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## Joe Brainard Letters

Finding aid prepared by Special Collections & Archives

Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego

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## **Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Joe Brainard Letters

**Identifier/Call Number:** MSS 0703

**Contributing Institution:** Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego

9500 Gilman Drive

La Jolla, California, 92093-0175

**Languages:** English

**Physical Description:** 2.4 Linear feet(6 archive boxes)

**Date (inclusive):** 1957-1994

**Abstract:** Letters to Joe Brainard, author and artist. The collection is comprised of correspondence from various poets and artists, including John Ashbery, Ted Berrigan, and Kenward Elmslie, and includes letters, postcards, images and ephemera. The materials date from 1957 through 1994, with the bulk of the collection covering the period from 1964 through 1993.

**Creator:** Brainard, Joe, 1942-1994

## **Biography**

Born in Arkansas in 1942 and raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Brainard moved to New York City in 1961. There, he quickly developed friendships with Frank O'Hara, James Schuyler, Bill Berkson, Barbara Guest, and other participants in the New York School.

Brainard's achievement, however, is remarkable aside from his many associations. Brainard harmonized linguistic and visual materials in extraordinary ways. His graphic work is notably literary, often incorporating words and sentences into non-literary designs. Such qualities prompted Frank O'Hara to say that Brainard's work had "nothing to do with philosophy, it's all art." Both the art work and writing are full of information and frequently take erotic and semiotic risks. In one of his more scandalous serial works, Brainard subjected Ernie Bushmiller's Nancy to every imaginable erotic and high art situation.

A prolific artist, Brainard's work has been exhibited extensively in the New York City area since the early 1960s. The Joe Brainard Archive, located in the Mandeville Special Collections Library at UCSD, is the largest collection extant of Brainard's work.

Brainard died on May 25, 1994.

## **Preferred Citation**

Joe Brainard Letters, MSS 703. Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego.

## **Acquisition Information**

Acquired 2009.

## **Publication Rights**

Publication rights are held by the creator of the collection.

## **Scope and Contents of Collection**

The Joe Brainard Letters include correspondence from such American authors and artists as John Ashbery, Bill Berkson, Ted Berrigan, Robert Creeley, Kenward Elmslie, Joanne Kyger, and Alice Notley. The collection is arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Materials cover the period from 1957 to 1994 and include copies of manuscript and typescript drafts of poems sent to Brainard from such writers as Ted Berrigan, Ray Johnson, and Lewis Warsh.

This collection includes 89 postcards, separated into 12 undated packets, from Frank Bidart. These postcards, in which Bidart wrote for Brainard, contain an overarching narrative in each packet, including such themes as "clothing", "hair", and "the wonder book."

## **Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Allen, Donald, 1912-2004 -- Correspondence

Ashbery, John, 1927- -- Correspondence

Berkson, Bill -- Correspondence

Berrigan, Ted -- Correspondence

Brainard, Joe, 1942-1994 -- Archives

Creeley, Robert, 1926-2005 -- Correspondence

Elmslie, Kenward -- Correspondence

Ginsberg, Allen, 1926-1997 -- Correspondence

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Johnson, Ray, 1927-1995 -- Correspondence  
Kyger, Joanne -- Correspondence  
Mayer, Bernadette -- Correspondence  
Notley, Alice, 1945- -- Correspondence  
Owen, Maureen, 1943- -- Correspondence  
Warsh, Lewis -- Correspondence  
American poetry -- 20th century  
Gay men -- United States -- Poetry

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## LETTERS

Box 1, Folder 1  
Box 1, Folder 2  
Box 1, Folder 3  
Box 1, Folder 4  
Box 1, Folder 5

**Adler, Stella 1980-1984**  
**Albee, Edward 1982**  
**Alan, Charles undated**  
**Allen, Donald 1972-1979**  
**Ashbery, John 1967-1993**

### General note

Includes a three page handwritten manuscript of introduction for *Gegenschein Quarterly* 1975, entitled "Joe Brainard."

Box 1, Folder 6  
Box 1, Folder 7  
Box 1, Folder 8  
Box 1, Folder 9  
Box 1, Folder 10  
Box 1, Folder 11  
Box 1, Folder 12  
Box 1, Folder 13  
Box 1, Folder 14

**Bachardy, Don 1963-1993**  
**Bamberger, Janet undated**  
**Baxter, Glen 1973-1974**  
**Berkson, Bill 1966-1970**  
**Berkson, Bill 1971-1972**  
**Berkson, Bill 1973-1993**  
**Berkson, Lynn O'Hare 1993**  
**Berrigan, Sandy 1964-1978**  
**Berrigan, Ted 1964-1982**

### General note

Includes a fourteen page handmade booklet entitled "Corridors of Blood" and a copy of "Living with Chris," by Joe Brainard and Ted Berrigan.

Box 1, Folder 15  
Box 1, Folder 16  
Box 2, Folder 1

**Bidart, Frank January-July 1992**  
**Bidart, Frank August-September 1992**  
**Bidart, Frank - Postcards undated**

### General note

Includes twelve undated packets containing six-twelve numbered and captioned postcards.

Box 2, Folder 2  
Box 2, Folder 3  
Box 2, Folder 4  
Box 2, Folder 5  
Box 2, Folder 6  
Box 2, Folder 7  
Box 2, Folder 8  
Box 2, Folder 9

**Blaine, Nell 1973**  
**Brainard, Marie 1971-1973**  
**Bridges, Jim 1978**  
**Brinkman, Rolf Dieter 1968**  
**Britton, Donald 1979**  
**Brodey, Jim 1964**  
**Brown, Lee Ann 1993**  
**Brownstein, Michael 1969-1973**

### General note

Includes a five page typescript entitled "More Short Poems for Joe."

Box 2, Folder 10  
Box 2, Folder 11

**Burckhardt, Rudy and Yvonne Jacquette 1967-1982**  
**Burrow, Ruby 1975-1982**

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Box 2, Folder 12  
Box 2, Folder 13  
Box 2, Folder 14  
Box 2, Folder 15  
Box 2, Folder 16  
Box 2, Folder 17

**Button, John 1977-1982**  
**Butts, Robert 1974-1994**  
**Bye, Reed 1993**  
**Chernoff, Maxine 1984-1993**  
**Clark, Tom 1966-1972**  
**Clinton, William Jefferson and Hillary Clinton 1993**

**General note**

Contains a holiday greeting card with a stamped signature from the Clintons in December 1993.

Box 2, Folder 18  
Box 2, Folder 19  
Box 2, Folder 20  
Box 2, Folder 21

**Cooper, Dennis 1977-1984**  
**Corbett, Bill 1974-1993**  
**Cox, Chris 1979**  
**Creeley, Robert 1971-1974**

**General note**

Includes a seven page poem typescript entitled "The Class of '47."

Box 2, Folder 22  
Box 2, Folder 23  
Box 2, Folder 24  
Box 2, Folder 25  
Box 2, Folder 26  
Box 2, Folder 27  
Box 2, Folder 28  
Box 3, Folder 1  
Box 3, Folder 2  
Box 3, Folder 3  
Box 3, Folder 4  
Box 3, Folder 5  
Box 3, Folder 6  
Box 3, Folder 7  
Box 3, Folder 8  
Box 3, Folder 9

**Dalrymple-Hollo, Jane 1993**  
**Dine, Jim 1970**  
**Dlugos, Tim 1988-1990**  
**Dunn, Anne 1991**  
**Elmslie, Kenward 1964**  
**Elmslie, Kenward 1965**  
**Elmslie, Kenward 1966-1970**  
**Elmslie, Kenward 1971**  
**Elmslie, Kenward 1972-1973**  
**Elmslie, Kenward 1974-1975**  
**Elmslie, Kenward 1976-1979**  
**Elmslie, Kenward 1980-1991**  
**Elmslie, Kenward 1992-1993**  
**Elmslie, Kenward undated**  
**Elmslie, Vivian 1993**  
**Equi, Elaine 1981-1993**

**General note**

Includes three page poem typescript entitled "Molecules."

Box 3, Folder 10  
Box 3, Folder 11  
Box 3, Folder 12  
Box 3, Folder 13  
Box 3, Folder 14  
Box 3, Folder 15

**Evans, Donald 1973**  
**Fagin, Larry 1970-1979**  
**Falco, Louis 1971-1977**  
**Fishbach Gallery 1972**  
**Ford, Charles Henri 1969-1970**  
**Ford, Ruth 1970-1993**

**General note**

Includes a two page poem typescript.

Box 3, Folder 16  
Box 3, Folder 17  
Box 3, Folder 18  
Box 3, Folder 19  
Box 3, Folder 20  
Box 3, Folder 21  
Box 4, Folder 1  
Box 4, Folder 2  
Box 4, Folder 3  
Box 4, Folder 4  
Box 4, Folder 5

**Freeman, Jonathan 1993**  
**Freilicher, Jane Hazen 1969-1973**  
**Fulmer, Frederick 1975-1976**  
**Gander, Forrest 1993**  
**Ginn and Company 1975**  
**Ginsberg, Allen 1971-1988**  
**Giorno, John 1969-1973**  
**Godfrey, John 1993**  
**Golde, Morris 1973-1978**  
**Gooch, Brad 1976-1984**  
**Gottlieb, Michael 1993**

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|------------------|---|
| Box 4, Folder 6  | <b>Greenwald, Ted and Joan Simon 1969-1979</b>  |
| Box 4, Folder 7  | <b>Groffsky, Maxine 1965-1975</b>   |
| Box 4, Folder 8  | <b>Grossinger, Richard 1972-1973</b>  |
| Box 4, Folder 9  | <b>Guest, Barbara 1965-1993</b>   |
| Box 4, Folder 10 | <b>Hannah, Duncan 1991-1993</b>   |
| Box 4, Folder 11 | <b>Harwood, Lee 1965-1973</b>   |
| Box 4, Folder 12 | <b>Hawkins, Bobbie Creeley 1971-1982</b>  |
|                  | <b>General note</b>   |
|                  | Includes a seven page typescript entitled "The Valley Dark-And-Drear and The Girl who Couldn't Laugh."    |
| Box 4, Folder 13 | <b>Henry, Gerrit 1972-1973</b>  |
| Box 4, Folder 14 | <b>Higgins, Dick 1970</b>   |
| Box 4, Folder 15 | <b>Holland, Joyce 1972</b>  |
|                  | <b>General note</b>   |
|                  | Contains 5 issues of <i>Matchbook</i> poetry magazine.  |
| Box 4, Folder 16 | <b>Hurwitz, Michael 1991</b>  |
| Box 4, Folder 17 | <b>Isherwood, Christopher 1972</b>  |
| Box 4, Folder 18 | <b>Jess [Collins, Jess] 1971-1974</b>   |
| Box 4, Folder 19 | <b>Johns, Jasper 1971</b>   |
| Box 4, Folder 20 | <b>Johnson, Ray 1971-1975</b>   |
| Box 4, Folder 21 | <b>Katz, Alex, Ada and Vincent 1966-1978</b>  |
| Box 4, Folder 22 | <b>Kernan, Nathan 1988-1993</b>   |
| Box 4, Folder 23 | <b>Kikel, Rudy 1980-1992</b>  |
|                  | <b>General note</b>   |
|                  | Includes a two page poem typescript entitled "Boston."  |
| Box 4, Folder 24 | <b>Koch, Kenneth 1965-1993</b>  |
| Box 4, Folder 25 | <b>Kyger, Joanne 1971-1993</b>  |
| Box 4, Folder 26 | <b>Lally, Michael 1973-1993</b>   |
|                  | <b>General note</b>   |
|                  | Includes one envelope enclosure containing six cards of a Lally/Worthington poem entitled "Joe Brainard." |
| Box 4, Folder 27 | <b>Larson, Jack 1969</b>  |
| Box 5, Folder 1  | <b>Lauterbach, Ann 1974-1993</b>  |
| Box 5, Folder 2  | <b>Lehman, David 1976-1980</b>  |
| Box 5, Folder 3  | <b>Le Seur, Joe 1964-1979</b>   |
| Box 5, Folder 4  | <b>Levitt, Annabel 1978</b>   |
| Box 5, Folder 5  | <b>Marberger, Aladar 1973</b>   |
| Box 5, Folder 6  | <b>Martin, John 1971-1973</b>   |
| Box 5, Folder 7  | <b>Mathews, Harry 1966-1986</b>   |
| Box 5, Folder 8  | <b>Mayer, Bernadette 1978-1993</b>  |
| Box 5, Folder 9  | <b>McConnell, David 1984-1993</b>   |
| Box 5, Folder 10 | <b>McDermott, Keith 1993</b>  |
| Box 5, Folder 11 | <b>McDermott, Ray 1993</b>  |
| Box 5, Folder 12 | <b>Mikolowski, Ken and Ann 1974</b>   |
| Box 5, Folder 13 | <b>Mitchell, John J. 1969-1979</b>  |
|                  | <b>General note</b>   |
|                  | Includes a six page typescript of "The Hairping Drop Heard Around the World."                             |
| Box 5, Folder 14 | <b>Moss, Barbara 1981-1988</b>  |
| Box 5, Folder 15 | <b>Moynihan, Anne 1977-1981</b>   |
| Box 5, Folder 16 | <b>The Museum of Modern Art 1973</b>  |
| Box 5, Folder 17 | <b>Notley, Alice 1972-1993</b>  |

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|------------------|---|
| Box 5, Folder 18 | <b>Oliver, Douglas 1993</b>                                 |
| Box 5, Folder 19 | <b>Owen, Maureen 1979</b>                                   |
| Box 5, Folder 20 | <b>Palmer, Michael 1993</b>                                 |
| Box 5, Folder 21 | <b>Pell, Margaret 1994</b>                                  |
| Box 5, Folder 22 | <b>The Poet's Press 1973</b>                                |
| Box 5, Folder 23 | <b>Porter, Anne 1988</b>                                    |
| Box 5, Folder 24 | <b>Purdy, James 1973</b>                                    |
| Box 5, Folder 25 | <b>Raworth, Tom 1970-1992</b>                               |
| Box 5, Folder 26 | <b>Rivers, Larry 1963</b>                                   |
| Box 5, Folder 27 | <b>Rorem, Ned 1969-1993</b>                                 |
| Box 5, Folder 28 | <b>Rosenberg, David 1971</b>                                |
| Box 5, Folder 29 | <b>Rosenblum, Robert undated</b>                            |
| Box 5, Folder 30 | <b>Ryan, D. D. 1957-1972</b>                                |
| Box 5, Folder 31 | <b>San Francisco Community Press 1973</b>                   |
| Box 5, Folder 32 | <b>Saroyan, Aram 1965-1973</b>                              |
| Box 5, Folder 33 | <b>Schjeldahl, Peter and Brooke Alderson 1968-1971</b>      |
| Box 5, Folder 34 | <b>Schmidt, Paul 1975</b>                                   |
| Box 5, Folder 35 | <b>Shapiro, David 1970-1972</b>                             |
|                  | <b>General note</b>   |
|                  | Includes a two page poem typescript draft.                  |
| Box 5, Folder 36 | <b>Solomon, Holly 1975-1987</b>                             |
| Box 5, Folder 37 | <b>Sondheim, Stephen 1972-1973</b>                          |
| Box 5, Folder 38 | <b>Stanton, Johnny 1971-1972</b>                            |
| Box 6, Folder 1  | <b>Stein, David 1993</b>                                    |
| Box 6, Folder 2  | <b>Stern, Peter 1980</b>                                    |
| Box 6, Folder 3  | <b>Thomas, Ronald and Serge Cao 1993</b>                    |
| Box 6, Folder 4  | <b>Thomson, Virgil 1978</b>                                 |
| Box 6, Folder 5  | <b>Trinidad, David 1983-1993</b>                            |
| Box 6, Folder 6  | <b>Veitch, Tom 1971-1972</b>                                |
| Box 6, Folder 7  | <b>Watchel, Andi 1971</b>                                   |
| Box 6, Folder 8  | <b>Waring, James 1965</b>                                   |
| Box 6, Folder 9  | <b>Warsh, Lewis 1968-1979</b>                               |
| Box 6, Folder 10 | <b>Whalen, Philip 1971-1972</b>                             |
| Box 6, Folder 11 | <b>White, Edmund 1973-1987</b>                              |
| Box 6, Folder 12 | <b>Wieners, John 1969</b>                                   |
| Box 6, Folder 13 | <b>Wilcock, John 1966-1968</b>                              |
| Box 6, Folder 14 | <b>Winkfield, Trevor 1968-1979</b>                          |
| Box 6, Folder 15 | <b>Williams, Jonathan 1972-1982</b>                         |
| Box 6, Folder 16 | <b>Young, Geoff 1973-1975</b>                               |
| Box 6, Folder 17 | <b>Zirlin, Harry 1973-1975</b>                              |
| Box 6, Folder 18 | <b>Zirlin, Larry 1972-1976</b>                              |
| Box 6, Folder 19 | <b>Unidentified correspondents</b>                          |
| Box 6, Folder 20 | <b>Unidentified correspondent [Juan Antonio?] 1973-1975</b> |
| Box 6, Folder 21 | <b>Unidentified correspondent [Doug?] 1981-1993</b>         |