Judy Freespirit papers, 1971-1993 LSC.1956


UCLA Library Special Collections
Room A1713, Charles E. Young Research Library
Box 951575
Los Angeles, CA, 90095-1575
(310) 825-4988
spec-coll@library.ucla.edu
Online finding aid last updated 28 August 2017.
Title: Judy Freespirit papers
Identifier/Call Number: LSC.1956
Contributing Institution: UCLA Library Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.6 linear feet (1 document box, 1 half-sized document box)
Date (inclusive): 1971-1993
Abstract: Judy Freespirit was born Judith Louise Berkowitz in 1936 in Detroit, Michigan to a working class Jewish family of Eastern European descent. She pointed to her early life as formative for her political and activist work and credits theatre and dancing as positive outlets for frustration. Judy Freespirit was a lifelong activist and advocate for Jewish, lesbian, and fat rights. With a background in radical therapeutic theory and practice as well as a community organizational ethic, she formed the Fat Underground in 1976, an organization devoted to both informing and mobilizing the public. Freespirit was also a writer and performer, lending her talents to a traveling Anti Briggs Initiative show and continuing to perform in both group and individual contexts. She continued to perform, educate, and counsel up until her death in 2008. This collection includes materials with her married name, Judith Ackerman because she continued to use it for legal purposes after her marriage. It contains written and published materials by Judy Freespirit, as well as other materials that are part of her personal collection of political writings and community information. The bulk of the writings in this collection are focused on Freespirit’s fat activism, specifically through her involvement with both Radical Therapy practices and the Fat Underground.
Language of Materials: Materials are in English.
Physical Location: Stored off-site at SRLF. All requests to access special collections materials must be made in advance through our electronic paging system using the "Request items" button.
Creator: Freespirit, Judy, 1936-2010
Conditions Governing Access
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF: Open for research. All requests to access special collections materials must be made in advance through our electronic paging system using the "Request items" button.
Conditions Governing Use and Reproduction
Property rights to the physical object belong to the UCLA Library Special Collections. Literary rights, including copyright, are retained by the creators and their heirs. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine who holds the copyright and pursue the copyright owner or his or her heir for permission to publish where The UC Regents do not hold the copyright.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Judy Freespirit Papers (Collection 1956). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.
Provenance/Source of Acquisition
This collection is part of an outreach and collection-building partnership between the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW) and the UCLA Library. These collections expand the pool of primary source materials available to researchers and to the community at large. This partnership was initiated by CSW and is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to inventory, organize, preserve, and digitize more than eighty Mazer collections pertaining to lesbian and feminist activism and writings.
UCLA Catalog Record ID
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 6961280
Processing History
The June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive at UCLA is an outreach and collection-building partnership between the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women (CSW) and the UCLA Library. These collections expand the pool of primary source materials available to researchers and to the community at large. This partnership was initiated by CSW and is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to inventory, organize, preserve, and digitize more than eighty Mazer collections pertaining to lesbian and feminist activism and writings.
Biography
Judy Freespirit was born Judith Louise Berkowitz in 1936 in Detroit, Michigan to a working class Jewish family of Eastern European descent. She often pointed to her early life as formative for her political and activist work and credits theatre and dancing as positive outlets for the frustration of being pressured to diet at the age of eight and the trauma of being an incest survivor. She attended Michigan State University for two years and majored in drama before marrying. She moved to Japan with her husband after he was drafted, giving birth to her son Joe abroad. She, Joe, and her husband moved to Los Angeles, where they divorced. In 1976, she founded the Fat Underground, an organization that sought to inform and mobilize the public about fat rights. Freespirit was a writer and performer, and she also formed a traveling Anti Briggs Initiative show. She continued to perform, educate, and counsel until her death in 2008.
Angeles in 1960 where she finished college and began her work in the psychiatric field, completing her Master's Degree at the age of 35. Through her discovery of the Women's Liberation Movement in Los Angeles and her professional background, Judy developed and began to share her Radical Therapy skills with the feminist community in small group settings. During this period she came out as a lesbian and left her husband. Along with four others, Judy founded the Fat Underground in 1976. When she moved to the Bay Area she also founded the Fat Lip Reader's Theatre, a collective of fat women writing and performing comedic, dramatic and musical theatre. In 1978, Judy became involved in working to stop the Briggs Initiative and travelled around California raising awareness and funds for its defeat. After its defeat, she moved to the Berkeley/Oakland area and became more focused on her Jewish identity, involving herself in a Jewish Lesbian Writer's group in 1982 and performing and participating at the Jewish Feminist Conference in San Francisco. After struggling with asthma and the discovery of severe allergies, Judy became active in the disability movement, working with the World Institute on Disabilities. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Judy wrote and performed prolifically, creating one-woman shows dealing with her life as a fat, Jewish, lesbian incest survivor with disabilities. She published in journals, spoke at health conferences, provided counseling, and made people laugh. Up until her death she remained an advocate, calling for more visibility of the gay and lesbian community in elder care housing, specifically in San Francisco's The Jewish Home where she passed away in 2010.

1936  Born Judith Louise Berkowitz
1960  Moves to Los Angeles
1976  Fat Underground is founded
1978  Fat Lip Theatre is founded
1978  Briggs Initiative and subsequent Anti Briggs Initiative traveling show.
1982  Becomes involved with the Jewish Lesbian Writer's group
2008  Judy Freespirit passes away

Scope and Content
This collection contains written and published materials by Judy Freespirit, as well as other materials that are part of her personal collection of political writings and community information. The bulk of the writings in this collection are focused on Freespirit's fat activism, specifically through her involvement with both Radical Therapy practices and the Fat Underground. This collection includes materials with her married name, Judith Ackerman because she continued to use it for legal purposes after her marriage.

Organization and Arrangement
Arranged chronologically.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements
COLLECTION CONTAINS AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS: Audiovisual materials in this collection will require assessment and possible digitization for safe access. To review these audiovisual materials, you must notify the UCLA Library Special Collections Reference Desk in advance of your visit.

Related Material
There are recordings of Judy Freespirit speaking in the Burke (Kevin) Sound Recordings 1975-1979 collection as well as materials in the Alfred (Randy) Subject Files and Sound Recordings 1974-1990 collection. Both of these collections are found at the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Freespirit, Judy, 1936-2010 -- Archives
June L. Mazer Lesbian Archive at UCLA.
June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives.
Body image in women
Discrimination against overweight women--United States
Jewish lesbians--California--Archives.
Lesbian activists--California--Archives.
Lesbian actresses--California--Archives.
Radical therapy
Box 1, Folder 1  
**Radical Therapy materials 1971-1982**
General Physical Description note: flyers, certificates, notes and photocopies  
Scope and Contents note  
Includes flyers from speaking engagements, professional and student association certificates in psychology and psychotherapy, "An Open Letter to all my Former Shrinky," notes, and copies of newspaper clippings. All materials are by Judy Freespirit.

Box 1, Folder 2  
**Rape Prevention Literature circa 1971-1972**
General Physical Description note: printed paper  
Scope and Contents note  
Program for Anti Rape Conference, "Rape: The Experience" by Anonymous, "The Politics of Rape" by Susan Griffin, and "How Not to Get Raped" from the NY Radical Feminists.

Box 1, Folder 3  
**Political publications 1972**
General Physical Description note: photocopied and bound publications  
Scope and Contents note  
Independent or small press publications not by Judy Freespirit. Includes: A Citizen's Guide to the Right Wing released by the UAW, Female Liberation as the Basis for Social Revolution by Roxanne Dunbar, Grand Juries and Immunity Law published by the Coalition to End Grand Jury Abuse, The Anti-Mass (author unspecified), and Socialism/Feminism: Papers from the New American Movement Conference on Feminism and Socialism in Durham, North Carolina over Thanksgiving Weekend 1972.

Box 1, Folder 4  
**Clippings 1973-1978**
General Physical Description note: printed paper  
Scope and Contents note  

Box 1, Folder 5  
**Fat Underground literature 1973-1974**
General Physical Description note: printed paper  
Scope and Contents note  
Fat Liberation Manifesto, surveys, sample letters to doctors, medical information, humor, information on job discrimination, a work on psychiatry, stereotypes, "Female and Welfare" by Betsy Warrior, and "Fat Liberation: Outline for a Radical Therapy Approach."

Box 1, Folder 6  
**Published articles by Judy Freespirit 1974 September - 1979 April**
General Physical Description note: printed paper  
Scope and Contents note  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 7</th>
<th><strong>Radical Therapy clippings 1974-1977</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: printed unbound manuscript</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Radikale Feministiese Therapie&quot; is an unbound manuscript in German including musical scores, an essay, cartoons, and other drawings. Also included are &quot;Assertiveness Training,&quot; &quot;How to Spot a Radical Therapist,&quot; a flyer for the Womon's Self Healing Weekend, Sliding Scale Price Structure, Radical Therapy Manifesto, an introduction to basic group structure, and a reading list.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 8</th>
<th><strong>Assorted materials 1977-1978</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: clippings, printed paper, photocopies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper clippings, an inventory of the collection which does not match original organization, &quot;The Woman with the Two Hundred Pound Mustache&quot; by Lyn McAffee and Aldebaran, a service contract with pay stubs, printed lyrics, and a photocopied baby picture (unnamed).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 9</th>
<th><strong>Poetry and prose 1977-1982</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: printed paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 10</th>
<th><strong>Anti Briggs/Proposition 6 tour materials 1978</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: printed paper, photocopies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itineraries and contracts for talks and performances throughout California in support of the Anti-Briggs effort.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 11</th>
<th><strong>New Alliance for Gay Equality materials 1978</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: bound glossy paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press manual and program guide for a fundraising event hosted by the New Alliance for Gay Equality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folders 12-13</th>
<th><strong>Interview transcript 1981 July</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: printed paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcript of an interview in which Judy Freespirit discusses childhood, class consciousness, identity issues and politics, political activism, and therapeutic community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 14</th>
<th><strong>Correspondence 1981-1983</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: notes, correspondence, printed paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence with acquaintances and publishers. Also includes personal notes and a separatists' newsletter titled Womynlovers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 15</th>
<th><strong>Flyers 1982-1983</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Physical Description note: flyers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope and Contents note</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flyers for various one-woman and group performances and readings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 1, Folder 16,  
Box 2, Folder 1  
**Malka Windsinger manuscript circa 1990**

General Physical Description note: spiral bound paper  
Scope and Contents note  
Manuscript for Judy Freespirit's unpublished novel titled *Malka Windsinger*.

Box 2, Folder 2  
**Keeping It in the Family circa 1993**

General Physical Description note: 2 cassette tapes  
Scope and Contents note  
Judy Freespirit reading her novel *Keeping It in the Family* on two cassette tapes.  
Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements  
COLLECTION CONTAINS AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS: Audiovisual materials in this collection will require assessment and possible digitization for safe access. To review these audiovisual materials, you must notify the UCLA Library Special Collections Reference Desk in advance of your visit.