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Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society Collection

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The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society Collection MSS.2013.22.08

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Language of Material: English

Contributing Institution: SJSU Special Collections & Archives

Title: The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society Collection

Identifier/Call Number: MSS.2013.22.08

Physical Description: 2.6 Linear feet

Date (inclusive): 1977-2006

Date (bulk): bulk

Abstract: The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society Collection documents the variety of activities, organizations, publications, photographs, and new articles about the society.

Physical Location: Vault 1, Range 22A, Bay 20

Physical Description: 2 Boxes, 25 Folders

Language of Material: Languages represented in the collection: English

Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

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Processing Information

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Organizational History

In 1977, Sabina Sedgewick founded The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society by initiating the society's first meeting at a potluck dinner at her house. With inspiration from Sedgewick, the ladies' first assignment was to expand on their love for food, in which they each created an individual recipe for their ideal lover. Sedgewick asked the society whether or not women and men agree on what is erotic. To explore this question, the society continued to meet every month at one of the member's homes. The Erotica meetings commenced with chilled wine, hors-d'œuvres, and finally the moment of Erotica would begin. Together, the ladies recollected about their sexual awakenings, by slowly and randomly assembling information; from pulp magazines, the dictionary, comparing their anatomies, and eavesdropping on conversations not meant for their ears. The result of these meetings lead to the society's first publication, Ladies Home Erotica: Tales, Recipes, and Other Mischiefs by Older Women (1984), later published as Ladies' Own Erotica (February 1986). Then, The Erotic Companion: An Illustrated Write-Your-Own Erotic Journal was published in 1985 by Pat Adler of The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society. Afterwards Look Homeward Erotica was published 1986, followed by the society's final publication, Sex, Death, and Other Distractions (2002).

Scope and Content of Collection

The collection consists of administrative records, correspondences, ephemera, periodicals, photographs, sound recordings, and writings. The majority of the collection contains books and written material, including individual rough drafts of book chapters, journals, poetry, and short stories. In addition, the collection contains information regarding the policies and procedures of the society. There is also a variety of correspondences between publishing and royalty houses, along with many invoices that record the costs of distribution and sales. The rest of the collection contains photographs of the people in the society, name tags and ribbons, along with advertisements, book-buying catalogs, and newspaper clippings that

trace the history of the society's success.

Arrangement

The arrangement of this collection consists of seven series documenting 1977-2002: Series I, Administrative Records, 1983-2006, is arranged chronologically and then alphabetically by title; Series II, Correspondences, 1983-2000, is arranged chronologically and then alphabetically by title; Series III, Ephemera, no dates, is arranged by format; Series IV, Periodicals, 1972-1992, is arranged chronologically and then alphabetically by title; Series V, Photographs, 1984-1988, is arranged chronologically in folders and intact with their respective albums; Series VI, Sound Recordings, no dates, is arranged in a folder; Series VII, Writings, 1974-2000, is arranged alphabetically by authors' pseudonym (last name, first name), then alphabetically by title, and then by draft edition number.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Erotic stories, American -- California
American fiction -- 20th century
Sexual fantasies -- California
American fiction -- Women authors
Erotic literature, American -- California
Velora Moore (Jenna York)
Judy McBride (Emma Hawksly)
Frances Rowe (Claudia Morton)
Annegret Ogden (Sabina Sedgewick)
Laurel Cook (Elvira Pearson)
Nenelle Bunnin (Nell Port)
Pat Adler (Rose Solomon)
Ann Fisher (Susan Hutchinson)
Sascha Dorgeloh (Bernadette Vaughan)

Series I: Administrative Records 1983-2006 bulk

Physical Description: 1 Box, 2 Folders

Scope and Contents

This series consists of financial material, including estimates of production costs, invoices, and pay check records between The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society and among various publishing houses. It also includes an informative list of the names and pseudonyms of the members of the society along with a list of the societies' procedures.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically and then alphabetically by title.

Box 1

Folder 1: Society procedures, information, and records 1983-1985

Folder 2: Financial Records 1986-2006

Series II: Correspondences 1983-2000 1983-1988

Physical Description: 1 Box, 1 Folder

Scope and Contents

The material in this series documents correspondence letters between The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society and among various publishing houses, society members, friends, and relatives. Files are arranged alphabetically by title, and then chronologically (oldest to newest) within each folder.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically and then alphabetically by title.

Box 1

Folder 1: Correspondences, letters 1983-2000

Series III: Ephemera No dates

Physical Description: 1 Box, 2 Folders, Two loose yellow masks

Scope and Contents

The material in this series documents bookmarks made by the members of The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society, advertisements for book publications, and two ballroom masks made out of colorful construction paper.

Arrangement

This series is arranged by format.

Box 1

Folder 1: Bookmarks, postcards, event invites No dates

Folder 2: Advertisements No dates

Folder 3: Two yellow masks No dates

Series IV: Periodicals 1972-1992 bulk

Physical Description: 1 Box, 4 Folders

Scope and Contents

The material in this series documents newspaper clippings that refer to The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society, and book-buying periodicals that feature books written by the society members.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically and then alphabetically by title.

Box 1

Folder 1: Periodicals 1972-1992

Folder 2: Periodicals 1978-1987

Folder 3: Periodicals 1984-1985

Folder 4: Periodicals 1985-1992

Series V: Photographs 1984-1988

Physical Description: 1 Box, 8 Folders

Scope and Contents

The material in this series documents photographs of the members of The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society.

Arrangement

This series is arranged chronologically and then by format.

Box 2

Folder 1: Photographic album 1984-1985

Folder 2: Photographic album bulk

Folder 3: Photographic album 1985-1986

Folder 4: Photographic album 1985-1986

Folder 5: Photographic album 1985-1986

Folder 6: Photographic album 1986

Folder 7: Photographic album 1985-1988

Folder 8: Photographs 1987

Series VII: Writings 1974-2000 bulk

Physical Description: 1 Box, 6 Folders

Scope and Contents

The material in this series comprises the bulk of The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society collection. This series consisting of hand-written in notebooks and type-written drafts of chapters, short stories, and poetry by the society's members. There are also seven books in this series which consist of the society's first publication, Ladies Home Erotica: Tales, Recipes, and Other Mischiefs by Older Women (1984), later published as Ladies' Own Erotica (February 1986), and Ladies' Own Erotica: Two bestsellers from the Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society Together in one Volume (1984, 1986). The Erotic Companion: An Illustrated Write-Your-Own Erotic Journal (1985) was published by Pat Adler of The Kensington Ladies' Erotica Society. Look Homeward Erotica was published in 1986, followed by the society's final publication, Sex, Death, and Other Distractions (2002). These books can be searched in the general catalogue.

Arrangement

Files are arranged alphabetically by authors' pseudonym (last name, first name), then alphabetically by title, and then by draft edition number. Books have been cataloged in the OPAC.

Box 1

Folder 1: Ann Fisher (Susan Hutchinson) 1985-1986

Folder 2: Jenna York (Velora Moore) 1979-2000

Folder 3: Jenna York (Velora Moore) 1980-2000

Folder 4: Notebooks of Jenna York (Velora Moore) No dates

Folder 5: Notebook of Jenna York (Velora Moore) 1998

Folder 6: Illustrated stories 1974

Series VI: Sound Recordings 1985-1986

Physical Description: 1 Box, 1 Folder

Scope and Contents

The material in this series consists of six cassette tapes.

Arrangement

This series is arranged in a folder.

Box 2

Folder 1: Six cassette tapes 1985-1986