

Daisy Aldan:

An Inventory of Her Papers at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator	Aldan, Daisy, 1923-
Title	Daisy Aldan Papers
Dates:	1946-1966
Extent	3 boxes (1 linear foot)
Abstract	Daisy Aldan, perhaps best known for her poetry and editorial work, is also an accomplished translator and teacher. Her papers emphasize her editorial work, in particular her efforts for <i>Folder Magazine</i> (1953-59). Her own work is also represented by materials from <i>The Destruction of Cathedrals</i> and <i>Seven: Seven</i> as well as her translation of <i>A Throw of the Dice Never Will Abolish Chance</i> by Stephanie Mallarme.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-00056
Language:	English.
Access	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition	Purchase, 1969 (R4965)
Processed by	Betty Oliver, 1987; Revised by David H. Sparks 1994
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Daisy Aldan was born in 1923 in New York City to Louis Aldan, a designer, and Esther Edelheit Aldan, an actress. She received a B.A. degree from Hunter College in 1943, and an M.A. from Brooklyn College in 1948, and did further graduate study at New York University. While primarily known as a poet, editor, and translator, she has given readings and lectured extensively throughout the United States, Switzerland, India, France, and Germany. She has also taught English, creative writing, literature, speech, and film studies at the New York School of Art and Design, Emerson College (Sussex, England), the Rudolf Steiner Institute (NY), and at the Goetheanum (Switzerland). Aldan, while part of the New York City poetry scene of the 1950s and 1960s, is not well known outside urban literary circles. She was aware of and friends with the Beats, but her style was more influenced by modern French poetry and metaphysics. Aldan has said that her primary motivation is "to bring a renewal of the WORD into the world." Aldan was recognized by *Epoch*, Cornell University's literary magazine, as one of America's fifty best poets.

Aldan's earliest chapbook of poems was published in 1946. This was followed by *The Destruction of Cathedrals and Other Poems* in 1963, with a preface by Anaïs Nin, and *Seven: Seven (Poems and Photographs)* in 1965. During the 1970s, Aldan published seven books of experimental and lyrical poetry. Her non-fiction and prose works are focused on the topic of poetry and consciousness. In 1979 she was able to publish, due to an NEA grant, the novella, *A Golden Story*.

She edited several important poetry magazines, including *Folder Magazine of Literature and Art* (1953-1959) and *Two Cities* (co-edited with Anaïs Nin), from 1961 to 1962. She also published in 1959 a book length anthology of poetry and drawings, *A New Folder: Americans - Poems and Drawings*, that she considered a continuation of *Folder Magazine*. She has also edited and published translations of works by Stéphane Mallarmé, Anaïs Nin, Albert Steffen, and Rudolf Steiner. She contributed to anthologies including *Fifty-Three American Poets of Today* (1973), *Twentieth-Century American Women Poets* (1974), and *The Little Magazine in America Today* (1978), as well as to magazines including *Botteghe Oscure*, *Imago*, *Massachusetts Review*, *New York Times*, *Poet and Critic*, and *Poetry*.

Aldan was awarded the NEA poetry prize in 1968, a Doctor of Letters by the University of Karachi in 1970, and received a Pulitzer Prize nomination in 1978 for her book of poems, *Between High Tides* (1978). She has served in an advisory or directorial capacity for such publications and organizations as Folder Editions, *World Literature Today*, *New York Quarterly*, and the Poetry Society of America. She is a member of PEN, World Congress of Poets, National Critics Circle, and the Academy of American Poets.

Sources

For further information on the life and work of Daisy Aldan, see

Harms, Valerie. *Celebration with Anaïs Nin*. Riverside, Conn.: Magic Circle Press, 1973.

Scope and Contents

The Daisy Aldan Papers, 1946-1966, include correspondence, drafts, manuscripts, notes, layout dummies, paste-ups, galleys and page proofs, and various materials collected for publication. The collection is arranged in three series: Publications Edited, 1953-1959 (1.5 boxes); Works, 1956-1965 (1 box); and Correspondence, 1946-1966 (.5 box).

Aldan's editorial files dominate the collection. From 1953 to 1961, Aldan was involved in the publication and promotion of a group of New York poets, musicians, and artists, most of whom were friends and colleagues. Publications resulting from these activities include *Folder Magazine of Literature and Art* and *A New Folder: Americans--Poems and Drawings*. In these publications and in public performances by Aldan and other *Folder* artists, Aldan emphasized the connection between poetic and visual images by combining drawings or photographs with poetry. The *Folder* artists included John Ashbery, Lucia Dlugoszewski, Edward Field, Allen Ginsberg, Barbara Guest, Kenneth Koch, Willem and Elaine de Kooning, Denise Levertov, James Merrill, Frank O'Hara, Jackson Pollock, Larry Rivers, Ned Rorem, and Eve Triem.

Manuscripts by Aldan and others are also present in the collection. Among these are the manuscripts for two of Aldan's published books of poetry, *The Destruction of Cathedrals* and *Seven:Seven*. The material for *The Destruction of Cathedrals* also includes numerous revisions ("working notes") of poems accompanied by the final typed version. Also found here are the manuscripts, notes, and publication materials for Aldan's translation of Stephane Mallarmé's *A Throw of the Dice*. Manuscripts by others consist mostly of submissions of the *Folder* poets to Aldan's publications, although other writers such as James Broughton, Gregory Corso, Edward Field, Paul Goodman, Lyons Phelps, Larry Rivers, James Schuyler, Elliot Stein, Eugene Walter, and Philip Whalen are also represented.

Aldan's correspondence in these papers, 1946-1966, mainly reflects editorial duties and requests to a wide variety of people in the musical, literary, and art worlds.

Correspondence from such writers as Gregory Corso, Kenneth Koch, John O'Hara, Ned Rorem, James Schuyler, Eve Triem, and Eugene Walter is of a more personal nature and often discusses details of their work in a more informal context. Other significant correspondents include Donald Allen, John Ashbery, Dore Ashton, Imamu Amiri Baraka, William Rose Benét, Paul Blackburn, Julian Beck, Marguerite Caetani, Robert Creeley, Richard Eberhart, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Edward Field, Charles Henri Ford, Allen Ginsberg, Erick Hawkins, Geroge Hitchcock, Denise Levertov, Michael McClure, James Merrill, Henry Miller, Harold Norse, Charles Olson, Elliott Stein, May Swenson, Alice B. Toklas, Tristan Tzara, and William Weaver.

Beyond the study of Aldan and her work, this collection also provides insight into a part of the New York avant-garde poetry scene not necessarily dominated stylistically or philosophically by the Beats. Rather it could provide information on the influence of modern French poetry (Dadaist, Surrealist, and Symbolist) and other contemporary experimental techniques (theater of the absurd and multimedia techniques) on post-World War II American literature. Additionally this collection provides insight into the editing and publishing of little magazines in the United States.

Series Descriptions

Series I. Publications Edited, 1953-1959

This series includes material from two of Aldan's publications, *Folder Magazine of Literature and Art* (1953-1959) and *A New Folder: Americans--Poems and Drawings* (1959). These materials, arranged chronologically by date of publication, provide a documented review of the literary productions from a prolific period in Aldan's literary career. The arrangement for each issue also generally reflects the process of publication from beginning designs, through the printing and editing process, to publicity and performance. The material for *Folder Magazine* includes numbers 1-3, also called Vol. I, #1 and #2 (1953-1954) and Vol. II, #1 (1955). These materials include paste-ups of the magazine with printer's marks, galleys, page proofs, samples of covers, manuscripts from contributors, unbound copies, news releases, and miscellaneous front matter. The design of *Folder Magazine* featured "folio-like" loose leaves with a wrap-around cover. Aldan seems to have taken an active role in the design of each volume; various designs, including several color prints of the cover, are found here. The material for *Folder 1* includes photographs of the *Folder* poets at a party for the magazine that were not used in the publication. The material for *Folder 2* includes a final printed copy. Manuscripts from contributors (often signed) are present for all three issues. The material for *A New Folder: Americans--Poems and Drawings* (1959) is also found in this series. While *A New Folder* was considered by Aldan to be a continuation of *Folder Magazine*, it was bound in regular book format. These materials also include an unbound copy, various designs for covers, a news release, and an article from *Mademoiselle* (January 1961) that features a group photograph of poets and artists represented in the book. Several photographs found in this series were not used in the publication, among them are portraits of John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, Frank O'Hara, and Larry Rivers. Also included here are both the accepted and rejected manuscripts for the book, as well as a poster layout and related organizational material for a reading held in New York at The Living Theater in 1959. Also found here are numerous manuscripts collected by Aldan. These manuscripts mainly comprise submissions by such *Folder* poets as John Ashbery, Edward Field, Barbara Guest, Denise Levertov, Larry Rivers, and Eugene Walter. Other writers, such as James Broughton, Gregory Corso, Paul Goodman, Lyons Phelps, James Schuyler, Elliot Stein, and Philip Whalen are represented as well. Also present are two copies of *Semi-Colon*, edited by John Bernard Myers, containing poems by several *Folder* poets, especially Kenneth Koch and Frank O'Hara.

Series II. Works, 1956-1965

The Works series contains the manuscripts for two of Aldan's books of poetry and for her translation of *A Throw of the Dice Never Will Abolish Chance* (1959) by Stephane Mallarmé. This series is arranged alphabetically by title and is organized to reflect the process of editing and publication. The material for *The Destruction of Cathedrals and Other Poems* (1963) includes what Aldan calls 'working notes on poems,' as well as a typescript, covers, galleys, and miscellaneous front matter. Aldan's working notes include numerous annotated drafts of poems. Also present are camera-ready photographs of drawings (by Charles Henri Ford, Willem De Kooning, and Jackson Pollack, among

others) that were used in the book. The material for *Seven:Seven* includes a typescript with printer's notes, page proofs, galleys, drawings of designs for the book, as well as photographs by Stella Snead that were used as illustrations. The material for the translation of Mallarmé's *A Throw of the Dice* includes material for both the original 1956 publication (included in *Folder 4*, 1956) and a separate edition published in 1961. The unbound copies of the 1961 edition found here are signed by Aldan and inscribed as copy #3. Found here also are typescripts and layout dummies of both the English translation and the original French with printer's marks and editor's corrections, galleys, and notes for the introduction and translation.

Series III. Correspondence, 1946-1966

The Correspondence series includes both outgoing and incoming correspondence. The outgoing correspondence focuses on matters relating to the publication of *Folder* poetry and is chronologically arranged. The incoming correspondence is alphabetically arranged and contains one folder of correspondence from Frank O'Hara, which includes paste-ups and printer's proofs for two poems published in *Folder 1* (1953), and a typescript for his essay "Nature and New Painting," published in *Folder 3* (1954). Significant correspondents include John Ashbery, Imamu Amiri Baraka, Paul Blackburn, Robert Bly, Julian Beck, Marguerite Caetani, Gregory Corso, Robert Creeley, Caresse Crosby, Kenward Elmslie, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Edward Field, Charles Henri Ford, Allen Ginsberg, Galway Kinnell, James Herlihy, Kenneth Koch, Denise Levertov, Michael McClure, James Merrill, Henry Miller, Harold Norse, Frank O'Hara, Charles Olson, Kenneth Rexroth, Ned Rorem, James Schuyler, May Swenson, Alice B. Toklas, Tristan Tzara, and Philip Whalen. A complete index of all correspondents can be found at the end of this inventory. The correspondence also includes manuscripts from several writers. In the correspondent's index that follows this inventory, an asterisk (*) is used to denote authors for whom manuscripts are also present.

Related Material

Aldan materials can also be found in several other HRHRC collections, including the *El Corno Emplumado*, Judson Crews, Edward Lucie-Smith, Gerard Malanga, Willard Mass, and Eugene Walter collections. The HRHRC Vertical File contains a couple of items relating to later publications by Aldan.

Index Terms

Correspondents

Allen, Donald Merriam, 1912-
 Ashbery, John
 Ashton, Dore
 Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934-
 Beck, Julian
 Benet, William Rose, 1886-1950

Blackburn, Paul
Bly, Robert
Caetani, Marguerite
Corso, Gregory
Creeley, Robert, 1926-
De Kooning, Elaine
De Kooning, William, 1904-
Dlugoszewski, Lucia, 1931-
Eberhart, Richard, 1904-
Elmslie, Kenward
Ferlinghetti, Lawrence
Field, Edward
Ford, Charles Henri
Fraser, Kathleen, 1937-
Ginsberg, Allen, 1926-
Guest, Barbara
Hawkins, Erick
Hitchcock, George
Koch, Kenneth, 1925-
Levertov, Dennis, 1923-
Logue, Christopher, 1926-
Mallarme, Stephane, 1852-1898
McClure, Michael
Merrill, James Ingram
Miller, Henry, 1891-
Norse, Harold
O'Hara, Frank
Olson, Charles, 1910-1970
Pollock, Jackson, 1904-
Rexroth, Kenneth, 1905-
Rivers, Larry, 1925-
Rorem, Ned, 1923-

Schuyler, James

Stein, Elliott

Swenson, May

Toklas, Alice B.

Triem, Eve, 1902-

Tzara, Tristan, 1896-1963

Walter, Eugene, 1921-

Weaver, William, 1923-

Welch, Lew

Whalen, Philip

Subjects

Poetry--Translations into English

Women poets, American

Document Types

First drafts

Galley proofs

Photographs

Poems

Translations

Series I. Publications Edited, 1953-1959*Folder Magazine of Literature and Art (1953-1955)**Folder 1, Vol. I, #1 (1953)*

Typescripts from contributors with corrections and printer's marks	box 1 folder 1
Front matter and photographs with corrections and printer's marks	folder 2
Paste-up with corrections, cover designs, and prospectus	folder 3
Page proofs, two sets, one with corrections	folder 4

Folder 2, Vol. I, #2 (1954)

Typescripts from contributors with corrections and printer's marks, and miscellaneous front matter	box 1 folder 5
Page proofs, cover designs, prospectus with designs	folder 6
Printed copy with trial covers	folder 7

Folder 3, Vol. II, #1 (1955)

Covers, page proofs with corrections and printer's marks, prospectus, and news release	box 1 folder 8
Rejected manuscripts for <i>Folder</i>	folder 9
Galleys for <i>Folder Magazine #1-3</i> --removed to Galley files	

A New Folder: Americans--Poems and Drawings (1959)

Typescripts from contributors with corrections and printer's marks, and miscellaneous front matter	box 1 folder 10
Paste-up with corrections and printer's marks	folder 11

Galleys (1 oversize folder and 5 galley folders), and front matter (2 oversize folders)--removed to Galley files or Oversize

Living Theater Reading of *New Folder* poets (1959), includes introductory remarks, manuscripts, poster proof, and news release

box 2
folder
1

Unbound copy, covers, news release, *Mademoiselle* article

folder 2

Manuscripts collected, nd

folder 3

Semicolon, Vol. I, #2-3; Vol. II, #1

folder 4

Series II. Works, 1956-1965*The Destruction of Cathedrals, and Other Poems* (1963)

"Working notes on poems" and typescript

**box 2 folder
5-6**

Covers, paste-up, photographs, miscellaneous front matter and notes

folder 7

Galleys (1 oversize folder)--removed to Oversize

Seven:Seven, Poems and Photographs (1965)

Typescript with printer's marks, photographs, galleys, page proofs, and book designs

**box 3
folder
1**

Galleys (1 oversize folder)--removed to Oversize

A Throw of the Dice Never Will Abolish Chance (1956, 1961, nd)

Layout dummies of English translation and original French text; handwritten notes for translation, preface, and introduction; unbound, numbered, and signed copy (#3)

**box 3
folder
2**

Layout dummies of English translation and original French text with editor's corrections and printer's marks; prospectus

**folder
3**

Series III. Correspondence, 1946-1966

Outgoing, 1954-1960

box 3 folder 4

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A-H

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O'Hara, Frank, 1953-1959

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Daisy Aldan Papers--Index of Correspondents

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- Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934- --3.7
- Beck, Julian--3.5
- Benét, William Rose, 1886-1950 (*Saturday Review of Literature*)--3.5
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- Blackburn Paul--3.5 *
- Blaine, Nellie--3.5
- Bly, Robert (*The Sixties*)--3.5
- Boultenhouse, Charles--3.5
- Brigante, Louis (*Intro Bulletin: A Literary Newspaper of the Arts*)--3.5
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- Calas, Nicoles--3.5
- Chester, Alfred, 1928-1971--3.5
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- Fowlie, Wallace, 1908- --3.5
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- Jones, LeRoi--See Baraka, Imamu Amiri, 1934-
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- Larsen, Carl, 1934- --3.7
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- Whitman, Ruth, 1922- --3.7
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- Zinnes, Harriet--3.5