Descriptive Summary

Languages: English

Contributing Institution: Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego
9500 Gilman Drive
La Jolla 92093-0175

Title: Gerald Burns Manuscripts and Other Documents

Identifier/Call Number: MSS 0221

Physical Description: 1.4 Linear feet (1 carton and 1 archives box)


Abstract: Literary papers, correspondence, and artwork of Gerald Burns, "postmodern" poet, critic, artist, and editor. Includes typescripts of Burns' poetry collections; galleys for Burns' critical books Toward a Phenomenology of Written Art (1979) and Prose (1982); and correspondence with poet Barbara Jordan.

Scope and Content of Collection

A small collection of the literary papers, correspondence and artwork of Gerald Burns, "postmodern" poet, critic, artist, and editor. Includes typescripts and drafts of Burns' poetry; galleys for Burns' critical books Toward a Phenomenology of Written Art (1979) and Prose (1982); and correspondence with Barbara Jordan. It also contains page proofs of Robert Trammell's Epics, for which Burns set the type; some prose writings such as essays; and artwork (principally line drawings, doodles, and sketches).

The second part of the collection consists of papers by and on Gerald Burns from the collection of Barbara Jordan, a friend of Burns and his wife, Clio Dunn, and a fellow poet. This material primarily consists of their letters and drafts of poems that Burns shared with Jordan.

Arranged in two series: 1) PAPERS, and 2) MATERIALS FROM BARBARA JORDAN.

Biography

Gerald Burns was born in 1940 in Detroit, Michigan. He was educated at Harvard, Trinity College (Dublin), and taught at Southern Methodist University and New York University. In 1975 Burns moved to Dallas. In 1985, he was awarded an NEA Creative Writing Fellowship for poetry. Burns found employment as an English teacher and editor, but his life's work was as a writer, poet, and artist. He illustrated several of his own books and designed many of their covers (most notably, Boccherini's Minuet and Prose).

Burns is considered a leading practitioner of long-lined, thickly-textured verse. His wide reading and close observation of a panoramic range of subjects allows his poetry to bridge formal and expressive gaps between the 19th-century Romantics, early 20th-century Modernism, and later 20th-century language-oriented writing.

Burns passed away in July 1997.

Preferred Citation

Gerald Burns Manuscripts and Other Documents. MSS 221. Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego.

Acquisition Information


OFF-SITE STORAGE

COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE. ALLOW ONE WEEK FOR RETRIEVAL OF MATERIALS.

Publication Rights

Publication rights are held by the creator of the collection.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

American poetry -- 20th century

Burns, Gerald -- Archives

Jordan, Barbara, 1949- -- Correspondence
**Scope and Content of Series**

Series 1) PAPERS. Arranged in two subseries: A) Correspondence, and B) Writings.

A) Correspondence: Contains a letter from Scott Bowdan to Leland Hickman along with Bowdan's submission to *Boxcar*, "Quest/Questions." Also included are two letters from Burns to Hickman.

B) Writings: Includes works of poetry; prose (literary essays, criticism, and a galley version of his *Toward a Phenomenology of Written Art*); art, travel writing, and journals; and one review. The poetry files contain an untitled collection of Burns' poetry in two successive drafts, and a galley copy of Robert Trammell's *Epics* for which Burns did the typesetting "as a Christmas present to Bob." The journals section contains a long travel narrative, "Painting Statues Books" with the author's sketches of relevant "objets d'art" following the text; and one full-sized sketch of Ezra Pound's head from the travel sketches. Finally, Burns' "My Leatherette Reminder", something of a critical/scholarly diary, is included.

### Correspondence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 1</th>
<th><strong>Bowdan, Scott</strong> - Letter to Leland Hickman and submission, &quot;Quest/Question&quot; to <em>Boxcar</em> 1982</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Box 1, Folder 2 | **Burns, Gerald** - 2 letters to Leland Hickman 1982, 1985  
**General note**  
Includes photograph used for initial cover of *Prose*. |

### Writings

#### Poetry

| Box 1, Folder 3 | **Trammel, Robert** - *Epics*, galleys 1982  
**General note**  
Introductory note and type setting by Burns. |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 1, Folder 4 | **Untitled collection of Burns' poems 1984-1985**  
**General note**  

#### Prose/Literary Essays

| Box 1, Folder 5 | **Duration is Destination--Verse in the Eighties** - Reprint from *Southwest Review* 1980  
**General note**  
Essay/review of *Selected Poems* by Donald Justice, *The Venetian Nespers* by Anthony Hecht, and *Greenwich Mean Time* by Adrien Stoutenburg. |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Box 1, Folder 6 | **Magnificence of His Rebuttals** - Reprint from *Southwest Review* 1979  
**General note**  
Essay/review of *The American Quest for a Supreme Fiction: Whitman's Legacy in the Personal Epic* by James Miller, Jr., and *John Ashbery: An Introduction to the Poetry* by David Shapiro. |

| Box 1, Folder 7-8 | **Prose galleys 1981-1982** |
## Box 1, Folder 9
- **Straddling the Brink - Reprint from *Southwest Review* with author’s handwritten notes 1978**
  - General note
  - Essay/article on *Words for Dr. Y* by Anne Sexton, *Hearts of the Tattooed* by Jim Hubert, and *Refractions* by Paul Shuttleworth.

## Box 1, Folder 10
- **Toward a Phenomenology of Written Art - Paste-ups 1979**

## Box 1, Folder 11
- **Bound typescript journal with varied commentary 1982**

## Box 1, Folder 12
- **Paintings Statues Books, a travel journal with sketches - Typescript with photocopies of drawings 1985**

## Box 1, Folder 13
- **Gaudier Brzeska--Hieratic Head of Ezra Pound - Full size photocopy of drawing contained in Paintings Sculpture Books 1985**

## Box 1, Folder 14

### MATERIALS FROM BARBARA JORDAN

#### Scope and Content of Series

Series 2) MATERIALS FROM BARBARA JORDAN: Papers from the personal collection of Barbara Jordan, a friend of Burns and his wife, Clio Dunn, and a fellow poet. Arranged in three subseries: A) Correspondence, B) Writings, and C) Miscellaneous.

A) Correspondence: Burns and Jordan carried on a decade-long correspondence, and letters from Burns to Jordan (often mailed with artwork and voluminous poetry drafts, copies, and typescripts) are included here, arranged chronologically by year. At the beginning of most folders is an inventory by Jordan of the file’s contents, though Jordan wrote these inventories before the collection came to the Library and there are some discrepancies in her description. Overall, however, these are highly useful guides to the rich content of each folder of letters and the enclosed writings and drawings. There are also a small number of letters to and from Burns and Jordan to other correspondents. Arranged alphabetically by the name of the author.

B) Writings: Many drafts and copies of Burns’s work were bundled with letters to Jordan and remain with the letters in subseries 2A, however, Jordan also had a pile of Burns’s writings that was not explicitly linked to correspondence. This material has been sorted roughly by genre and year.

C) Miscellaneous: Ephemera, Burns’s artwork, teaching materials, and works by others.

### Correspondence

#### Letters by Gerald Burns

- Burns, Gerald to Jonathan Brannen 1995
- Burns, Gerald to Michael Franco 1988-1989
- Burns, Gerald to Barbara Jordan and Ed Batchelder 1987-1995
- Burns, Gerald to Barbara Jordan 1996-1997
- Burns, Gerald to Spencer Selby (with reply) 1994

#### Letters by Others

- Falleder, Arnold to Barbara Jordan 1998
- Jordan, Barbara to George Minkoff 2013
  - General note
  - Jordan describes the context and history of the correspondence between her and Gerald Burns in the collection.

- Jordan, Barbara to Gerald Burns and Clio Dunn 1989-1996
- Lehman, David to Gerald Burns 1991
- Southern Illinois University Press to Gerald Burns 1989
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 21</th>
<th>Sullivan, Gary to Gerald Burns 1995</th>
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**Writings**

- Box 2, Folder 22-23
  - Shorter Poems compilation - Typescript drafts 1989, 1991
- Box 2, Folder 24-32
  - Poetry undated
  - Prose writings
    - General note
      - Includes essays "San Antonio art," "What's left for the liberal arts," and others.

**Miscellaneous**

- Box 2, Folder 35
  - Ephemera undated
    - General note
      - Reading notes, business cards, and list of experimental/poetry art magazines.
- Box 2, Folder 36
  - Drawings by Gerald Burns
- Box 2, Folder 37
  - Drawings by Gerald Burns - On envelopes
- Box 2, Folder 38
  - Final exams for English/writing courses taught by Burns ca. 1991
- Box 2, Folder 39
  - Journalism - Course agendas 1990
- Box 2, Folder 40
  - Works by others - James Haining, Monica Raymond, Kevin Killian undated
    - General note
      - The Raymond poem is a response to Burns's "Reply to a poem by Arnold Falleder called 'Ice cream is for the summer and kugel is for all year long.'"