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Herbert Huncke papers 4078923

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 14, 2025.

Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Butler Library, 6th Floor
Columbia University, Mail Code 1127
535 W. 114th St.
New York, NY 10027

Business Number: (212) 854-5153

Fax Number: (212) 854-1365

rbml@libraries.cul.columbia.edu

URL: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rbml/index.html>

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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Huncke, Herbert
Title:	Herbert Huncke papers
ID:	4078923
ID:	MS#0635
Date [inclusive]:	1946-1980
Physical Description:	2.5 linear feet 5 manuscript boxes
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	Writer, counter-culture figure and associate of Beat Generation writers such as Allen Ginsberg, Peter Orlovksy, and Jack Kerouac.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Herbert Huncke papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical / Historical

Herbert Huncke was born in Greenfield, Massachusetts in 1915, but moved as a young boy to Detroit and then Chicago where his father owned H.S. Huncke, a company that distributed machine parts.

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Biographical / Historical

Though Huncke grew up in a comfortable middle class household (a history he recounts in some of his pieces of writing, most notably "Love" and "Song of the Self"), his family life was not particularly smooth and he often ran away from home. When he was 17 he went to New York for the first time and, after a few years drifting around the country working odd jobs, he relocated to the city more-or-less permanently in 1939.

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Biographical / Historical

Over the next several years, Huncke, a junkie, drug-dealer, hustler, and small time thief, became deeply involved in the street scene that had emerged around Times Square. Though he left New York for a time during World War II to serve as a merchant marine, his return to the city meant a return to drugs and the demimonde of 42nd Street. It was as a bisexual Times Square hustler that Huncke drew Alfred Kinsey's interest and in his capacity as petty thief and mover of stolen goods that Huncke first became affiliated with the William S. Burroughs. In 1945 Burroughs approached Huncke's roommate about selling a shotgun and a cache of morphine syrettes. Though initially Huncke was deeply suspicious of the clean-cut Burroughs, the two became close friends and Huncke was adopted into Burroughs's group of young friends, including Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg.

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Biographical / Historical

Huncke, with his history of prostitution, drug-use, and other criminal activity became a sort of talisman of authenticity for the young writers. They adopted his hipster street lingo--Huncke reputedly coined the term "beat" and his drug-fueled lifestyle and used him as an urban hipster muse (Huncke appears as a character in many of Kerouac's works, as well as Burroughs's *Junky*, and is mentioned in Ginsberg's "Howl.>").

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Biographical / Historical

In the 1940s Huncke began to write more seriously himself, composing many of the stories and journal entries that he would later publish. In 1947 he briefly moved to the Texas farm where Burroughs and his wife Jean Vollmer were growing marijuana. He returned to New York where, in 1949, he was arrested for theft and did a stint in Sing Sing. He was released in 1954, but ran afoul of the law again the next year and landed back in prison, where he remained until 1959.

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Biographical / Historical

Upon his return to New York he reconnected with his beat friends, living for a time in the same building as Allen Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky (with whom Huncke had a brief affair). He moved around New York's Lower East Side for most of the rest of his life. He met Louis Cartwright in the 1970s and Cartwright became Huncke's lover and primary caretaker for most of the remainder of Huncke's life. Huncke enrolled in a methadone program in an attempt to kick his heroin habit, but the program was never fully successful.

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Biographical / Historical

Though he began his writing in the 1940s, he found it very difficult to write in prison, so did very little writing during the 1950s. He gained some popularity giving live reading in New York City, but was not published until 1965 when Diane DiPrima's Poets Press published excerpts from his journal. His story "Alvarez" was published in Playboy in 1968 and he had small editions of his work released through small presses with Elsie John and Joey Martinez released in 1979 and The Evening Sun Turned Crimson in 1980. His autobiography Guilty of Everything: The Autobiography of Herbert Huncke was released in 1990 and a posthumous collection of his work, The Herbert Huncke Reader was published in 1997.

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Biographical / Historical

Herbert Huncke died in 1996 at the age of 81.

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Summary

This collection contains correspondence, journal entries, manuscript writings, and miscellaneous notes.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in three series

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

xml document instance created by Carrie Hintz Corrected folder numbers in box one. kws EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2010-03-11 2018-08-28 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

Box 5 of this collection is located off-site. You will need to request this box at least three business days in advance to use the collection in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library reading room.

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Reproductions may be made for research purposes. The responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Method of acquisition--Purchase; Accession number--M-59.

Processing Information

Cataloged Christina Hilton Fenn 07/--/89.

Processing Information

Papers processed Carrie Hintz 10/--/2009.

Processing Information

Finding aid written Carrie Hintz 11/--/2009.

Processing Information

Corrected folder numbers in finding aid. kws 2018-08-28

Conditions Governing Use

The RBML cannot provide access to original time-based media material which has not been first been reformatted for preservation. Researchers are welcome to examine archival time-based media items and decide whether they wish to place an order for Audio/Video reformatting. If copyright and/or condition restrictions apply, it may not be possible to

digitize a requested item. Please note that A/V reformatting is handled by an outside vendor and typically takes 6-8 weeks.

Processing Information

PTL added box 5 (audiotapes) on 10/17/2019. Accession 2019.2020.M064

Accruals

Materials may have been added to the collection since this finding aid was prepared. Contact rbml@columbia.edu for more information.

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Controlled Access Headings

- Beats (Persons)
- Drugs
- Narcotics
- Drug abuse
- Prisoners
- Poets, American -- 20th century
- Nepal -- Description and travel
- Diaries
- Authors
- Ginsberg, Allen, 1926-1997
- Huncke, Herbert
- Orlovsky, Peter, 1933-2010

Collection Inventory

Series I: Correspondence, 1946-1973

Scope and Contents

Series I consists of correspondence sent to and written by Herbert Huncke. The correspondence, much composed while Huncke was in jail, documents his varied relationships with his friends and cohorts, as well as shedding some insight onto his writings.

Scope and Contents

The correspondence is arranged alphabetically by composer of the item, and chronologically within each writer.

Title/Description	Instances	
Ginsberg, Allen to Herbert Huncke		
1966 September-December <u>Physical Description:</u> (15 Folders)	box 1	folder 1 to 15
1968 March-June <u>Physical Description:</u> (5 Folders)	box 1	folder 16 to 20
1974 July- August, 1974 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 1	folder 21 to 22
Ginsberg, A to Louis Cartwright, 1970 February 10	box 1	folder 23
Huncke, Herbert		
to Peter Orlovsky, undated	box 1	folder 24
to Louis Cartwright, undated	box 1	folder 25
to Allen Ginsberg		
Circa, 1946 <u>Physical Description:</u> (6 Folders)	box 1	folder 26 to 31
Scope and Contents		
(with carbons)		
1947 March 26	box 1	folder 32
Circa, 1959	box 1	folder 33
Scope and Contents		
(with handwritten manuscript)		
to Peter Orlovsky		
Circa, 1960 <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 1	folder 34 to 35
to Allen Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky, 1960 August 15	box 1	folder 36
to Eila Kokkinen, 1961 June- December, 1961	box 1	folder 37
to Elise Cowen, 1960 June 7	box 1	folder 38
to Howard Schulman, 1961 June 16	box 1	folder 39
to Howard Schulman and Elizabeth Sutherland, 1961 June 24	box 1	folder 40

to Janine Pommey, 1962 June- August, 1962 <u>Physical Description</u> : (4 Folders)	box 1	folder 31 to 44
To Eila Kokkinen, 1962 March- July, 1962	box 1	folder 45
To Eila Kokkinen, 1964 February-June <u>Physical Description</u> : (2 Folders)	box 1	folder 46 to 47
To Noah Goldenberg, 1964 February – April, 1964 February <u>Physical Description</u> : (4 Folders)	box 1	folder 48 to 51
To Eila Kokkinen, 1966 October 13 and December 2, 1966 October 13	box 1	folder 52
To Gary, 1968 August 3	box 1	folder 53
To The Ministry of Foreign Affairs [of Nepal], 1971 April 4	box 1	folder 54
To Linda, 1971 April 5	box 1	folder 55
To Eila Kokkinen, 1971 May 30	box 1	folder 56
To Louis Cartwright, 1973 April-July <u>Physical Description</u> : (3 Folders)	box 1	folder 57 to 59
Orlovsky, Peter to Herbert Huncke, [1960]	box 1	folder 60
Pommy, Janine to Herbert Huncke, 1970 March 24 and Undated (8 letters), 1970 March 24, Undated	box 1	folder 61

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Series II: Writings, 1948-1971

Scope and Contents

Series II is comprised of Herbert Huncke's writings, including manuscripts, notebooks, and journals. Many of the notebooks include both fragments of published and unpublished manuscripts as well as general notes and daily observations.

Title/Description	Instances	
1948		
"Philosophizing"	box 2	folder 1
"Song of the Self"	box 2	folder 2
"A Story- New York"	box 2	folder 3
[Thoughts About Writing]	box 2	folder 4
[The Urge to Write]	box 2	folder 5
Untitled Manuscripts	box 2	folder 6 to 7

Physical Description: (2 Folders)

Scope and Contents

(includes "Alone," "Suicide," and "A Fix")

1949		
"Dear Dad Letter"	box 2	folder 8
1959		
Criticism of a Poem (II)	box 2	folder 9
"Cuba"	box 2	folder 10
"Dancing in Prison"	box 2	folder 11
"Good Talker"	box 2	folder 12
"Love"	box 2	folder 13
"A New Orleans Scene"	box 2	folder 14
"Poem"	box 2	folder 15
"Spencer's Pad"	box 2	folder 16
"Miscellaneous and Untitled Manuscripts"	box 2	folder 17
Scope and Contents		
(including "Arrested" and "Youth")		
1959-1960		
Notebook and Diary Excerpts	box 2	folder 18
1960		
"Ed Leary"	box 2	folder 19
"A Sea Voyage-- and Junk"	box 2	folder 20
"Strangers"	box 2	folder 21
Untitled Manuscripts	box 2	folder 22
Scope and Contents		
(small notebook)		
1961		
Huncke's Journal	box 2	folder 23 to 25
<u>Physical Description:</u> (3 Folders)		
Notebook	box 2	folder 26

Scope and Contents

(includes draft of "The Magician")

Notes en Route to Lexington, July 10, 1961	box 2	folder 27
Untitled Manuscript	box 2	folder 28
1962		
"The Party"	box 2	folder 29
1963		
Notebooks <u>Physical Description:</u> (3 Folders)	box 2	folder 30 to 32
1963		
Notebooks <u>Physical Description:</u> (2 Folders)	box 3	folder 1 to 2
Scope and Contents		
(contains drafts of "Beware of Fallen Angels")		
Notebooks, 1963-1966 <u>Physical Description:</u> (3 Folders)	box 3	folder 3 to 5
1964		
Notebooks <u>Physical Description:</u> (7 Folders)	box 3	folder 6 to 12
Scope and Contents		
(include drafts of "In the Park" and "Russian Blackie")		
"Ponderosa Pines	box 3	folder 13
"Untitled Manuscript"	box 3	folder 14
1965		
Notebooks <u>Physical Description:</u> (3 Folders)	box 4	folder 1 to 3
Scope and Contents		
(includes draft of "Cat and his Girl")		
1971		
Notebooks	box 4	folder 4

Scope and Contents

(these document Huncke's trip to Nepal)

Undated		
"Alvarez"	box 4	folder 5
"A Beginning of a Portrait"	box 4	folder 6
"Detroit Redhead"	box 4	folder 7
"Faery Tale"	box 4	folder 8
"Funny Notes"	box 4	folder 9
"Johnie I"	box 4	folder 10
"Johnie II"	box 4	folder 11
Journal-- typescript excerpts	box 4	folder 12
Notebooks <u>Physical Description:</u> (4 Folders)	box 4	folder 13 to 16
Scope and Contents (includes drafts of "New York Notes")		
Notes	box 4	folder 17
Miscellaneous and Untitled Manuscripts <u>Physical Description:</u> (5 Folders)	box 4	folder 18 to 21

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Title/Description	Instances
Herbert Huncke: An Unpublished Interview by William L. Stull, 1980-08-06	box 5
Scope and Contents	
Two 5-inch reel-to-reel audiotapes.	

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