Ford, Charles Henri.

Charles Henri Ford letters to Ted Joans
1964-1987

Abstract: This small collection of letters from American poet and collagist Charles Henri Ford to fellow artist Ted Joans illuminate Ford's extensive world travels as well as his artistic and writing projects.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 292
Creator: Ford, Charles Henri.
Title: Charles Henri Ford letters to Ted Joans
Inclusive Dates: 1964-1987
Extent: 55 items (1 box and oversized removals)
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 292, Charles Henri Ford letters to Ted Joans, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Box 1: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes (1 inch); F3 (removal): Shelved in SPEC MSS oversize boxes (32 inches)

Location: Special Collections Department, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware 19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL: http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/


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Biographical Notes

Charles Henri Ford

Poet, artist, filmmaker, and editor, Charles Henri Ford was regarded as America's first surrealist poet. Charles Henri Ford was born on February 10, 1908, in Hazelhurst, Mississippi. In 1929, having dropped out of high school, Ford began his literary career as co-editor, with Parker Tyler, of *Blues: a magazine of new rhythms* (1929-1930). The magazine showcased the new schools of modern art and literature, publishing such contemporary writers as Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, Erskine Caldwell, Ezra Pound, and e. e. cummings.

By 1931 Charles Henri Ford had left the United States for France and began his world travels. During his first few years abroad, Ford wrote his only novel, *The Young and the Evil* (Obelisk, 1933). Later Ford lived in Morocco, Italy, France, Crete, and New York City; and his poetry, films, and artwork reflected his international travels and multicultural experiences.

From 1940 until 1947, Ford was editor and publisher of both the little magazine *View* and of View editions. Published in New York, *View* featured the works of avant-garde American and European artists and writers, especially the surrealist artists.

*View*, recognized as one of the most important little magazines of the 1940s, bore covers designed by such artists are Man Ray, René Magritte, Marcel Duchamp, and Alexander Calder, and contained the prose, fiction, critical essays, stories, and art of Wallace Stevens, Edouard Roditi, Max Ernst, Lincoln Kirstein, William Carlos Williams, Paul Bowles, James T. Farrell, Marc Chagall, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus.

In addition to his editorial achievements, Charles Henri Ford was a recognized poet and an accomplished artist. Since his first book of poetry, *A Pamphlet of Sonnets* (Caravel Press, 1936), more than fifteen collections of his poems have been published.

Charles Henri Ford was also a graphic artist, filmmaker and photographer. His photography, paintings, and drawings were exhibited in London, Paris, and New York; and frequently included collaborations with international craftsmen. For example, *The Kathmandu Experience* (New York Cultural Center, 1975) included sculptures in wood, embroideries in silk and appliques, all executed by Nepalese craftsmen from Ford's original designs; and his *An Operation Minotaur Manifestation* (The October Gallery, 1976) included the collages of Nepalese artists, Reepak Shakya and Indra Tamang.

Ford's motion pictures included *Poem Posters* (1966), which received the Fourth International Avant-Garde Film Festival Award in 1966, and *Johnny Minotaur* (1972).

Charles Henri Ford died September 27, 2002, in New York City.

Ted Joans

African-American poet, jazz musician, and surrealist painter Ted Joans was a self-described "jazz poet" of the Beat generation. Joans, who was also considered by many to be part of the French surrealist movement, was the only African-American painter to be viewed as part of that group. He was born July 4, 1938, in
Cairo, Illinois. Through his associations with Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, in Greenwich Village during the 1950s, Ted Joans has been identified as part of the Beat generation. In 1957, his first book of poetry, *Beat Poems*, was published by Deretchin, which also published his *Funky Jazz Poems* in 1959. In the 1960s Joans became an expatriate, traveling the world, and later settling in Tangier, Morocco. As he painted and wrote poetry, Joans supported himself primarily through the sale of African artwork, which he collected during his travels in Africa. Some of his African experiences are reflected in the poems in his *Afrodisia: new poems* (1971). Joans edited *Dies und Das* (1984), the first surrealist magazine published in Germany, and contributed to *Black World, Coda Jazz Magazine, Jazz*, and *Presence Africaine*. Ted Joans died May 07, 2003, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

**Sources:**


**Scope and Content Note**

This small collection of letters from American poet and collagist Charles Henri Ford to fellow artist Ted Joans illuminate Ford's extensive world travels as well as his artistic and writing projects.

Ford discussed his works-in-progress, including his collections of poetry, *Spare Parts* (Horizon Press, 1966), *Om Krishna II* (Cherry Valley Editions, 1981), and *Om Krishna III* (Red Ozier Press, 1982). He also mentioned exhibitions of his work at the Cordier Edstrom Gallery (New York, 1965), the Robert Samuel Gallery (New York, 1980), and The October Gallery (New York, 1984). Occasionally Ford referred to other projects, such as filming *Johnny Minotaur*, compiling *Blues 10*, editing a new edition of his only novel, *The Young and the Evil*, and composing a book titled *Double Exposures*.

Ford also apprised Joans of his travels and their mutual friends, such as fellow poets Allen Ginsberg and Harold Norse, and conveyed information and greetings from his collaborator, Nepalese collagist and photographer Indra Tamang.

The versos of some of the letters bear photocopies of such items as collages (including images of Ford), an invitation to a party celebrating the publication of *Om Krishna II*, a review of Ford's film *Johnny Minotaur*, an article which described a New York party hosted by Ford, haikus written by Ford, a page from a play, and articles about Ford. Envelopes occasionally bear block prints or pasted on cutouts and cartoons which form mini collages.

In addition to Ford's letters, this collection includes two notes written by Ted Joans to Ford, one of which includes a poem written by Joans and dedicated to Ford. There are also several notes written by Indra Tamang (enclosed in Ford's letters), a photocopied collage by Nepalese artist Reepak Shakya, two notes from Ruth Ford (Charles Henri Ford's sister) to Joans, as well as a brochure for Ford's film, *Johnny Minotaur*, and a brochure for a Paris museum. The collection also includes a poster for Ford's exhibition, "Layouts and Camouflages," at the Robert Samuel Gallery (New York, 1980).
Selected Search Terms

Personal Names
Ford, Charles Henri--Correspondence.
Ford, Ruth, 1911-2009--Correspondence.
Joans, Ted--Correspondence.

Topical Terms
American poets--20th century--Correspondence.
American artists--20th century--Correspondence.
American poets--20th century--Correspondence.

Form/Genre Terms
Correspondence.
Clippings (information artifacts)
Brochures.
Postcards.
Collages (visual works)

Occupation
Poets.

Personal Contributors
Joans, Ted, correspondent.

Related Materials in this Repository
Ms 294, Charles Henri Ford papers relating to Om Krishna II
Arrangement

The collection is arranged in chronological order.
### Detailed Description of the Collection

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<th>Folder</th>
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Postcard written by Ruth Ford (Charles Henri Ford's sister) to Ted Joans.
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1975 February 3 [Box 1 F2]

1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1975 December 12 [Box 1 F2]

1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed with envelope, 1976 January 20 [Box 1 F2]

1 item (1 p.)

The letter was written on the verso of photocopy of an article regarding Ford.

1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1976 May 17 [Box 1 F2]

1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1976 July 6 [Box 1 F2]

1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1976 September 4 [Box 1 F2]

1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed, 1978 July 1 [Box 1 F3]

1 item (2 p.)

Typed letter signed, 1978 December 2 [Box 1 F3]

1 item (2 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1979 October 7 [Box 1 F3]

1 item (1 p.)

Postcard announcement, 1980 January 23 [Box 1 F3]

1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed with envelope, 1980 February 8 [Box 1 F3]
The letter was written on the verso of a photocopy of a review of Ford's film, Minotaur. Also enclosed was a photocopy of a collage with an inscription from Indra to Joans. The verso of the envelope is decorated.

Autograph letter signed, 1980 April 15 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (2 p.)

Autograph letter signed with envelope, 1980 June 14 [Box 1 F3]
1 item (1 p.)
The letter was written on the verso of a photocopy of an collage of images. Removed to oversize is a poster invitation to Ford's "Layouts and Camouflages."

Typed postcard signed, 1981 August 12 [Box 1 F4]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed with envelope, 1982 April 13 [Box 1 F4]
1 item (1 p.)
The letter was written on the verso of a photocopy of a flyer for a party related to Om Krishna II.

Typed letter signed with decorated envelope, 1982 April 24 [Box 1 F4]
2 items (2 p.)
Enclosed with the letter is a small photocopied collage of words. On the verso of the letter is a haiku by Ford.

Typed letter signed with envelope, 1982 September 1 [Box 1 F4]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed with envelope, 1982 September 17 [Box 1 F4]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed, 1982 December 3 [Box 1 F4]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed, 1982 December 31 [Box 1 F4]
1 item (1 p.)
Autograph postcard signed, 1983 June 28 [Box 1 F5]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1983 September 13 [Box 1 F5]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph note signed with envelope, 1983 October 3 [Box 1 F5]
1 item (1 p.)
The letter was written on a tear sheet from the 1983 Black Swan Press catalog.

Autograph letter signed, 1983 October 31 [Box 1 F5]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1984 March 6 [Box 1 F5]
1 item (1 p.)

Invitation with envelope, 1984 October 13 [Box 1 F5]
1 item (2 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1984 December 21 [Box 1 F5]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1985 February 16 [Box 1 F6]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1985 March 12 [Box 1 F6]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1985 March 20 [Box 1 F6]
1 item (1 p.)

Ted Joans typed noted and poem to Charles Henri Ford with envelope, 1985 April 6 [Box 1 F6]
2 items (2 p.)
The typed poem is Joan's, "Voluptuous Rebellion," plus an enclosed clipping.

Autograph postcard signed, 1985 July 2 [Box 1 F6]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed with envelope, 1985 August 20 [Box 1 F6]
1 item (1 p.)
The letter was written on the verso of a photocopy the New York edition of \textit{Celebrity Bulletin} in which Ford was the "celebrity of the day" (1980).

Autograph postcard signed, 1985 October 18 [Box 1 F6]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1985 October 31 [Box 1 F6]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed with envelope, 1986 January 20 [Box 1 F7]
1 item (2 p.)

Autograph postcard signed, 1986 March 17 [Box 1 F7]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph note by Ted Joans on an envelope, [1986 June 10] [Box 1 F7]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter from unidentified person to Ford, 1986 July 17 [Box 1 F7]
1 item (6 p.)

Autograph letter signed with envelope, 1986 August 12 [Box 1 F7]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph letter signed with decorated envelope, 1986 October 1 [Box 1 F7]
1 item (1 p.)
Christmas card with envelope, [1986 December 7] [Box 1 F7]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph note signed with envelope, 1987 June 21 [Box 1 F7]
1 item (1 p.)
The envelope bears an autograph note written by Ted Joans.

Autograph letter signed with envelope, 1987 July 7 [Box 1 F7]
1 item (1 p.)
The letter was written on the verso of a photocopy of a collage by Reepak (1986).

Autograph postcard signed from Ruth Ford to Joans, [1980s] [Box 1 F7]
1 item (1 p.)

Autograph note, [1980s] [Box 1 F7]
1 item (1 p.)

Miscellaneous clippings, brochures, [1970-1986] [Box 1 F8]
6 items