Strange Victories

Grove Press 1951–1985
Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries

November 18, 2013 to February 6, 2014

Syracuse University Art Galleries
Strange Victories
Grove Press 1951–1985

Grove Press began as a small independent publisher on Grove Street in New York City’s Greenwich Village in 1949. Under the direction of Barney Rosset, it grew into a multimillion-dollar company and one of the great publishing houses of the twentieth century, and, yet, it often struggled to survive.

From its role in the national censorship trials over the publication of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* through its dissemination of politically engaged works such as *The Wretched of the Earth* to its avant-garde and sometimes scandalous Film Division, Grove altered the American literary and film landscape. At the same time, the press aggressively deployed savvy marketing strategies seemingly at odds with its counterculture ethos, became embroiled in union battles and internal conflicts, and floundered despite its successes. *Strange Victories* offers a glimpse into the complex story of Grove’s many literary and political achievements, which continue to exert a profound influence on American culture today.

The materials on view in this exhibition all come from the Grove Press Records held at the Special Collections Research Center at Syracuse University Libraries. In 1969, Barney Rosset donated the Grove Press Records to Syracuse University. Since then, other Grove employees have donated additional materials to this important collection, which consists of over five hundred linear feet of original manuscripts, letters, photographs, and other archival materials. The collection has been made publicly available for research through the Syracuse University Libraries with the support of a Hidden Collections Grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources.

LUCY MULRONEY
Curator of Special Collections

OPENING RECEPTION
November 19, 6:00 – 8:00pm

PERSONALITIES IN POSTWAR PUBLISHING:
ROGER STRAUS, BARNEY ROSSET, AND SAMUEL ROTH
December 11, 6:00pm
Panel Discussion sponsored by the Columbia Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
Location: Butler Library, Room 523. Columbia University Morningside Campus. 535 West 114th Street.

REMEMBERING GROVE:
A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH FORMER GROVE PRESS EMPLOYEES
December 12, 6:00 pm – 8:30pm
Reception 6:00 – 7:00pm. Panel 7:00 – 8:30pm

Loren Glass, author of *Counter-Culture Colophon: Grove Press, the Evergreen Review and the Incorporation of the Avant-Garde*, will moderate a panel discussion with former employees of Grove Press, including, Judith Schmidt Douw, Fred Jordan, Claudia Menza, Kent Carroll, and Herman Graf.

Panel Discussion sponsored by the Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries.
Location: Syracuse University Lubin House. 11 East 61st Street (between Madison and Fifth Avenues).
EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Two photographs of the newly renovated Grove Press offices at 214 Mercer Street, c1969.

Photograph of Evergreen Bleecker Street Cinema marquee with handwritten notations, January 1970.


Flyer announcing the sale or net lease of the Grove Press office building, c1969.


Typed letter from Judith Schmidt to Mary G. regarding accounting difficulties due to the IBM computer, undated.

Mimeograph copy of memorandum from the Committee for the Survival of Grove Press, undated, unsigned.


Thermographic copy of the first page of Jack Kerouac’s introduction to The Americans, c1959.


Handwritten memorandum by Constance Farrington, the English translator of The Wretched of the Earth, regarding the book’s title, c1963.


Typed letter signed by Octavio Paz to Barney Rosset, January 9, 1961.


Reproduction of autograph letter signed by Malcolm X to Alex Haley, dated Friday, 9:00 a.m., April 25, 1964.


Photograph of Barney Rosset and Samuel Beckett in Paris, c1953.

Typed letter signed by Samuel Beckett to Barney Rosset, July 18, 1953.


Newspaper clipping of an advertisement for the American premier of Jean Genet’s The Blacks at St. Mark’s Playhouse, unknown publication, c1961.

Production mechanicals of the front matter for the second printing of Bernard Frechtman’s translation of Jean Genet’s The Blacks for Grove Press, c1960.

Photograph of Ethel Ayler creating the role of Augusta Snow, taken by Martha Swope during the first American performance of The Blacks on May 4, 1961.

Typed letter signed by Bernard Frechtman to Barney Rosset, with Rosset’s handwritten response, December 9, 1957.


Mimeograph copy of typed letter signed by Harold Pinter to John Lahr sent to Barney Rosset, February 19, 1974.


Handwritten memorandum by Barney Rosset to Judith Schmidt, c1959, unsigned.


Typed letter signed with additional handwritten notations by Henry Miller to Maurice Girodias, December 8, 1960.

Autograph postcard signed by Lawrence Ferlinghetti to Richard Seaver, February 24, 1961.


Unattributed portrait of Simone de Beauvoir, c1940.


Poster advertising the film I Am Curious (Yellow) directed by Vilgot Sjöman and distributed in the United States by Grove Press Films, c1969.

Danish publicity booklet for the film Uden en trævl (1968), directed by Annelise Meineche.

Typed letter by Arnold Leo to Jens Bjørneboe, December 16, 1969.

Royaltone color photograph of Viva (Susan Hoffman) and Louis Waldon, possibly taken by Andy Warhol, during the filming of Blue Movie (1968), undated.


Alain Robbe-Grillet, photographed by Jerry Bauer, undated.

Tibor Déry, photographed by Lütfi Özkök, 1963.

Samuel Beckett and Barney Rosset, unknown photographer, undated.


Kenzaburō Oe, photographed by Barney Rosset, undated.

Malcolm X, unknown photographer, undated.

Jean Genet, photographed by Jerry Bauer, undated.

Allen Ginsberg, unknown photographer, undated.

James Haskins, unknown photographer, undated.

Hubert Selby Jr., unknown photographer, undated.

Yukio Mishima, photographed by Tamotsu Yato, undated.

Jens Bjørneboe, unknown photographer, undated.

Eugène Ionesco, photographed by Sean Kernan, undated.

William Burroughs, photographed by Brion Gysin, August 1965.

John Rechy, unknown photographer, undated.

John Arden, photographed by Roger Mayne, undated.

Fernando Arrabel, photographed by Jerry Bauer, undated.

Ivo Andrić, photographed by Lütfi Özkök, 1961.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries, would like to thank the Council on Library and Information Resources for supporting the processing and cataloging of the Grove Press Records, and the Ray Smith Symposium, an initiative of Syracuse University’s College of Arts and Sciences, for sponsoring this exhibition and related programming during the 2012-13 academic year. Co-sponsors included the Syracuse University Humanities Center, School of Architecture, LGBT Studies, and the departments of English, History, African American Studies, and Art, Design and Transmedia.

Learn more:

scrc.syr.edu
suart.syr.edu