
Finding aid for the Joseph Cornell letters to Susanna De Maria Wilson and other papers

Isabella Zuralski

Descriptive Summary

Title: Joseph Cornell letters to Susanna De Maria Wilson and other papers,

Date (inclusive): 1963-1994, undated

Number: 2014.M.30

Creator/Collector: Cornell, Joseph

Physical Description: 2.17 Linear Feet(3 boxes)

Repository:

The Getty Research Institute

Special Collections

1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100

Los Angeles 90049-1688

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URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/10020/askref>

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Abstract: Collection of thirty-three unpublished letters from Joseph Cornell to Susanna De Maria Wilson, one of his assistants and wife of the minimalist sculptor Walter De Maria. The letters feature poetic and philosophical musings on various topics as well as practical information about the artist's work and document aspects of Cornell's relationship with De Maria Wilson. Besides the textual content, the aesthetic composition of the letters, comprising multiple envelopes frequently contained within each other, collaged elements and the inclusion of objects, produces a layered reading and viewing experience. The letters are as much a collection of collage work and mail art as they are archival documents.

Request Materials: Request access to the physical materials described in this inventory through the [catalog record](#) for this collection. Click here for the [access policy](#).

Language: Collection material is in English.

Biographical / Historical Note

The American artist Joseph Cornell (1903-1972) was a pioneer and celebrated practitioner of collage and assemblage art, and experimental filmmaker. He was born in Nyack, N.Y. in 1903, the eldest of four children. Following his father's death in 1917 he moved with his family to Queens, New York, and then attended the Phillips Academy in Andover in Massachusetts, but without earning a diploma. Except for the years spent in Andover, Cornell lived most of his life in a small house on Utopia Parkway in a working-class neighborhood of Flushing, Queens, along with his mother and his younger brother Robert, who suffered from cerebral palsy. For many years he struggled to make a living and supported his family by working various jobs: salesman in the textile industry; door-to-door appliance salesman; working at a plant nursery; as a textile designer; and as a designer of covers and layouts for *Harper's Bazaar*, *View*, *Dance Index*, and other magazines. Cornell was a self-taught artist. In 1940, he decided to devote all of his time to pursuing art, and set up a workshop in the basement of his house in Flushing. While spending most days at home, he continued to visit Manhattan to meet friends and look for materials. His artworks began to sell, but it was not until after the 1949 solo show at the Charles Egan Gallery that it began to sell for more significant sums.

In the 1950s and 1960s, although highly regarded as an artist, Cornell continued to lead a reclusive life. As caring for his mother and brother claimed more of his time, he hired assistants to help him organize material, make artwork, and run errands. One of his assistants was the wife of the American minimalist sculptor Walter De Maria, Susanna De Maria Wilson. Cornell's brother died in 1965, followed by his mother in 1966. Cornell died in 1972, a few days after his sixty-ninth birthday.

Cornell is best known for assemblages made of objects found in bookshops and thrift stores and arranged eclectically in simple shadow boxes, usually fronted with a glass pane. He also created flat collaged works and experimented with film. The underlying principle of Cornell's art relies for its appeal on the use of dreamlike irrational juxtaposition, inspired by Surrealism, and the evocation of a sense of nostalgia, inspired by 19th-century Romanticism.

Cornell was introduced to Surrealism in the early 1930s when he began frequenting the Julien Levy Gallery, which during the 1930s and 1940s was an important venue for surrealist and avant-garde art, photography and experimental film. His work was first exhibited as part of the *Surrealisme* show at the Julien Levy Gallery in 1932. He made his first glass-fronted box in 1937, which was included that same year in the *Fantastic Art, Dada and Surrealism* show at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Cornell was also an avid collector of books, prints, postcards, and printed ephemera. In the mid-1930s he began collecting movies and movie stills and embarked upon various film-related projects, including a trilogy of collage-films. In the

mid-1950s, he began to incorporate film-related material into his other artwork.

Cornell's art often reflects his preoccupation with women whom he encountered both in his fantasy life, such as actresses and ballet dancers, or in real life, and various other interests, such as his captivation with birds. Besides surrealism, his art was also influenced and informed by French symbolist writers, the philosophy of American Transcendentalism and the Christian Science belief and practice. Throughout his life he came into contact with and befriended well known figures of the art, dance, and literary world; including several artists of the surrealist, abstract expressionist, and pop art movements.

Access

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Preferred Citation

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Acquisition Information

Acquired in 2014.

Processing History

Isabella Zuralski processed the collection and wrote the finding aid in 2015. The scope and content notes for the collection and for the first series are largely drawn from curatorial notes by John Tain.

Digitized Material

The collection was digitized in 2017. Images are available on-site only: <http://hdl.handle.net/10020/2014m30>

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection includes letters from the American collage and assemblage artist Joseph Cornell to one of his assistants, Susanna De Maria Wilson; a small quantity of printed ephemera and notes related to the screenings of films drawn from Cornell's personal collection; and a few letters and notes by others.

Series I. consists of thirty-three letters by Cornell, which document diverse aspects of his working relationship with De Maria Wilson. In terms of aesthetic composition, the pieces of mail are generally strongly visual in their orientation, and some envelopes even seem to have had stamps affixed with care and for deliberate effect. Furthermore, Cornell adapted the collage and assemblage technique to the sequential mode of reading in the epistolary format, so that the outer envelopes frequently contain multiple envelopes that are then wrapped in tissue paper, stitched or clipped together. Often, these items are collaged with stamps, seals, foil stickers, and small photographs. Several small objects are enclosed with the letters: a bird call whistle, pressed grass, a toy plastic mirror, a piece of perforated metal, and rusty nails. Cornell's method of collage and assemblage thus produces a layered experience of reading and viewing. As a group, the letters exist as much as a collection of work on paper or mail art as they are archival documents.

Included with this series is the painted wood box in which De Maria Wilson stored Cornell's letters at her home. Cornell saw the box in a Manhattan store and asked DeMaria Wilson to purchase it with money he gave her.

Series II. includes a small group of printed ephemera and notes related to the historic 1963 screenings of films drawn from Cornell's personal collection, held at 9 Great Jones Street, the space run by Walter De Maria and Robert Whitman; and a few letters by others written after Cornell's death.

Arrangement

Arranged in two series: Series I. Joseph Cornell letters to Susanna De Maria Wilson, 1963-1968, undated; Series II. Other papers, 1963-1994, undated.

Subjects - Names

De Maria Wilson, Susanna

Cornell, Joseph

Subjects - Topics

Assemblage (Art)

Genres and Forms of Material

Collages -- United States -- 20th century

Mail art -- United States -- 20th century

Letters (correspondence) -- United States -- 20th century

Contributors

Cornell, Joseph

Series I. Joseph Cornell letters to Susanna De Maria Wilson, 1963-1968, undated

Physical Description: 146 items(33 letters in 34 folders, 1 painted wood box)

Scope and Content Note

Included are thirty-three postmarked letters sent by Joseph Cornell from his house in Flushing, Queens, to Susanna De Maria Wilson at her various addresses in New York City. The letters begin in 1963 and continue until 1968, but the prevalent portion, about half of the letters, dates from 1963.

In addition to Cornell's letters to De Maria Wilson, the postmarked envelopes also contain other items such as notes, greeting cards, or clippings from magazines, which are often inserted in smaller envelopes, wrapped in tissue paper, stitched or clipped together. Frequently, these items are collaged with stamps, seals, foil stickers, and small photographs. Several small objects are included: a bird call whistle, pressed grass, a plastic toy mirror, a piece of perforated metal, and rusty nails.

As stated in the first letter (21 January 1963), Cornell had met De Maria Wilson in the spring of 1962, when the latter was working at MoMA, but did not write her until the start of the following year. The letters document diverse aspects of Cornell's and De Maria Wilson's working relationship. De Maria Wilson was given the task of helping acquire source material for Cornell's collage and assemblage work, and the letters frequently contain directions on where to go, guidance as to what kind of imagery particularly appealed to him, and even samples of images. Sometimes, the letters are purely social in purpose, as in an Easter card sent on 13 April 1963, or in a postcard dated 15 April 1964, thanking her for perfumes. Cornell also shared insight into various aspects of his thought and collage processes. For instance, in a letter dated 28 March 1963, Cornell discusses the mystery of sylphs and sensuality, and in a letter from 5 April 1963 he wrote a lengthy note discussing three dreams. Throughout, the writing is typical of the artist's allusive and laconic style, but there are also surprising moments of humor, as in the humorous card sent on 23 May 1964.

Just important as the discursive or textual content of the letters is their aesthetic composition. The pieces of mail are generally strongly visual in their orientation, and even the more mundane-seeming of the letters and postcards appear to have had stamps affixed with care and for deliberate effect. Many include collaged elements and objects. At times, this could consist simply of the addition of stickers or the pasting on of a cut-out image, but there are also sumptuous demonstrations of Cornell's artistry, as in the collage bouquet of pressed grasses and angels included in an envelope stamped 13 February 1964.

Furthermore, Cornell adapted the collage and assemblage technique to the more temporally ordered sequential mode of reading in the epistolary format, so that any given piece frequently contains multiple envelopes that are then wrapped in tissue paper, stitched or clipped together, producing a layered reading and viewing experience. In short, the letters as a group exist as much as a collection of work on paper or mail art by Cornell as they are an archive of documents.

Included with this series is the painted wood box in which De Maria Wilson stored Cornell's letters at her home. Cornell saw the box in a Manhattan store and asked DeMaria Wilson to purchase it with money he gave her.

In the following descriptions of the letters the name of the addressee is transcribed documenting the various ways Susanna De Maria Wilson was addressed by Cornell.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

box 1, folder 1

1963 January 21 

Physical Description: 8 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to Mrs. Susanne De Maria, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 21 January 1963, with a five-cent George Washington postage stamp. Inserted is [2] a yellow blank envelope containing [3] a white folded piece of paper, to which is affixed [4] a piece of perforated metal; the folded paper is inscribed in pencil: Back Door in Flushing. Also inserted is [5] a white blank envelope with a broken 1958 Japanese stamp seal, inside which is inserted [6] a paper sleeve containing [7] a swiss warbler bird call whistle. The sleeve has "Made in Japan" printed on one side and instructions on how to use the whistle on the other. Also inserted is [8] an undated letter from the artist to De Maria Wilson.

box 1, folder 2

1963 February 17 

Physical Description: 5 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to De Maria Wilson and stamped along left and upper margins with ten half-cent Benjamin Franklin postage stamps; postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 17 February 1963. Inserted is [2] a folded printed card illustrated with a drawing of a cupid by Francesco Mazzola (called Parmigianino). The card is collaged inside with two small photos of De Maria Wilson's eyes and a tiny heart made of red aluminium foil. Also inserted inside the white envelope is [3] another white envelope from the 1870s with a five-kroner postage stamp. It is addressed in Italian in ink by old hand to Nobil Donna in Roveredo and postmarked in Vezzano in Liguria, Italy, and sealed with a tiny red foil heart and a blue foil dot. Inside this "old" envelope is [4] a note typed on folded pink onionskin paper and a [5] Mona Lisa stamp. The typed note is addressed to de Maria Wilson, signed Anon and dated 14 February 1963.

box 1, folder 3

1963 February 26 

Physical Description: 2 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] Oblong yellow envelope, initialed and dated by the artist on the recto and sealed with a stamp lettered in Japanese and illustrated with a picture of a mouse in a mousetrap on the verso. Inside the envelope is a [2] blank onionskin paper with a blue conté rubbing on the recto, stamped with the words Apollinaire's Swan, folded and perforated after the removal of staples.

box 1, folder 4

1963 March 8 

Physical Description: 6 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] Blue envelope addressed to De Maria, stamped with one two-cent postage stamp and one three-cent postage stamp, and a decorative stamp with two birds affixed on the verso; postmarked on 8 March 1963. Inserted is [2] a handwritten note on an index card saying "Return pink packet for enrichment & museum times." Stapled to the index card is a [3] small pink envelope containing [4-5] two rusty nails. Also inserted is a [6] folded white paper bag with a blue conté rubbing.

box 1, folder 5

1963 March 14 

Physical Description: 6 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope with one one-cent Washington postage stamp and one four-cent Remington stamp, addressed to Mrs. Walter De Maria and postmarked on 14 March 1963. Inserted are [2] a small glassine envelope [3] and a folded yellow paper marked "Postscript" on the verso and with a typed Walt Whitman quote on the recto. Also inserted is [4] a typed-and-handwritten note on white onionskin paper, addressed to De Maria, folded and collaged with a Japanese mouse trap stamp seal (same as in folder 3) and a tiny red foil heart. Also inserted is a [5] blank glassine envelope into which is inserted [6] a sheet of blue paper, folded and with a red foil ampersand sign affixed on top.

box 1, folder 6

1963 March 20 

Physical Description: 4 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to Mrs. Walter De Maria, with a five-cent postage stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on March 20 1963. Inserted is [2] a printed greeting card with floral illustration by Manville, inside of which is a [3] handwritten personal note on a torn half-sheet onionskin paper and [4] and an "old" letter handwritten in ink and dated "ca. 1849," signed "Jaeger."

box 1, folder 7

1963 March 22 

Physical Description: 5 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] Light blue envelope addressed to Mrs. Walter de Maria, with a five-cent postage stamp postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 22 March 1963. Inserted is [2] a letter typed on light blue paper with dragonfly letterhead, stamped "La Salamandre Fin de siècle." Also inserted is a [3] small white envelope, which contains a [4] white card with printed text by Novalis, wrapped in [5] blue tissue.

box 1, folder 8

1963 March 27 

Physical Description: 11 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] Blue envelope addressed to Mrs. Walter De Maria, with two five-cent postage stamps, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 27 March 1963. Inserted is [2] a typed note on folded blue paper, which encloses [3] a handwritten note on a white slip of paper; [4] a handwritten note on a Dixons Cafeteria postcard; [5-6] two Jay Bee Magazine Stores business cards; [7] an annotated torn-out page from *Rogue* magazine; and [8-9] two leaves of onionskin paper with handwritten text, numbered "Sylph #1" and "Sylph #2" and clipped together. Included here are [10] a torn strip from *Horticulture* magazine and [11] a brown paper bag with a hand-drawn map to a magazine store on 54 W. 42nd street.

box 1, folder 9

1963 April 1 

Physical Description: 3 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to Mrs. Walter De Maria, with two five-cent postage stamps, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 1 April. Inserted is [2] a blue folded paper with handwritten prose titled "Living The Statues Five + Dime" and [3] a blue plastic toy mirror with handle.

box 1, folder 10

1963 April 5 

Physical Description: 4 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope, addressed to Mrs. Susanne de Maria, with one one-cent and one four-cent postage stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 5 April 1963. Inserted is [2] a postcard of Time's Square at night; [3] folded blue paper with a handwritten text beginning with the words "three dreams" and hand-marked "correction" on the verso; and [4] another handwritten note on folded blue paper.

box 1, folder 11

1963 April 8 

Physical Description: 9 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] Brown clasp envelope with "S. De Maria on self" handwritten in upper right corner. Inserted is [2] a torn white tissue with three inked stamps: five-pointed star, hand with pointing finger and woman's face. Also inserted are a [3] white onionskin paper with a handwritten note and a doodle "via phone S. De Maria"; [4] a folded blue paper sheet with text typed and corrected by hand in black ink, and dated on verso: 4-8-63; [5] folded white onionskin paper with a short typed note, to which is stapled a magazine clipping of a female nude in the desert; [6] a folded blue paper containing [7,8,9] three leaves of illustrations depicting mostly female nudes, torn from magazines. One of the illustrations is hand-marked "Chamber of Seraphs." Typed on the blue paper are the words "no connection with other enclosures."

box 1, folder 12

1963 April 11 

Physical Description: 3 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White stapled envelope, addressed to Miss Susanne de Maria, with one one-cent and one four-cent postage stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 11 April 1963. Inserted is [2] a sheet of folded white onionskin paper with a handwritten note captioned "Thanks to Susanne" and "too much for words" and a [3] small color magazine clipping of a dark haired female nude seen from behind and holding up her hair, and a typed note "another better one to follow" on verso.

box 1, folder 13

1963 April 11 

Physical Description: 2 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to Mrs. Walter De Maria, with one five-cent postage stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 11 April 1963. Inserted is [2] an Easter card depicting an angel with a basket of flowers and decorated with two small foil stars, and with an Easter greeting inscribed inside.

box 1, folder 14

1963 April 12 

Physical Description: 7 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope, addressed to Mrs. Walter De Maria, with two five-cent postage stamps, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 12 April 1963, and inscribed on verso in pencil "fleeting image returned 2/29/64." Inserted is [2] a piece of corrugated cardboard; [3] a folded yellow onionskin paper with typed notes; and [4-5] a clipped white card with a typed note beginning with the words "early morning benediction of light..." Also inserted are [6] a typed note on a fragment of white onionskin paper, beginning with the words "another dream or vision..."; and [7] a hand-and typewritten note on white paper, titled "Two Girls" and dedicated "For Susanna Good Friday 63."

box 1, folder 15

1963 April 17 

Physical Description: 3 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope, addressed to Mrs. Susanne De Maria, with one five-cent postage stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 17 April 1963. Inserted is [2] folded white onionskin paper with a handwritten note beginning with words "I just found a new born may fly" and marked by hand "4-17-63" on the verso, to which is affixed a stapled postage stamp with the image of a beetle. Also inserted is [3] a folded white paper napkin with several handwritten notes.

box 1, folder 16

1963 June 8 

Physical Description: 3 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White oblong envelope addressed to Mrs. Susanne De Maria, with one five-cent postage stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 8 June 1963. Inserted is [2] a folded white onionskin paper with a handwritten note, and [3] a strip of five postal stamps depicting birds, from the series "Protect Our Natural Resources."

box 1, folder 17

1963 December 30 

Physical Description: 4 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope, addressed to Mrs. Walter de Maria, marked "Personal," with one five-cent postal stamp, and two small Christmas Greetings stamps on verso, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on December 30 1963. Inserted is [2] a folded light blue paper with a handwritten note titled "The Statue of Bronze" and [3] a black-and-white photocopy of the note. Also inserted is [4] a folded white paper with handwritten notes by De Maria Wilson, in which she is interpreting Cornell's note.

box 1, folder 18

1964 February 13 

Physical Description: 5 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to W. De Maria, with one one-cent and two two-cent stamps, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 13 February 1964; with a "Returned" stamp on the recto, and a small piece of white paper with a post office box address for Susanna De Maria Wilson affixed on the verso. Inserted is [2] a playing card with black-and-white close-up image of hair on the recto and an image of a beret and a circle with spheres on the verso. Also inserted is [3] a note on yellowed paper, typed in red ink and handwritten, beginning with the words "regret pressures." Also inserted is [4] a folded blue onionskin paper with a "Calling All Girls" stamp seal, which contains [5] a handmade card decorated with pressed flowers and embossed stickers of cupids.

box 1, folder 19

1964 March 25 

Physical Description: 4 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed in red type to Mrs. Walter De Maria, with one one-cent and two two-cent postal stamps, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 25 March 1964, and sealed on the verso with a stamp depicting rabbits. Inserted is [2] an Easter card, and [3] folded yellow onionskin paper with a typed note beginning with words "Deerly Dearly." Also inserted is [4] a torn-off fragment of yellow onionskin paper with a typed note beginning with words "a year ago this time."

box 1, folder 20

1964 April 15 

Physical Description: 1 item

Scope and Content Note

[1] A postcard addressed to Mrs. Walter De Maria, with a printed four-cent postal stamp. Handwritten note on verso begins with the words: Thank you for your sweet sending.

box 1, folder 21

1964 May 23 

Physical Description: 3 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] Oblong white envelope addressed to Mrs. Susanne De Maria, with a five-cent Gettysburg postal stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 23 May 1964. Inserted is [2] a signed greeting card from the New York World's Fair 1964-1965, and [3] another postcard with image of a Thai pavilion on verso.

box 1, folder 22

1964? 

Physical Description: 3 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to Mrs. Walter de Maria and words "Courtesy of Mrs. Ethe," all in red type. Inserted is [2] a folded white paper with a note in red type, sealed with a rose sticker; and [3] a folded white paper with a note in black type.

box 1, folder 23

1964 December 3 

Physical Description: 2 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to Mrs. Susane De Maria, with a five-cent postage stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on December 3 1964. It has a large yellow stain on its recto. Inserted is [2] a folded white paper with a handwritten note.

box 1, folder 24

1965 January 6 

Physical Description: 9 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White oblong envelope addressed to Mrs. Susanne de Maria, with one thirty-cent and one five-cent postal stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 6 January 1965, and stamped "Special Delivery" on both recto and verso. Inserted is [2] a folded white paper with a handwritten note dated "Jan. 6. 65", and [3] a folded blue silk scarf. Also inserted is [4] a note and sketch on brown paper cut from a Stern's shopping bag; [5] a typewritten note on onionskin paper beginning with words "this is from the original day of the deer nymph"; and [6] a small white envelope, which contains [7] a blue tissue wrapped around [8] a white card with printed text by Novalis. The printed card and the blue tissue are held by a [9] metal clip.

box 2, folder 1

1965 November 23 

Physical Description: 2 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] Light blue onionskin paper envelope addressed to Mrs. Walter De Maria, with a five-cent Christmas postage stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on November 23 1965. Inserted is [2] a folded white paper with handwritten notes captioned "vision d'Ondine" and a small color photograph of a man at a snack stand.

box 2, folder 2

1965 November 29 

Physical Description: 5 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to Mrs. Susanne de Maria, with a five-cent Christmas postage stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 29 November 1965. Inserted is [2] a small white envelope addressed to "Susanne & Walter", which contains [3] a handwritten note beginning with the words "In Robert's name." Also inserted is [4] a handwritten letter on white onionskin paper beginning with "Dear Susanne." Also inserted is [5] a card with a small picture of a rose on the outside, and a small picture of a pygmy kingfisher bird, collaged with a rope, on the inside.

box 2, folder 3

1966 January 4 

Physical Description: 3 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White oblong envelope addressed to Mrs. Walter de Maria, with a five-cent postage stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 4 January 1966. Inserted is [2] a five dollar money order payable to Mrs. Walter De Maria and dated 8 November 1965 and stapled to [3] folded white onionskin paper with a collage of a small poinsettia stamp and a cut-out illustration of a bird and seed.

box 2, folder 4

1966 October 9 

Physical Description: 2 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to Mrs. Walter de Maria, with a five-cent George Washington postal stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 9 October 1966. Inserted is [2] a handwritten letter beginning with the words "Your tribute is extremely perceptive."

box 2, folder 5

1966 December 3 

Physical Description: 3 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to Mrs. Susanne de Maria, with a five-cent Christmas postal stamp, postmarked Flushing N.Y. on 3 December 1966; with Cornell's printed return address stamp on verso. Inserted is [2] a smaller square-shaped white envelope addressed to Mrs. Susanne de Maria, with a five-cent Christmas postal stamp on its recto and Cornell's printed return address stamp on its verso. It is postmarked 29 November 1966, stamped "Returned to Writer" on its recto, and annotated in pencil "your note comes today thank you" on its verso. Inside the smaller square-shaped envelope is [3] an illustrated Christmas card, inscribed with a handwritten note.

box 2, folder 6

1967 February 24 

Physical Description: 4 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope addressed to Mrs. Susanne de Maria, with a five-cent George Washington postal stamp and torn postmark. Inserted is [2] a typed collaged note with caption "ASK TO SEE!" Also inserted is [3] a sheet with duplicate photographs of a girl holding a tambourine, and [4] a sheet with larger negatives for the photographs.

box 2, folder 7

1967 March 9 

Physical Description: 3 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] Yellow oblong envelope addressed to Miss Susanne de Maria, with a five-cent George Washington postal stamp and postmarked New York N.Y. on 9 March 1967. Inserted is [2] a letter on folded yellow paper, handwritten with a lot of ink splash and [3] a small photograph of two raccoons stapled on it.

box 2, folder 8-9

1968 July 

Physical Description: 6 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] White envelope with "Susanna" typed on it, with a six-cent postal stamp and postmarked July 1968. Inserted is [2] a small "Handle With Care" clipping printed in red and white; [3] a small white envelope with a flower bouquet sticker, which contains [4] a folded white tissue sealed with a torn "Fragile" sticker printed in red and white. Inside the tissue are [5] dried grasses. Also inserted is [6] a folded newspaper clipping from *Women's Wear Daily* that features names of several contemporary artists and authors, including the name of Walter De Maria.

box 2, folder 10

1968? 

Physical Description: 5 items

Scope and Content Note

[1] Small white envelope addressed to Susanna, with a large six-cent Christmas stamp and a sticker of a fox with Santa's hat holding a wrapped present. Inserted is [2] a card with a handwritten note in red and blue beginning with the words "Thank you for the WARMTH." The card is attached with [3] a clip and [4] blue ribbon to [5] a tag illustrated with a stamp of a potbelly stove.

box 3

Painted wood box, undated 

Physical Description: 1 item

Scope and Content Note

Painted wood box in which De Maria Wilson stored the letters at her home and that Cornell saw in a Manhattan store and De Maria Wilson purchased with money Cornell gave her.

Series II. **Other papers, 1963-1994, undated**

Physical Description: 19 items(10 folders)

Scope and Content Note

Included are printed ephemera and notes related to the 1963 screenings of films drawn from Cornell's personal collection; and letters by others written after Cornell's death.

Arrangement

Arranged by topic in two subseries.

Series II.A. **Joseph Cornell film series memorabilia, 1963**

Physical Description: 13 items(13 items in 6 folders)

Scope and Content Note

Included are printed ephemera and notes related to four of the historic 1963 screenings of films drawn from Cornell's personal collection held at 9 Great Jones Street, the space run by Walter De Maria and Robert Whitman. These documents provide information about the screenings, as well as who was in attendance, including well known artists such as Hans Haake, James Rosenquist, and Robert Motherwell, and the director of the Green Gallery, Richard Bellamy.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically.

- box 2, folder 11 **Advertisement for film program 1963 April 11** 
Physical Description: 1 item
Scope and Content Note
[1-2] Two clippings from the *Village Voice* with an ad for the first of the film series *Magic Varieties Fantasy* and three Melies shorts: *A Detectives Tour of the World*, *Hanky Panky Cards*, and *Automatic Moving Company*.
- box 2, folder 12 **Advertisement for film program, 1963 April 18** 
Physical Description: 1 item
- box 2, folder 13 **The Little Match Girl program 1963 April 19-20** 
Physical Description: 4 items
Scope and Content Note
[1-4] Program (four copies) from the second in a series of weekend film programs from the collection of Joseph Cornell at the loft Walter De Maria, Robert Whitman, Simone Forti and Susanna De Maria Wilson rented at 9 Great Jones Street in New York City. Movies in this series included *The Little Match Girl* (Jean Renoir, 1926) and *Water Babies/The Little Chimney Sweep* (Gaumont, 1910). Silver star affixed.
- box 2, folder 14 **Comedy Americana program, 1963 April 26-27** 
Physical Description: 4 items
Scope and Content Note
[1-4] Program (four copies) from the film series *Comedy Americana*. Shown were *The Fireman* with Charlie Chaplin and *Coney Island* with Mack Sennett, cartoons and "special extra" *Love is Blonde*. Mentioned are "coming attractions" for Friday and Saturday May 3 and 4, *The Waxworks*.
- box 2, folder 15 **Advertisement for film program, 1963 May 2** 
Physical Description: 1 item
Scope and Content Note
[1] *Village Voice* ad for the 4th in the series on May 3 and 4. Shown were Pola Negri in *Sumurum* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1920) and *The Match Girl* (Jean Renoir, 1926).
- box 2, folder 16 **Reservation sheets, [1963]** 
Physical Description: 2 items
Scope and Content Note
[2] Two handwritten reservation sheets by Susanna De Maria Wilson for 8 PM and 10 PM shows. The names include Richard Bellamy the director of the Green Gallery, and the artists Hans Haake, James Rosenquist and Robert Motherwell.

Series II.B. **Miscellaneous items, 1973, 1974, 1994, undated**

Physical Description: 6 items(6 items in 4 folders)

Scope and Content Note

Included are letters by others written after Cornell's death; a memorial service announcement for Cornell; and a note by De Maria Wilson.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically. Painted wood box is listed at the end.

box 2, folder 17

Joseph Cornell memorial announcement, 1973 January 

Physical Description: 2 items

Scope and Content Note

[2] Envelope marked with names of Susan and Walter De Maria and announcement of memorial service for Joseph Cornell at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on 15 January 1973.

box 2, folder 18

Betty C. Benton letter to Susanna de Maria, 1974 February 23 

Physical Description: 2 items

Scope and Content Note

[2] Envelope addressed to Miss S. de Maria and letter from Cornell's sister Betty C. Benton, in which she thanks De Maria Wilson for the Christmas card and seeds sent to Cornell shortly before his death.

box 2, folder 19

Notes on Cornell lecture, undated 

Physical Description: 1 item

Scope and Content Note

[1] One leaf of handwritten notes by Susanna De Maria Wilson from an afternoon lecture by Cornell in his kitchen.

box 2, folder 20

Susanna De Maria Wilson letter to Dr. Ernest Nagamatsu, 1994 July 20 

Physical Description: 1 item

Scope and Content Note

[1] Letter dated 20 July 1994 from Susanna Wilson to her friend Dr. Ernest Nagamatsu (dentist by trade; artist, photographer, and cultural activist based in Los Angeles), in which she relates details about her interactions and friendship with Cornell. She also mentions Cornell's collage *Mirror Double* and two accompanying letters from Cornell in Nagamatsu's possession.