement for a reading by Helen Adam, April 13, 1985. This was to have been Adam's second visit to Woodland Pattern, but unfortunately the reading was canceled due to the death of her sister. The archive also includes the heartbreaking letter from Adam notifying Woodland Pattern that she would be unable to do the reading.

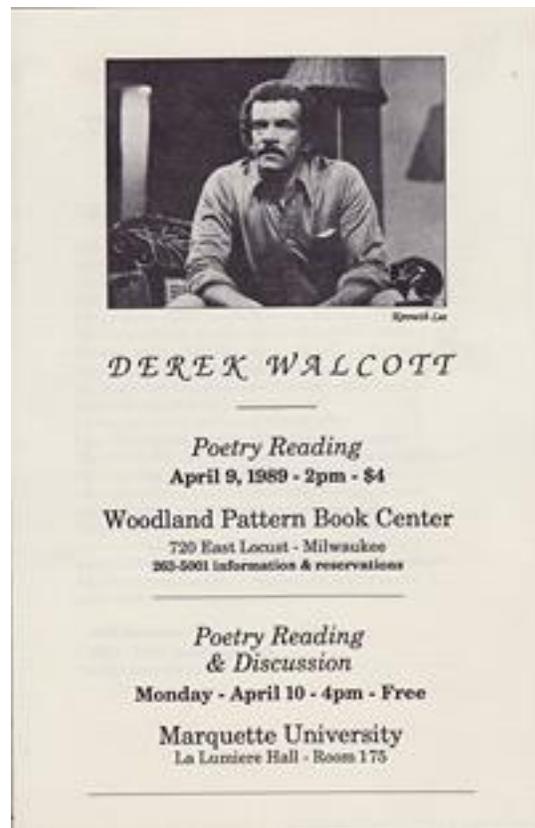


Announcement for a performance held in conjunction with the Woodland Pattern exhibition of Fluxus work from the collection of Ellsworth Snyder, December 4, 1982 and a photo documenting the exhibition.





Announcement for the "Guitar Smashers," a dual improvisation concert with Fred Frith and Hans Reichel, November 1, 1987.



Announcement for Nobel Prize recipient Derek Walcott's poetry reading, April 9, 1989.



Announcement for "Common Ancestry: Books, Prints, Paintings and Collaborative Works" exhibition by Katherine Kuehn and Patricia Scobey, May 19–July 17, 1986.



Flyer for Woodland Pattern and its Dial-a-Poem project. Woodland Pattern became part of the Dial-a-Poem movement after Karl Galtung received permission from John Giorno. James Laughlin granted Karl permission to record poems in the New Directions catalog. The first recording (ca. 1976) was Willem Dafoe reading Ezra Pound's poem "Ancient Music." Unfortunately the tapes were reused each time, so it is unlikely that the audio survives.



An installation view of Clarissa Sligh's exhibition "Three Wishes: Maps, Cranes and Love." The exhibition included 3,000 origami cranes and more than 200 portraits, October 17, 2010 through January 30, 2011. This was Sligh's third visit to Woodland Pattern. Her first was in 1990 when she presented Woodland Pattern's first bookmaking workshop.

Writer and artist files including correspondence

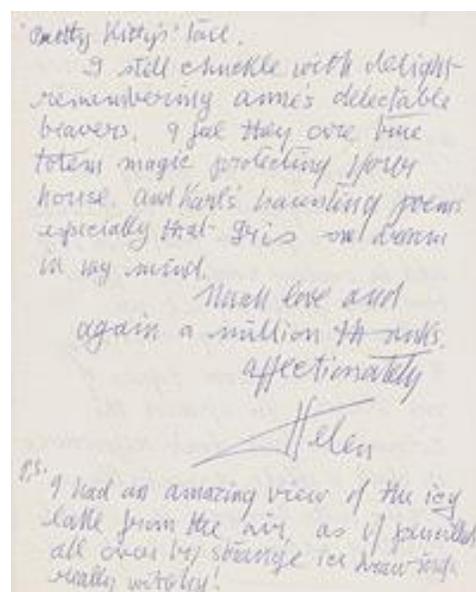
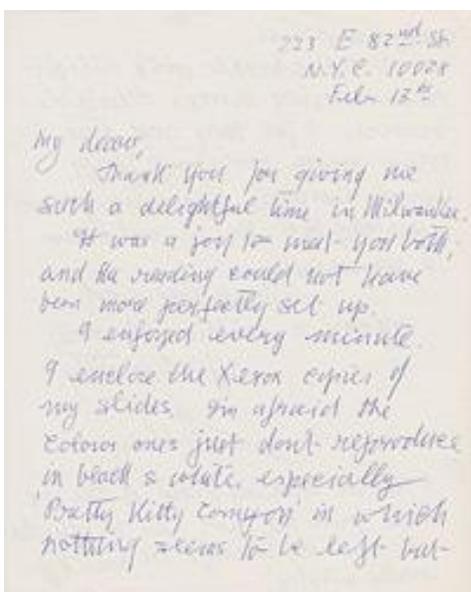
The archive contains extensive writer and artist files reflecting all aspects of Woodland Pattern's contact with poets, writers and artists including correspondence, manuscripts, typescripts, details of visits, poet and artist information, photographs, and so forth.



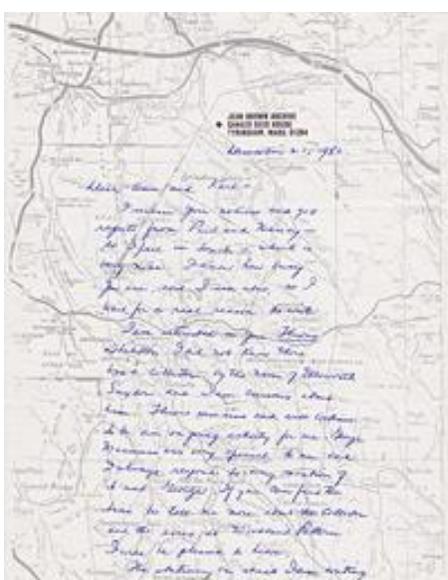
Laurie Anderson during a visit to Woodland Pattern in June 1980. Anderson was Woodland Pattern's first performance artist. Anne Kingsbury experimented with documenting visiting artists by asking them to be photographed in a wolf's mask. The experiment did not last long and it eventually gave way to asking the artists to design a ceramic tile on the occasion of their visit.



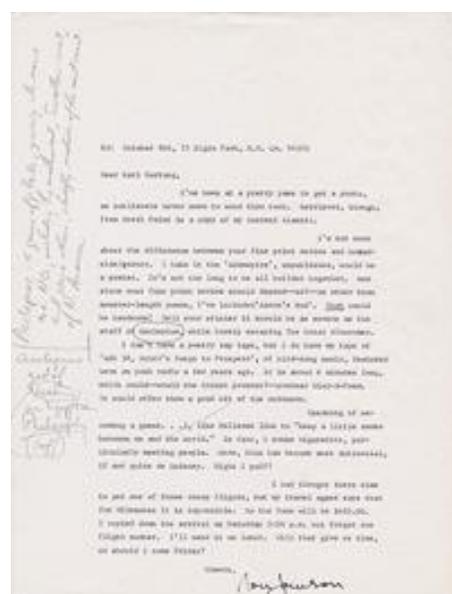
In this letter concerning her upcoming performance, Anderson writes that "[t]he piece will include selections from a long work in four parts based on various aspects of American culture. It used to be entitled 'United States' but since a TV soap has this name now, the cycle is currently untitled." May 21, 1980.



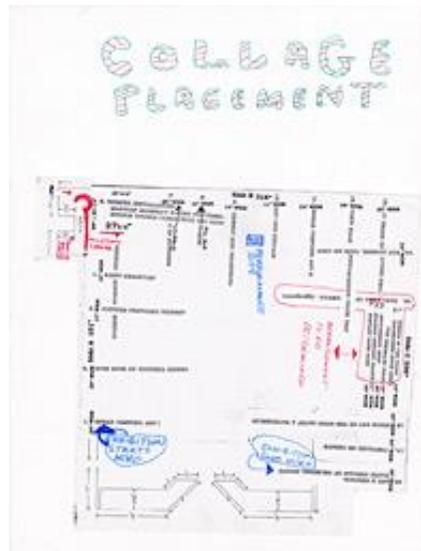
Front and back of a letter from Helen Adam thanking Karl Gartung and Anne Kingsbury for "such a wonderful time in Milwaukee," February 13, 1982.



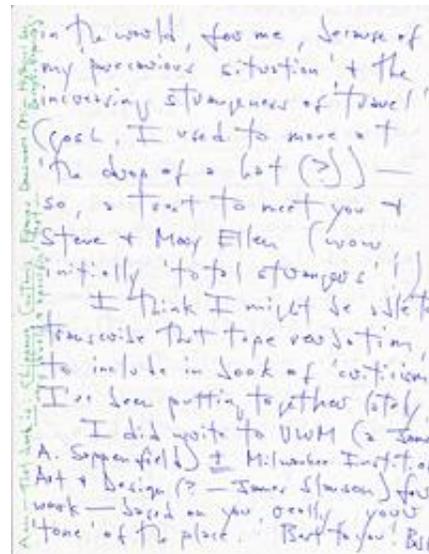
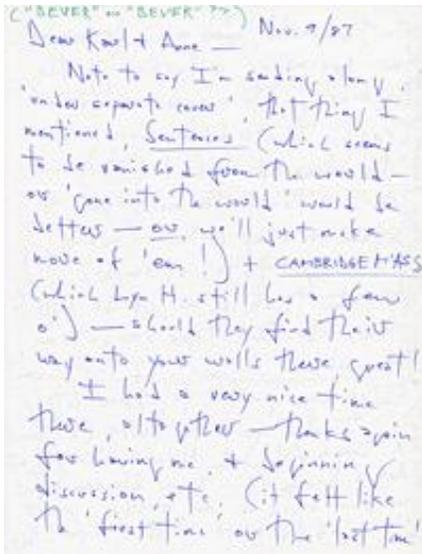
First page of a two-page letter (on stationery designed by George Maciunas) from librarian and avant-garde art collector Jean Brown. In the letter she writes of her ongoing interest in Fluxus and inquires about the Fluxus exhibition from the Ellsworth Snyder collection at Woodland Pattern, December 21, 1982.



Letter from Ronald Johnson to Karl Gartung, October 8, 1985. Woodland Pattern published Johnson's broadside (printed by Landlocked Press) "Ark 44, The Rod of Aaron," 1985.



First page of a letter from Kenward Elmslie that accompanies a diagram of how his "Postcards on Parade" exhibition was to be hung at Woodland Pattern, February 29, 1996. Kenward also did a performance in conjunction with the exhibition on April 20, 1996.



Letter from Robert Grenier thanking Karl Gartung and Anne Kingsbury for his visit to Woodland Pattern, November 9, 1987.

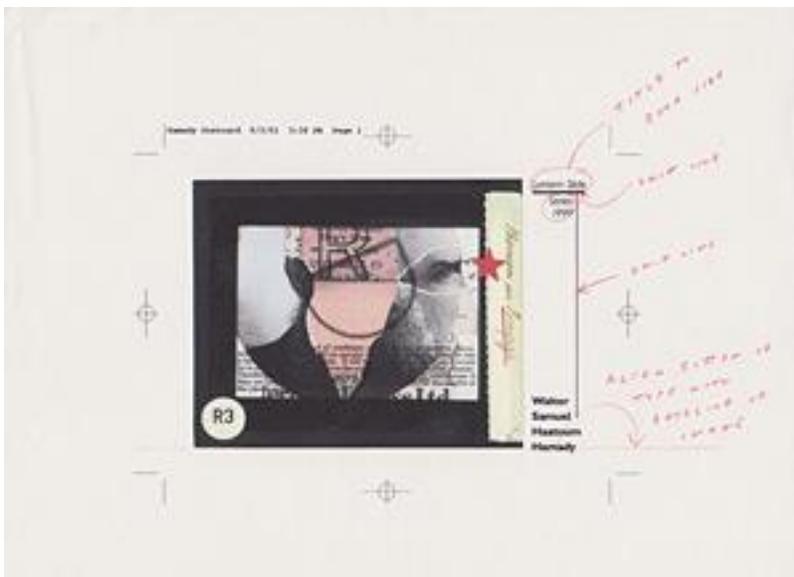


Walter Hamady letter to Karl Gartung and Anne Kingsbury, March 14, 1988. Hamady reflects that he "[feel[s] simultaneously rich & with power AND defeated in thinking I'm just making unsalable art and how long I can afford to do so."

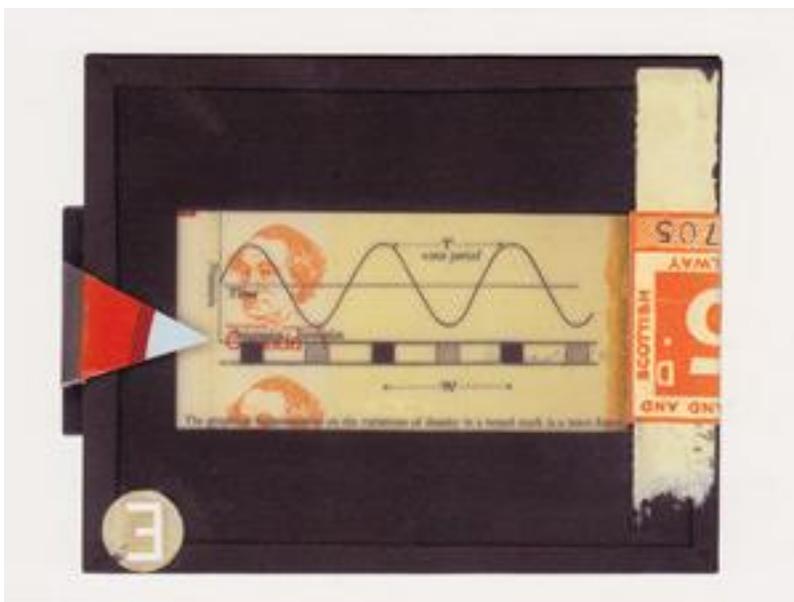
One of many letters from Walter Hamady. This letter, written to Karl Gartung, includes a discussion of the proper layout for the postcards representing pieces that were included in Hamady's 2000 Woodland Pattern exhibition and later published, September 6, 2001.



Snapshot, probably taken by Anna Hamady, of Walter clearing the brush during a visit by Karl Gartung and Anne Kingsbury to Walter's Mount Horeb studio and home, May 2000.



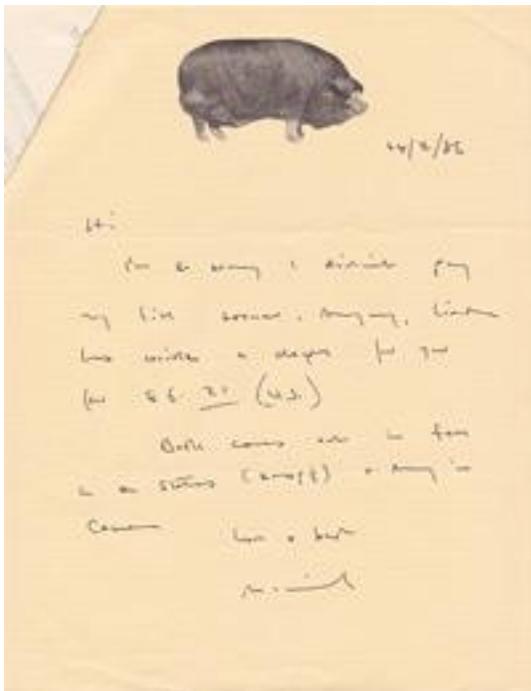
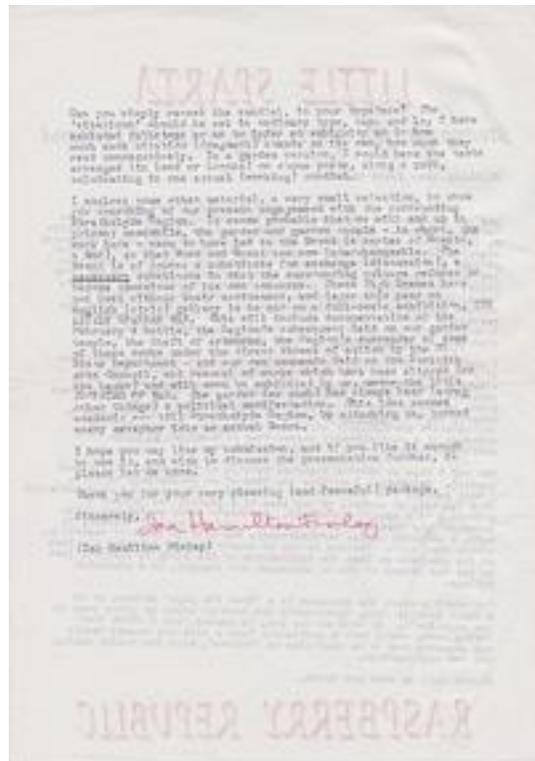
Proof for one of Walter Hamady's "Lantern Slides Series (1999)" postcards, published by Woodland Pattern in 2001.



One of Walter Hamady "Lantern Slides Series (1999)" postcards published by Woodland Pattern in 2001.



"The garden (as such) has always been (among other things) a political manifestation. This idea seemed academic --- until Strathclyde Region, by attacking us, turned every metaphor into an actual Event." Letter from Ian Hamilton Finlay to Jesse Glass discussing, among other things, reflections upon the Little Spartan War exhibition, September 30, 1983.



Letter from Michael Ondaatje, February 14, 1986. Perishable Press printed a quad-folding broadside "Two Poems" on the occasion of his Woodland Pattern reading.



Letter from Anne inviting Michael Ondaatje back to Woodland Pattern for a reading. In addition to fees she tries enticements such as "A visit to Theatre X where Willem Defoe started his career? ... Home cooked meal (that probably isn't as strong a one as others might be)? A drive through the Wisconsin spring? A visit to Lorine Niedecker house on Black Hawk Island?" March 3, 1986.



Front and back of April 10, 1979 postcard from Dick Higgins to Karl Gartung. "1. This is flat flat flat New Mexico (dull). 2. They grow fine peanuts 3. Sugar in ALL the food! 4. Chilly. 5. Can't eat the chili..."



Publishing

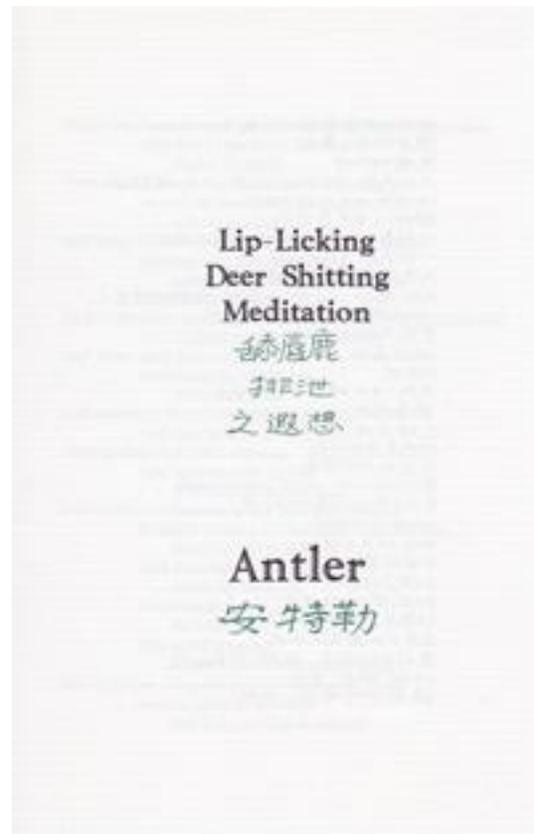
Woodland Pattern has published over 100 broadsides many produced in limited editions by Wisconsin fine press printers— many of national stature—including Perishable Press, Salient Seedling Press, Landlocked Press, and Black Mesa Press among many others. Writers in the series include: Helen Adam, Bill Berkson, Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, Norma Cole, Robert Duncan, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Nathaniel Mackey, Eileen Myles, Ron Padgett, Ron Silliman, Jonathan Williams and Elizabeth Willis. Woodland Pattern has also published over 100 posters, books and newsletters.



A view inside the broadside cabinet. Shown here: Theodore Enslin's "Markings" (Black Mesa Press, 1981), the inaugural broadside in Woodland Pattern's Fine Print Broadside Series. Also shown is Carl Rakosi's "Meditation" (Chax Press, 1985), a folding broadside with ribbon.



More broadsides including August Kleinzahler's "A Wine Tale (for Lee Harwood)" (Chuck Stebelton, 2012), Tom Raworth's "Juice" (Poote Press, 1985), and Anne Tardos's "Nines" (Chuck Stebelton, 2011).



Antler's "Lip-Licking Deer Shitting Meditation," part of the Woodland Pattern publication on the occasion of a reading by four poets from the People's Republic of China, Gong Liu, Jiang He, Gu Cheng, and Li Gang, along with four poets from the United States, Folami Abiade, Antler, Martha Bergland, and J.D. Whitney, November 18, 1988.

Bookstore

The Woodland Pattern Bookstore currently stocks about 25,000 titles of mostly independent and small press publications. The poetry collection is recognized as one of the best in the U.S. The archive of store's activities offers a unique insight into the world of small press publishing, especially at its height.



Drawers holding fine press books in the Woodland Pattern Book Center bookstore.



Part of the display of zines and chap books.



"Mayhap you could check & make sure you got all that stuff. If not let me know (choke, gasp)." Letter from bpNichol written on Underwhich Editions letterhead to Anne Kingsbury that discusses, among other things, money that the bookstore owes bp as well his sending out replacement copies for damaged books, April 17, 1982.

Vendor consignment cards or "zero cards" show how the bookstore was inventoried by hand from at least 1977 to 1993. It is a fascinating and revealing snapshot of every transaction by date as well as what was stocked and from whom it was obtained.

Top: Zero card for Kathy Acker's *Don Quixote* from 1988 to 1992.

Bottom: Zero card for Andre Codrescu's *American Poetry Since 1970: Up Late*.

Handwritten: *Fact. paper 1993*

Vendor: *Acker, Kathy* / Title: *Don Quixote* / ISBN: *0-8021-3192-1*

DATE	QUANTITY	PRICE	AMOUNT	DATE	QUANTITY	PRICE	AMOUNT
11/3/88	2		2				
4-4-88		1.1					
2-1-89		1.1					
7-26-89		1.9					
12/1/89	1		1.9				
1-2-90		1.6					
1-2-91		1.88					
5-1-91		1.0					
2/18/92	1		1.0				

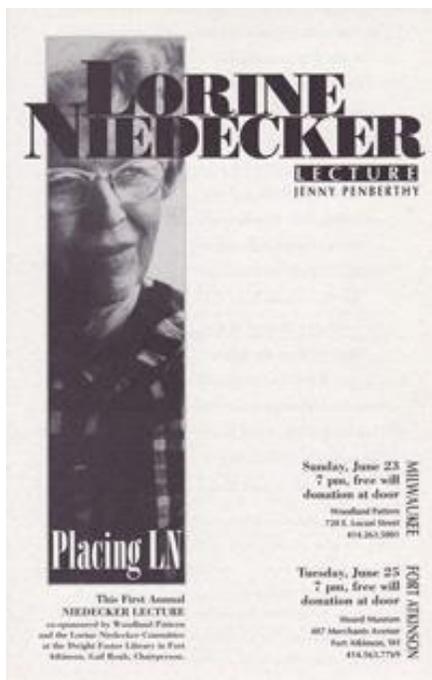
Handwritten: *Anth. paper 16.95*

Vendor: *Codrescu, Andre* / Title: *American Poetry since 1970: Up Late* / ISBN: *0-8021-3192-1*

DATE	QUANTITY	PRICE	AMOUNT	DATE	QUANTITY	PRICE	AMOUNT	
2/14/87	5	5	1-20-83	1	0	10/12/90	1	
4/26/87		1	4	2/19/93	2	2	10/27/90	0
10-6-88		1	3					
12-9-89		1	3					
2 JAN 30		2	10					
2-16-90		1	1					
2-16-90		1	0					
5/26/90	2		2					
5-25-90		1	1					
6-4-90		1	1					
10/12/90	2		2					
10-2-90		1	1					
1-1-91		1	1					
4-5-91		1	0					
7-22-91		1	1					
12-22-91		1	0					
8/24/92	1		1					

Conferences, educational initiatives and special events

Among the many diverse special offerings organized by Woodland Pattern, "Lorine Niedecker: a Centenary Celebration" of October 2003 stands out due to its scholarly and historic importance, as well as the wide spectrum of participants that it attracted. The three-day conference brought together more than 50 poets, writers and scholars from around the world to pay tribute to the poet of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. Along with honored guest Cid Corman, presenters included Rae Armantrout, Thomas A. Clark, Cid Corman, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Theodore Enslin, Kathleen Fraser, Michael Heller, Maureen Owen, Michael Ondaatje, Jenny Penberthy, Meredith and Peter Quartermain, Anne Waldman and Elizabeth Willis.

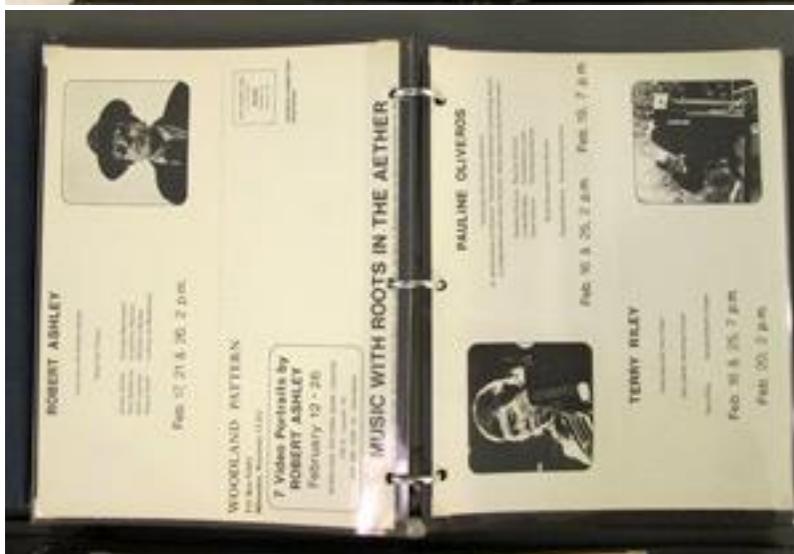
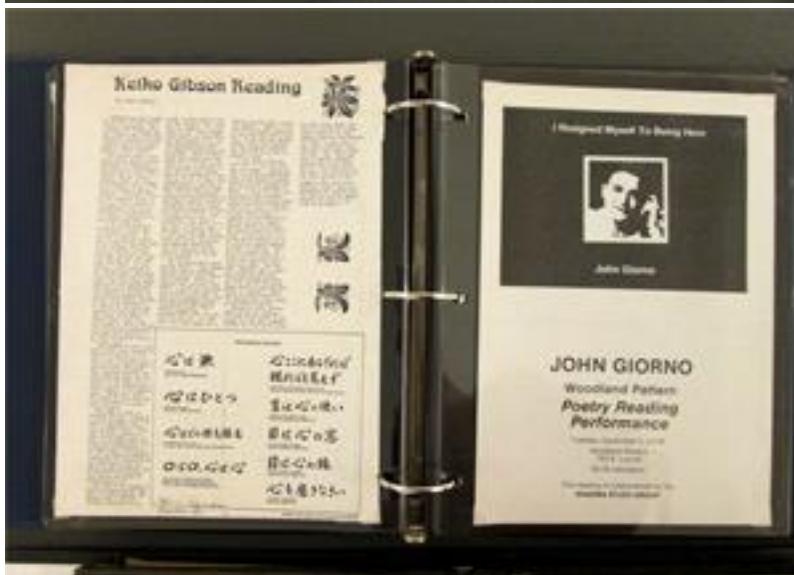


Left: Flyer for the First Annual Niedecker Lecture presented by Niedecker scholar Jenny Penberthy in June 1996. Penberthy was also a participant in the October 2003 "Lorine Niedecker: a Centenary Celebration."

Above: Scrapbook assembled to document "Lorine Niedecker: a Centenary Celebration."

Scrapbooks, press releases and press clippings

There are approximately 12 scrapbooks (comprising approximately 1,300 pages) assembled over the years to document individual projects, such as the Niedecker Centenary. The scrapbooks contain letters of support, documentation of activities, flyers, photographs, press clippings and photographs.



Archive Description

Dates

1979–2012

Physical description

Approx. 120 linear feet

Organization of the archive

The Archive is organized into seven broad areas:

1. Writer and artist files including correspondence

The archive contains extensive writer and artist files concerning all aspects of Woodland Pattern's interaction with poets, writers, musicians and artists for more than thirty years. It includes correspondence, manuscripts, typescripts, clippings, details of visits, poet and artist information, photographs, and so forth. In addition to printed material, digital email records (not inventoried) are also included. Approximately 17 linear feet.

2. Literary readings, concerts, performances, book art exhibitions and film and video screenings

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3. Publishing

Woodland Pattern has published more than 100 broadsides—many produced in limited editions—by Wisconsin fine press printers of national stature including Perishable Press, Salient Seedling Press, Landlocked Press, and Black Mesa Press, among many others. Writers in the *Fine Print Broadside Series* include Helen Adam, Bill Berkson, Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, Norma Cole, Robert Duncan, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Nathaniel Mackey, Eileen Myles, Ron Padgett, Ron Silliman, Jonathan Williams and Elizabeth Willis. Woodland Pattern has also published over 100 posters, books and newsletters.

4. Bookstore

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5. Conferences, educational initiatives and special events

Among the many diverse special offerings organized by Woodland Pattern "Lorine Niedecker: a Centenary Celebration" of October 2003 stands out. The three-day conference brought together more than 50 poets, writers and scholars from around the world to pay tribute to the poet of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. Along with honored guest Cid Corman, presenters included Rae Armantrout, Thomas A. Clark, Cid Corman, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Theodore Enslin, Kathleen Fraser, Michael Heller, Maureen Owen, Michael Ondaatje, Jenny Penberthy, Meredith and Peter Quartermain, Anne Waldman and Elizabeth Willis. The archive includes thorough documentation of this and other special events.

6. Organizational files

All extant business records since the founding of Woodland Pattern in 1979 to the present day includes papers of incorporation, grant proposals and so forth. Not catalogued. Approximately 50 linear feet..

7. Scrapbooks, press releases and press clippings

There are approximately 12 scrapbooks (comprising approximately 1,300 pages) that were assembled over the years to document individual projects, such as the Niedecker Centenary. The scrapbooks contain letters of support, documentation of activities, flyers, photographs, press clippings and photographs. Approximately 3 linear feet. There are also approximately 4 linear feet of press releases and press clippings that are not inventoried.

The top photo of the 30-year anniversary mural outside of the Woodland Pattern Book Center was taken by Jennifer Tomaloff and is not included in the archive.
