

Granary Books presents the archive of

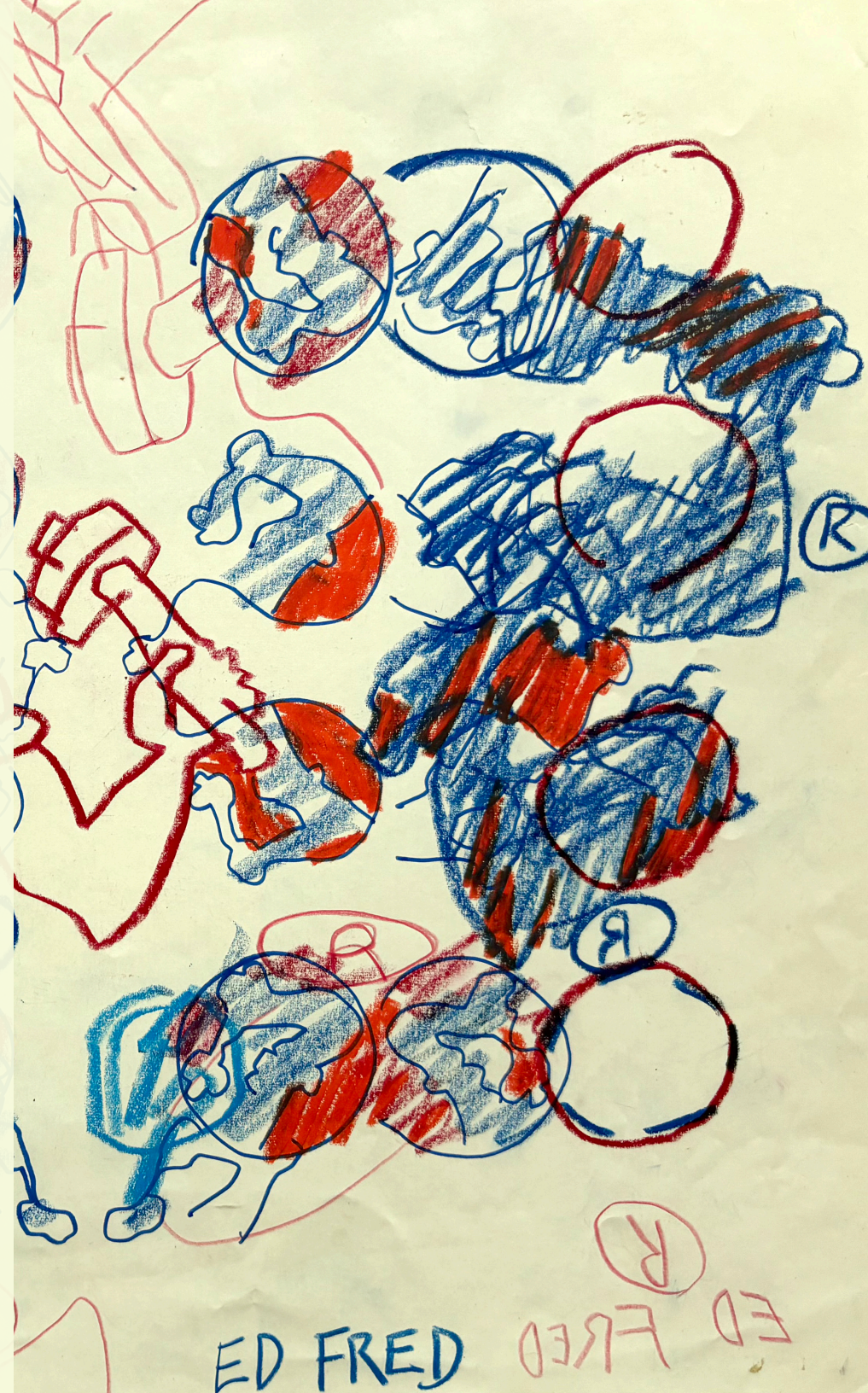
RALSTON FARINA

EXTENT: Approx. 15 linear feet, comprised of 6 bankers' boxes of documents; 7 drop-front document boxes (23 x 18 x 3 in.), 1 oversize box (37 x 26 x 8 in.); 2 boxes of printed material; 1 box of audio/visual material which has been digitized to approx. 136 GB; and 2 boxes for selective incorporation after conservation assessment.

DATES: Bulk 1970s and early 1980s, with some material from the early 1960s and 2013.

CONTENT: Ralston Farina was an artist known for performances in the Downtown New York art scene during the 1970s and 1980s, especially those that involved concepts of time and its experience. A computer scientist who studied at Princeton and Stanford, and worked with Xerox, 3M, and other technology corporations, Farina's research focused on computer-generated artwork, artificial intelligence, and the study of time as a mathematical concept. His performances and persona were well-known contemporaneously by other experimental artists including John Cage and the community of The Poetry Project and Artists Space, as well as galleries such as Paula Cooper and Holly Solomon, but because of his insistence that recording or documenting his work was antithetical to his approach to time, his methods have been largely invisible to researchers and his contributions uncited. This archive, which remained with his friends from the mid-1980s until present moment, offers the first such opportunity for researchers to explore a comprehensive collection of the artist's processes and practices, including correspondence, professional files, performance notes and drawings, mathematical and scientific research, sculptures, audio/visual items (that have been professionally digitized), and objects used in performances and for the creation of "time objects."

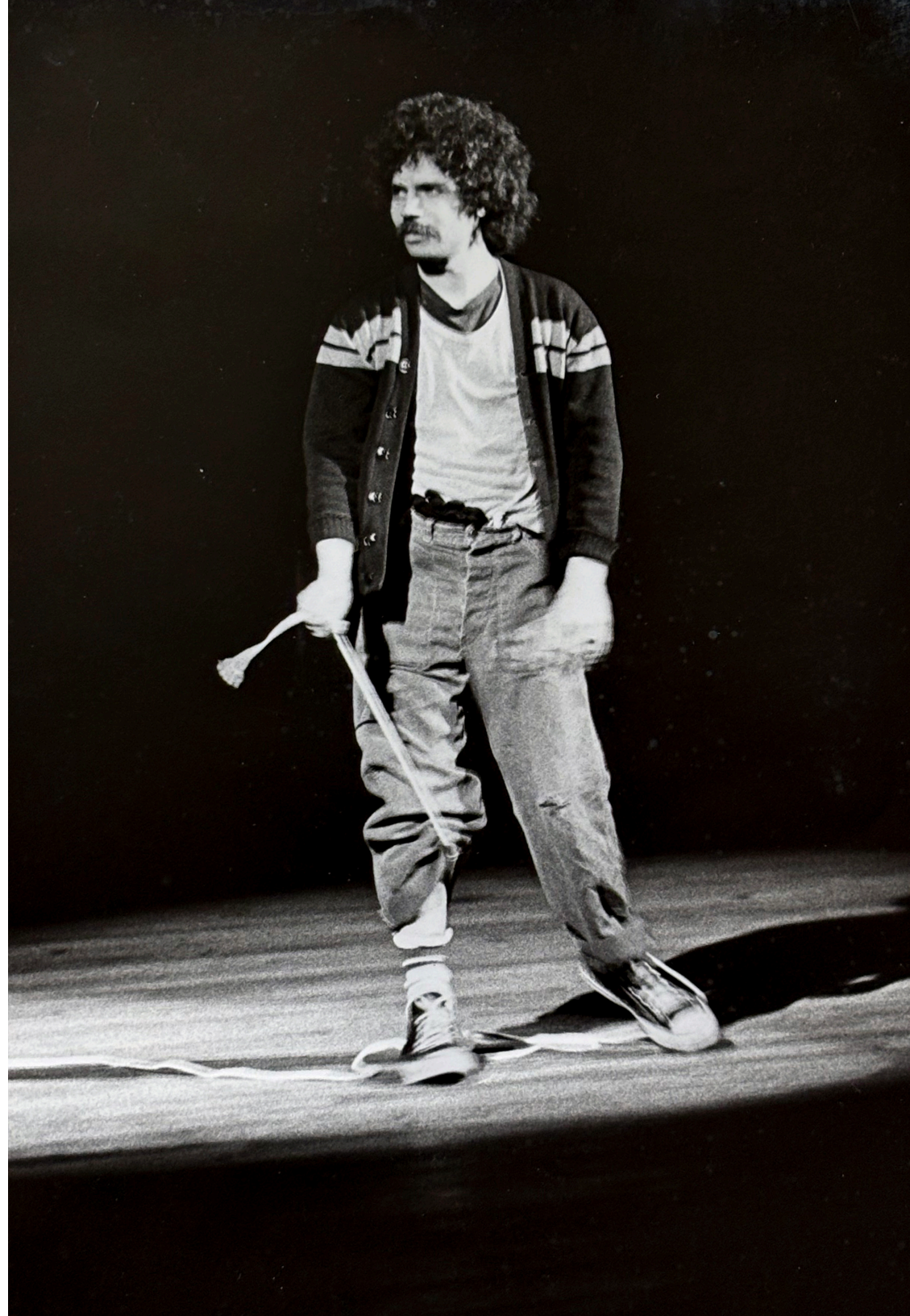
The archive is housed at Granary Books in Brooklyn, New York.



ABOUT RALSTON FARINA

Ralston Farina (December 21, 1946–1985) was a performance artist in the Downtown New York art scene from the 1960s through 1980s, whose work explored philosophical and mathematical approaches to time. Known by several different monikers, each with variant spellings, including "Steven Raven," "Steven Snyder," "Zip Sandusky" and "Steven/Duncan Skullnck," Farina's stage name was a pun on "Ralston Purina," a pet food conglomerate and "Farina," a breakfast food (that evokes Farina's later experiments with "serial" or "cereal" performances that used breakfast foods). He was known as a mercurial, fascinating presence on the Downtown scene—the directors of The Poetry Project, Anne Waldman and Larry Fagin, avowed "NOBODY we know (and we know a LOT of performing artists) is more exciting or charming a performer than Ralston Farina" (letter, October 25, 1972). Or, as John Cage stated, "Everything he has performed that I have seen is mysterious, unexpected, and strong. Were I to say his work is beautiful it would only mean that it 'clicks' for me (which it does)" (letter, postmarked 1976).

Farina's "demonstrations of temporal perception" (as he described his work on a 1974 resume) were influenced by early beginnings as a child magician and mind-reader who performed with his father at the Elks Lodge and other local venues as "Steven Raven." An annotated collection of magic books that accompanies the archive, along with annotated books on scientific approaches to perception, undergirds the relationship for Farina between visual perception, the alternate reality created by a performance, and indeed, the way that time is a different experience in person and when remembered. In addition to this, Farina was influenced by Ernie Kovacs, a radio and television host and comic who was known for eclectic, performance-art-esque programming. This appreciation of kitsch, comedy, and timing was embedded in Farina's first performances, which occurred at The Poetry Project at St. Mark's Church in 1965, titled "Then, Then, Then and Now."





Performances included a variety of phenomena, including ticking clocks in the dark, eating bowls of cereal, opening and closing suitcases, projections and live sketching to music, and other activities intended to punctuate and otherwise explore the passing of discrete units of time. Until the early 1980s, Farina would continue to perform time-based and ephemeral works at venues both experimental and influential, including 98 Greene Street Loft, 112 Greene Street, The Museum of Modern Art, O.K. Harris Gallery, Paula Cooper Gallery, Onnasch Galerie, The Kitchen, Holly Solomon Gallery, James Yu Gallery, and even a store window on West Broadway for his work, "Look – Puzzle, Phase 3." He exhibited internationally at documenta 6, Internationaal Cultureel Centrum Antwerp, and the 10th Biennale de Paris in 1977, and also staged performances at Princeton University, Boston Museum School, and the Philadelphia College of Arts, where his "Time//Time" was exhibited. His work was funded by the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts, the New York State Council of the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts in the late 1970s.

In addition to his performance art, Farina studied, researched, and worked in computer science, visual arts, and experimental technology from 1969 until his death. He was influenced by Wittgenstein and Husserl from the perspective of phenomenology and mathematical logic, yet also deeply interested in hardware and programming for visual arts in computational contexts. Farina studied at the New School for Social Research, Stanford University, and Princeton University (as well as Goddard College and N.Y. School of Visual Arts), and conducted research collaborations with Bell Telephone Laboratories, Polaroid Corporation, Xerox Computer Research (in Palo Alto, at what would become the epicenter of the tech boom), and Princeton University. His research focused on acoustic holography, 360 holography, and computational approaches to artistic generation of graphics, as well as early studies in artificial intelligence (through symposia attended at New York University). The archive suggests that Farina was no casual participant in this radical era of computing, as computer science began to transition from mainframe computing towards the dawn of personal computing.

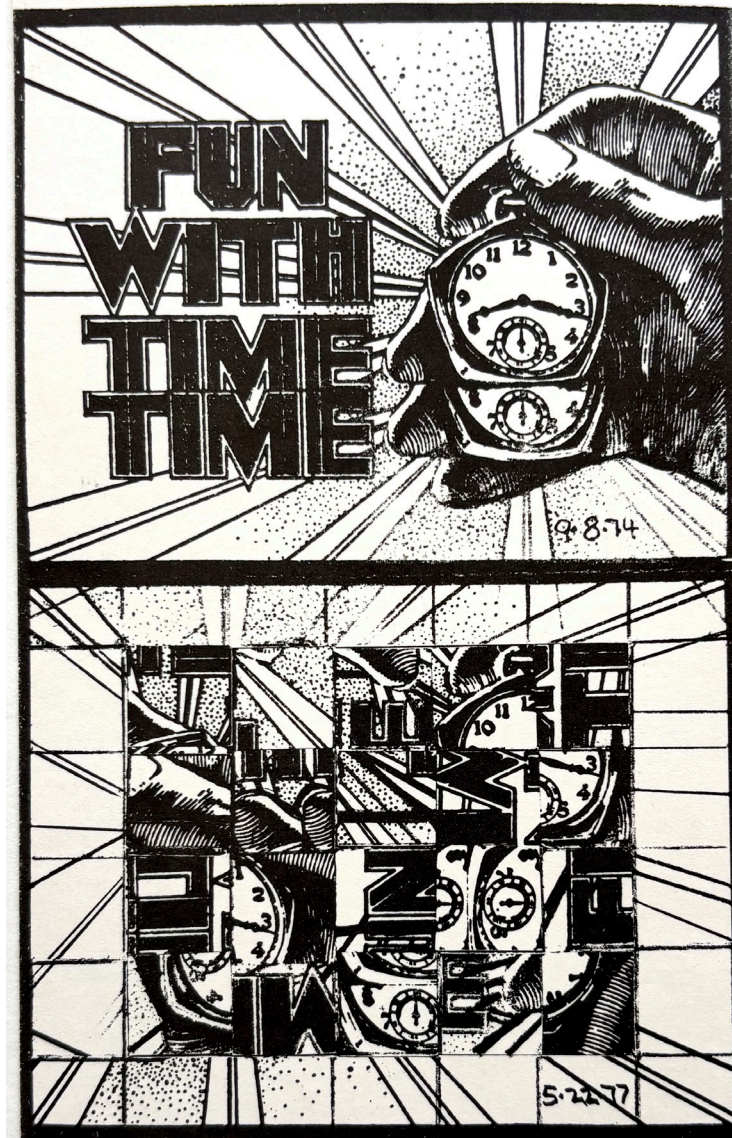
By 1980, he was involved (as a director and advisor) with the Communication Artists' Network, a nonprofit that aimed to provide "artists, art organizations, and institutions access to a computerized bank of arts-related information, including data, graphics, and digitized video," suggesting early involvement with internet-like file sharing, networked and digital humanities, and computerized graphics. While Farina's technological research was known through his performances, this archive offers an opportunity for the first time to understand the interdisciplinary nature of his work and extent of his research contributions, through several linear feet of research notes, diagrams, and drawings of the scientific, mathematical, and philosophical concepts of time that undergirded Farina's performance art, as well as correspondence related to these professional collaborations.

Farina's work was documented scarcely, at his own request, allegedly due to fears of plagiarism of his methods, as well as his principles about the experience of time in his performances. Edit deAk, founder of *Art-Rite* magazine, noted in a letter to the New York State Council on the Arts:

"...Mr. Farina's work seems to have influenced most of the younger generation of performers who are flooding the galleries in the evenings lately. [...] Since Mr. Farina has never allowed to compromise his work by the inefficiency of the photo-documentation conveying ideas of his performances, the media neglected him for quite a while. Also his pieces have a non-verbal quality which tend to make audiences speechless, like when one receives a perfect gift. So even the grapevine about him has been less of an oral myth than that of a reputation created by eyewitness enthusiasm for an indescribable brand name: Ralston Farina." (letter, June 27, 1975)

Within the archive, a bill from a lawyer's office corroborates this perspective, noting that Farina consulted about copyright enforcement regarding a contemporaneous "Saturday Night Live" sketch, and was in general concerned about mimicry of his work. As such, scant evidence of his artistic influence on the Downtown performance art scene has been available to researchers, except in oral histories. And, as John Howell noted in *Performing Arts Journal* (Winter 1977), Farina's performances were "composed from a score which organizes units of time rather than incidents." Indeed, the archive contains extensive drawings of how Farina's conceptualized these units of time as they appeared in his performances, drawing on mathematical permutations and combinations, set theory, and other principles. Now surfaced, this entire hidden layer of meaning in Farina's work can be assessed alongside digitized video in the archive.

In 1985, Farina participated in "The Artist in the First Person," a seminar/performance program organized by Plexus International at New York University. That same year, he passed away suddenly in Berkeley, California. After his death, Farina's ephemeral work began to recede from view, though his archive remained stored with friends Richard Skidmore and Dennis Hermanson. Curator Jay Sanders' inclusion of Farina in the Whitney's *Rituals of Rented Island: Object Theater, Loft Performance, and the New Psychodrama—Manhattan, 1970–1980* in 2013–2014, marked Farina's return to the conversation of Downtown performance art, and the exhibition encouraged visitors to reach out with recollections of Farina's performances and persona. That year, J. Hoberman published an extensive article on Ralston Farina in *ArtForum*, noting significant absences in sources to study Farina, yet the memorable and influential nature of his work.



RALSTON FARINA
MAY 22 8:17 PM

ARTISTS SPACE

In addition to performances, Farina created extensive drawings that explored his conceptions of time, as well as “time objects” or “time boxes,” which used a combination of commercially-made and deconstructed toys and household substances to create objects that evoke time capsules, deconstructed time in parts, and other aspects of Farina’s philosophical inquiry. These were exhibited for the first time at Artists Space in December 2025, when Jay Sanders, a longtime scholar of Farina, along with Stella Cilman and Nusheen Ghaemi, curated *Ralston Farina: Time//Time*. In collaboration with Farina’s friends and custodians of the archive, Skidmore and Hermanson (who were participants, at times, in Farina’s works), this show highlighted selections from the Ralston Farina archive for the first time to the general public. In addition, Artists Space published a catalog for the show which contains reflections on the archive, memories of Farina from other Downtown participants, and biographical and artistic notes.

Farina declared in an artist’s statement that his artistic medium was time itself. He arrived at this conclusion via mentalist performances, magic tricks, philosophy of mind, computer science, the slapstick commercialism of the 1950s, and the innovative atmosphere of New York City in the 1960s through 1980s. For those of us who curate, research, or create art in our contemporary moment, where artificial intelligence and computational advancement are part of large-scale, corporate conversations and top-down requirements, Farina’s message is more relevant than ever. This archive highlights the unexpected connections between Downtown performance art and technological research, the early efforts of artists to conceptualize our relationship with computer technology, and shares visual evidence for how we might continue to explore a deeper interdisciplinary poetics of the human experience.





HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ARCHIVE

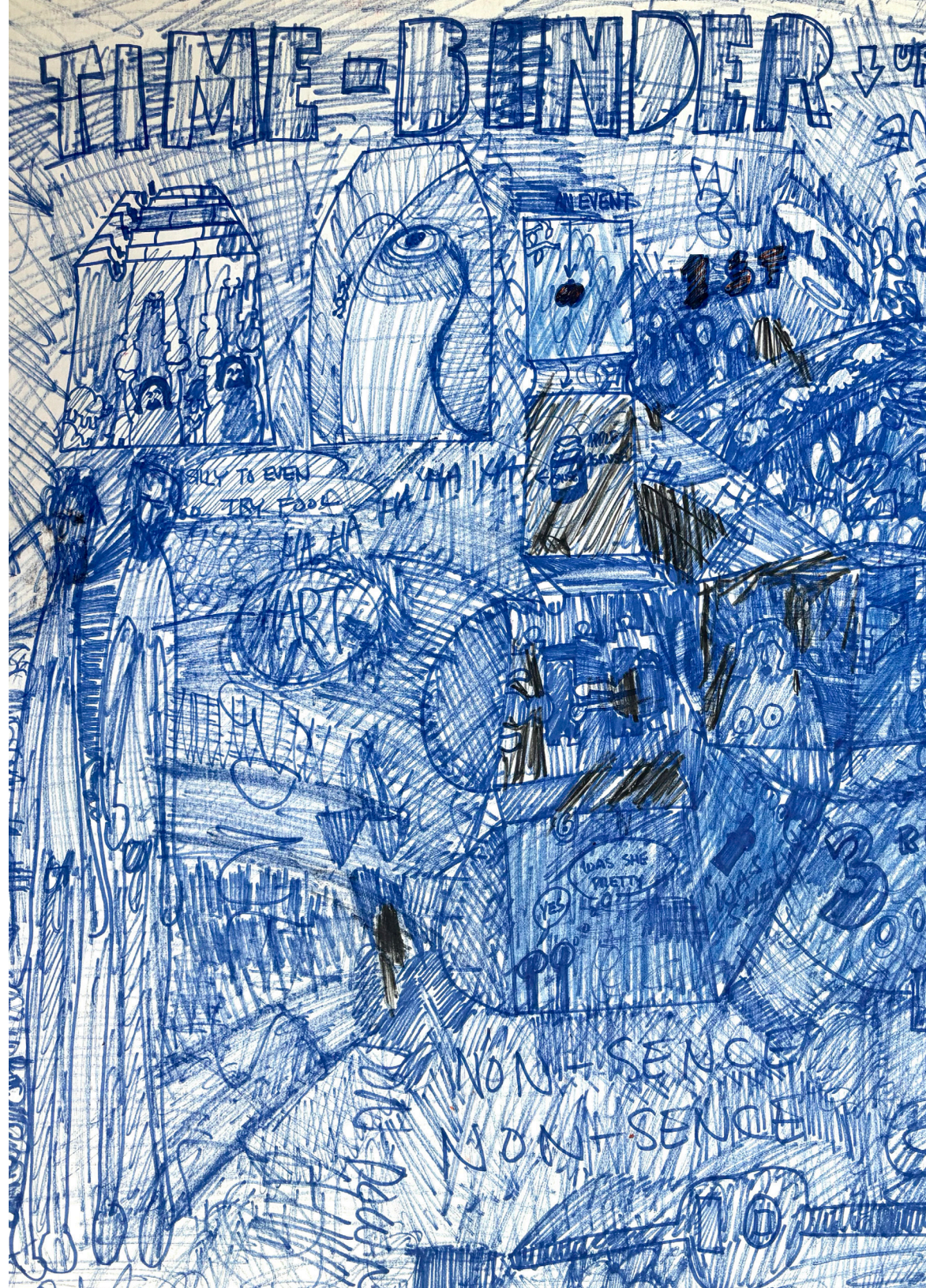
- **Math and Performance Drawings:** an expansive group of mathematical and performance drawings comprising diagrams, equations for dividing time, and scores for performances of Farina's major works such as "Time//Time," "Time Ard," "Jiffy Pop," and "Time Tattoo," representing some of the most direct physical documentation Farina would produce of his own work.
- **Notebooks:** 70 autograph notebooks spanning the 1970s, containing significant research notes on theories of time, experimental mathematics, and artificial intelligence, from Farina's own research and residencies at Xerox, Princeton, Stanford, RCA, and other collaborations.
- **Correspondence and Professional Files:** a robust collection of correspondence and professional files documenting Farina's work as it was received and championed by his contemporaries, with figures such as John Cage, Paula Cooler, Anne Waldman, Larry Fagin, Rosalind Krauss, and numerous others endorsing and responding to Farina's performances.

ABOUT THE ARCHIVE

In 1982, Ralston Farina left the contents of his archive with friend Dennis Hermanson in New Rochelle, at Hermanson's office. Hermanson and Richard Skidmore have been the custodians of the archive since that time, and were friends and collaborators with Farina prior. Material has been housed per Farina's original order and boxes for the majority of the intervening years. Circa 2019, Hermanson began to inventory and assign "RF" numbers as unique identifiers to the archive, mostly preserving the original order of items in commercial boxes and artists' portfolios.

In October 2025, the Ralston Farina archive was transferred from Hermanson's home in North Carolina to Artists Space for their *Ralston Farina: Time//Time* exhibition. Curators Jay Sanders, Stella Cilman, and Nusheen Ghaemi rehoused the archive to stabilize its contents, and identified important categories, including "handwritten performance notes, diagrammatic studies, flyers, photographic and video documentation, props, and autonomous artworks such as drawings and 'time boxes.'" Some material was organized and foldered according to these categories by Artists Space, who also arranged for the professional digitization of audio/visual material and photographic negatives. Sanders, Cilman, and Ghaemi record their reflections on their archival encounter in an invaluable exhibition catalog.

In April 2026, Granary Books transported the archive to its Brooklyn offices, where all materials were physically arranged by series, including categories identified by Artists Space as well as further series identified by Granary Books. In many instances, Artists Space staff housed items in plastic sleeves to preserve conceptual groupings or assist in the preservation of items; this activity was mostly left intact by Granary Books. In May 2026, material that would require further conservation assessment for institutional acquisition was sequestered, duplicate objects and items were removed, and all items were foldered and boxed. Granary Books inventoried the archive at folder- and at times item-level in May and June 2026 in a spreadsheet.



SERIES & DESCRIPTION

The physical archive was described by the following series, at box level with folder and item-level details as applicable.

Photographs

Correspondence

Professional Files

Personal Files

Notebooks

Math and Performance Drawings

Drawings

Time Objects and Collages

Ephemera

Flyers, Posters, and Pasteups

Reference Ephemera

Toys and Props Used in Works

Audio/Visual (digitized)

Printed Material

Magic Books

Reference Material

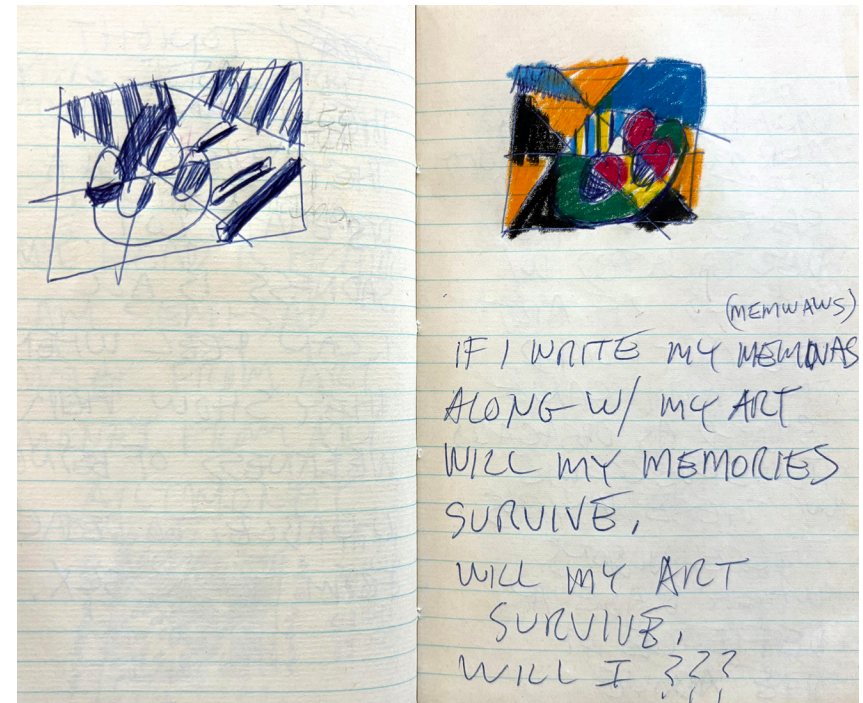
Oversize

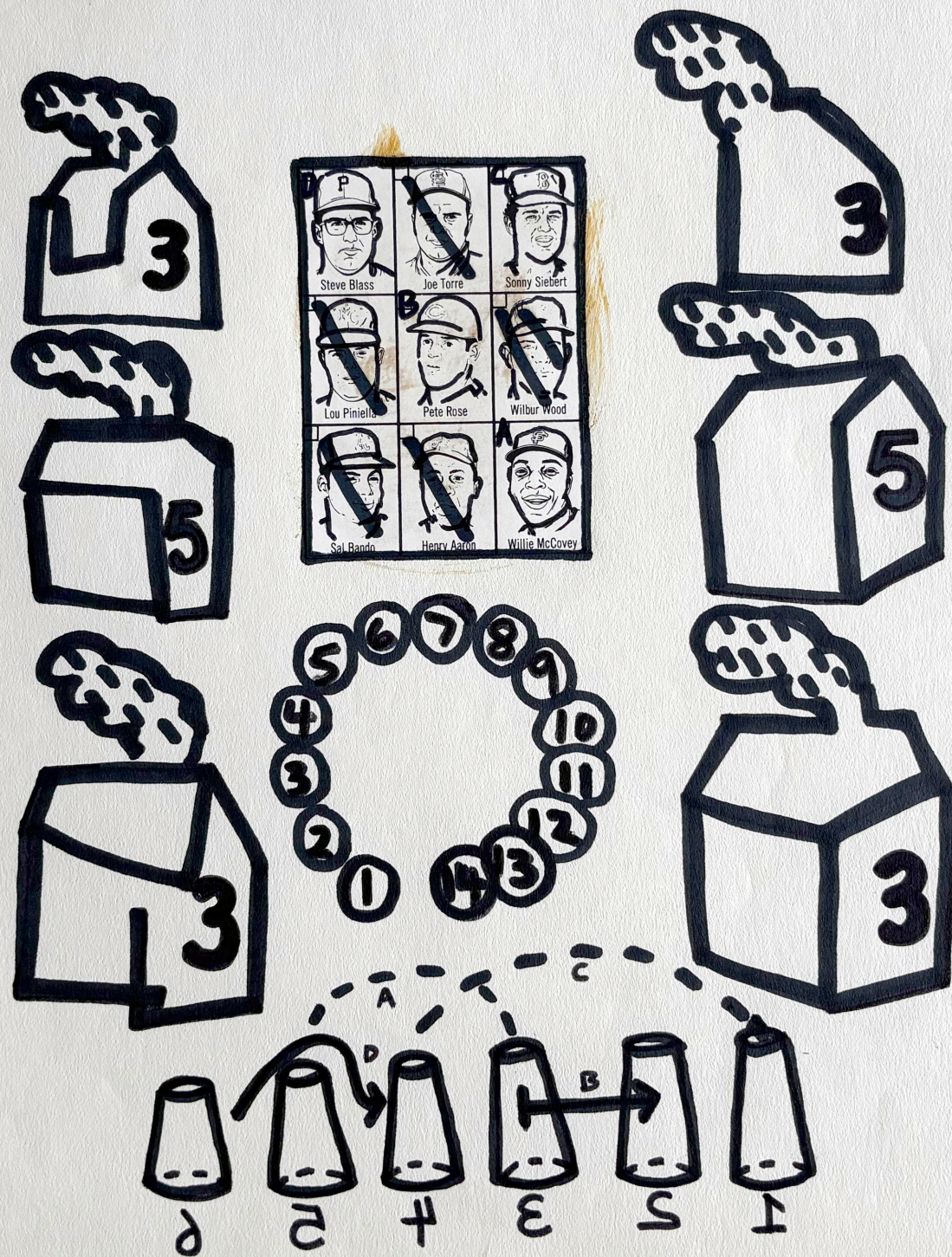
Conservation Assessment Boxes

AUDIO/VISUAL MATERIAL

Audio/visual material in this archive includes videotapes, cassettes, and film reels, as well as photographic negatives and slides. All material of this nature was digitized by Artists Space (who contracted professionals for this process) for their exhibition on Farina in 2025-2026, and digitized versions have been included as CDs and digital files.

Pictured: notebook with fragmented drawing, and Farina in front of a window-based performance.

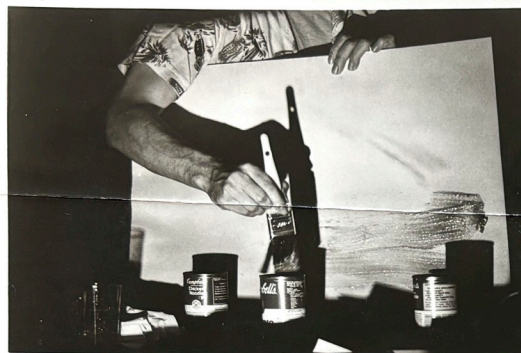




**DESCRIPTION
of the
ARCHIVE**

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs within the archive primarily document performances, though there are some promotional and family images of Farina, and photographs of other artists, such as John Cage. Performances depicted include "Ralston Farina Doing a Painting Demonstration with Campbell's Chicken Noodle/Tomato Soup, 1977," "Fun with Time//Time" by Steve Shadley in 1977, "Chance," "Eat the Clock," "Time // Time #994 or 995," and others. Photographers include Steve Shadley, Mary Ellen Andrews, Lorraine Senna, Allan Tannenbaum, Perry Deroy Gruber, Alex Kayser, Peter Moore, Barbara Moore, James Klosty (for a photograph of John Cage), and others. In addition to photographic prints, there is one box containing slides of performances and Downtown scenes, along with some photographic negatives and contact sheets documenting similar content. Often, photographs clarify the role of objects within the archive, such as photograph of Farina with Cage depicts a joint performance involving a cyanotype, which references a cyanotype included in the "Oversize" series.



RALSTON FARINA DOING A PAINTING DEMONSTRATION WITH CAMPBELL'S CHICKEN NOODLE/TOMATO SOUP.

1977

CORRESPONDENCE & PROFESSIONAL FILES

Correspondence is divided into three categories: professional, personal (a small folder), and stewardship-related files, and there is also correspondence located in the Professional Files series. Stewardship correspondence dates after Farina's passing, and includes exchanges between Jay Sanders at the Whitney and Dennis Hermanson, involving Farina's appearance in a 2013 exhibition curated by Sanders. Professional correspondence includes incoming holograph and typescript letters and postcards regarding Farina's projects, especially related to funding sources and performance logistics. Correspondents include CAPS (Creative Artists Program Service Inc.), Foundation for Contemporary



Performance Arts, Hubert Alyea, Michael Riley (Michael Malice, including piece of mail art), Performing Arts Services, The Foundation of Art Performances and Projects, Inc., Museum of Modern Art, Change Inc., Polaroid Corporation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Biennale of Paris, Ray Johnson and Jeff Hudson, The Poetry Project, and others. Humorously, a holograph card from The Poetry Project states: "Dear Sirs: Did you know 'Steve Raven''s real name is Steve Snyder [Snider, Schneider]...Name Withheld."

In the Professional Files series, additional correspondence and endorsements occur from John Cage, Paula Cooper, Rosalind Krauss (Director of the Visual Arts Program of Princeton University), David Walley, The Foundation of Art Performances and Projects, Inc., Xerox Corporation (including documentation of Farina's research there on video graphics), RCA (regarding employment), 3M, Princeton University, Bell Laboratories, 112 Workshop, Philadelphia College of Art, Biennale de Paris (1976), documenta 6, the Guggenheim Foundation, and other organizations. Farina's letters to technology companies provide greater detail on the specifics of his computational work; writing as Steven Raven, an outgoing letter to RCA indicates he has "professional experience at Xerox (Palo Alto) as a co-designer in user interaction for a computer graphics system. I have made a video tape of these experiments demonstrating the capability of the Ampex disk in use at that time, particularly with regard to synthesized animation. My interest is in pursuing the temporal aspects and interactive potentials of the RCA video disk."

Other items of interest include a proposal and typescript draft for a proposed serial titled "En Rapport" to NBC, which was "an espionage serial set in the art world" that features two CIA agents and hijinks

Pictured: letter from Edit deAK at Art-Rite regarding Farina to CAPS.



June 27, 1975

C.A.P.S.
New York State Council on the Arts
250 West 57 Street
New York, New York

Dear Sirs;

This letter is to let you know that Art-Rite is putting out a special issue on performances in September. This is relevant to Ralston Farina's application, since there is going to ^{be} a major article on him in that issue.

Since Mr. Farina has never allowed to compromise his work by the inefficiency of photo-documentation conveying ideas of the performances, the media neglected him for a while. Also his pieces has a non-verbal quality which tend to make audiences speechless, like when one receives a perfect gift. So even the grapevine about him has been less of an oral myth than that of a reputaion created by eyewitness enthusiasm for an undscribable brandname: Ralston Farina.

To ~~set~~ ^{suit} the nature of his art, the Art-Rite article will be a composite one, assembled from the writings of several critics and artists. Artists went to see him and many people stayed to follow his performances for years.

Since Mr. Farina's work seems to have influenced most of the younger generation of performers who are flooding the galleries in the evenings lately, our article will be somewhat historically oriented, untangling a lot of the impulses and modes and reasons why visual artists has been producing art in such ephemeral ~~manner~~ - and why this form or media has such vigour in its message.

We will be mailing the performance issue to you as soon as it appears.

Sincerely yours,
Edit deAK
Edit deAK
Editor
Art-Rite

DEAR SIR:

I AM AN ARTIST AFFILIATED WITH E.A.T.,
PRESENTLY STUDYING HOLOGRAPHY ON MY
OWN AND RAN ACROSS VOL. 2 OF ACOUSTICAL
HOLOGRAPHY. THE SECTIONS PRESENTED BY
YOU AND YOUR COLEAGUES HAS INSPIRED ME
TO INQUIRE INTO THE POSSIBILITIES OF
CONTINUING MY RESEARCH AS AN ARTIST
IN RESIDENCE WITH DOUGLAS, ADVANCED
RESEARCH.

I AM ALSO STUDYING PHENOMENOLOGY
AND HAVE RESTRUCTURED MY SENCEORAL
NOTIONS OF SPACIAL PERSPECTIVE TO
THE CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS OF
~~DIFFERENTIALS~~ DIFFERENTIALS
THESE TEMPORAL VANISHING "POINTS" ALONG WITH
INTUITIVE INSIGHTS
INTO HARMONIC MODES OF MNEMONIC
ORIENTATION ARE LEADING ME TOWARD
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TOPOCHONOLOGY.
THIS MNEMONIC ORIENTATION I FEEL CAN
BEST BE EXPRESSED THROUGH ^{ACOUSTOOPTICAL} HOLOGRAPHY.
~~THIS WHEN ONE JUMPS OUT~~
* MY PHENOMENOLOGICAL FRAME OF
REFERENCE ENCOURAGES ME TO CONSIDER
A ^{COHERENT PLASMA} MAGNETOIONIC ARCHETYPE AS REAL
TIME "EMULSION".
* WHEN ONE JUMPS OUT OF A SPACIAL

involving computer information from the KGB. There is also material related to CAN (Computer Arts Network), reestablished as Communications Artists' Network, a non-profit established in 1979 to "provide artists, art organizations, and institutions access to a computerized bank of arts related information, including data, graphics, and digitized video," and notes suggest that Steve Raven would serve as the "Network Director" and on the Board of Advisors for this organization. There is also a folder of computer-related research files, readings, programs, reports, advertisements, and catalogs that includes a flyer for NYU's "Second Symposium on Directions in Artificial Intelligence" (1975) in the Department of Computer Science and other ephemera related to computer science in the 1970s.

Professional Files include CVs, resumes, exhibition lists, and press releases, including those related published in/by *The Performing Arts Journal* (1977); Art Performances Inc.; Holly Solomon Gallery; The Poetry Project; *The Village Voice*; and *SoHo Weekly News*. There are clippings of a review of Farina's mentalist show held in Philadelphia in 1962, as well as a 2013 *New York Times* review of *Rituals of Rented Island* at the Whitney, which featured Farina. There are also receipts, payment stubs (including from employment such as Xerox Corporation in Palo Alto), tax files, and other administrative notes.

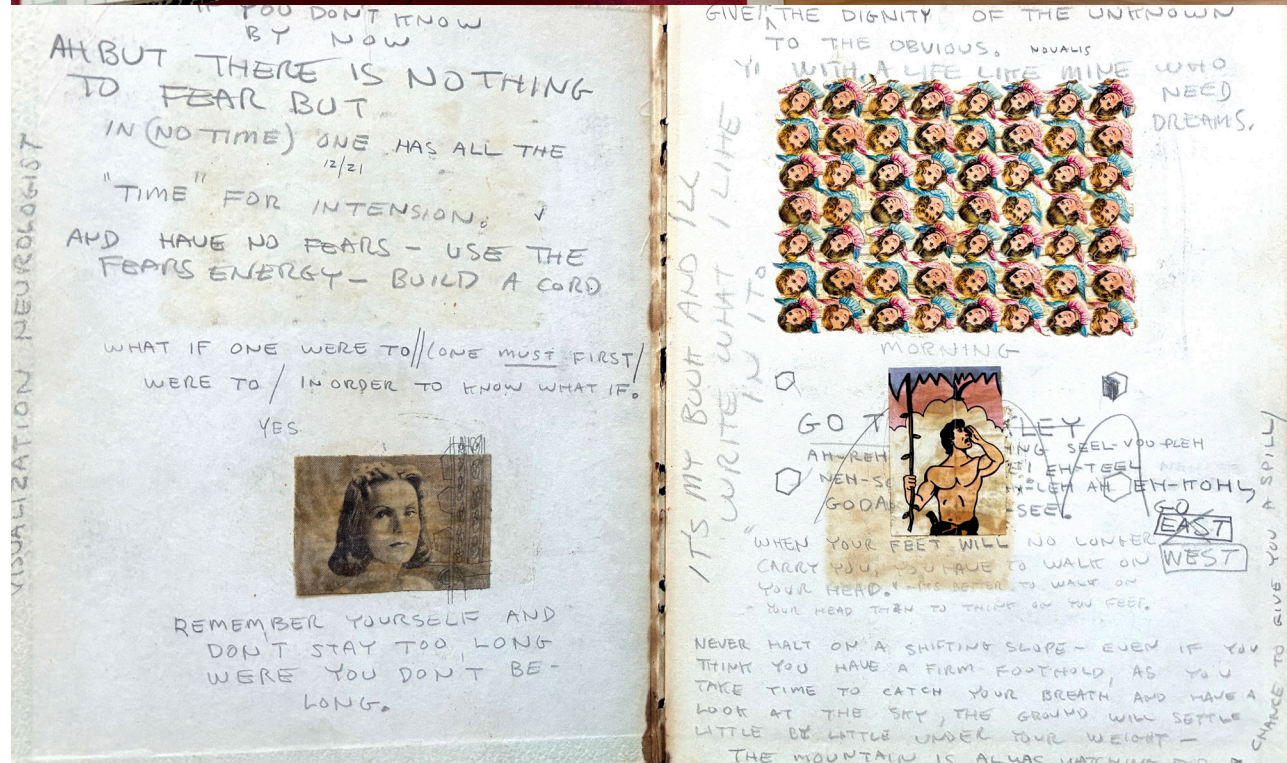
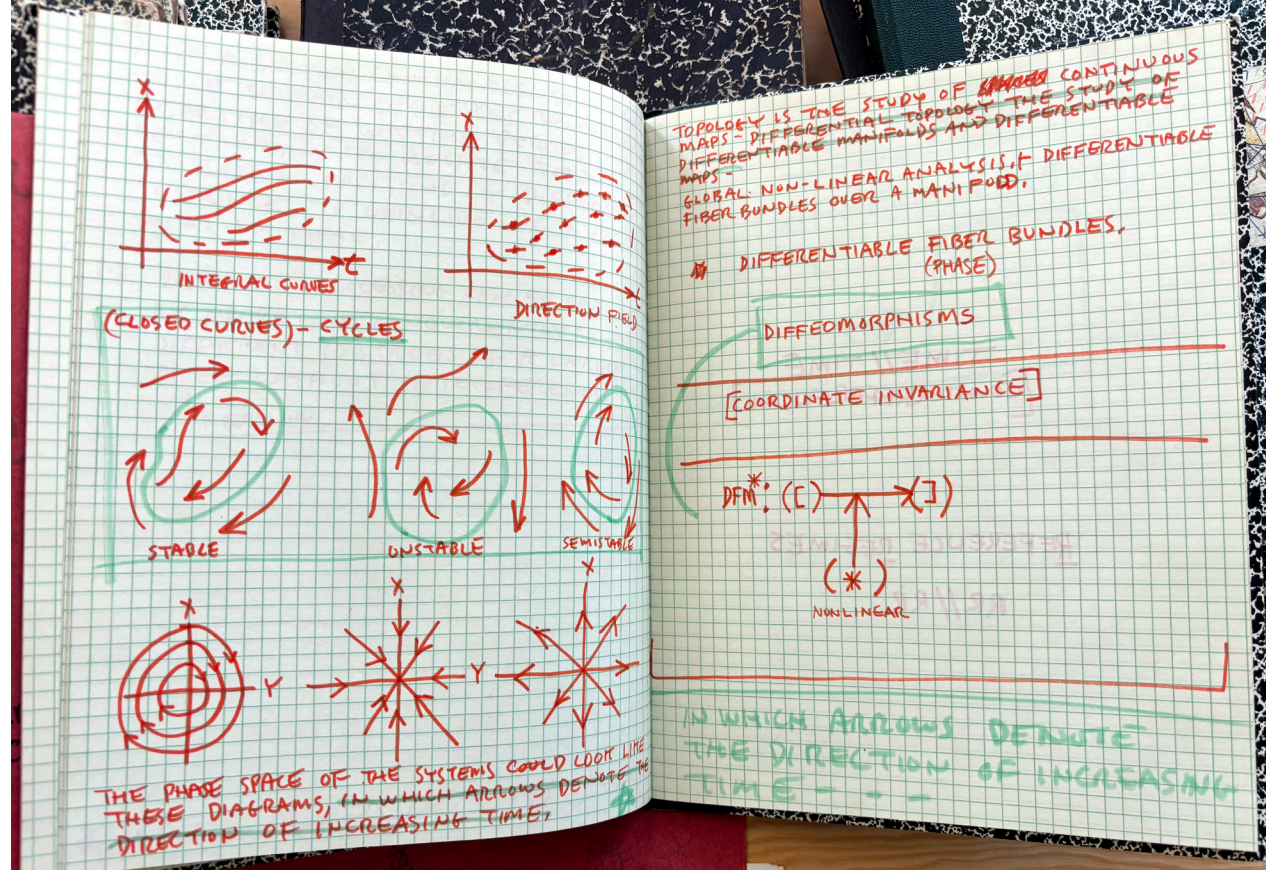
Pictured: autograph draft of letter by Farina soliciting research collaboration, which describes his artistic and research processes.

PERSONAL FILES

This small series consists of Farina's handwritten horoscope; as a child magician, Farina was advertised as reading horoscopes. One folder of personal material was assembled by Artists Space for its 2025-2026 exhibition, including early photographs of Farina as a magician, a yearbook, Farina's first autograph poems, flyers for his early magical acts in Philadelphia (in 1961), and other early magic-related ephemera. There are also nine letters addressed to "Mr. Steven Raven," which have dates only and otherwise appear blank when opened; these may contain invisible ink or otherwise be a part of a magic act. In addition, within the Oversize series, there is a large photographic print of a woman who may be Farina's mother, as well as his X-rays used to make a case against his being drafted. These X-rays are highly degraded and require conservation review.

NOTEBOOKS

The archive contains approx. 70 notebooks of various sizes, including approx. 11 medium notebooks (max dims. 10 x 8.5 in.), 13 large notebooks (max dims. 11.5 x 9 in.), 23 composition notebooks; 15 small notebooks (max dims. 7 x 5 in.), and eight "Time" notebooks (7 x 4 in.). These notebooks document comprehensive research notes for Farina's studies on the philosophy of time, mathematical and



scientific approaches to time and its experience, and performance ideas. These notebooks appear to relate to specific research conducted in independent studies at places including Stanford, and especially Farina's exploration of theoretical and commercial applications of research to his own art.

Most are undated, but those that are suggest a range of 1971–1980 for their composition. In particular, a black notebook contains diary entries from 1979–1980, in which Farina describes feeling as if his art is “in limbo,” discusses “two computer jobs on the horizon,” the need for income, and health concerns. If such an entry suggests his embedded presence in both the performance art world of New York City and the burgeoning field of computer science, these notebooks underscore the deep interrelatedness of these activities for Farina.

The notebooks contain drawings, including morphing images that appear in larger drawings and performance notes, as well as diagrams and notes that relate to the Drawings and Math and Performance Drawings and Notes series. Diagrams related to Farina's Matisse experiments, of gridding and rearranging colorful Matisse-inspired drawings, appear in these notebooks. And often, drawings and diagrams will be accompanied by notes related to specific projects, such as “Time Ard,” “Time Tattoo,” “Time // Time,” or brainstorming activities, including notes for potential films, prop usage (referencing, for instance, foot powder located in the archive), or new projects.

Farina's research notes are heavily represented here, and organized within the structure that notebooks provide, show progressive exploration of mathematical, computational, and scientific concepts that likewise appear in his performance art.

Research topics include artificial intelligence and Markov intentionality, dynamic data abstractions, object-oriented methodologies, dynamic network configurations, chemistry and olfaction, theoretical acoustics, petri nets, cooperative phenomena in multicomponent systems, conditional variance, stochastic laws, c-operators, fuzzy algorithms, pattern matching mechanisms, temporal foresight, internal time consciousness, polymers and solubility, multiphasic alternating forms, distributed control programming, artificial intelligence, electrical drift, Markov chains, multiordinal terms, bootstrapping and data control, dynamorphisms and time-varying systems, noesis, experimental design and computer operating systems, nullinear (nonlinear) autonomous systems, imagery analysis, open and closed cycles in phase space for computational systems, Husserl, set theory, time objects and mnemonic function, time theory and plasma frequency, lasers, Wittgenstein, color theory, radio broadcasts, amplitude, music notation, and other concepts.

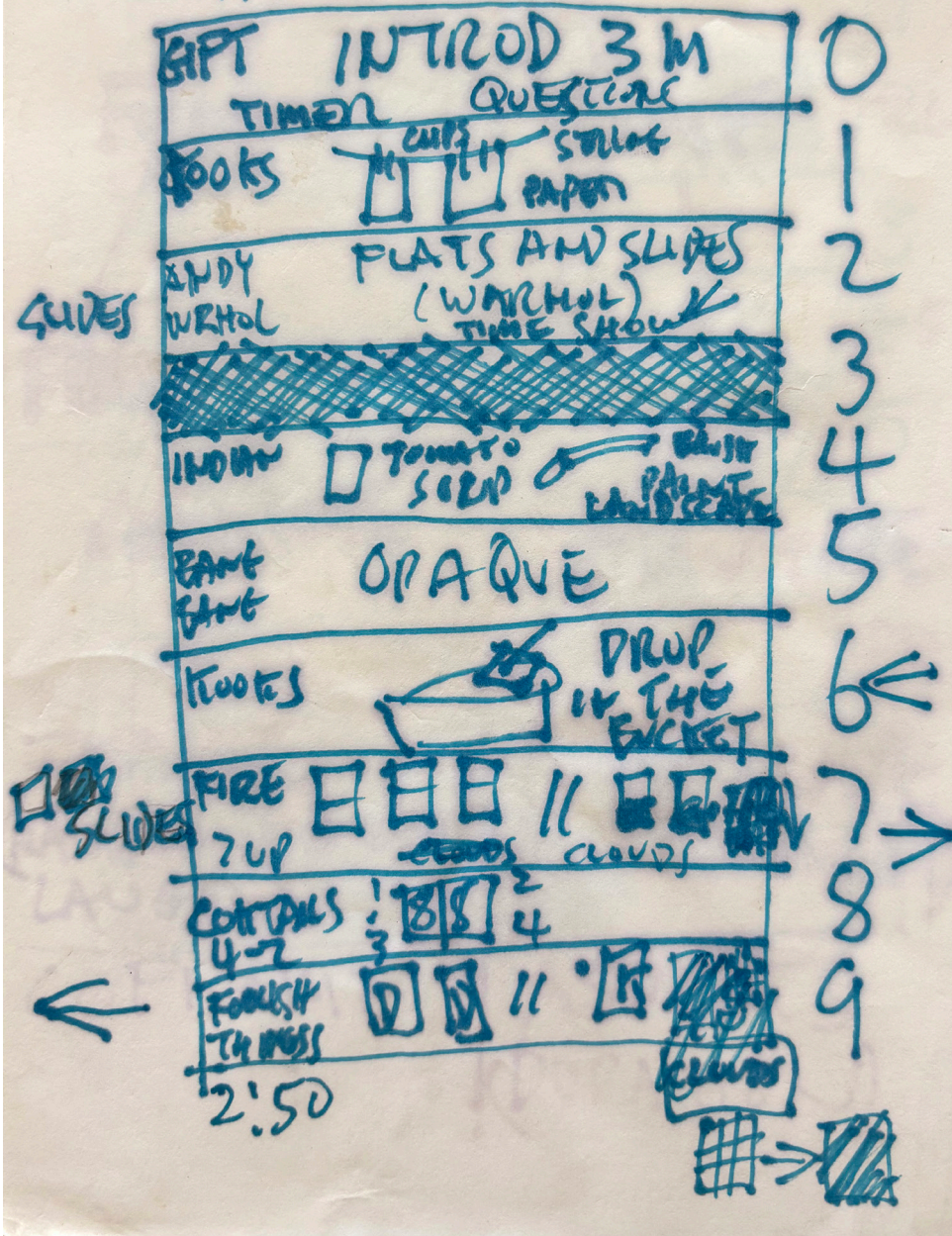
The eight “Time” notebooks appear to have been used practically and conceptually due to their name and ornate covers, and the notes within focus on time, functions of time, and the nervous system. These notebooks are almost “time objects,” and less fully-populated than the other notebooks.

Pictured: labels on composition notebooks, including miniature diagram of fragmented drawing and names of Farina performances.



EPISODE #999

EXPERIMENTING w/ TIME AS TIME



MATH AND PERFORMANCE DRAWINGS AND NOTES

This extensive series relates to the themes and contents of the Notebooks, as well as Drawings series, and offers the most comprehensive documentation of Farina's creative process for his performances and artworks. For an artist who resisted documentation of his performances, these research notes, visual studies, mathematical diagrams and equations for dividing time, and sketches are an invaluable resource for contextualizing his contributions to the Downtown performance art scene in the 1970s. In particular, this series includes illustrations and scores (showing Farina's adaptation of musical notation for his performances and understanding of mapping time), color studies, morphing structures, spray paint tests for performance materials, and research notes. Projects represented include many of Farina's major works from the 1970s, "Time//Time" (and various episodes) "Time Arts (Time Ard)," "Jiffy Pop," "Time Tattoo," cereal/serial performances (such as those at The Poetry Project), "Aléatoire Je Ne Sais Quoi" at The Kitchen, sketches related to performances for MoMA and SoHo gallery spaces, "Time" at the Philadelphia College of Art, and the ominously-named "cockroach routine."

This material is primarily visual, but does contain numerous references to Farina's computational research—from a 1961 drawing of a flip-flop circuit by "S. Snyder," to an autograph essay, circa 1981, attributed to Steve Raven, on computer monitors that participate in the formation of self-organization interpretations systems. There are also references to Merce Cunningham's use of notation for choreography, as part of Farina's interests in sketching time and movement.

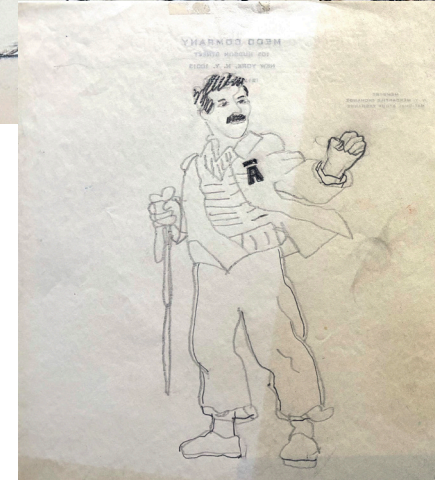
Within this series are approx. 4 linear in. of notecards used by Farina to sketch diagrams and take mathematical notes, especially related to his performances. It has been theorized by Stella Cilman that these notecards are an intermediary between concepts as conceived through notebooks and

Pictured: diagrammed event for "Episode #999" of "Time//Time" performance.

drawings and the finalized performances. There are also small notes on cards, napkins, scrap paper, envelopes, and other materials, related to the development of performances and artistic ideas.

DRAWINGS

These drawings, in loose pages or drawing pads, are stored in two large flat-file boxes, and represent both process-oriented artworks and drafts, as well as drawings that function as standalone artworks. Media includes pencil, pen and ink, colored pen, and ample use of oil pastels, as well as some paintings and collages. Themes include portraits, morphing objects (including salt shakers, matches, human figures, clocks, a cup—all of which reference the appearance of these objects in performances), as well as gridded transformations of other artworks by mathematical proportions. There are also approx. 26 transparencies in this series, which often show successive transforming drawings, and relate to Farina's frequent use of projections in his performances. There are also drawings in the Oversize series, with elaborate color patterns and densely-populated visual fields, including a self-portrait for which there are several preliminary sketches. Some of these oversize drawings are attributed to a pseudonym, "Duncan Skullnick."



TIME OBJECTS AND COLLAGES

In an artist's statement, Farina once wrote: "My medium is time. The materials I work with, the objects and images, are merely moments of punctuation, phrasing and articulation." Items in the Time Objects and Collages series represent the objects and images that Farina would fabricate and produce as part of his attempts to articulate time. Often, these objects and collages are created using items that can be found in their original form in the Toys and Props series, though here, are modified and remixed by Farina for performance or to engage with his theories on time.

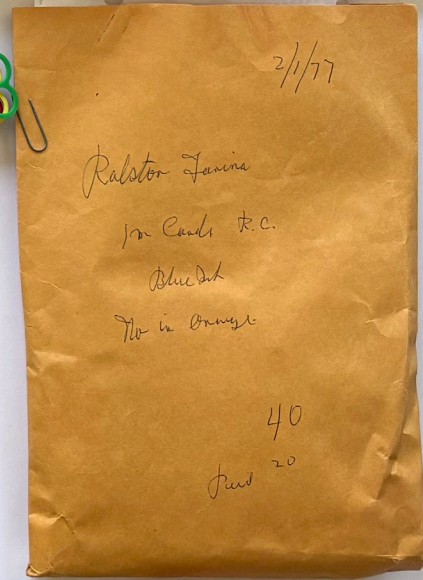
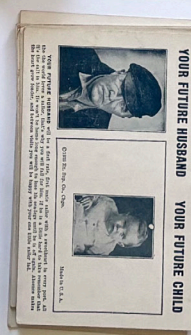
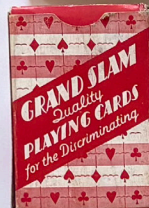
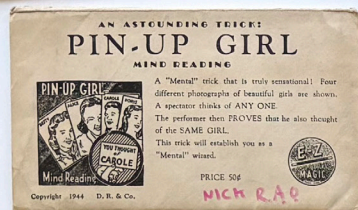
These objects, per Artists Space, might be considered "time objects," and include a modified "Jiffy Pop" container, related to Farina's "Jiffy Pop" performance, a sculpture of a Greek god with the Disney character Goofy attached to his back, and importantly, a rubber clock, which Farina would frequently return to in his performances to physically shape and mold time itself. Additional sculptural objects engage the relationship between commercial branding, shape-shifting, and time, including a wand made of Bazooka Bubblegum, a packet that contains gum that riffs on the branding for Baby Ruth that also appears in Farina's performance posters for Paula Cooper Gallery, and starkly, a wrist watch with its face replaced by a plastic snap container filled with dead insects. An important group of "time box" sculptures represent Farina's practice of suspending objects. These suspension sculptures, constructed within two-piece plastic cases measuring approximately 3 x 2 in., make use of Farina's "Howdy Doody" figures, thumb tacks, and other time-related media. Of note for conservation, six of these sculptures are enclosed in mercury, while four are suspended in a solid, unidentified yellow substance.

The series also includes approximately 15 collages, echoing the visual lexicon of Farina's reference ephemera and objects collection, and one of which references an image also featured in a Harry Smith string figures collage.





WEEKLY TIME CARD	
NAME: _____	
ADDRESS: _____	
CITY: _____	
MON	TUE
WED	THU
FRI	SAT
SUN	



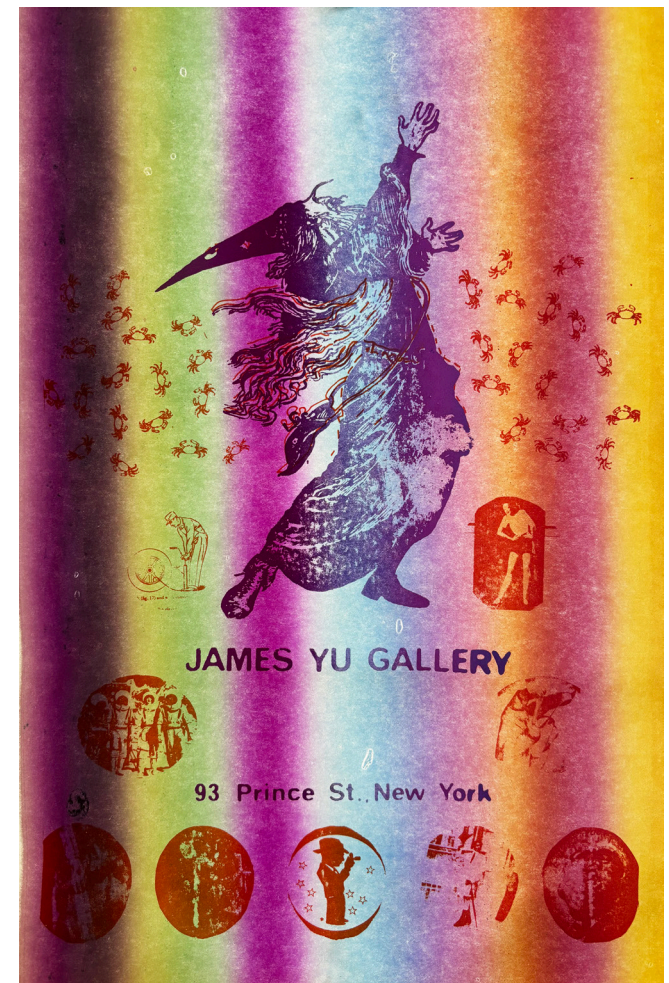
TOYS AND PROPS USED IN WORKS

The Toys and Props series (pictured on previous page) contains objects and materials that Farina often disassembled for parts and turned into his "time objects" or collages. Often, these objects would later be integrated into performances, with many of the three-dimensional items embodying the visual, commercially-oriented lexicon Farina remixed and adapted in the context of his art practice. At times, some objects also relate to Farina's early career as a child magician. A brief list of objects within the series includes: a clip on tie with Farina's autograph label, "Zip Sadnsky"; a kitchen timer (used in performances); a trick rubber pencil; a fabrication kit, including miniature wrenches, a pocket knife, a miniature screwdriver, and other tools; a Jesus Christ keychain (one of Farina's performances involved multiple images of Jesus, matching religious prints in the Oversize series); multiple toys related to the "Howdy Doody" puppet series (which Farina dissembled for "time objects"); a "Ralston" brand make-up tin; prank squirt-gun brass knuckles; labels for "Ruby" brand smoked oysters (used in performance flyers); a slide puzzle (used as reference for flyer for Artists Space performance, "Fun with Time," pictured on page 4 of this prospectus) and many other items.

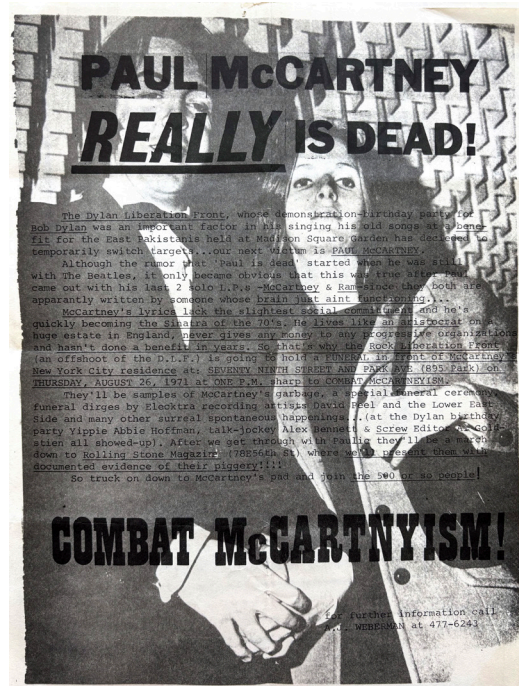
Of note, many objects were originally included in groups of large multiples, and it is likely that Farina planned to continue fabricating with these objects. For institutional acquisition, only one item of each group has been retained. The inventory notes the original number of items included. Additionally, some objects contained material not traditionally housed in special collections for preservation purposes, such as food products or other non-shelf stable or chemical items; these have been placed in a separate box for the stability of other items and for conservation assessment.

EPHEMERA FLYERS, POSTERS, AND PASTE-UPS, AND REFERENCE EPHEMERA

Items in the Ephemera series document Farina's working process via reference ephemera, as well as performances, by Farina and others, in the form of flyers, gallery cards, brochures, and other promotional materials. Farina used his reference ephemera for sketching, visual inspiration, and collage, and some pieces of ephemera show signs of having been collaged, with pieces cut out and at times used in the collages included in the archive. Repetition is a heavily present theme across material Farina saved, such as photographs of military cadets or identically-dressed diners at a table, as are brands and commercial aspects of American culture, including food labels, lighting catalogs, and pinup girls, with many of these image motifs recognizable in Farina's sketches. Of note, in addition to material organized into series by Granary Books, reference ephemera contains eight packets, three envelopes, and one binder created by Farina, some of the only instances of original order within the archive.



Posters, flyers, and gallery cards are arranged by those that feature Farina, and those related to the Downtown scene more broadly. Ephemera documenting Farina's work includes flyers and posters, at times printed in multiples across varying colors or techniques, that depict performances of "Time//Time," "Time Ard," "Look-Puzzle," "Eat the Clock," and "Ideas at The Idea Warehouse," among others. Paste-ups by Farina are also included for performances at venues such as Paula Cooper, Onnasch Galerie, and 98 Greene Street. A substantial collection of flyers, posters, and announcement cards related to Farina's contemporaries and peers includes Red Grooms, Roy Lichtenstein, Jasper Johns, John Zorn, Timothy Leary, Jenny Holzer, John Cage, and Jack Smith, at spaces including The Poetry Project, The New Museum, Artists Space, La MaMa, New York University, and Studio 54, among many others.



Pictured clockwise from top left: Dylan Liberation Front flyer; paste-up for "Look-Puzzle" performance (which uses ephemera from the Ephemera series); Paula Cooper "Time Ard" flyer; advertisement for "Steve Raven" magic performances; "O-Zoned" performance at The Poetry Project by Farina.

PAULA COOPER 96 PRINCE
212-925-1627 NEW YORK 10012

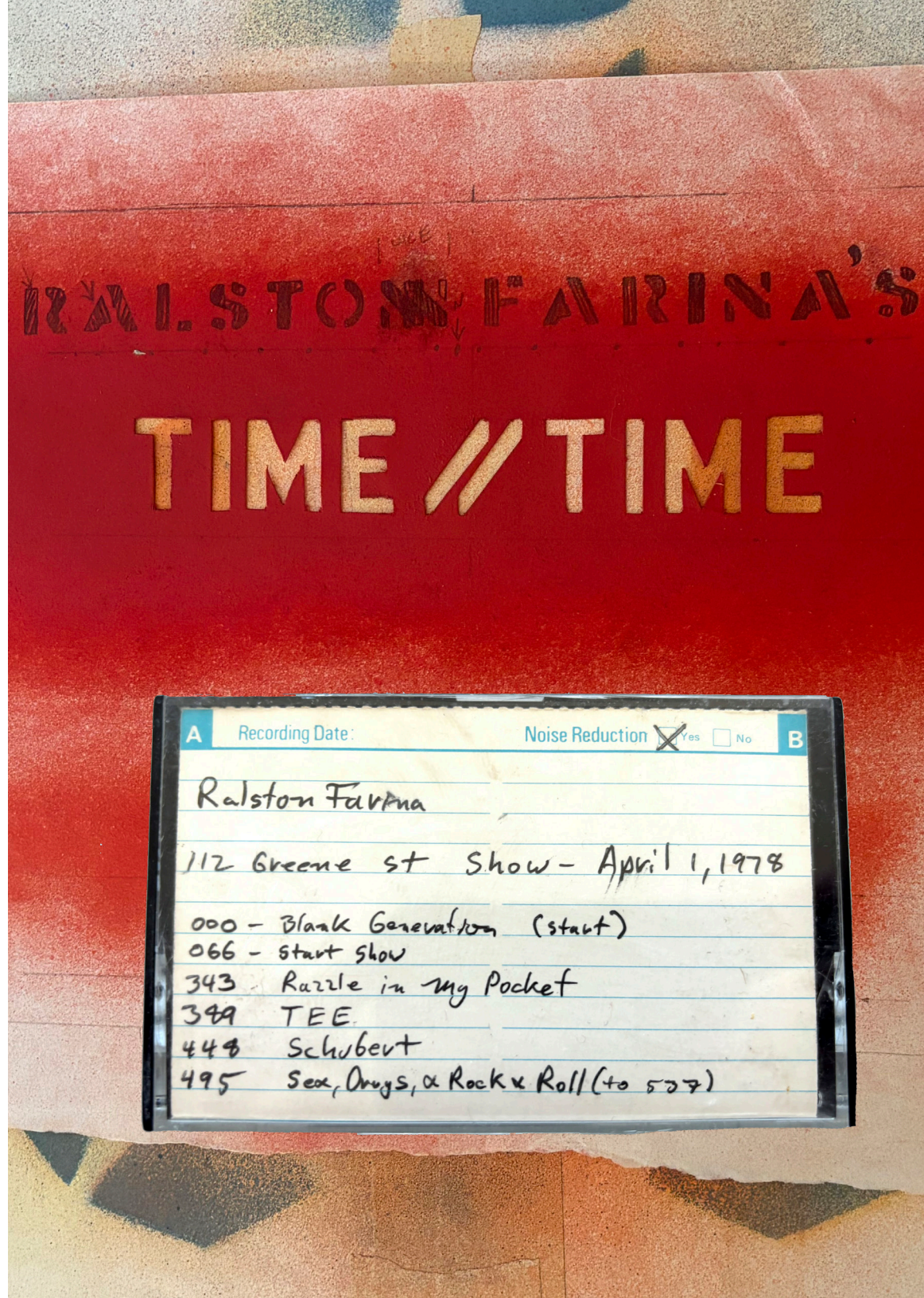


AUDIO/VISUAL (DIGITIZED)

Original audio/visual material within the archive includes two U-Matic video cassettes, four 5" Sony video reels, one 3.5" film reel, two Super8 reels, and four audio cassettes. While some material is unlabeled, labeled material depicts specific performances by Farina of works including "Rubber November" and "Time//Time," or is otherwise identified by the location in which Farina's performances were held, such as performances at the Internationaal Cultureel Centrum in Belgium or 112 Greene Street in New York. As part of their exhibition on Ralston Farina in 2026, Artists Space arranged for all audio/visual media to be professionally digitized, and the results are included as both digital files on a USB drive and on preservation reels and CDs.

OVERSIZE

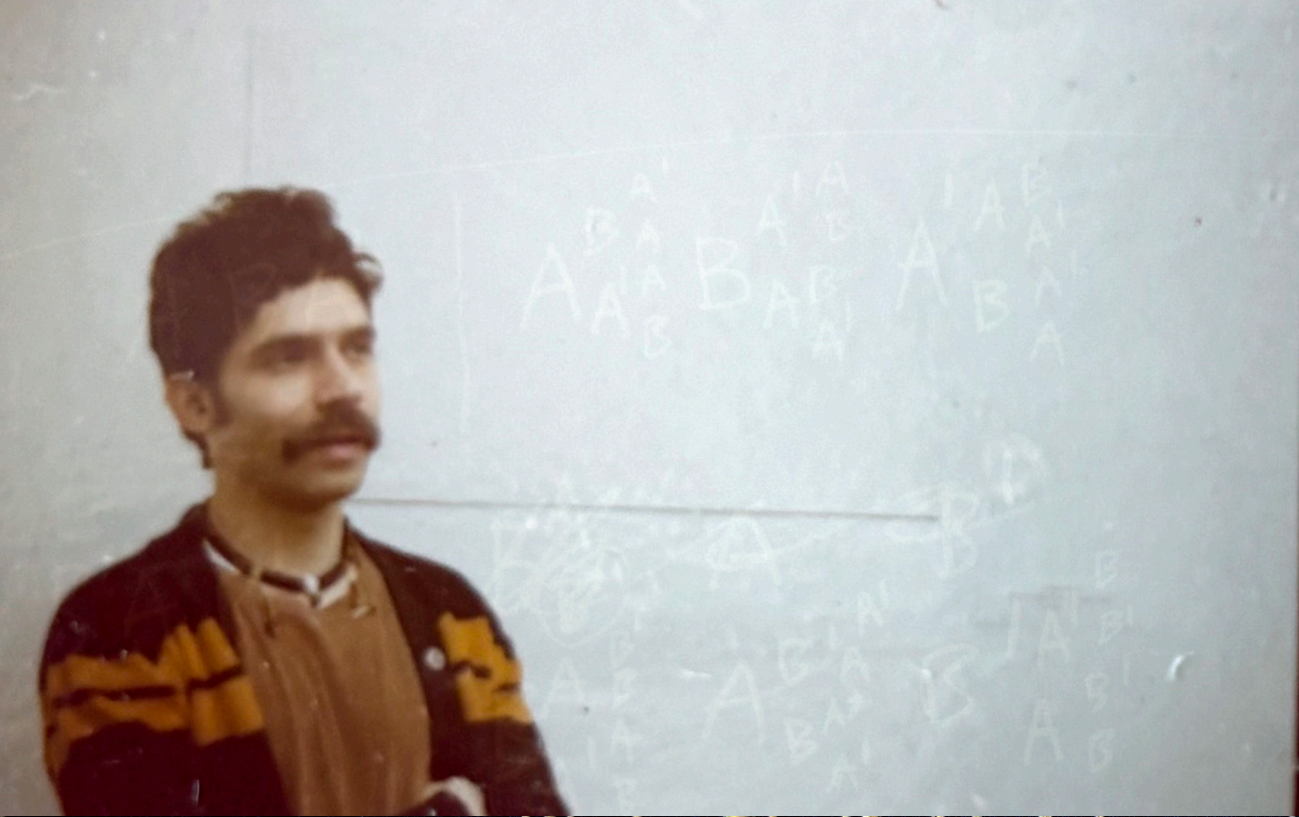
The Oversize series comprises primarily artworks by Farina, along with some ephemera, prints by others, and a brief selection of personal files. A collage measuring 31 x 22 in. represents the largest object in the series. Farina's collages are especially rich, constructed with playing cards, oil pastels, and other mixed media, with portions drawn from his reference ephemera within the archive. Farina's sketches and drawings echo themes found in his smaller sketchbooks and drafts; notably, this grouping includes a self-portrait, for which sketches appear in the Drawings series. There are also artworks within the series related to Farina's performances, such as "Time//Time" exhibition mockups, a cyanotype (24 x 30 in.) used for a performance with John Cage (as seen in the Photographs series), and several sketchpads with pages taped together that were possibly used in a performance capacity. Ephemera and prints by others in the series includes collaging materials, such as a Chinese-language newspaper, a signed print by Richard McLean, and two works by Michael Balog.





PRINTED MATERIAL: MAGIC BOOKS, REFERENCE MATERIAL

Printed material within the archive comprises approx. 49 titles and spans two primary categories: reference and magic. Reference materials are primarily related to artistic and theoretical practice, and document both instances of Farina in print and other artists and the concepts in which he was interested. Catalogs from exhibitions, such as the 10th Annual Biennale de Paris and documenta 6 Kassel, offer photographic documentation of Farina's work at these cultural stagings (rare in and of itself, given his aversion to his performances being recorded) while placing his work and artist's statements in context with his contemporaries. Other titles, such as Don Celender's *Holy Holy Art Cards* (inscribed to Farina), or Aaron Marcus' *Soft Where, Inc.*, with a photocopied typescript on a time-based conceptual art piece by Marcus laid in, depict Farina's network within New York's artistic publishing scene. Three reference titles, all on music and scoring, are richly inscribed by Farina throughout, and offer a cogent glimpse into how Farina's reading practices would inform the theories and concepts he later worked through in his notebooks. Approx. 27 books fall into the magic portion of the Printed Material series, and make clear the types of magic, mind reading, sleights of hand, and "misdirection" practices Farina studied and would integrate into his performances, often with annotations and likely dating to Farina's early years.



the archive of

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