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Peter Orlovsky papers 4079181

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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
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Summary Information

Repository:	Rare Book and Manuscript Library
Creator:	Orlovsky, Peter, 1933-2010
Creator:	Orlovsky, Lafcadio
Title:	Peter Orlovsky papers
ID:	4079181
ID:	MS#0954
Date [inclusive]:	1954-1971
Physical Description:	.75 linear feet 1 document box 1 half size document box
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The papers of the poet, member of the Beat Generation, and Allen Ginsberg's lover. The collection is comprised primarily of correspondence with some sketches, photographs, and diary fragments.

Preferred Citation

Identification of specific item; Date (if known); Peter Orlovsky Papers; Box and Folder; Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.

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Biographical / Historical

Peter Orlovsky was born in 1933 to Oleg, a Russian immigrant who painted silk neckties and Katherine Orlovsky, an aspiring writer. He was born in Manhattan, on the Lower East Side, but grew up on Long Island in the town of Northport. The family was poor and both Oleg and Katherine were alcoholics and the Orlovsky's five children were often neglected and abused. The oldest son, Julius, went mad and had, eventually to be institutionalized, and both Peter and his younger brother Lafcadio struggled throughout their lives with substance abuse.

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Biographical / Historical

Peter, the second of the Orlovsky's five children left his mother's home at 17. He worked as an orderly in a mental hospital in Queens while taking night classes to complete the requirements for his high school diploma. In 1953 he was drafted into the Korean war where he served as a medic in a hospital in San Francisco.

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Biographical / Historical

In 1954, Orlovsky and moved in with painter Robert LaVigne acting both as the painter's model and his lover. Through LaVigne he met other writers and artists, most significantly Allen Ginsberg. Orlovsky and Ginsberg almost immediately became lovers and within months entered into a marriage that would last most of the remainder of their lives.

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Biographical / Historical

Ginsberg and Orlovsky lived together first in North Beach in California and later in New York City, but also traveled extensively throughout Europe and the Mediterranean as well as India and Pakistan. Though he lived and traveled all over the globe, Peter felt his responsibility to his brothers Julius and Lafcadio keenly, and his trips abroad were often abbreviated in order for him to care for one or both of them.

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Biographical / Historical

With Ginsberg's influence and encouragement, Orlovsky began writing poetry in 1957 while the two were living in Paris. He was first published in 1960 and continued to write throughout

that decade, though this is also when his own drug use, particularly amphetamines, was at its worst.

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Biographical / Historical

In 1970 Orlovsky moved to the farm Allen Ginsberg purchased in Cherry Valley, New York to pursue organic farming and his writing. He joined the faculty of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at the Naropa Institute in 1974 to teach the course "Poetry for Dumb Students" and remained a core member of the faculty for several years. He was awarded a \$10,000 National Endowment for the Arts grant in 1979.

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Biographical / Historical

He is the author of several books of poetry including *Dear Allen: Ship will land Jan 23, 58*, *Clean Asshole Poems & Smiling Vegetable Songs: Poems 1957-1977*, *Lepers Cry*, and the volume *Straight Hearts' Delight--Love Poems and Selected Letters*, by Orlovsky and Allen Ginsberg as well as publishing poems in a number of periodicals. He was also featured in Robert Frank's documentary film *Me and My Brother* (1969), which explores Julius Orlovsky's mental illness.

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Summary

Correspondence of Orlovsky with Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Gregory Corso, Herbert Huncke, Jack Kerouac, Michael McClure, Philip Whalen, and others. Also, manuscripts of Allen Ginsberg, Lafcadio Orlovsky, and Peter Orlovsky, including his extensive diary notes for 1954-1955.

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Arrangement

This collection is arranged in 2 series.

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Administrative Information

Publication Statement

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Revision Description

xml document instance created by Carrie Hintz EAD was imported spring 2019 as part of the ArchivesSpace Phase II migration. 2010-03-11 2019-05-20

Restrictions on Access

This collection is located on-site.

Restrictions on Access

This collection has no restrictions.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

Source of acquisition--05625F. Accession number--M-59.

Processing Information

Cataloged Christina Hilton Fenn 08/--/89.

Processing Information

Papers processed Carrie Hintz 11/--/2009.

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)
- Bohemianism -- United States
- American poetry -- 20th century
- American literature -- 20th century
- Diaries
- Authors
- Ginsberg, Allen, 1926-1997
- Burroughs, William S., 1914-1997
- Corso, Gregory
- Huncke, Herbert
- Kerouac, Jack, 1922-1969
- McClure, Michael
- Orlovsky, Peter, 1933-2010
- Whalen, Philip

Collection Inventory

Series I: Correspondence, 1957-1971

Scope and Contents

This series contains correspondence sent to Orlovsky, as well as some of his outbound correspondence. His incoming correspondence includes letters from members of his family and from friends such as Gregory Corso, Jack Kerouac, and Michael McClure. The bulk of the incoming correspondence is from Allen Ginsberg, sent while he was traveling through Europe and South America. Some of the Ginsberg correspondence includes poems or drawings along with the letter. There are also letters that Peter sent to

friends and family, in particular to Janine Pommey. The correspondence series represents the bulk of the collection.

Title/Description	Instances	
Corso, Gregory		
to Peter Orlovsky, 1957-1960 (6 letters), 1957-1960	box 1	folder 1
to Peter and Julius Orlovsky, 1969 August-October (2 postcards), 1969 August-October	box 1	folder 2
Ginsberg, Allen		
To Peter Orlovsky		
1957 (5 letters), 1957	box 1	folder 3
1958 (14 letters), 1958	box 1	folder 4
Scope and Contents		
(includes poems "O Blake! Blake! Blake!" and "World! World! World!")		
1960 January-May (20 letters), 1960 January-May	box 1	folder 5
1960 May-July (10 letters), 1960 May-July	box 1	folder 6
1961-1967 (11 letters), 1961-1967	box 1	folder 7
1968-1971	box 1	folder 8
<u>Physical Description:</u> (10 Folders)		
To Peter Orlovsky and Denise Filieu, 1971 April-August (6 letters), 1971 April-August	box 1	folder 9
To Lafcadio Orlovsky, 1960 March 16	box 1	folder 10
Ginsberg, Louis to Orlovsky, 1965 May 15	box 1	folder 11
Glassman, Joyce		
To Orlovsky and Allen Ginsberg, 1957 October 28	box 1	folder 12
To Orlovsky, 1958 February 13	box 1	folder 13
Huncke, Herbert to Orlovsky, 1960 February 28	box 1	folder 14
Kerouac, Jack to Orlovsky, 1957, 1960 (6 letters), 1957, 1960	box 1	folder 15
McClure, Michael to Orlovsky, 1960 April 27	box 1	folder 16
Miles, Barry to Orlovsky, 1965 October 19	box 1	folder 17
Orlovsky, Katherine		
To Peter Orlovsky and Allen Ginsberg, 1957 October 4	box 1	folder 18
To Peter Orlovsky, 1957-1959 (5 letters), 1957-1959	box 1	folder 19

Orlovsky, Lafcadio		
To Peter Orlovsky and Allen Ginsberg, 1957 (2 letters), 1957	box 1	folder 20
To Peter Orlovsky, 1958 January 8	box 1	folder 21
Orlovsky, Marie, To Peter Orlovksy, 1959 February 26	box 1	folder 22
Orlovsky, Peter		
To Joyce [Glassman], 1957 November 22	box 1	folder 27
To Henry Schlachler, 1957 September 4	box 1	folder 23
To Katherine Orlovsky, 1957 December 31	box 1	folder 24
To Janine Pommey, 1961 March-October (10 letters and postcards), 1961 March-October	box 1	folder 25
Whalen, Philip to Peter Orlovsky, 1958 February 13	box 1	folder 26

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Series II: Drawings, Writings, and Photographs, 1954-1958

Scope and Contents

This series contains sketches, dairy entries, and a small number of photographs created by Peter Orlovsky. The diary fragments are loose and many are undated.

Title/Description	Instances	
Drawings		
Miscellaneous Drawings	box 2	folder 1
Scope and Contents		
(done mostly on paper napkins)		
"My Father and his Leg in Our Room on the 3rd Floor", 1958 July	box 2	folder 2
[Sketch of Robert LaVigne], 1954	box 2	folder 3
[Portrait Sketch], unattributed, circa, 1956	box 2	folder 4
Photographs	box 2	folder 5
Scope and Contents		
(3 photos of Orlovksy and Allen Ginsberg shot by the Harold Chapman Studio, 1 photo booth frame with Gregory Corso, Allen Ginsberg, Paul Carroll, and Peter Orlovsky)		
Diary Fragments and Notes, circa, 1954 July-1956 January	box 2	folder 6

"Restraint and Seclusion Order", 1958	box 2	folder 7
Miscellaneous Envelopes	box 2	folder 8

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