



Smithsonian

Archives of American Art

A Finding Aid to the Tom Marioni Papers, 1970-2017, in the Archives of American Art

Christopher DeMairo

The processing of this collection received Federal support from the Smithsonian Collections Care and Preservation Fund, administered by the National Collections Program and the Smithsonian Collections Advisory Committee.

2021 March 2

Archives of American Art
750 9th Street, NW
Victor Building, Suite 2200
Washington, D.C. 20001
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/services/questions>
<https://www.aaa.si.edu/>

Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Scope and Contents.....	2
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Arrangement.....	2
Names and Subjects	3
Container Listing	4
Series 1: Address and Appointment Books, circa 1970-2011.....	4
Series 2: Guest Books, 1991-2017.....	5
Series 3: Printed Material, 1974-2006.....	6
Series 4: Photographs, 1970s-2012.....	7

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Tom Marioni papers
Date:	1970-2017
Identifier:	AAA.mariotom
Creator:	Marioni, Tom, 1937-
Extent:	6.7 Linear feet 7.37 Gigabytes
Language:	English .
Summary:	The papers of conceptual and performance artist Tom Marioni measure 6.7 linear feet and 7.37 GB and date from 1970-2017. The collection documents Marioni's career through photographs, address and appointment books, visitor books from performances, exhibitions, and other gatherings, printed material, and digital sound and video recordings of exhibitions and events.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

The collection was donated by Tom Marioni in 2018.

Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Christopher DeMairo in 2021. Born-digital material was processed by Kirsi Ritosalmi-Kisner in 2021 with funding provided by Smithsonian Collection Care and Preservation Fund.

Preferred Citation

Tom Marioni papers, 1970-2017. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

This collection is open for research. Access to original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Researchers interested in accessing born-digital records or audiovisual recordings in this collection must use access copies. Contact References Services for more information.

Conditions Governing Use

The Archives of American Art makes its archival collections available for non-commercial, educational and personal use unless restricted by copyright and/or donor restrictions, including but not limited to access and publication restrictions. AAA makes no representations concerning such rights and restrictions and it is the user's responsibility to determine whether rights or restrictions exist and to obtain any necessary permission to access, use, reproduce and publish the collections. Please refer to the [Smithsonian's Terms of Use](#) for additional information.

Biographical / Historical

Tom Marioni (1937-) is a conceptual and performance artist in San Francisco, California, known for his role in the emergence of the conceptual art movement in the 1960s to the mid-1970s.

Marioni was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and from an early age had an interest in music, particularly jazz, and played the violin. He attended the Art Academy of Cincinnati before moving to San Francisco where his art was included in a juried exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Marioni served in the U.S. Army between 1960-1963 and was stationed in Germany, before returning to pursue a career as an artist and educator.

Through his works "One Second Sculpture" (1969) and "The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art" (1970), and his role in the founding of the Museum of Conceptual Art in 1970, Marioni played a key role in the conceptual art movement, and held several art shows at the Museum of Conceptual Art before its closure in 1984. In weekly *Cafe Wednesdays*, Marioni's renditions of "The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art" were performance art shows in which guests were both participants and observers who were asked to follow several rules, drink beer, and interact. The show was held at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1979, and renditions of the performance have since occurred in museums around the world. In 1989, Marioni established an artists club in his San Francisco studio and began holding *Cafe Wednesdays* again. In 1999 the name "Cafe Wednesday" was changed to the Society of Independent Artists.

Marioni has had many solo shows throughout his career including exhibitions at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco, de Young Museum, and Kunstsaale in Berlin, Germany. Retrospectives of Marioni's work have been held at the Contemporary Art Center in Cincinnati and Mills College Art Museum in Oakland, and he has completed installations and participated in group exhibitions internationally, including at Y1 Gallery in Stockholm, Sweden, Demarco Gallery in Edinburgh, Scotland, the Lyon Biennale in France, Secession Gallery in Vienna, Austria, and many others. Marioni's work can be found in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Städtische Kunsthalle in Mannheim, Germany, the Pompidou Center in Paris, and elsewhere.

Scope and Contents

The papers of conceptual and performance artist Tom Marioni measure 6.7 linear feet and 7.37 GB and date from 1970-2017. The collection documents Marioni's career through photographs, address and appointment books, visitor books from performances, exhibitions, and other gatherings, printed material, and digital sound and video recordings of exhibitions and events.

The bulk of the collection consists of photographs that document Marioni's weekly performances of "The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art," which were held in his San Francisco studio in the 1990s and early 2000s, and digital video recordings of one series of performances at the Hammer Museum in 2010. Also found are snapshots taken at exhibitions, museums, and galleries, and photos of artwork by Marioni.

Printed material includes editions 1-5 of *Vision*, an art journal published by Crown Point Press for which Marioni served as editor.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as four series.

- Series 1: Address and Appointment Books, 1970-2011 (Box 1; 11 folders)
- Series 2: Guest Books, 1991-2017 (Box 1-2; 1 linear foot)

- Series 3: Printed Material, 1991-2006 (Box 2, OV 13; 11 folders)
 - Series 4: Photographs, 1970-2012 (Box 2-3, 5-12; 4.5 linear feet, ER01-ER05; 7.37 GB)
-

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

Conceptual art
Performance art

Types of Materials:

Sound recordings
Video recordings

Names:

Crown Point Press (Oakland, Calif.)

Occupations:

Conceptual artists -- California -- San Francisco
Performance artists -- California -- San Francisco

Container Listing

Series 1: Address and Appointment Books, circa 1970-2011

11 Folders (Box 1)

Scope and Contents: Found here are two address books, one of which includes a contact list for members of the Museum of Conceptual Art (MOCA); and 12 appointment books that highlight Marioni's activities and engagements such as art exhibitions and performances.

Box 1, Folder 1	Address Book, circa 1970s-1990s
Box 1, Folder 2	Address Book; MOCA Members, circa 1970s-1980s
Box 1, Folder 3-11	Appointment Books, 1972-2011

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Guest Books, 1991-2017

1.3 Linear feet (Box 1-2)

Scope and Contents: Included are 24 guest books signed by attendees of Marioni's exhibitions in several galleries and museums including the Museum of Conceptual Art, and events held in his studio.

Box 1, Folder 12 Visitor Guest Book, Tom Marioni: The Art of Participation, The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art (2008-2009), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2008-2009

Box 1, Folder 13-22 Visitor Guest Books, 1991-2009

Box 2, Folder 1-13 Visitor Guest Books, 2009-2017

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Printed Material, 1974-2006

10 Folders (Box 2, OV 13)

Scope and Contents: Included are published writings by Marioni; cards and flyers related to his Society of Independent Artists and *Cafe Wednesday* events; and editions 1-5 of *Vision*, an art journal published by Crown Point Press. Edition #4 of the journal includes vinyl recordings of talks given by 12 artists: Laurie Anderson, Chris Burden, Daniel Burden, John Cage, Bryan Hunt, Joan Jonas, Robert Kushner, Brice Marden, Tom Marioni, Pat Steir, Marina Abramovic/Ulay, and William T. Wiley.

Box 2, Folder 14	Fabliaux: Tom Marioni Fairy Tails: Short, Comic, Coarse, Cynical Tales in Verse, 2009
Box 2, Folder 15	Society of Independent Artists, Cards and Flyers, 1984-1999
Box 2, Folder 18	Tom Marioni: Beer, Art and Philosophy (The Exhibition), 1968-2006, 2006
Box 2, Folder 16	Tom Marioni: Sculptures and Installations, 1969-1997, 1999
Oversize 13	Tom Marioni: The Italians, the Germans, The Japanese, 1987
Box 2, Folder 17	Tom Marioni: Trees and Birds, 1969-1999, 1999
Box 2, Folder 19-22	Vision, 1975-1981
Oversize 13	Vision, 1980 3 Sound discs (vinyl)
Box 2, Folder 23	Writings on Art, 1969-1999 by Tom Marioni, 2000

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Photographs, 1970s-2012

4.5 Linear feet (Box 2-3, 5-12)

7.37 Gigabytes (ER01-ER05)

Scope and Contents: Photographs consist of snapshots taken by Marioni during the Wednesday events he held in his studio in the 1990s and 2000s; snapshots from exhibitions, galleries, and museums; images of Marioni's studios and the artists who visited to see his projects and artwork; and personal photographs of travel and gatherings with friends and family. Various snapshots include images depicting *Cafe Wednesday*, Marioni's studio, travel, and other scenes. Also found in this series are digital video recordings of a series of 40th anniversary performances of *The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art* at Hammer Museum in 2010.

Arrangement: The series is arranged as 7 subseries.

- 4.1: *Cafe Wednesday*, 1989-2005
- 4.2: Exhibitions, Museums and Galleries, 1970-2009
- 4.3: Personal Snapshots, 1972-circa 2000s
- 4.4: Places, 1970s-2000s
- 4.5: Projects and Artwork, circa 1970s-2010
- 4.6: Studios, 1986-2010
- 4.7: Various Snapshots, circa 1970s-2012

4.1: *Cafe Wednesday*, 1989-2005

Box 5, Folder 1-26	<i>Cafe Wednesday</i> , 1989-1996
Box 2, Folder 24	<i>Cafe Wednesday</i> ; Photograms, circa 1992
Box 5, Folder 27-29	<i>Cafe Wednesday</i> , John Moore Photographs, 1996-1997
Box 5, Folder 30-32	<i>Cafe Wednesday</i> , 2001
Box 2, Folder 25	<i>Cafe Wednesday</i> , circa 2001
Box 6, Folder 1-19	<i>Cafe Wednesday</i> , 2004-2005, undated
Box 2, Folder 26	<i>Cafe Wednesday</i> , "1-9", 2004-2006
Box 6, Folder 20-21	<i>Cafe Wednesday</i> , John Moore and Tom Photographs, undated

4.2: Exhibitions, Museums and Galleries, 1970-2009

Box 6, Folder 22	<i>The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art</i> , 1970
Box 6, Folder 23	Vito Acconci Show at MOCA, circa 1975-1976
Box 6, Folder 24	Santa Barbara Museum Performance; Chris Burden L.A., 1979

Box 6, Folder 25	MOCA; Tom Marioni Art, 1983
Box 6, Folder 26	AVA Show [?]; Jenny and [?], 1984
Box 2, Folder 27	Margarete Roeder; Shadow Box; Shadowgrams Objects, circa 1985
Box 6, Folder 27	Langton Arts Opening, 1986
Box 2, Folder 28	Langton Arts Opening, 1986
Box 6, Folder 28	3d: Installation; 3D Snapshots, circa 1986
Box 6, Folder 29	David Ireland Show; Travel, circa 1986
Box 6, Folder 30	[Copp Street?] Show, 1990
Box 6, Folder 31	Reno Show, 1990s
Box 7, Folder 1	Paule Anglim Show, 1993
Box 2, Folder 29	Paule Anglim; Crown Point Show, 1993
Box 7, Folder 2	Conceptual Art from the Bay Area (1974); Artists Space, New York, 1994
Box 7, Folder 3	Refusalon Show; New Studio; Golden Rectangle; Cafe Wednesday, 1995
Box 7, Folder 4	SF MOMA Opening; Studio, 1995
Box 7, Folder 5	Paule Anglim Show, 1996
Box 2, Folder 30	Paule Anglim Show, 1996
Box 7, Folder 6	Conceptual Art Show, MOCA L.A., 1996
Box 3, Folder 1	Cologne, Germany Performance, 1996
Box 7, Folder 7-10	Mills College Show, 1999
Box 7, Folder 11	Paule Anglim Show, 2000
Box 7, Folder 12	Margarete Roeder Show, 2003
Box 7, Folder 13-15	Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Show; Model, 2003-2004
Box 7, Folder 16	Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Show, Crown Point Press Opening, 2004
Box 7, Folder 17	Rosa (100 paintings), 2004

Box 7, Folder 18-19	De Young Museum, Opening, 2005
Box 3, Folder 2	De Young Museum, 2005
Box 7, Folder 20-22	Margarete Roeder Gallery; Cincinnati, 2006
Box 7, Folder 23-25	Paule Anglim; Tennessee, 2007
Box 7, Folder 26	Paule Anglim, 2009
Box 7, Folder 27-28	Crown Point Show; Guggenheim, 2009
Folder ER01	The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art, 40th Anniversary event, Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA (2010 September 1), Digital Video Recording, 2010 1.12 Gigabytes (One computer file)
Folder ER02	The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art, 40th Anniversary event, Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA (2010 September 8), Digital Video Recording, 2010 1.12 Gigabytes (One computer file)
Folder ER03	The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art, 40th Anniversary event, Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA (2010 September 15), Digital Video Recording, 2010 1.26 Gigabytes (One computer file)
Folder ER04	The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art, 40th Anniversary event, Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA (2010 September 22), Digital Video Recording, 2010 1.93 Gigabytes (One computer file)
Folder ER05	Billy's Surrealist Cuts #1-8, Tom Marioni and WA (Bill) Morrison, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA (2010 September 1-22), Digital Video Recordings, 2010 2.17 Gigabytes (Eight computer files)
Box 7, Folder 29	Amherst University Show; Fuller; Gross, undated

4.3: Personal Snapshots, 1972-circa 2000s

Box 8, Folder 1	San Francisco Art World Personalities, 1986
Box 8, Folder 2	50th Birthday Party, 1987
Box 8, Folder 3	Kids; Bottles, circa 1990
Box 8, Folder 4	Family Party, circa 1990s

Box 8, Folder 5 Dinner Set Up; Christmas, circa 1996

Box 8, Folder 6 Family, 1997

Box 8, Folder 7 David Ireland Party, 2000

Box 8, Folder 8 Various Snapshots of People, 1990s-2000s

4.4: Places, 1970s-2000s

Box 8, Folder 9-10 Cincinnati and [?], circa 1970s-1980s

Box 8, Folder 11 Edinburgh, London, 1972

Box 8, Folder 12-13 New York, 1997, undated

Box 8, Folder 14-20 Philadelphia, undated

Box 8, Folder 21 Tennessee, 2007

Box 8, Folder 22 Travel, Japan and Others, circa 1980s-1990s

Box 8, Folder 23 Saki Cups, Japan, circa 1985

Box 8, Folder 24 Vienna, undated

4.5: Projects and Artwork, circa 1970s-2010

Box 8, Folder 25 Boomerang; Mission St. Studio, circa 1988-1989

Box 8, Folder 26-27 By the Fire; 22 Hawthorne Studio, circa 1990s

Box 3, Folder 5 By the Fire; 22 Hawthorne Studio, circa 1993

Box 8, Folder 28-29 By the Sea (Pacific Rim), 1991-1992

Box 8, Folder 30-33 Free Beer, MOCA, circa 1990s

Box 8, Folder 34 Flying, Cincinnati, 1999

Box 8, Folder 35 From China to Czechoslovakia (1976), undated

Box 8, Folder 36 Glass of Beer, 2003

Box 9, Folder 1 Manhattan Sculptures; Blow Up's Magnified, 2003

Box 9, Folder 2	Observatory Bird, 1989
Box 9, Folder 3	Planets; Green Gulch; Oldenberg, 2003
Box 9, Folder 4-7	Self Portraits, 1980s-2004
Box 9, Folder 8-10	Shadow Boxes, 1988-1989
Box 3, Folder 6	Shadowgrams; Objects; Studio, circa 1992
Box 9, Folder 11	Square Circle Triangle All the Same, 1996
Box 9, Folder 12-13	Stonehenge, undated
Box 9, Folder 14-15	Temple of Geometry, Model, 2004
Box 9, Folder 16	Temple of Geometry, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 2004
Box 9, Folder 17-19	Violin; Negatives, 1970s
Box 9, Folder 20	Violin Planets, 2003
Box 9, Folder 21-22	Violin, Close Up, circa 2003
Box 9, Folder 23	Violin, Deconstructed, 2005
Box 9, Folder 24	Violin, Submission for Wilshire/Normandie Metroline, circa 2003
Box 9, Folder 25-31	Various Snapshots of Artwork, circa 1994-2010, undated

4.6: Studios, 1986-2010

Box 10, Folder 1	MOCA, Demolition of Back Wall; 75 3rd Street, 1986
Box 10, Folder 2	Mission Street Studio; Berkley Bath House; Bed Room, circa 1986
Box 10, Folder 3	Mission Street Studio, 1988
Box 10, Folder 4-5	Studio, 1990
Box 3, Folder 7	Photo Album, Snapshots at Studio, 1990s-2000s
Box 10, Folder 6	22 Hawthorne Studio; Art in Studio, 1992
Box 10, Folder 7-8	Tom Studio Reception; Photographs by Susan Middleton, 1994
Box 10, Folder 9	657 Studio; Eliminated Drawing, 1995

Box 10, Folder 10	Studio, 1995
Box 10, Folder 11-12	657 Studio Just Before and After Move, 1995
Box 10, Folder 13	Studio; Orchestra, 1996-1997
Box 10, Folder 14	657 Studio; Art in Studio, 1996
Box 10, Folder 15	657 Studio; Dinner Table Set Up, 1996
Box 10, Folder 16	Studio; MOCA, 1997
Box 10, Folder 17	657 Studio, 1997
Box 10, Folder 18	Studio, 2001
Box 10, Folder 19	[?] in Studio, 2004
Box 10, Folder 20	Studio, 2004
Box 10, Folder 21	Studio; Car, 2004
Box 10, Folder 22	Studio; Goldstein, 2005
Box 10, Folder 23	Studio, 2010
Box 10, Folder 24	Studio; Kiki Smith, undated
Box 3, Folder 8	Studio; Kiki Smith, Negatives, undated
Box 3, Folder 9	Studio; Train; Book, undated
Box 10, Folder 25	Corner of Hawthorne and Howard Building, undated
Box 10, Folder 26	Studio Construction, undated

4.7: Various Snapshots, circa 1970s-2012

Box 10, Folder 27-37	Various Snapshots, 1970s-2005
Box 4, Folder 1-2	Various Snapshots, circa 1990s-2010
Box 11, Folder 1-33	Various Snapshots, 2006-2008
Box 12, Folder 1-29	Various Snapshots, 2008-2012, undated

Box 4, Folder 3

Photo Album, Black and White Images from the Film Casablanca (1942),
undated

[Return to Table of Contents](#)