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Spring 2008

## The Beat Poetry and Little Magazine Collections Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University

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### Recommended Citation

Brunke, Denis and Cole, Bradford R., "The Beat Poetry and Little Magazine Collections Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University" (2008). *Library Faculty & Staff Presentations*. Paper 2.  
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## The Beat Poetry and Little Magazine Collections Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University

Utah State University's core Beat Collection was purchased for the Merrill Library by the Marie Eccles Caine Foundation in 1998. It contained 2,300 poetry books and pamphlets of both major and minor poets. The collection also included some 1,400 magazines and serials; 150 anthologies and works of literary history/criticism; and about 50 broadsides and posters.

The core collection was originally compiled as a research library by Steven Clay and Rodney Phillips, the curators of the exhibit (and writers and compilers of the accompanying book) "A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Adventures in Writing, 1960-1980." The exhibit was held at the New York Public Library January 24-July 25, 1998. Steven Clay, publisher of Granary Books, is an editor, curator, and archivist specializing in the art and literature of the 1960s and 1970s. Rodney Phillips is curator of the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature at The New York Public Library.

The collection covers a wide range of writing and publishing which emerged following the publication of Donald Allen's landmark anthology, *The New American Poetry*, in 1960. The main schools, movements or tendencies identified in the anthology are well represented in the collection, including: San Francisco Renaissance, Beat, Black Mountain, and the New York School (three generations).

In 2003 another collection of small-press beat poetry became available via 871 Fine Arts, a gallery & rare art book store in San Francisco. The collection was purchased for the Library by the Marie Eccles Caine Foundation to augment the original Beat materials, and included approximately 2,675 books and little magazines. These additional titles complemented and enhanced the core beat collection, broadening its range and depth, with more poets & artists represented.

The Library has added to the collection over the years with specific purchases and has also incorporated donations from individuals – including a large gift from the late Professor Kenneth W. Brewer, a USU faculty member and Utah's 2003 poet laureate.

Since Autumn of 2004 the Marie Eccles Caine Foundation has worked with the library and 871 Fine Arts to purchase large runs of the little magazines and periodicals associated with the literary underground. This collection has been purchased mainly from Laurence McGilvery's La Jolla bookstore. The "little magazine and periodical collection" consists of approximately 1110 Titles ranging from runs of mainstream literary journals of the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, to a dizzying array of short run or one-issue mimeographs of varying quality and frequency, produced for a select subscribing audience or given away freely on the street.

The Beat Collection has continued to attract interest and donations. After the 2006 Beat-centered Tanner symposium at USU, "The 1950's, the Beat Generation & the Power of Expression," a number of guests and participants donated items to add to the collection, including books from Sam and Ann Charters, books & broadsides from poet Anne Waldman, and a wonderful collection of vintage broadsides from Ernesto Edwards (who presently resides in Salt Lake City). Mr. Edwards was an associate of many of the poets and painters in the Beat period in California.



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## America's Literary Underground and the "Mimeo Revolution"

Little magazine: noncommercial periodical of limited circulation, usually dedicated to publishing experimental literature and art and/or unconventional social ideas and political theories.

Mimeograph Revolution: the unprecedented outpouring of underground poetry books and magazines that took place roughly between 1960-1980; includes works produced on the mimeograph machine, as well as other means of production (e.g. ditto machine, fine presses, multilith, offset printing); works often distributed informally by hand, by mail, or thru alternative bookstores.

Beat Generation: a term used to describe both a group of anti-conformist American writers who came to prominence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and the cultural phenomena that they wrote about and inspired.

*Figures: Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gary Snyder, William Burroughs, Neal Cassady, Gregory Corso, Diane Di Prima, Philip Lamantia, Michael McClure, Philip Whalen*  
*Magazines/publishers: City Lights, New Directions, Bastard Angel, Beatitude, Evergreen Review*

San Francisco (and Berkeley) Renaissance: the avant-garde poetic and artistic movement that centered around San Francisco and Berkeley in the 1950s-1960s. Later spread to places like Bolinas, Calif. Many of the poets were closely associated with the Beat Generation.

*Figures: Kenneth Rexroth, William Everson, Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer, David Meltzer, Joanne Kyger*  
*Presses: Grabhorn Press, Auerhahn Press, Cranium Press, White Rabbit Press, Oyez Press*  
*Magazines: The Ark, Circle, J, Open Space, Measure, Floating Bear, Big Sky*

The New York School: the group of poets and visual artists thriving in New York from the early 1950s to the 1980s, centered in New York's Lower East Side. After 1966, many of these poets were affiliated with The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church-in-the-Bowery.

*1<sup>st</sup> gen. figures: John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, James Schuyler, Kenward Elmslie*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> gen. figures: Ted Berrigan, Larry Fagin, Ron Padgett, Dick Gallup, Anne Waldman, Lewis Warsh, Tom Clark, Bernadette Mayer, Ed Sanders, Alice Notley, Aram Saroyan*  
*Magazines: Adventures in Poetry, Fuck You, "C", Mother, United Artists, Angel Hair, Telephone, Z*

### Artists/Illustrators in the Mimeo Revolution:

Wallace Berman (1926-1976); George Herms (1935-); Jess (1923-2004); Joe Brainard (1942-1994); George Schneeman (1934-); d.a. levy (1942-1968); Fielding Dawson (1930-2002); Bruce Conner (1933-)

### Recommended Reading:

Allen, Donald M., ed. The New American Poetry. New York: Grove Press, 1960.

Clay, Steven, and Rodney Phillips. A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Adventures in Writing, 1960-1980. New York: New York Public Library and Granary Books, 1998.

Meltzer, David, ed. The San Francisco Poets. New York: Ballantine Books, 1971.

Padgett, Ron, and David Shapiro, eds. An Anthology of New York Poets. New York: Random House, 1970.

Waldman, Anne, ed. Out of This World: An Anthology of the St. Mark's Poetry Project, 1966-1991. New York: Crown Publishers, 1991.