

BOO-HOORAY

Some notes on  
Ray Machine  
reality

Being an account  
of the  
MINATORY EFFECT  
in regards to realization  
of rays recieved

⊕

Shortlist #69  
Good Hot Stuff

## Shortlist #69: Good Hot Stuff

Boo-Hooray is pleased to present our 69th shortlist, showcasing some magnificent highlights from among our recent acquisitions.

A short shortlist, but a mighty one. In honor of it being our sixty-ninth, **item one** is a collection of turn-of-the-millennium sex & strip club ephemera from Harlem, Brooklyn, and The Bronx. This gathering of material traces the trajectories of both New York's urban policies and its undercommons; it also showcases an aesthetic of print media produced just before the internet's ubiquity – and thus a suddenly lost form, as promoters retreated into the greater comfort of digital anonymity.

**Item two** is a remarkable collection of Claes Oldenburg's early printed "Ray Gun" work, featuring heretofore unrecorded mimeograph works, a complete set of the publications issued for Ray Gun Spex (including two copies of his staggeringly rare Ray Gun Poems, one of which with a previously unrecorded collation), and more.

**Item three** is a complete copy of Ray Johnson's exceedingly scarce *A Book About Death*.

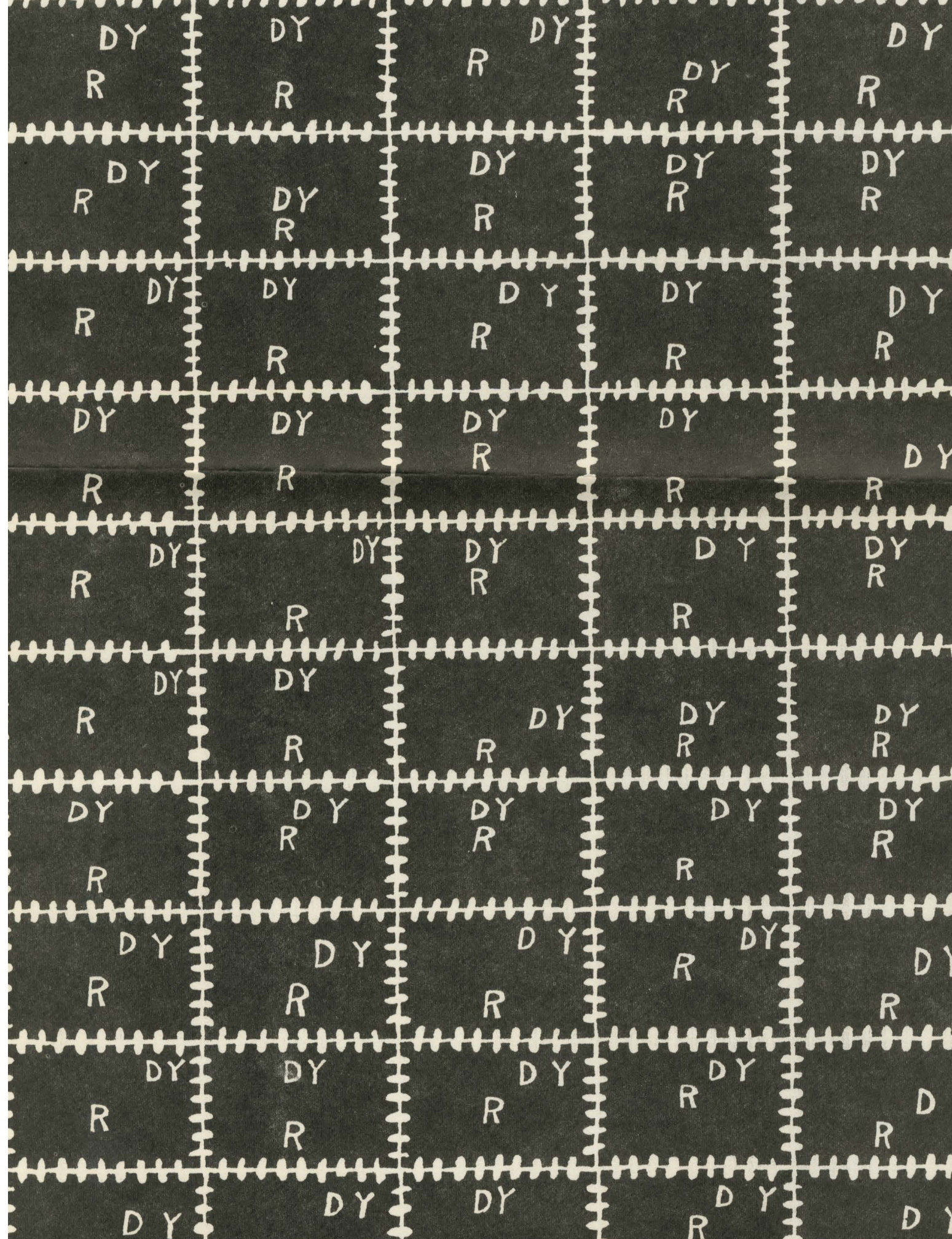
**Item four** collects the magnificent copper plate illustrations from the first edition of Jerónimo de Prado and Juan Bautista Villalpando's 1596-1605 work on Solomon's Temple, *Ezechielem explanationes et Apparatus vrbis ac Templi Hierosolymitani*.

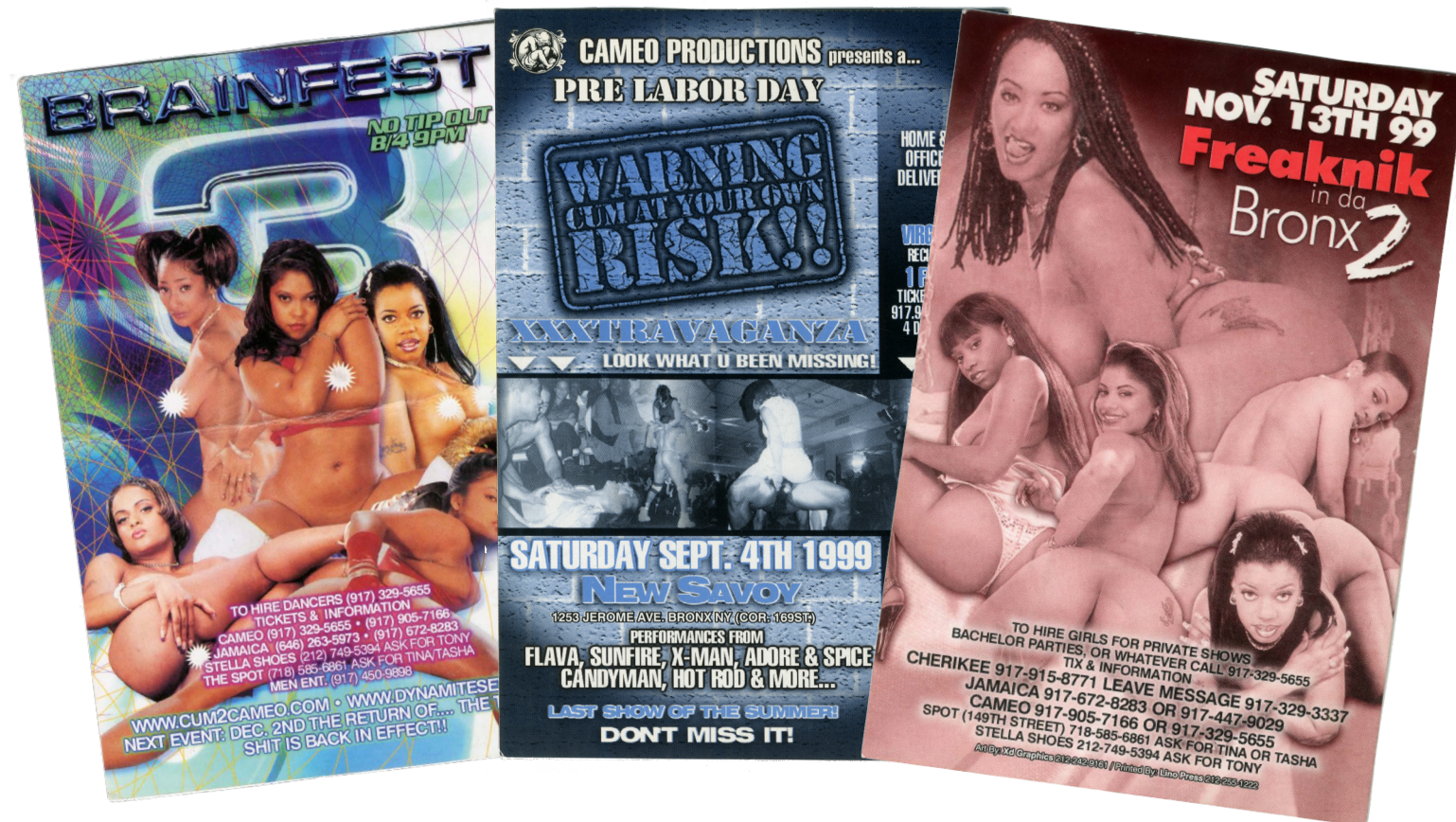
Finally, **item five** is a remarkable gathering of postcolonial West African commercial photography, with over 400 photographic prints spanning 1960 to 1984. Together they illuminate not only the lives of newly liberated Cameroonians and Nigerians, but also the diversity of commercial photographic practices at the time.

For over a decade, Boo-Hooray has been committed to the organization, stabilization, and preservation of cultural narratives through archival placement. Today, we continue and expand our mission through the sale of individual items and smaller collections. We encourage you to browse our extensive inventory of rare books, ephemera, archives, and collections on our website [www.boohooray.com](http://www.boohooray.com). Open by appointment only.

Shortlist prepared by Sebas Alarcon, Sarah Hudes, and Daniel Baker. Photography and layout by those three, too. Please direct all inquiries to [info@boo-hooray.com](mailto:info@boo-hooray.com).

Terms: Usual. Not onerous. All items subject to prior sale. Payment may be made via check, credit card, wire transfer or PayPal. Institutions may be billed accordingly. Shipping is additional and will be billed at cost. Returns will be accepted for any reason within a week of receipt. Please provide advance notice of the return.





### 1. Millennial Sex Club / Strip Club Ephemera from Harlem, Brooklyn, and The Bronx

New York: Various, including Cameo Productions and Big Time Entertainment, 1994 - 2011. 195 flyers and 8 schedule sheets. Offset, inkjet, xerox, and holograph. Various sizes, from 2 3/8 x 2 3/4 in. to 11 x 8 1/2 in. Very good.

Collection of 195 flyers and 8 dance schedules from Black adult nightlife entertainment venues in The Bronx, Bed-Stuy, and Harlem, which intersected with New York's hip-hop scene in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The collection documents not only nights of erotic dances, but also the more hidden world of full-blown sex shows and parties. While some flyers promote singular parties, others promote events which were parts of larger, themed series, such as "Brainfest" and "Freaknik in da Bronx." Many of the flyers feature recurring performers and dancers, such as Flava, Anaconda 16 1/2, and Cherokee. Among the major producers featured here is Cameo Productions (also known as Cum 2 Cameo), a company that offered erotic productions for nightclubs, bachelor (and divorce) parties, or bridal showers. On their now-defunct website ([www.cum2cameo.com](http://www.cum2cameo.com)), Cameo advertised that some of their prominent clients included Jay-Z, Dr. Dre, Funk Master Flex, Ed Lover, Total, Nore, and Sinbad. Other prominent producers include Big Time Entertainment, Big F Productions, So Real Entertainment, and Nubian Entertainment.

These flyers point to an under-documented outlet of hip-hop nightlife of Black and Latino folks in the Bronx and Brooklyn in the 1990s and early 2000s, a period often referred to as the genre's mainstream breakthrough, making these venues contemporary with the rise of artists such as Dre and Jay-Z.

Outside of scarce ephemera such as this, these nightclubs almost completely lack documentation. With the bulk of the flyers dating from 1996 to 2004, the clubs have left incredibly few traces on the internet, as they just preceded its total integration into global social life. Events at clubs in The Bronx make up the bulk of the collection, with the most prominent venues including New Savoy, Parkside Plaza, Tahbu, The New Players Club, The Temple, and Mickey & Anthony's Adult Nightclub, among numerous others. But Brooklyn and Harlem are also represented here by Wiggles, The Lab Club, Porthole Supper Club, Club Passion, and many more.

Through the then-mayor Rudy Giuliani's aggressive policies levied against the city's "adult establishments" in 1998, many of these nightclubs were forced to shut their doors. An example in the collection includes the Bronx staple Mickey and Anthony's, located in the industrial strip north of Co-Op City, known in the neighborhood for its shoddy-but-fun reputation and lax age-restrictions. Giuliani's policies thus shut down the familiar neighborhood joints that allowed for Bronx teenagers as young as 14 years old to have their first beers and erotic dances.

These flyers thus trace the trajectories of both New York's urban policies, and its undercommons, with extreme specificity. The Bed-Stuy adult nightclub The Lab, for instance, open during the turn of the millennium, eventually closed its operations in the aughts, leading to the building being re-opened as a massive, 10,000-square-foot underground party space in the early 2010s for both a hipster and local clientele, prefiguring the intensified gentrification of the area. However, this collection also features fun historical documents of a geographically-unbounded proletarian social life, such as the flyer for the "Thanksgiving Feast" of 1996, presented by Mr. Wonderful, for ladies who wished to "feast on a smorgasbord of male treats, black, white, & latino" at the famous Ukrainian Ballroom in the East Village, just under the Ukrainian National Home, making for a rare downtown and Bronx cross-over.

- DIS ANNOUNCE OF TFS -  
- 5 MINS EARLY -

8	COFFEE BG	8:30	QUEEN DEBBIE
9	BG ✓	9:30	DEBBIE ✓ TWIX ✓
10	COFFEE ✓	10:30	QUEEN ✓
11	BG ✓ COFFEE ✓	11:30	DEBBIE ✓ CHARISMA ✓ QUEEN ✓
12	BG ✓ COFFEE ✓ PAULINE ✓	12:30	DEBBIE ✓ CHARISMA ✓ QUEEN ✓
1	BG, COFFEE ✓ PAULINE ✓	1:30	DEBBIE ✓ CHARISMA ✓
2	BG ✓ COFFEE ✓ PAULINE ✓	2:30	QUEEN ✓ DEBBIE ✓ CHARISMA ✓
		3:30	DEBBIE ✓ CHARISMA ✓

Miss Jamaica Entertainment presents  
**TIP THAT TEE**  
Thur May 2nd 2002  
Leggs Open Wide @ 10pm  
ADM \$10 B4 Midnite  
more after ladies tip out \$20 at  
**Mr D's Lounge**  
231-83 Merrick Blvd  
corner 231st Av  
Laurelton Queens  
for info Ms Jamaica 646.263.5873, 917.393.0770, 877.348.6770  
Ty 917.500.7751, Candyman 646.326.8296

**BRONX TOUCH OF CLASS**  
PRESENTS A  
**BIRTHDAY BASH 2000**  
FOR  
MARK DA SPOT + DERRICK MA POPS  
\$100 MOST X-RATED FEMALE  
SHOUT OUT TO BOGGIE DOWN, HARLEM, QUEENS, BROOKLYN  
SHOUT TO ALL LIBRAS  
LOOK OUT FOR BRONX TOUCH OF CLASS JANUARY 2001  
FOR GUEST LIST CALL PRESTIGE  
**AT BA**  
555 WEST 33rd STREET (COR.) (212) 947-0400

YOU HEARD ABOUT "BRAINFEST" "THE BRAINFEST BOATRIDE", YOU HOT 97'S STAR & BUC TALK ABOUT THE

**FRIDAY NOVEMBER 29TH, 1996**  
FRIENDS • CO-WORKERS • MOMS • SISTERS  
NIECES • AUNTS • COUSINS • DAUGHTERS  
ARE ALL INVITED TO  
**THE THANKSGIVING FEAST**  
at The Plush and Spacious  
**Ukrainian Ballroom**  
110 Second Ave. cor. East 9th St. N.Y.C.  
**BUMP & GRIND**

**BRAINFEEST**  
LIVE & UNDER  
2255 WESTCHESTER AVE.  
OVER 100  
TIX \$25 IN ADVANCE

**"SATURDAY" APRIL 5TH, 1997**  
MICKEY'S & ANTHONY'S  
1769 EAST GUN HILL RD., Bx., N.Y. 10469  
DOORS OPEN NOON TO 4 AM  
AFTER 8PM \$5.00 ADMISSION  
23 AND OVER - NO EXCEPTIONS  
FOR INFO PAGE BIG TIME 1-917-926-1258

**BIG TIME ENTERTAINMENT PRESENT**  
"A - EXOTIC DANCE REVUE"  
"FEATURING A SPECIAL MIDNIGHT SHOW & THE BEST BREAST CONTEST"  
MUSIC BY DJ 1210 & DJ NEIL  
20 OF N.Y.'S SEXIEST EXOTIC FEMALE DANCERS  
STAGE, BAR & LAP DANCING  
MR. WONDER  
TO HIRE A CALL MR. Ladies ... Design Quality Enter

The collection also provides a view to the interior operations of an adult club, gathering eight holograph dance schedules for erotic dancers at an unspecified nightclub, which detail the 30-minute rotations for the nightshift, starting at 8pm and ending at 4am.

On the whole, this is a extensive collection of a popular nightlife scene that still exists on the margins of the historical record.

\$5500

## 2. Claes Oldenburg Ray Gun Collection

Claes Oldenburg

New York: various publishers, 1960-1968. Mimeograph, offset, and holograph. 25 original Ray Gun artist's mimeographs; the second edition of *Store Days: Documents from The Store* (1961) and *Ray Gun Theater* (1962), with the business card in glassine envelope on the front free-endpaper; and Oldenburg's copy of *The Floating Bear*, issue #19, postmarked and with his printed address label, featuring holograph illustrations and inscriptions in Oldenburg's hand. From 2 x 4 1/2 to 11 1/8 x 8 5/8 in. All very good.

**A remarkable collection of early Claes Oldenburg material, containing the complete works produced for his first Happening, with two copies of the exceedingly rare Ray Gun Poems and previously unrecorded works.**

This collection gathers rare mimeograph prints and manuscripts produced by Oldenburg and Jim Dine in 1960 and 1961 under their slippery eroto-mystical theme, "Ray Gun," which was inaugurated in February 1960 when the two opened the Ray Gun exhibition at the Judson Gallery. These prints, totaling 25 distinct artworks, are collected here with the second edition of *Claes Oldenburg's Store Days*, Oldenburg's and Emmet William's artists' book on the former's store and performance venue from 1961 to 1962. The collection further includes a copy of the nineteenth issue of *The Floating Bear* (1962), posted to Oldenburg, which bears striking illustrations and texts on the Ray Gun theme, hand drawn by the artist on the last page, illuminating Oldenburg's developing thoughts on the concept as they arose in process. These materials constitute a substantial gathering of Oldenburg's early career in New York, when he experimented with the printed image as "a special form of publicity, information, modern technology, and traditional practice leading to a work of art" (Rose, *Artforum*).



Some notes on  
Ray Machine  
reality

Being an account  
of the  
MINATORY EFFECT  
in regards to realization  
of rays recieved

interesting than some of the other strictly taped, music concrete sounding pieces, or the willful affectation of George Brecht's breath-like chatter behind Dithyramb. However, the whole story was Mr. Waring's choreography and performance, as well as the brilliant performances of his company. It is a shame that we cannot watch Mr. Waring & Co. perform (or the companies of Merce Cunningham or Aileen Passloff or Paul Taylor) more often. Once or twice a year is certainly not enough. Why is it that people like Alwin Nikolais and his original dixieland jazzband are always around, and really estimable performers like Mr. Waring and Mr. Cunningham are not able to appear more often? (A good question, Sam.)

--Lehoi Jones

KARP - PARK  
KRAP -

Dear Floating Bear,

Fred Herko's review of Paul Taylor says: "Love is ultimately beautiful. Love is interesting. Love is exciting... Mr. Taylor is not exciting. Mr. Taylor is not interesting. Mr. Taylor is not ultimately beautiful." Herko is judging Taylor by an idea. This idea - the idea of love and art and The Unscooled Life - is shit. If Taylor falls by that, he's doing fine. Herko had better watch his language.

PIP  
ARK  
RITE-ROPE PAIR  
R(EST) PAIR  
I(CN)

PEA - PARE (PIA/AIP)  
PRI - PAT (PRACT)  
Edwin Denby  
RIP - RAP  
RAY - GUN  
RAFF - RAFF

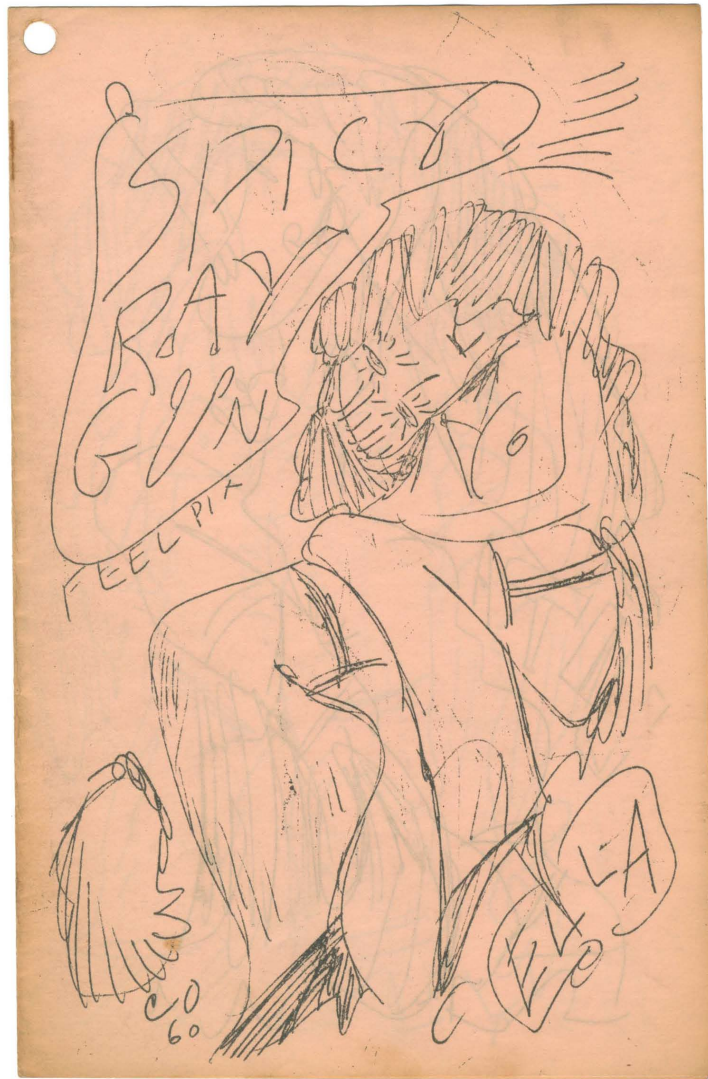
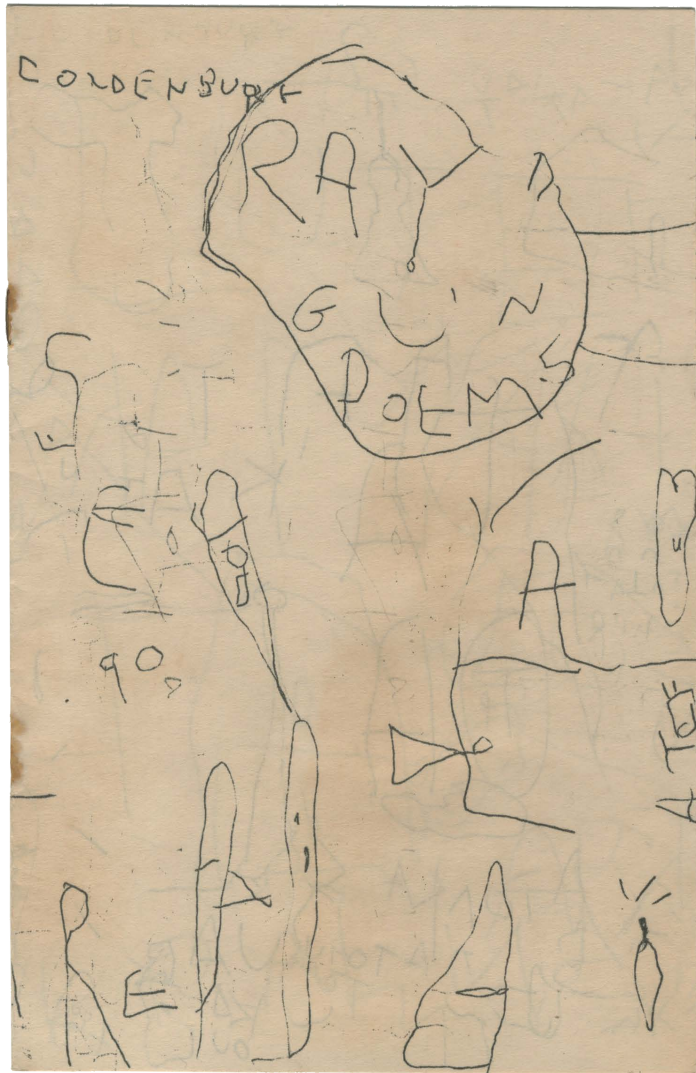
NOTICES:  
Thanks to all the people who helped the Bear by its own mimeograph machine, especially Peter Hartman, Lita Hornick and Howard Schulman. \*

\*Reviews appearing in the Floating Bear express (we hope) the opinion of the reviewer, and often of nobody else, including the editors.

\*Having bought the machine, we now have no money for paper & stamps...  
KULCHUR 5 is out, guest editor J. Oppenheimer.

PAPER BAG PLAYERS are coming to the Living Theatre for Easter.

PARIS) APP (A) RI(TION) AIR



A post-war artist who created simultaneously lighthearted and piercing depictions of everyday objects, Oldenburg's oeuvre transformed the landscape of sculpture and art. Through monumentalizing quotidian material – creating massive public replicas out of food, equipment, articles of clothing, and more – Oldenburg made popular and funny art available in parks, plazas, and the other settings of everyday life. These sculptures were often placed in counterpoint to classical, neoclassical, or simply much older architecture in playful and prodding ways (such as his sculptural work at Yale University).

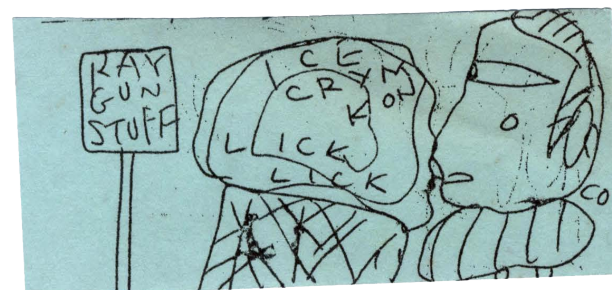
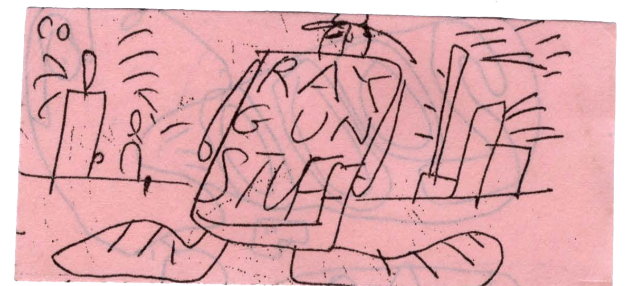
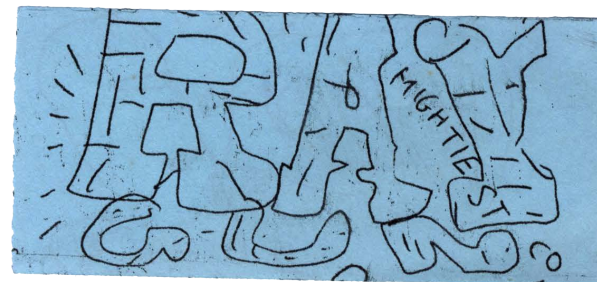
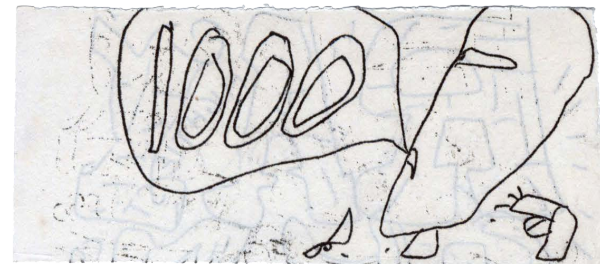
While the focus of this collection, Oldenburg's early 1960s "Ray Gun" work, is unlike the sculpture he is perhaps best known for, it is in fact germinal to it. These comic books, sketches, poems, word-art, all printed via the humble mimeograph, are irreverent, proto-punk, graffiti-like, funny, horny, political, mystical, and above all, a mode of researching and interacting with the world and its stuff.

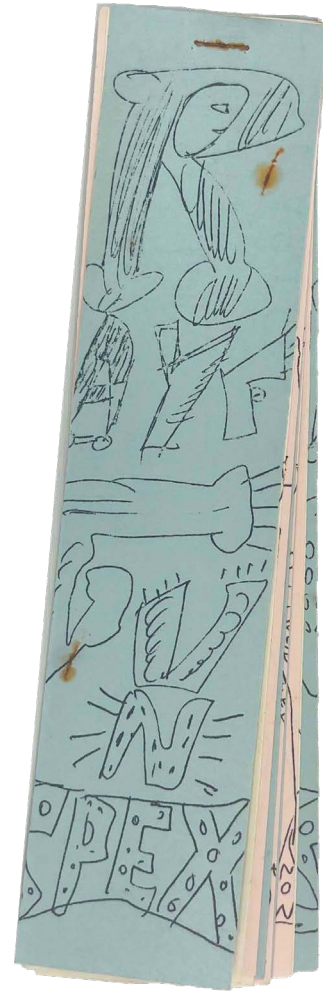
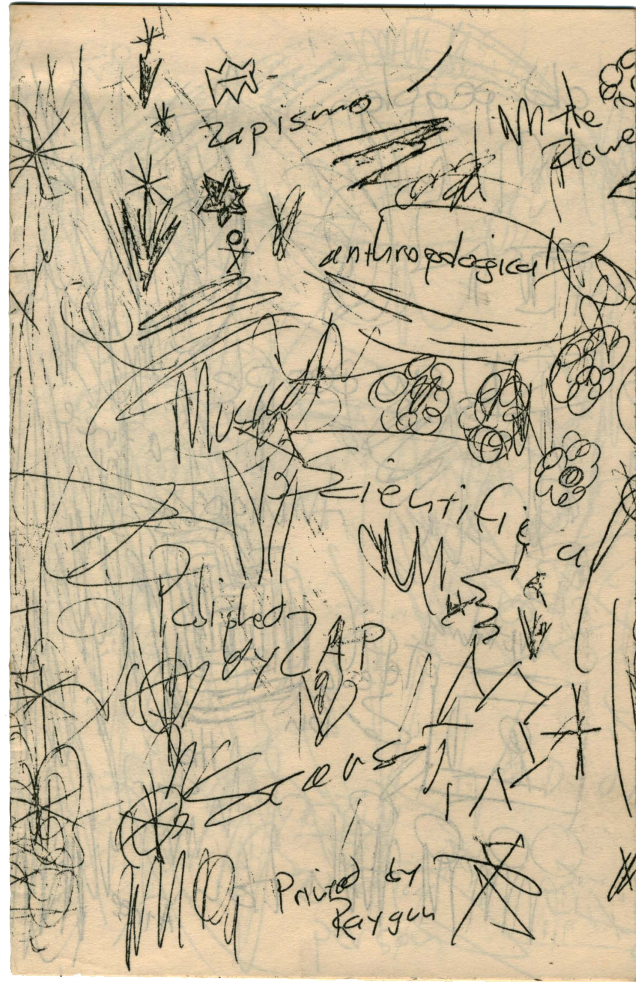
The "Ray Gun." What is Ray Gun? On the surface, Ray Gun was Oldenburg's and Jim Dine's exhibition at the Judson Gallery, where they also produced and printed their work; Ray Gun is also a sculpture of a toy gun now held at MoMA; Ray Gun is hostile to abstract expressionism; Ray Gun 'zips' or 'zaps'; it fires like all guns do, so Ray Gun is also war; Ray Gun is pointy like all guns are; Ray Gun is hot, or 'spicy,' and erotic; Ray Gun's eros is of both men and women's nude bodies; Ray Gun is the theme of a series of mimeographed artworks and comic books, which revolve around all of the above; Ray Gun is Oldenburg's alter-ego; Ray Gun is an experiment in picking up any word or thing on the street that has the shape of a gun, or can be reproduced, drawn, printed, or written down that way. Ray Gun is all these things and beyond the sum of its parts.

Oldenburg's research into and production of Ray Gun was chiefly inspired by the Lower East Side neighborhood where he made his home. His printed work and sculptures rendered figures, letters, sounds, signs, food, and equipment that one would come across on a walk through this part of Manhattan in the early '60s. Even further, it was made from materials you could find on the same walk, often printed on or constructed out of cardboard, burlap, and newspapers. It is this aspect which gives the Ray Gun prints their punk, graffiti-like feel, and which moved Oldenburg to plaster his posters, flyers, and comic book onto the neighborhood walls. Through this, these works occupied a remarkable visual polyphony, promoting his art while also reflecting the street back on itself.

The bulk of these materials comprise complete works published for the Ray Gun Spex performances, Oldenburg's the first Happening held at Judson Gallery. Held from February 29 – March 2, 1960, the Ray Gun Spex included performances by Jim Dine, Al Hansen, Dick Higgins, Allan Krapow, Robert Whitman, and Oldenburg himself (Red Grooms was billed to perform, but did not). For the Happening, Oldenburg mimeographed the present program, the Ray Gun Money, three artist's books, and two prints (Axsolm & Platzker, 4-6.5). Not only remarkable for being a complete set of these works, these also constitute some of the earliest recorded printed works by Oldenburg writ large – with only three other works preceding them, according to Axsom and Platzker.

Included here are several remarkable highlights of archival significance. First, present are two copies of Ray Gun Poems. While Oldenburg published an edition of unknown size for Ray Gun Spex, he felt that the work was a failure after printing and claimed to destroy all the copies prior to distribution. However, in Axsolm and Platzker's 1997 *catalogue raisonné*, they note, that "at least one copy has survived in the artist's archive." **They trace no other copies; OCLC still locates no institutional holdings as of February 2026, and we can trace no other copy in the standard auction records. One of the present copies features six leaves, which conforms to no known copy; the other copy conforms to Axsolm and Platzker 6.1.**





The other notable highlights include **two evidently unrecorded mimeographed artist's books** of the same period and composition, seemingly titled *My Epharun Sheep Herders* and *Zapismo Anthropological Scientifical*. Also present is another print produced in the same style as *Street Scene #1 (PWEET)* and *Street Scene #2 (YABLA)*, both of which are also present here.

In total, the collection contains the following mimeographed artist's books and comix printed by Oldenburg in the basement of Judson Memorial Church: the *Ray Gun Spex* program (conforming to Axsolm & Platzker 4); five examples of *Ray Gun Money*; *Ray Gun Poems* [2 copies]; *More Ray Gun Poems* [2 copies]; *Spicy Ray Gun*; *Street Scene #1 (PWEET)*; *Street Scene #2 (YABLA)*; the unrecorded print in the *Street Scene* style; *Ray Gun Comics* [2 copies]; *The Super Thing*; *Some Notes on Ray Machine Reality* [2 copies]; *Ray Gun Cut Out Coloring and a Real Love Kind of Deluxe Book* [2 copies]; *More Ray Gun Poems* [2 copies]; *Zapismo Anthropological Scientifical*; *Ray Gun Cut Out Coloring and a Real Love Kind of Deluxe Book*; *My Epharun Sheep Herders*; *Comic by Red Grooms*; and *The Smiling Workman* by Jim Dine. Accompanying these are Oldenburg's copy of *The Floating Bear* number 19, with extensive manuscript illustrations on the *Ray Gun* theme, and a second edition of his artist's book *Store Days* (including the typically lacking business card).

Altogether, this is a significant gathering of Oldenburg's visionary and hilarious early work, some of which is heretofore unrecorded – and all of which rarely seen at all in the trade, nor in institutional holdings.

Item-level inventory and descriptions available upon request.

**SOLD**



### 3. A Book About Death

Ray Johnson

Self-published, 1963-65. Offset. Thirteen unbound sheets. 14 x 8 1/2 in. Very good; original creases from mailing, some minor edge wear.

A complete edition of the thirteen pages that comprise Ray Johnson's *A Book About Death*, a mail publication Johnson sent out one page at a time. Some pages creased due to being sent folded in the mail. The pages were printed offset individually by Johnson at the Pernet Printing Company and mailed out to members of the New York Correspondence School, though he purposefully did not send every page to any single reader so as to avoid the assemblage of a complete book. In essence, the book was to be a collaborative process spread between his many correspondents, and as a result these pages are rarely seen as a complete set.



Influenced by the Black Mountain School, Dada, Pop Art, and later Fluxus, Johnson is known as the originator of mail art, in which he used the mail-system and the format of correspondence to send friends and strangers original work. Beginning in late 1950s, his pieces became increasingly ambitious, utilizing collage, text, and various emblems of personal iconography. Often instructions were included with his pieces such as that the recipient add to the work and send it along to someone else. Following his influence, large systems of correspondence formed between artists, and mail art became a vital medium of collaboration among artists throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

The construction of *A Book About Death* sprawled over two years, as Johnson worked on no fixed schedule and would intermittently print and send new pages out. Thus, due to the ephemeral nature of the work, the order of the book and the process through which it should be assembled is not formally fixed. The sequencing of pages presented below was done by Clive Phillpot, a friend of Johnson's and former librarian of the Museum of Modern Art.

SEND  
96 CENTS  
POSTAGE  
FOR 8 PAGES  
OF THE BOOK  
ABOUT

DEATH  
TO RAY  
JOHNSON  
176 SUFFOLK  
ST. NEW YORK  
CITY

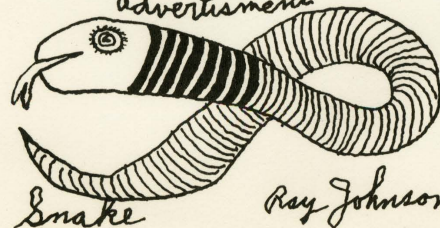
page ten

Pefouria

Peeightia

Penutia

Advertisement



8 MAN SHOW  
HERMS  
JOHNSON  
BRECHT  
ROBIN  
GALLERY

Sponsored by David Bourdon; Karl Winsum  
Michael Malce; Dorothy Podber;  
Larry Poons and Studio 3 of San Francisco.

8 MAN SHOW

GEORGE BRECHT

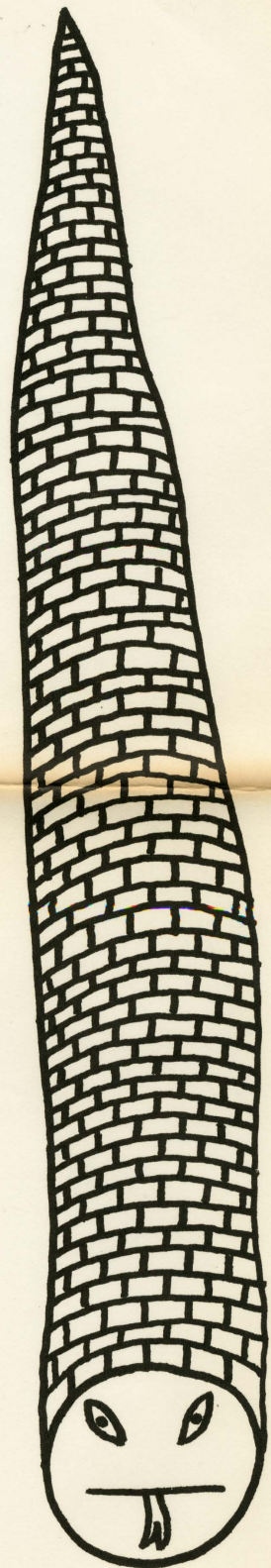
GEORGE HERMS

RAY JOHNSTON

ROBIN GALLERY

A

**BRICK SNAKE**  
**FOR ANNE WILSON**



Present in this edition are as follows:

[Page 1] "Mary Crehan, 4 choked to death..." [3/8/63]

[Page 2] "Cigar Bands from the Diane..." [3/15/63]

[Page 3] "Aunt Fritzi—What's This?..." [9/10/63]

[Page 4] "8 Ton Show...Robin Gallery" [10/22/63]

[Page 5] "Andy Warhol" [11/5/63]

[Page 6] "Michael Malce..." [3/17/64]

[Page 7] "Anne and Bill... The Bad Ara..." [4/17/64]

[Page 8] "Zuckerman Harpsichords" [5/8/64]

[Page 9] "Cara Men Nda Mara" [7/8/64]

[Page 10] "Send 96...A Brick Snake..." [10/1/64]

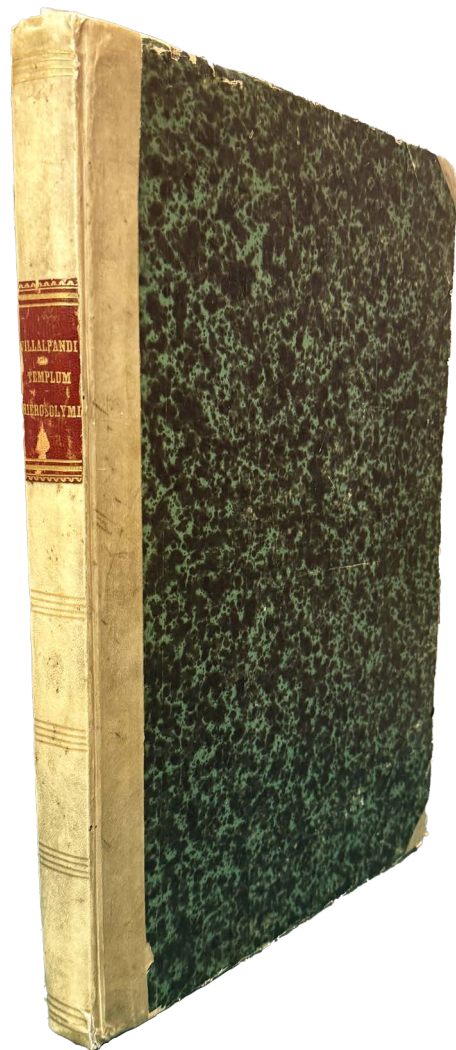
[Page 11] "Cigar Band from the Ami Lowell..." [11/11/64]

[Page 12] "Send 96... Fred Herko..." [12/22/64]

[Page 15] "Boom... Papa R Snake..." [2/19/65]

Scarce. OCLC locates only 2 holdings as of January 2026.

SOLD



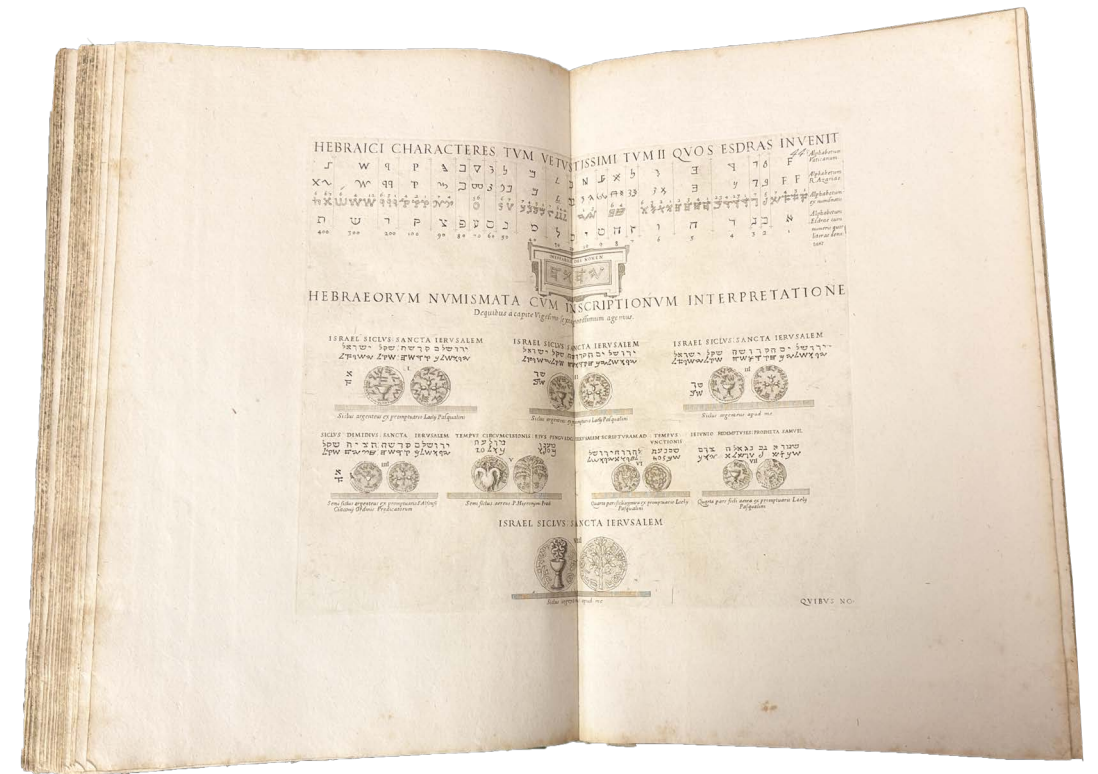
4. [Solomon's Temple] Hieronymi Pradi et Ioannis Baptistae Villalpandi e Societate Iesu In Ezechielem explanationes et Apparatus urbis ac Templi Hierosolymitani ...

Jerónimo de Prado, Juan Bautista Villalpando

Rome: [Zannetti] and Ciacconi, 1596-1605. 3 vols of plates (only) in one. Folio. Three engraved allegorical title surrounds, 37 double-page copper plates, one of which a numismatic table, 6 folding plates of architectural plans. Early half vellum over marbled boards, spine in 6 compartments with five gilt false bands, second compartment with red morocco label titled and decorated in gilt, plain endpapers, blue speckled edges. 16 3/4 x 11 1/2 in. Very good; rubbed at extremities with exposure to board edges and corners, upper joint with short closed tear at tail, slight loss to spine label, contemporary paper laid down on initial title-page obscuring imprint.

**First edition** of this grand work on Solomon's Temple, with highly detailed engraved copper plates. This volume collects only the magnificent illustrations from all three volumes, without the commentaries.





This work — *Ezechielem Explanones (Commentary on Ezekiel)* — was originally begun by Jerónimo del Prado, but he died before he could see it to completion. Prado had entered the Society of Jesus in 1572, where he taught literature and then filled the chair of scripture at Cordoba for 16 years, during which time he worked on this remarkable work. Following his death, Villalpando continued this ambitious and sumptuously illustrated study, which sought to reconstruct the Temple of Solomon and ancient Jerusalem based upon the vision of the prophet Ezekiel. He published the first volume in 1596, the year following Prado's death.

The work's printing, already complicated by the extent and detail of the plates, was further delayed by an accusation of heresy and an inquisitorial commission called to examine its theological orthodoxy. Declared innocent, Villalpando would go on to publish the second and third volumes, completing the work just three years before his death in 1608. Villalpando's remarkable "reconstruction" of the Temple seeks to reveal it as the archetype and source of architectural rules and theories, in order to trace the origin of classical architectural principles to God's doctrine, rather than through the practices of ancient Greece. Though always admired for the stunning illustrations, the work has also been greatly valued for its learned and detailed study of Jewish coins, weights, and measures.

Though it takes great care to reconstruct the Temple and Jerusalem from the extremely limited evidence available, the work is primarily a remarkable and stunning work of fantasy, imagination, and conjecture.

Scarce. OCLC locates only 10 copies as of February 2026; we can trace only 3 copies appearing at auction in the last 10 years.

REFERENCES: Adams P-2050; Brunet IV, 852; EDIT 16 CNCE 38933; not in Harvard/Mortimer Italian.

**\$8500**





**5. An exemplary archive of post-colonial West African commercial photography**

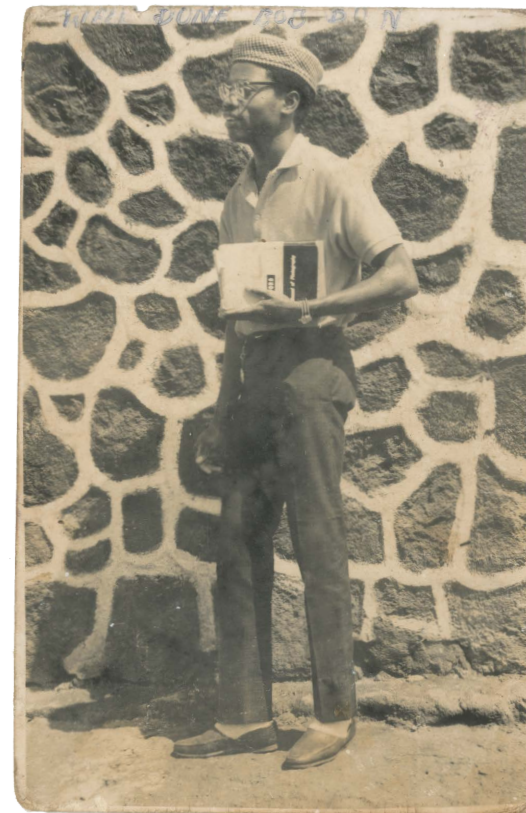
Various cities, Cameroon and Nigeria: Various printers, 1960-1984. 405 black-and-white photographic prints. Various sizes, but most 3 3/8 in x 5 1/4 in. Almost all stamped on the versos with studio names, most dated, some with inscriptions both verso and recto. Very good; some creasing, fading, chips at corners, minor soiling, overall wear commensurate with age. Each encased in a stiff poly sleeve.

**A remarkable and substantial collection of photographs, both showcasing West African life and representing the scope of studio photography in Cameroon and Nigeria in the mid-twentieth century.**

Commercial photography in West Africa first arose, broadly, out of colonial context. The photographic medium was brought to the continent in the nineteenth century by traders, explorers, and colonizers—and much of the earliest examples communicate this context explicitly. The first West African photographers' pictures were utilized in commercial contexts, specifically made for a colonial audience—as in book illustrations for a European and American readership, or were portraits of colonial patrons.

The first documented professional photographers in West Africa resided in Monrovia, Liberia—notable among those was Augustus Washington, a freeborn African American daguerrotypist who moved to Liberia in 1853 from Hartford, Connecticut, where he had operated a well-regarded studio. These photographers were primarily embedded in propagandizing the colonial project, producing photographs of an idealized image of Liberia.

In the years following the medium's arrival, a small number of enterprising, typically upper-class African men took up the trade and traveled to urban centers along the West and Central African coasts in search of patrons. Through the 1920s, even as the technology spread and the photographic economy expanded, commercial photography was still primarily made for and received by a colonial audience. Well versed in the aesthetics of Anglo-American photos, photographers in these decades mostly produced commissions for colonizers, cartes-de-visite, postcards, cultural scenes, landscapes, and architectural photography, which were essentially ethnographic in scope. The discipline was still small and aristocratic; French colonial records in Cameroon from 1927 trace the number of African photographers known to them, totaling only three by their count.



But the medium underwent massive developments in the 1930s, and with them came the birth commercial photography for a primarily local, African audience. Throughout the following decades, as photography became more prominent as a technology, it was widely democratized and the number of photographers grew rapidly—and with that, the interest from local patrons. The medium, according to scholar Christaud M. Geary,

*became vernacularized and largely democratized because now many more people desired to be photographed and could afford to pay for pictures. Labor migration, the consolidation and expansion of colonial administrations, and technical innovations such as the introduction of cheaper, handheld cameras facilitated these developments.*

“Roots and Routes of African Photographic Practices” in *A Companion to Modern African Art*, p. 84



“In Evidence of Modern Fashion”

“Think not Congo, because the lord’s destiny must never been clean out.”

“Worry not please”

“A flower shall rise up out of his root.”

“Ahead with me.”

“We pray to you O Lord”

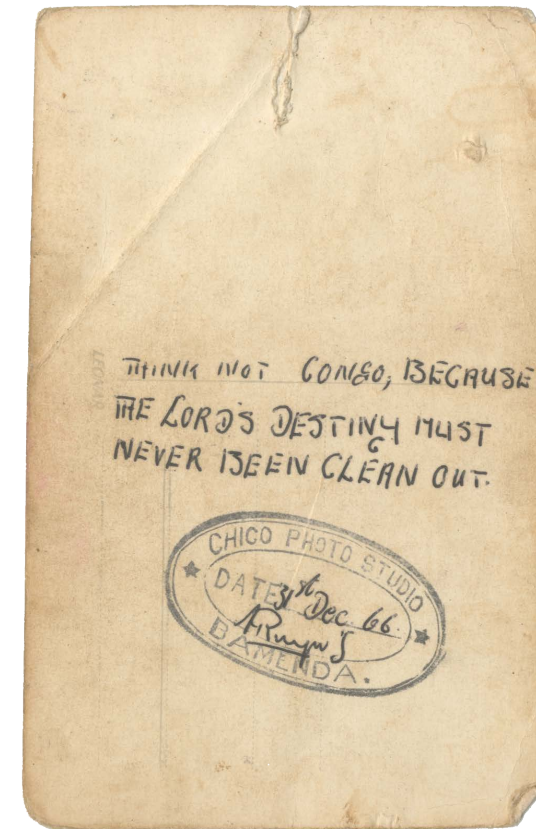
“Rest in Peace Amen”

As photo studios multiplied across cities, people began to flock to them for portraits. These studios maintained similar set-ups across the region, with a welcoming area in which clients could peruse sample books of the photographers’ works, a studio room where backdrops were available for portraits, and a private room where the photographer would print and develop the photos. Simultaneously, itinerant photographers known as ambulants proliferated, who would visit people’s homes, come to public ceremonies, and attend events. By 1985, the total number of photographers working in Cameroon had grown, according to David Zeitlyn, to approximately 4,000.

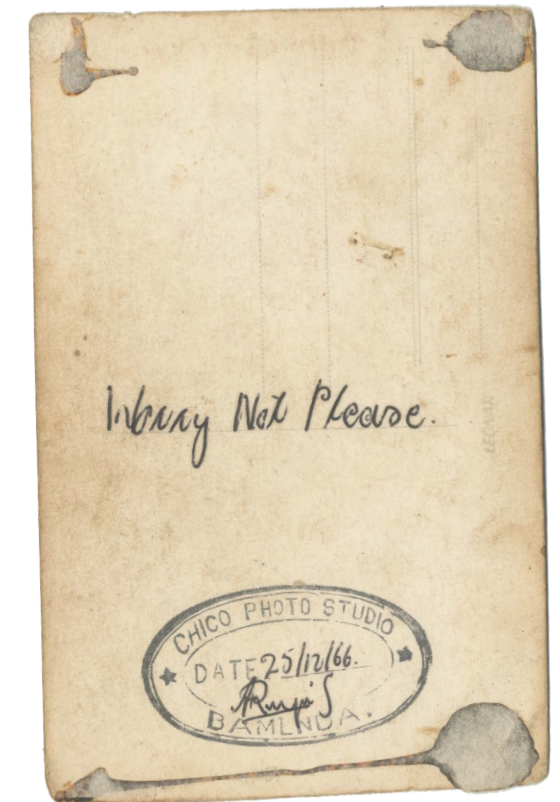
The present collection showcases the scope of these commercial practices in Cameroon and Nigeria after the democratization of the medium, featuring family portraits, baby photos, portraits of stylish young people, wedding photos, funeral processions, as well as large group shots of various organizations and events. The bulk of the pictures are from Cameroon—from studios based in Bamenda, Mezam, Mankon, Victoria [Limbé], Douala, among others—though many are from Nigeria, including from Lagos, Apapa, Ihioma, and Onitsha. A number of the photos feature contemporary inscriptions, presumably by the subjects and their loved ones, primarily on the versos, ranging from the mundane to the deeply moving:

“Our first son staying in Lagos”

“... I don’t know you smelling boy”



The photographs show the lives of newly liberated Nigerians and Cameroonians, who achieved independence from colonial powers in 1960—the year of the earliest photos in the collection. They mark a decisive contrast with the previous eras of commercial photography, being produced by and for West Africans, and illuminate modern life in the post-colonial period. The photographs are highly intimate and their emotional range is vast, revealing friendships, loves, and tragic losses. And in the depth of that felt intimacy, these photographers’ immense skill displays itself.





Not only does the collection chart the breadth of commercial photography in this period, it also tracks the timeline of the rise and fall of studio photography in West Africa. The introduction of color technology in the 1980s, which was more expensive, and which required photographers to send film away for development and printing, was a financial blow to studios. As color photographs were then being produced outside of studios in any case, the traveling, itinerant photographers could produce the same results as a studio without their overhead, rendering their services at cheaper rates. As a result, the number of ambulants grew rapidly and the region saw a massive decline in photo studios throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Ultimately, the economic basis for professional black-and-white photography mostly disappeared in these countries by 1998, with the arrival of new technologies and the changing, broader economic landscape.

The collection showcases not only a part of the golden age of studio photography in West Africa, but also the variety of photographic activities at the time—featuring a cross-section of itinerant and studio practices, up through 1984. As a whole, the collection is an exceptional archive of photographic history: it provides an outstanding glimpse into mid-century Cameroon and Nigeria, while the photographs themselves represent unique material artifacts from this time.

**SOLD**







We pray to you  
O' Lord.  
A. Rumpi  
21/5/67

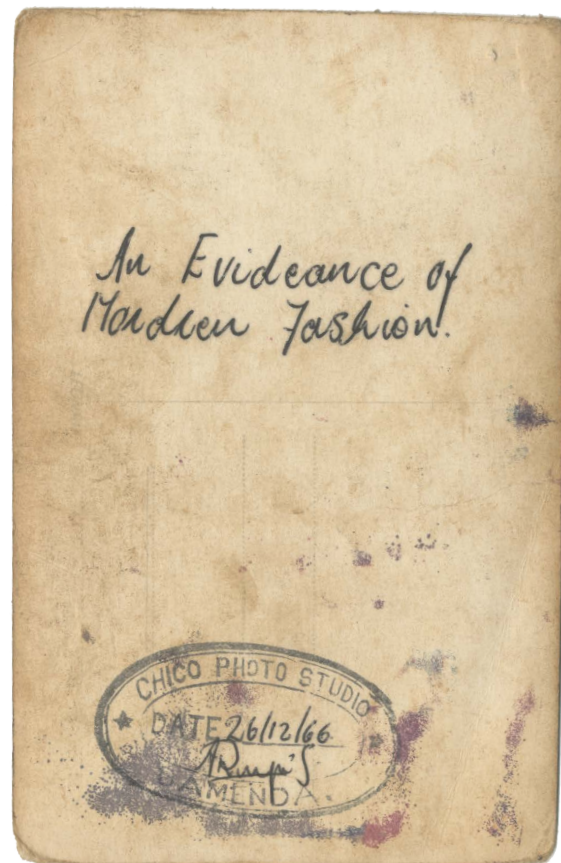


BE STEADY

SALOON DE YOUNG PHOTOS,  
B.P. 16, MANKON MEZAM DIV.,  
U. R. CAMEROON.  
MOTTO: LABOUR WITH COURAGE

Cougo  
A. Rumpi

YOUNG SALOON PHOTOS,  
★ MANKON MEZAM. ★  
MOTTO: LABOUR WITH COURAGE.



CHICO PHOTO STUDIO  
DATE 26/12/66  
Ramp's  
AMENDA

A FRIEND OF MINE





**BOO-HOORAY**