INVENTORY OF THE LETTRISM PAPERS, 1946-1965

Finding aid prepared by Lynda Bunting.
Descriptive Summary
Title: Lettrism papers
Date (inclusive): 1946-1965
Number: 980036
Creator/Collector: Queneau, Raymond, 1903-1976
Physical Description: 28.0 items
Repository:
The Getty Research Institute
Special Collections
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles, California, 90049-1688
(310) 440-7390
Abstract: A collection of letters and ephemera belonging to editor Raymond Queneau, one of the founders of “Oulipo.” The materials concern the avant-garde movement Lettrism, and comprise correspondence, manuscripts, typescripts, and ephemera.
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 French
Biographical/Historical Note
Raymond Queneau (1903-1973) worked with the surrealists as a young man before becoming known as one of the founders of “Oulipo” (Ouvroir de littérature potentielle, or the Workshop of Potential Literature). Two of his most famous works are Les exercices de style and Zazie dans le métro, which Louis Malle filmed in 1960. As an editor at Gallimard, Queneau was extremely influential in the publication and support of avant-garde movements and their proponents. Queneau began publishing Isidore Isou in the late 1940s and was supportive of him and his efforts to establish Lettrism.
Access
Open for use by qualified researchers.
Publication Rights
Contact Library Reproductions and Permissions.
Preferred Citation
Acquisition Information
Collection was acquired in 1998.
Processing History
Lynda Bunting processed the collection in October 1998
Scope and Content of Collection
Letters and ephemera sent to editor Raymond Queneau concerning the avant-garde movement Lettrism, founded by Isidore Isou. A letter, a clipping and the tract “Defense d'Isidore Isou” illustrate Isou's problems with obscenity charges brought against him in 1962. Three letters to Queneau and a copy of a 7 p. letter from Isou to Gaston Gallimard, dated 1962 and 1964, plead for continued support for the movement. Other materials by Isou are a handwritten card (1946), a handwritten cover design for a proposed book “Oeuvres complètes de Isidore Isou” (n.d.), a typescript titled “Domaine artistique integral” (n.d.), and the tract “Vive la retrospective surrealiste!” (1964), which denounces André Breton. The collection also includes three handwritten letters from Gabriel Pomerand concerning books Queneau sent him during his imprisonment (1949) and his hospitalization (1954), three typed letters from Jacques Spacagna regarding the issue of Bizarre that he and Maurice Lemaître are preparing, and two letters from Lemaître (1962, 1965). Ephemera consist of two announcements "Première manifestation lettriste" (n.d.) and "Le letrrisme" (n.d.), an invitation to a Lemaître event with ink drawings and stapled film strips (n.d.), the program "La poesie et la musique letrristes et aphonistes" (n.d.), and a 4 p. advertisement, with text by Noël Arnaud, for three recordings (1964).
Arrangement note
Arranged in one series, in rough chronological order.
Subjects - Names
Queneau, Raymond, 1903-1976

**Subjects - Topics**
Lettrism

**Genres and Forms of Material**
Drawings (visual works)
Ephemera

**Contributors**
Arnaud, Noël
Gallimard, Gaston, 1881-1975
Isou, Isidore
Lemaître, Maurice, 1926-
Pomerand, Gabriel, 1926-1972
Spacagna, Jacques

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**Box 1, Folder 1**

"Première manifestation Lettriste" n.d.
Scope and Content Note
announcement.

**Box 1, Folder 1**

Handwritten card [1946]
Scope and Content Note
from Isou to Queneau which invites Queneau to assist in the conference "Interdiction de Peter dans la salle," even though he is an ass.

**Box 1, Folder 1**

"Le Lettrisme" n.d.
Scope and Content Note
announcement.

**Box 1, Folder 1**

Cover design n.d.
Scope and Content Note
handwritten for the proposed book "Oeuvres complètes de Isidore Isou" (published?)

**Box 1, Folder 1**

Letter 1947
Scope and Content Note
typed from R. Veillé to Queneau forwarding two handwritten letters from listeners who heard Lettrisme programs on the radio.

**Box 1, Folder 2**

Letters Avril 1949, 12 Avril 1949, March 1954
Scope and Content Note
3 handwritten letters from Gabriel Pomerand to Queneau sending thanks for a package of books he received while imprisoned in Luasanne (1949) and requesting books be sent to him while he recuperates in the hospital (1954).

**Box 1, Folder 3**

Clipping n.d.
Scope and Content Note
about the judgement against Isou and also lists those who support him.

**Box 1, Folder 3**

Letter 23 Oct 62
Scope and Content Note
handwritten from Isou to Queneau requesting Queneau to read the enclosed letter to members of l'Acadèmie Goncourt.
Box 1, Folder 3  **Letter [1962]**  
Scope and Content Note  
4 p. typed from Isou to Queneau seeking support for the first Lettriste festival.

Box 1, Folder 3  **Letter 26 Oct 1962**  
Scope and Content Note  
typed from Isou to Queneau about the judgement against him and requesting Queneau to appeal to the public for support.

Box 1, Folder 3  **"Defense d'Isidore Isou" n.d.**  
Scope and Content Note  
tract with handwritten note from Isou to Queneau written in the top and bottom margins.

Box 1, Folder 4  **"Domaine artistique integral" n.d.**  
Scope and Content Note  
typescript.

Box 1, Folder 4  **Letter 25 mai 1964**  
Scope and Content Note  
typed from Isou to Queneau asking Queneau to participate in a cultural committee.

Box 1, Folder 4  **"Vive la retrospective surrealiste!" [1964]**  
Scope and Content Note  
tract which denounces André Breton.

Box 1, Folder 4  **"La poesie et la musique Lettristes et Aphonistes" n.d.**  
Scope and Content Note  
program.

Box 1, Folder 4  **Letters 1964**  
Scope and Content Note  
3 typed from Jacques Spacagna to Queneau concerning the issue of *Bizarre* that he and Lemaître are preparing.

Box 1, Folder 5  **Letter [1964]**  
Scope and Content Note  
copy of a 7 p. typed letter from Isou to Gaston Gallimard sent to Queneau with a note handwritten in the margin asking him to comment on Isou's proposals for Gallimard to have readers at Editions Gallimard capable of understanding and defending Lettrisme and changes to the journal N.N.R.F. which grows worse each year.

Box 1, Folder 6  **Advertisement [1964]**  
Scope and Content Note  
3 p. ts. By Noël Arnaud describing the contents of 3 recordings for sale listed on a 4th page.

Box 1, Folder 6  **Invitation [1956 or 1962]**  
Scope and Content Note  
to a Lemaître event with ink drawings and film strips.

Box 1, Folder 6  **Letters , 10 août 1965 19 Septembre 1962**  
Scope and Content Note  
2 typed, short letters from Lemaître to Queneau.
Box 1, Folder 7  

**Envelope [1962]**

Scope and Content Note
from Isou to Queneau.