



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Patricia Jordan Papers,  
1870, 1949-1984, in the Archives of American Art

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Archives of American Art  
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<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>  
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Patricia Jordan papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.jordpatr
<b>Date:</b>	1870 1949-1984
<b>Extent:</b>	2.4 linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Jordan, Patricia M., 1937-1989
<b>Language:</b>	English  Collection is in English
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of San Francisco based Beat photographer Patricia Jordan measure 2.3 linear feet and date from 1870, 1949-1984. The papers include correspondence, much of it illustrated and with Beat artists and poets, writings, exhibition files, printed materials, photographs, and artwork.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Patricia Jordan donated her papers to the Archives of American Art in 1988.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed and the finding aid written by Hilary Price in 2015.

### Preferred Citation

Patricia Jordan papers, 1870, 1949-1984. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

### Restrictions

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Contact Reference Services for more information.

### Conditions Governing Use

The Patricia Jordan papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

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## Biographical / Historical

Patricia Jordan (1937-1988) was a photographer and integral part of the Beat circle in San Francisco during the late 1950s and 1960s. Through her photography, she captured intimate portraits of the artists and poets in San Francisco at that time. Patricia Jordan, née Topalian, married Larry Jordan, assemblagist and avant-garde filmmaker, in the late 1950s. They lived in San Francisco, Larkspur, and finally settled in San Anselmo, California. Patricia and Larry Jordan had one daughter, Lorna, born in 1960.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of San Francisco based Beat photographer Patricia Jordan measure 2.3 linear feet and date from 1870, 1949-1984. The papers include correspondence, much of it illustrated and with Beat artists and poets, writings, exhibition files, printed materials, photographs, and artwork.

About one-half of the collection consists of correspondence; many items of which could be considered works of art or mail art. There are letters, illustrated letters, photographs, collages, postcards, greeting and holiday cards, and exhibition invitations. Letters are addressed to Patricia Jordan, her husband Larry, and/or daughter Lorna and are from family and friends, including many Beat artists and poets such as Kenneth Anger, Steve Arnold, Paul Beattie, Wallace Berman, Stan Brakhage, Jess Collins, Joseph Cornell (with whom Larry Jordan studied in 1965), Robert Duncan, George Herms, and Gary Snyder. Family letters are from Patricia's parents, sisters, daughter, and husband Larry.

The papers contain a large number of photographs and are primarily portraits taken by Patricia Jordan of friends and family including her husband Larry, daughter Lorna, Geroge Herms, and Wallace Berman. Many of the subjects are not identified. Some photographs are candid snapshots, while others are prints and test prints of images featured in the 1975 exhibition, "A Kind of Beatness," at Focus Gallery in San Francisco.

The remainder of the collection is comprised of scattered writings, exhibition files, printed material, and artwork.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 6 series

- Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1950-1977 (1.1 linear feet; Box 1, OV 4)
- Series 2: Writings, circa 1959-1970s (0.1 linear foot; Box 2)
- Series 3: Exhibition Files, 1962-1978 (0.1 linear foot; Box 2)
- Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1920-1984 (0.2 linear feet; Box 2)
- Series 5: Photographs, circa 1870-1970s (0.7 linear feet; Box 2-3)
- Series 6: Artwork, 1949-circa 1970s (0.2 linear feet; Box 2-3)

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Beat generation -- California -- San Francisco  
Photographers -- California -- San Francisco  
Women artists

Types of Materials:

Illustrated letters  
Mail art  
Photographs

Names:

Anger, Kenneth  
Beattie, Paul, 1926-  
Berman, Wallace, 1926-1976  
Brakhage, Stan  
Cornell, Joseph  
Duncan, Robert Edward, 1919-  
Herms, George, 1935-  
Jess, 1923-  
Jordan, Larry, 1934-  
Snyder, Gary, 1930-

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Correspondence, circa 1950s-1977

#### *1.1 linear feet (Box 1, OV 4)*

Correspondence comprises about one half of the collection. Many items of correspondence border on works of art, or mail art, and include letters, illustrated letters, photographs, collages, postcards, greeting and holiday cards, and exhibition invitations. Letters are addressed to Patricia, Larry, and/or Lorna Jordan from friends and family. Correspondence from friends include many artists and poets including Wallace Berman, Stan Brakhage, Joseph Cornell (with whom Larry Jordan studied in 1965), Robert Duncan, Jess Collins, George Herms, Paul Beattie, Steve Arnold, Gary Snyder, and Kenneth Anger. Some items of correspondence include revealing stories about famous beat poets. Family letters are from Patricia's parents, sisters Joanna Doyle and Dee Beattie (married to Paul Beattie), daughter Lorna, and husband Larry. One file contains correspondence between Patricia and Larry.

Box 1, Folder 1	Steve Arnold, circa 1963-1964
Box 1, Folder 2	Steve Arnold, 1965-1971 Oversized material housed in OV 4
Box 1, Folder 3	Dee and Paul Beattie, 1962-1969
Box 1, Folder 4-5	Wallace and Shirley Berman, 1958-1975
Box 1, Folder 6	Joseph Cornell, 1962-1971
Box 1, Folder 7	Kirby Doyle, 1959-1960
Box 1, Folder 8	Robert Duncan and Jess Collins, 1960-1977
Box 1, Folder 9	George Herms, circa 1959
Box 1, Folder 10	George Herms, circa 1960s
Box 1, Folder 11	George Herms, circa 1960s
Box 1, Folder 12	George Herms, 1960
Box 1, Folder 13	George Herms, 1961-1962
Box 1, Folder 14	George Herms, 1963-1964
Box 1, Folder 15	George Herms, 1965-1966 Oversized material housed in OV 4
Box 1, Folder 16	George Herms, 1967-1978
Box 1, Folder 17	Patricia and Larry Jordan, circa 1965
Box 1, Folder 18	Gary and Joanne Snyder, circa 1961-circa 1962

Box 1, Folder 19	Family Letters and Cards, 1954-1974
Box 1, Folder 20	Letters and Cards, circa 1950s-1960s Oversized material housed in OV 4
Box 1, Folder 21	Letters, 1957-1964
Box 1, Folder 22	Letters, 1965-1966
Box 1, Folder 23	Letters, 1967-1969
Box 1, Folder 24	Letters, 1970-1975
Box 1, Flat-file 25	Postcards, 1958-1963
Box 1, Folder 26	Postcards, 1964-1974
Box OV 4	Oversized Steve Arnold correspondence from Box 1, Folder 2.
Box OV 4	Oversized George Herms correspondence from Box 1, Folder 15.
Box OV 4	Oversized Letters and Cards from Box 1, Folder 20.

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## Series 2: Writings, circa 1959-1970s

### *0.1 linear feet (Box 2)*

Writings include photocopies of a mailing by Wallace Berman, a screenplay by Larry Jordan titled, "House of the Brain," and poetry manuscripts by John Wieners, Robert Duncan, Kirby Doyle, Patricia and Larry Jordan, Wallace Berman, Michael McClure, and Stan Brakhage.

Box 2, Folder 1	Wallace Berman Mailings, circa 1960s
Box 2, Folder 2	Larry Jordan Screenplay "House of the Brain", circa 1960s
Box 2, Folder 3	Various Authors' Manuscripts, 1959-circa 1970s

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## Series 3: Exhibition Files, 1962-1978

*0.1 linear feet (Box 2)*

Exhibition files contain exhibition announcements, catalogs, and a handwritten list for a New York exhibition. Announcements and catalogs relate to exhibitions that Larry, Patricia, and/or their friends were involved in.

Box 2, Folder 4            Exhibition Announcements, 1962-1978

Box 2, Folder 5            Exhibition Catalogs, circa 1968-1975

Box 2, Folder 6            Exhibition List, circa 1975

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## Series 4: Printed Material, circa 1920-1984

### *0.2 linear feet (Box 2)*

Printed material includes booklets, printed collages, a bulletin, magazines, and newspaper articles. Booklets of creative writing are by Jack Hirschman, Daniel Moore, Michael McClure, and Reverend Robert Rasmusson. A vintage booklet from the 1920s contains plates of famous paintings. Printed collages are by unidentified artists. Magazine and newspaper articles document publicity received by Patricia, Larry, or friends in *Artweek*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *This World*, and the *Pacific Sun*.

Box 2, Folder 7	Booklet "Famous Paintings-Nudes and Semi-Nudes", circa 1920
Box 2, Folder 8	Booklets, 1952-1979
Box 2, Folder 9	Collages, circa 1960s
Box 2, Folder 10	<i>Lomi School Bulletin</i> , 1980
Box 2, Folder 11	Magazines, 1975-1983
Box 2, Folder 12	Newspaper Articles, 1966-1984

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## Series 5: Photographs, circa 1870-1970s

*0.7 linear feet (Boxes 2-3)*

Photographs make up another large portion of the collection (.7 linear feet; 10 folders), and are primarily portraits taken by Patricia Jordan of friends and family including her husband Larry, daughter Lorna, Geroge Herms, Wallace Berman, and many others. Many of the subjects are not identified. Some photographs are candid snapshots, while other are prints and test prints of images featured in the 1975 exhibition, "A Kind of Beatness," at Focus Gallery in San Francisco.

Also included are vintage carte de visites, photographic collages incorporating cardboard and drawing, and photographs of Patricia Jordan, notably a triptych by Wallace Berman also featured in the Focus Gallery exhibition.

Box 2, Folder 13	Carte De Visites, circa 1870
Box 2, Folder 14	Collages, circa 1950s-1970s
Box 2, Folder 15-17	Friends and Family, circa 1950s-1970s
Box 2, Folder 18	Lorna Jordan, circa 1960s
Box 2, Folder 19	Patricia Jordan, circa 1950s-1970s Oversized material housed in Box 3, Folder 4
Box 3, Folder 1-3	Oversize Friends and Family, circa 1950s-1970s
Box 3, Folder 4	Oversized Patricia Jordan from Box 2, Folder 19

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## Series 6: Artwork, 1949-circa 1970s

### *0.2 linear feet (Boxes 2-3)*

Artwork includes sketches, prints, collages, and handmade books. Several sketches were created by Patricia's daughter Lorna. One of the handmade books was created by Robert Duncan and Jess Collins, and features many original works including drawing, collage, photography, and writing. The majority of the artworks were created by unidentified artists. Some were sent to Patricia by mail.

Box 2, Folder 20	Handmade book by Robert Duncan and Jess Collins, 1949-1950
Box 2, Folder 21	Handmade book by unidentified artist, 1959
Box 2, Folder 22	Sketches, Prints, and Collages, circa 1960s-1970s
Box 3, Folder 5	Oversized Collage from Box 2, Folder 22

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