

**MAMCO
GENÈVE**

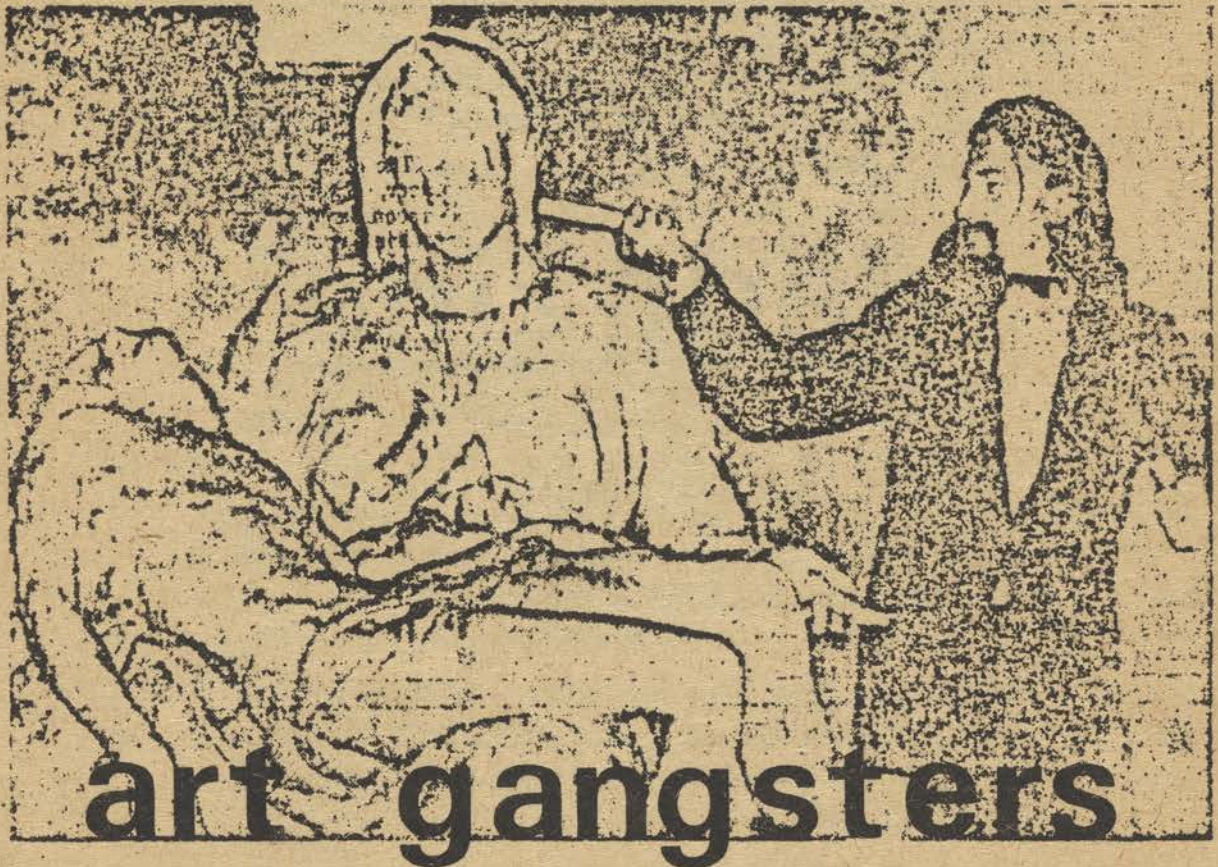
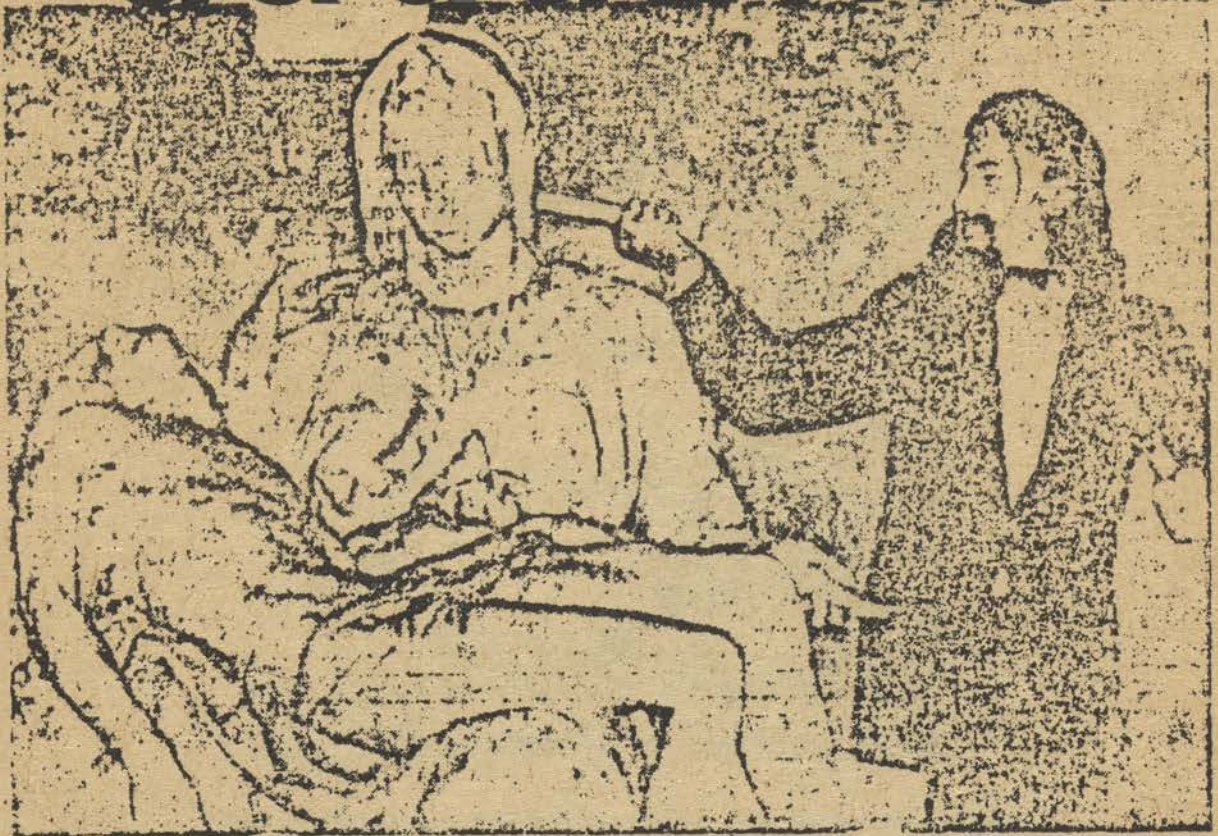
**— HEAD
Genève**

**KWIK-KOPY
CONCEPTUALISM:
BAY AREA DADAISTS'
ZINES, PERFORMANCES
AND MAIL ARTWORKS
IN THE 1970s**

**AN EXHIBITION CURATED BY
BRANDEN W. JOSEPH AND ELISABETH JOBIN**

DANIEL KNOLO

dadazine



art gangsters

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Introduction to Bananology
at ECART - Nov 3/78



'Alternation of Character'
at ECART. Nov 3/78

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The aim of this exhibition is to display and contextualize the production of a group of artists known as the Bay Area Dadaists in the context of the larger network of aesthetic practitioners with which they were in dialogue. The Bay Area Dadaists consisted of a loose association of performance and correspondence artists active in the San Francisco area beginning in the early 1970s. While their activities continue, in some sense, until the present day, the exhibition will focus on the first decade of their existence, a period in which the group was at the most active, engaged, and insightful. To date, the activities of this group has been the subject of one, difficult-to-locate bibliography by the librarian and collector John Held, Jr. (*Bay Area Dada*, San Francisco: Snowman Publications, 1998) and an art-historical essay by Emily Hage, a specialist in historical Dada. Aside from a subsection of the exhibition *Copy Machine Manifestos: Artists Who Make Zines* (co-curated by Branden W. Joseph and Drew Sawyer at the Brooklyn Museum, 2023), this group and its larger context has not been the subject of a focused exhibition.

The Bay Area Dadaists were so named by Tim Mancusi in the May 20, 1972 issue of the correspondence zine *The NYCS Weekly Breeder* and came to consist of a core group including Mancusi (b. 1950), Bill Gaglione (b. 1943), Anne Long (1940-2024), Charles Chickadel (1943-2002), Nancy Maass Mosen (b. 1945), and Monte Cazazza (1949-2023). Mancusi (aka dada processing) and Gaglione (aka daddaland) were originally from New York, where they studied at the School for the Visual Arts and met correspondence artist Ray Johnson. Long—better known under the name Anna Banana, which she adopted while working at the New Age retreat, the Esalen Institute, in Big Sur, California, in the 1960s—was originally from Vancouver, British Columbia. Although aspects of his biography are still obscure, Cazazza (who worked briefly under the name Dr. Dada), seems to have come from Philadelphia, where he likely knew correspondence artist Stu (Stuart) Horn (aka the Northwest Mounted Valise). Nancy Mosen, who worked under the name Irene Dogmatic, lived and worked both in the Bay Area, where she became close friends with the theatrical art/music group The Residents, and in New York, where she was an associate of photographer Richard Kern.

Others associated with the group include such names as Buster Cleveland, Richard Paulson, Ruby Begonia, Tana Emmolo-Smith, Judith Bell, Ms. Anne Thorpe, and Bahrarah, some still known only through their pseudonyms.

In addition to presenting and documenting this group, the goals of the exhibition would include presenting them in the wider context of the revival in the 1970s of artistic interest in historical Dada and avant-garde practices, including Futurism. Since, the neo-Dada or neo-avant-garde (as coined in Peter Bürger's *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 1974; English trans. 1984) is generally associated with the artistic practices of artists such as Robert Rauschenberg in the 1950s, this period constitutes something of a neo-neo-avant-garde revival, which would include artists such as Gregory Puchalski, Tom Hosier, and COUM Transmissions (Genesis P-Orridge and Cosi Fanni Tutti). Other contexts would include relevant cultural factors such as the influence of Pop art and the Bay Area's countercultural movements, including underground press and queer performance groups such as the Cockettes (with whom Gaglione and others shared a building); and the international correspondence art networks that include Ray Johnson in New York and artists across Latin America and Europe. A further goal of the exhibition would be to outline the artistic strategies implemented by the Bay Area Dadaist and associated artists, some of whose more well-known and sometimes humorous antics serve to occlude the sophistication of their practice as it relates to contemporary currents in Conceptualism and Pop art.

The group's broadsides, mailings, and publications draw from and relate to Conceptual art both because they were not confined to a particular medium and because they generally embraced an "anti-aesthetic" position, which largely opposed the fetishization of both the artist's hand and the notion of originality. More specifically, the group's work can be related to what the artist AA Bronson of the Canadian conceptual art group General Idea termed "format-oriented work." As Bronson outlined in a review of artist Vincent Trasov's book,

The Rise and Fall of the Peanut Party (1976), such work sought to infiltrate artistic content into existing modes of distribution (such as popular press, television broadcasting, and staged events). Such practices often instigated something of a feedback loop, in which the documentation of a staged event would itself become an artistic product, such as a printed mailer, that would be recirculated throughout an artistic context. Some of the group's more evidently off-hand and humorous activities, such as *The First BC Art Race* or *The Banana Olympics*, were staged, in part, to be placed within such artistic feedback circuits.

A particularly important context for the activities of the group was Pop art, especially the work of Andy Warhol. In the early-1970s, Warhol had something of a dual valence: on the one hand, he had publicly "retired" from painting in the mid-1960s in order to concentrate on activities such as filmmaking, book and magazine publishing, and staging events with the Velvet Underground rock group. Beginning in 1972, however, with the *Mao* series, Warhol returned to painting on canvas with a "brushier" style that, at first glance, seemed to return the artist's hand. Thus, while the Warhol of the late-1960s served as an inspiration for the group, the Warhol



of the early 1970s served as something of a foil. As expressed in mailers and manifestos, the Bay Area Dadaists opposed the high-art format of painting on canvas, the return of the hand of the artist and the attendant notion of originality, the authorial identity of the artist (heightened, in Warhol's case, to celebrity), and, above all, the artistic market. In their production of ephemeral events and performances and their embrace of cheap and easily reproduced fliers, the Bay Area Dada group sought to undermine marketability, originality, and high-art materials. At the same time, their embrace of collectivity, anonymity (via pseudonyms), and obfuscation served to oppose the conventional attributes of artistic authorship. Warhol appeared frequently in the group's mailings, sometimes with materials (such as Warhol's photo, stamped signature, or letterhead for Interview magazine) surreptitiously sent to Gaglione by his friend Ronnie Cutrone, who had become the pop artist's main studio assistant.

All of these strategies were articulated, in part, via recourse to ideas drawn from the historical avant-garde practices of Futurism and, above all, Dada, as articulated in detail by the group's mailers, manifestos, correspondence, and publications. The

sometimes aggressive and iconoclastic nature of the group's pronouncements, drawn from the historical avant-garde, contributed to the formation of the ethos that would be inherited and practiced by the punk rock and industrial music scenes in the Bay Area and elsewhere. Another of the exhibition's goals will be to flesh out the connections—both direct and via affinity—with these cultural and musical movements in both the United States and European contexts, particularly in the United Kingdom, where Cazazza was instrumental in the foundation of Industrial Records with P-Orridge and Tutti. The exhibition will also draw on the archives of the Genevan collective Ecart, which are housed at MAMCO and HEAD-Geneva, and highlight their broad mail network, notably with the Bay Area Dadaists.

The potential proposed title, "Quickcopy Conceptualism" comes from Anna Banana's paraphrase of artist Hudson Marquez's critique, in General Idea's magazine *FILE*, of the Bay Area Dadaists correspondence art as "Quik-kopy krap." Subsequently, members of the group such as Gaglione began referring to their work as "Quickcopy Mail Art," a phrase often stamped on his photocopied missives.



'SOUND' -
at ECART, Nov 3/78



'Colors'
at ECART Nov 3/78

A JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN MAMCO GENEVA AND HEAD – GENÈVE, IN COLLABORATION WITH BRANDEN W. JOSEPH

This exhibition is organized as part of a curatorial studies seminar for the Master's degree program at HEAD – Genève, Geneva School of Art and Design. Drawing from the Ecart Archives—the archive of a 1970s artist collective based in Geneva, active in the 1970s as part of the Mail art network and as publishers of artists' books—the exhibition will be held at LiveInYourHead, the art school's art gallery, at the conclusion of the seminar in May 2026. Throughout the seminar, students will engage in every phase of the exhibition process, from conception and spatial organization to the public opening.

During this journey, they will receive guidance from curators and professionals at MAMCO, including experts in collections management, technical staff, scenography, mediation, and communication, under the supervision of Elisabeth Jobin. The MAMCO team will also collaborate with guest curator Branden W. Joseph to broaden the knowledge surrounding the archival collection. Thanks to loan requests from partner institutions in North America and the expertise of Branden W. Joseph, the exhibition will go beyond its educational purpose, offering a comprehensive documentary exploration of the work of the Bay Area Dadaists.

About the Curators:

Branden W. Joseph is the Frank Gallipoli Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at Columbia University, specializing in post-World War II North American and European art. A founding editor of the journal *Grey Room*, he is also the author of influential books such as *Random Order: Robert Rauschenberg and the Neo-Avant-Garde*. Among his recent projects, Joseph co-curated the exhibition *Copy Machine Manifestos: Artists Who Make Zines* (with Drew Sawyer), which toured the Brooklyn Museum and the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2024. He has received numerous honors, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and the Paul Mellon Visiting Senior Fellowship.

Elisabeth Jobin is a curator at MAMCO Genva, where she has recently organized monographic exhibitions of artists such as Tishan Hsu, Erica Pedretti, and Paul Neagu. Her extensive research and publications on the Geneva-based Ecart collective have contributed to numerous exhibitions. Before joining MAMCO, she worked as an assistant curator at MCBA in Lausanne, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, and as a researcher at HEAD – Genève.



ABOUT MAMCO GENEVA

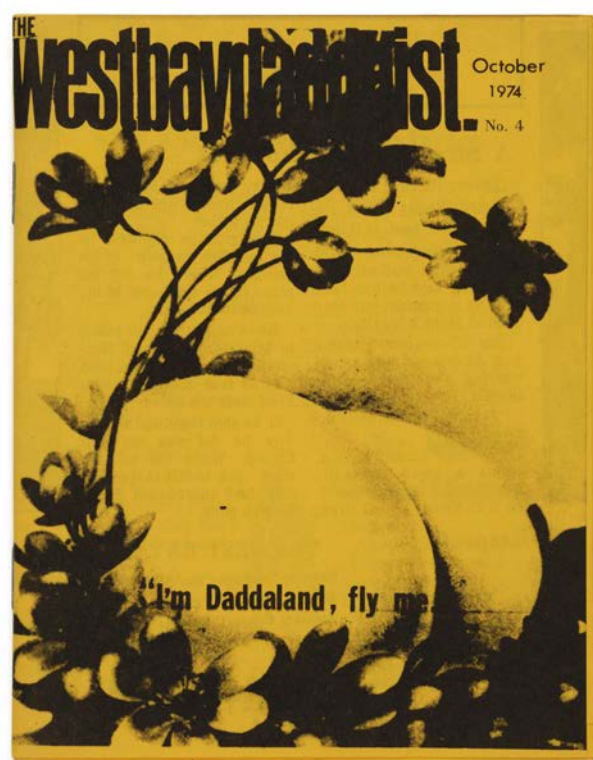
Since its opening in 1994, the MAMCO (Musée d'art moderne et contemporain de Genève) has been developing an innovative form of museography. Working essentially on art since the 1960s, MAMCO has based its work on several principles: a concept of the museum as a "global exhibition", bringing together temporary exhibitions and renewed presentations of its permanent collections; a variation in the types of spaces and displays to evoke the history of the museum (from the collector's apartment to the loft, via the "white cube" or the studio); the management of a "collection of artists' spaces" (Groupe ECART, Sarkis, Claude Rutault and a Cabinet de poésie concrète); and, finally, regular attention to the Geneva and Swiss art scenes.

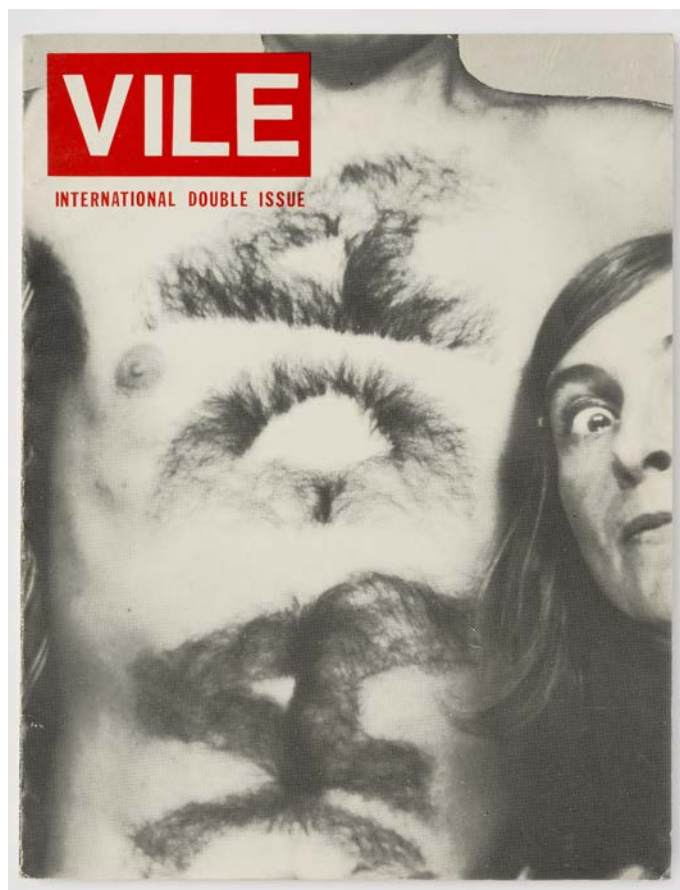
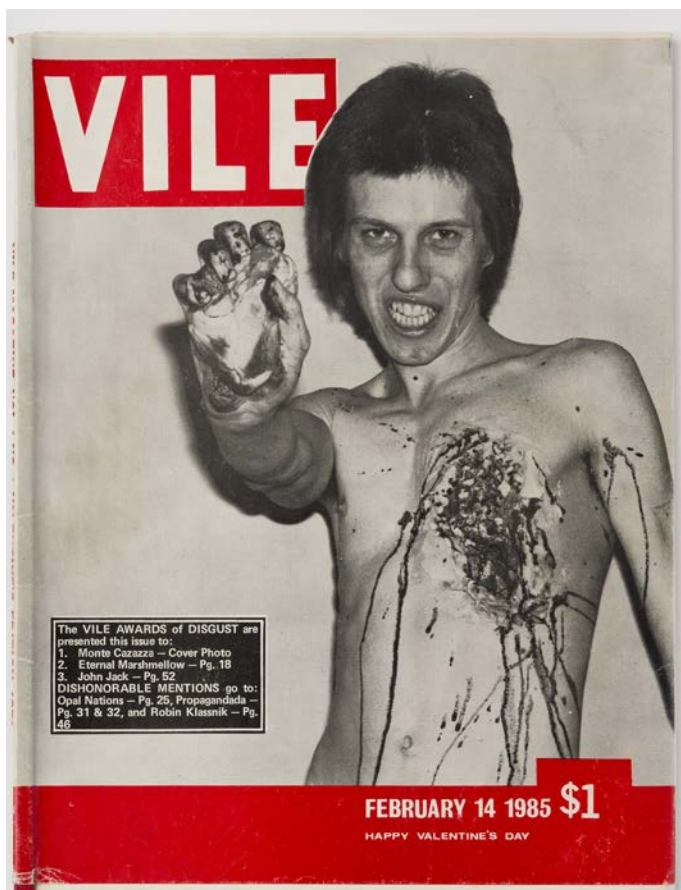
MAMCO can rely on a collection of over 6,000 works. In 30 years, it has staged over 500 exhibitions, including major retrospectives of the work of John M Armleder, Martin Barré, Rosemarie Castoro, Sylvie Fleury, Wade Guyton, Martin Kippenberger, William Leavitt, Olivier Mosset, Jim Shaw, Franz Erhard Walther, Tony Conrad, Verena Loewensberg, Laura Grisi and General Idea.

From 2025 to 2028, the building of the museum will be completely renovated: it will then benefit from climate-control, a new structuration of the ground floor, and will respond to the current energetic norms. During this whole period, MAMCO will produce off-site projects, upon invitations by partners as well as in new and unseen locations.

ABOUT HEAD – GENÈVE

HEAD – Genève (Haute école d'art et de design de Genève / Geneva School of Art and Design) is one of Switzerland's leading institutions for higher education in the fields of art and design. Offering a range of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs, HEAD – Genève fosters creativity and innovation across disciplines such as fine arts, graphic design, fashion, and media arts. The school is renowned for its cutting-edge approach to education, combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience in state-of-the-art facilities. HEAD – Genève also emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration, global perspectives, and engagement with contemporary cultural and artistic practices.





Artists

Bay Area Dadaists (main)

- Monte Cazazza (aka Dr. Dada), 1949-2023
- Charles Chickadel (born Charles Chickadelli, aka Arthur Cravan and [possibly] Frank Picabia), 1943-2002
- Bill Gaglione (aka "The Jerk", dadaland, daddaland), b. 1943; lives Knoxville, Tennessee
- Anne Long (aka Anna Banana, Canadada), 1940-2024
- Tim Mancusi (aka dada processing), b. 1950; lives Santa Rosa, California
- Nancy Maass Mosen (aka Irene Dogmatic, Rose Tattoo, Rose Tatoo, House Plant), b. 1945; lives Berkeley, California

Bay Area Dadaists (associated)

- Ruby Begonia, unknown
- Tana Emmolo-Smith, unknown
- Judith Bell, unknown
- Buster Cleveland, 1943-1998
- Richard Paulson
- Ms. Anne Thorpe, unknown
- Bahrarah, unknown
- Winston Smith, b. 1952; lives San Francisco

Associated neo-neo-Dada artists

- COUM Transmission, inc. Genesis P-Orridge, 1950-2020 and Cosi Fanni Tutti, b. 1951; lives London
- Bruce Conner, 1933-2008 (via his punk photos of the 1970s)
- Ken Friedman, b. 1949; lives Kalmar, Sweden
- Stu (Stuart) Horn (aka the Northwest Mounted Valise), 1946-2008
- Tom Hosier, 1951-2013
- Gregory Puchalski, lives Florida
- Pauline Smith (aka Adolf Hitler Fan Club), 1933-2017

Associated correspondence Artists

- Ulises Carrión, 1941-1989
- Ray Johnson, 1927-1995
- Clemente Padin, b. 1939; lives Uruguay
- Edgardo-Antonio Vigo, 1928-1997
- Horacio Zabala, b. 1942; lives Buenos Aires

Exhibition possible components and works

Vitrines of Mail art, printed mailers, and publications

Video (projected or on monitors; projection allows for greater flexibility and impact):

- Anna Banana and Bill Gaglione, *Dada Shave*, 1975 (Pacific Film Archive)
- Anna Banana and Bill Gaglione, *Futurist Sound*, 1979 (Western Front)
- Bay Area Dadaists, *Futurist Sound*, ca. 1980 (Pacific Film Archive)
- Bay Area Dadaists/La Mamelle Art Center, *Videozine Five* (Pacific Film Archive)
- *The First BC Art Race*, 1974 (with Anna Banana) (Western Front)
- *Target Video documentation of SST* (Irene Dogmatic punk band)

Photography (inc. Monte Cazazza Futurist Sintesi performance photos, 1975)

Sound

- Audio Players (Bay Area Dadaists), *A Futurist Octet*, 1978
- Audio Players (Bay Area Dadaists), *Toward the Future*, 1979
- Audio Players (Bay Area Dadaists), *Soundings*, 1980
- Anna Banana and Bill Gaglione, *No Title*, from Vec Audio Exchange 01 cassette, 1978
- SST (Irene Dogmatic punk band), 1978
- Monte Cazazza, various industrial music recordings
- COUM Transmissions/Throbbing Gristle, various industrial music recordings



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jeremy DREVA '77

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THE ECART ARCHIVES

Ecart is a group of artists, an independent space, and a publishing company, founded in Geneva by John M Armleder, Patrick Lucchini, and Claude Rychner in 1969 that quickly established itself in Europe as a reference site for the dissemination of artistic practices associated with Fluxus.

Opening with a festival of Happenings, the Ecart “gallery” devoted exhibitions to Daniel Spoerri, George Brecht, Ben, Ken Friedman, Manon, Olivier Mosset, Endre Tot, etc., while Editions Ecart published Genesis P.-Orridge, Lawrence Weiner, Annette Messager, Sarkis, and many others. If we add to this list the organization of Dada and Fluxus recitals, the group’s own artistic activities, and the opening of a bookshop devoted to artists’ books and periodicals, we get some measure of the protean output that made Ecart such an important link in the “Eternal Network” Robert Filliou talked of.

The archives consist of documents accumulated over the years that represent the daily actions of the group and their

international network during the 1970s. They bear witness to artistic practices inspired by Fluxus, which identified friendship, exchange, and daily life as the fundamental values of artistic creation—far more than technical mastery or commercial and institutional recognition.

The Ecart archives consist of both documents and artworks: on one hand, postcards printed by artists, invitation cards, documentary photographs, bank statements, order forms, and a library of art magazines. On the other hand, there are works in the form of performance scores, artist books, postal art, and protocols.

Hosted at MAMCO since 2019, the archives will be transferred to HEAD – Genève during MAMCO’s renovation (2025–2028) and will become the focus of an annual seminar and exhibition.

FURTHER ARCHIVAL RESOURCES



- Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver, BC
- Museum of Modern Art Library, New York
- Western Front, Vancouver, BC (consulted)
- Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, California
- University of California, Berkeley, Bancroft Library (Irene Dogmatic Mail art collection; Bill Gaglione Mail art collection)
- University of Iowa Special Collections and Archives (Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts [ATCA] collection)
- Getty Research Institute (various Mail art collections)
- School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) Library & Special Collections, Mail Art Collection
- Archives of American Art, Washington, DC (various Mail art collections)
- National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, ON (General Idea Collection/Art Metropole Collection)
- Tate Modern (COUM and Monte Cazazza materials)
- Princeton University Libraries (- Ray Johnson Estate, New York)
- Institute for Studies on Latin American Art (ISLAA), New York (Ulises Carrión materials)
- Personal Collections
- John Held, Jr., San Francisco (contacted)
- Philip and Shelly Fox Aarons, New York
- Greg Puchalski, Florida - Tom Hosier Estate, New Haven, Connecticut
- Joe Rees/Target video, San Francisco
- Monte Cazazza estate