



The New York Public Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

**James Wentzy papers**

1987-2008 [bulk 1990s]

MssCol 22286

Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2015.

## Summary

**Creator:** Wentzy, James

**Title:** James Wentzy papers

**Date:** 1987-2008 [bulk 1990s]

**Size:** 9.09 linear feet (21 boxes, 4 tubes), 437 video files

**Source:** Donated by James Wentzy, 2013.

**Abstract:** The James Wentzy papers date from 1987 to 2008 (bulk dates 1990s), and reflect the continuing work of AIDS activist James Wentzy to document ACT UP's advocacy on behalf of those individuals with HIV/AIDS through correspondence, clippings, flyers, pamphlets, posters, reports and video recordings.

### Conditions Governing Access:

Video recordings are unavailable pending digitization.

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**Processing note:** Compiled by Valerie Wingfield, 2015.

## Creator History

James Wentzy (1952- ) is an AIDS activist and a documentary filmmaker known for his work with ACT UP.

In the early 1990s, Wentzy became a documentary filmmaker videotaping members of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power or ACT UP. Wentzy videotaped artists living with H.I.V. or AIDS and their

struggle fighting against indifference and their own personal challenges. By 2013, his collection developed into an extensive archive with hundreds of hours of recordings.

Wentzy's work became the subject of a documentary entitled *Books of James*, which was produced by Ho Tam, a video artist. Drawing upon Wentzy's personal notebooks, this video traces his life story.

Wentzy also works as the producer of DIVA TV (Damned Interfering Video Activists). DIVA TV was founded in 1989 by a video documentary group along-side ACT UP. Their objective was to videotape public testimony and community activism to motivate the fight against AIDS.

Wentzy also serves as a video archivist for the Estate Project's AIDS Activist Video Preservation Project for the New York Public Library.

## Scope and Content Note

The James Wentzy papers date from 1987 to 2008 (bulk dates 1990s), and reflect the continuing work of AIDS activist James Wentzy to document ACT UP's advocacy on behalf of those individuals with HIV/AIDS through correspondence, clippings, flyers, pamphlets, posters, reports and video recordings.

The collection is mostly representative of ACT UP's activism during the 1990s, mainly in New York City. What emerges from Wentzy's research files is the portrait of an individual deeply committed to the ACT UP objectives to bring awareness to the general public on the critical importance of finding a cure for AIDS; end discrimination against lesbians, gays, and others with HIV/AIDS; and to demand that politicians act in a responsible and effective manner to support funding for AIDS research.

The correspondence files, arranged by subject, often hold multiple topics under a single heading. Information about ACT UP's committees or sub-groups may be located under its name filed under a subject(s). The files include information on the Board of Education sex education program in New York City; the United States policy for Haitians held in Guantanamo; needle exchange programs; housing for the homeless with HIV/AIDS; clean drinking water; universal health care; the International Conference on AIDS in Amsterdam in 1992; ending travel restrictions against people with HIV/AIDS; the effectiveness of the Division of AID Services (renamed HIV/AIDS Services) under the administration of Mayor Giuliani; and women with AIDS.

The globalization of AIDS is represented to a much smaller extent and consists of information on the international conferences regarding the AIDS crisis, ACT UP effectiveness abroad, and Germany's treatment of its populace with HIV/AIDS.

Wentzy's work as a documentary filmmaker is evident in the film festival catalogues that include the Internationale Filmfestspiele in Berlin, the New York Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film/Video Festival, San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Film Festival, Tribeca Film Festival, and the Tokyo International Lesbian & Gay Film & Video Festival.

The videos document ACT UP events including ACT UP demonstrations, New York City government meetings and hearings, and other ACT UP activities.

**Arrangement:** The collection is arranged as follows: Correspondence, Film Festival Catalogs, Posters, and Certificates, and Ephemera.

## **Key Terms**

### **Subjects**

AIDS (Disease)  
AIDS (Disease) -- Political aspects  
AIDS (Disease) -- Social aspects  
AIDS (Disease) and the arts  
AIDS activists  
Demonstrations -- United States  
Gay activists -- New York (State) -- New York

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Clippings (information artifacts)  
Correspondence  
Documentary film  
Ephemera  
Handbills  
Posters  
Video tapes

### **Occupations**

Film directors  
Producers and directors

### **Geographic Names**

New York (N.Y.)

### **Names**

ACT UP New York (Organization)

## Container List

### Correspondence

#### ACT UP

- b. 1 f. 1 Capsule History, Chronology 1987-1994
- General Information
- b. 1 f. 2-11 1987-2007
- b. 2 f. 1-3 1987-2007
- b. 2 f. 4 ACT UP Against New World Order (Bush) 1991
- b. 2 f. 5 ACT UP. Paris 1994-2000
- b. 2 f. 6 AIDS Bureaucrats 1994-1995
- b. 2 f. 7 AIDS 101 1993-1994
- b. 2 f. 8 AIDS Statistics 1992-1996
- b. 2 f. 9-10 Activism 1988-1997
- Affinities
- b. 2 f. 11-12 1991-1999
- b. 3 f. 1-2 1991-1999
- b. 3 f. 3-5 Alternative AIDS Treatments 1990-1995
- b. 3 f. 6 Asians and Pacific Islanders 1991-1993
- b. 3 f. 7-9 Barbara McClintock AIDS Cure Act 1993
- b. 3 f. 10 Blood and Blood Products 1992-1993
- Board of Education. Sex Education. New York City
- b. 3 f. 11 1990-1999
- b. 4 f. 1-4 1990-1999
- b. 4 f. 5 Cable TV Law 1992
- b. 4 f. 6-8 Center for Disease Control (CDC) 1991-1996
- b. 4 f. 9-11 Church and Family Values 1990-1996
- b. 5 f. 1-3 Clinton, Bill 1992-2001
- Discrimination
- b. 5 f. 4 Homophobia 1990-1995
- b. 5 f. 5 Human Rights 1992-1993
- b. 5 f. 6 Federal and New York City Budget 1995
- b. 5 f. 7 Federal Bureau of Investigation Surveillance 1994-1995
- b. 5 f. 8 Food and Drug Administration 1991-1992
- Giuliani, Rudy
- b. 5 f. 9-11 1994-2001
- b. 6 f. 1-4 Division of AIDS Services 1994-1995
- b. 6 f. 5-6 Global Immigration 1991-1994
- b. 6 f. 7-8 Guantanamo. United States Haitian Policy 1992-1994
- b. 6 f. 9 Health Care Reform, Universal Health Care 1991-1994
- b. 6 f. 10 Helms, Jesse 1991

Correspondence (cont.)

Homelessness, Housing 1991-1995

- b. 6 f. 11 1991-1995
- b. 7 f. 1-2 1993-1995
- b. 7 f. 3-9 HIV/AIDS, Politics 1990-2007
- b. 7 f. 10 Immigration and Travel Restrictions HIV/AIDS 1992-1993
- b. 8 f. 1-6 International AIDS Conferences 1992-2000
- b. 8 f. 7 Kramer, Larry 1992-1996
- b. 8 f. 8 Latinos 1995

List of Contacts

- b. 8 f. 9 1990s
- b. 9 f. 1 1990s
- b. 9 f. 2-3 Maine College of Art. Acceptance as Studio Instructor 2008
- b. 9 f. 4-9 Media Committee. ACT UP 1992-1997
- b. 9 f. 10 Medical (General) 1991-1993
- b. 9 f. 11 Native Americans 1993-1997
- b. 9 f. 12-13 Needle Exchange Programs 1991-1997
- b. 10 f. 1 New Member's Information Packet 1991, 1996
- b. 10 f. 2 Network Mailings. Contacts 1990s
- b. 10 f. 3 New York City Hospitals 1994-1995
- b. 10 f. 4-7 Obituaries 1990s-2000s
- b. 10 f. 8 Pataki, George 1995-1996
- b. 10 f. 9 People for the American Way 1993, 1995
- b. 10 f. 10-11 Pharmaceuticals 1992-1995
- b. 10 f. 12 Police and Violence 1991-1997
- b. 11 f. 1 Politics (general) 1990s
- b. 11 f. 2 Prison and AIDS 1991-1995
- b. 11 f. 3 Puerto Rico. Health Regulations for HIV Testing 1997
- b. 11 f. 4 Religious Right, Bigotry 1992-1994
- b. 11 f. 5 Republican Convention in Houston, Texas 1992
- b. 11 f. 6-10 Sex. Adult Entertainment, Bath Houses, Safe Sex 1990s
- b. 12 f. 1-4 Target Bush 1990s
- b. 12 f. 5 Tell It To ACT UP (TITA) 1990-1991
- b. 12 f. 6-8 Testing 1990s
- b. 12 f. 9-12 Treatment and Data Committee. ACT UP 1990-1995
- b. 13 f. 1 Tuberculosis 1992-1994
- b. 13 f. 2 Video Activism. DIVA TV 1991-1994
- b. 13 f. 3-4 Water Quality 1994-1995
- b. 13 f. 5-7 Women and AIDS 1990s
- b. 13 f. 8-11 Youth Education Life Line (YELL) ACT UP 1993-1998

Film Festival Catalogs

Film Festival Catalogs (cont.)

- b. 13 f. 12 *AIDS Activist Videotape Preservation Project by Aaron Krach* 1998  
Article
- b. 13 f. 13 Arts AIDS Communities Realizing the Archive Project. Boston 1996
- b. 13 f. 14 Chicago Lesbian and Gay International Film Festival 1995
- b. 13 f. 15 Cinema Spoutnik 1995
- b. 14 f. 1 Festival Gejevskega in Lezbi\_nega Filma. Slovenia 2005
- b. 14 f. 2 Festival Internazionale di Cinema Gaylesbico. Milan 2001, 2003
- b. 14 f. 3 Festival of Sexual Diversity. Brazil 2002
- b. 14 f. 4 Inside Out. Lesbian and Gay Film Video Festival 1998
- b. 14 f. 5-6 International Festival of Tactical Media. Amsterdam 1993, 2003
- b. 14 f. 7-8 Internationale Filmfestspiele. Berlin 2003
- b. 15 f. 1 London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival 1998
- b. 15 f. 2 Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Film Festival 2003
- b. 15 f. 3 Milwaukee Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual, Transgender Film and Video Festival.  
Wisconsin 2001
- b. 15 f. 4 Montreal International Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival 1998
- b. 15 f. 5-9 New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film and Video Festival 1991-2002
- b. 15 f. 10 Rochester Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival 1996  
San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival  
1995
- b. 15 f. 11-12 1998-2006
- b. 15 f. 13-14 Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival 2000
- b. 16 f. 1-2 Tokyo International Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival 1993, 2003
- b. 17 f. 2 Tribeca Film Festival 2003
- b. 16 f. 3 Tuscon Lesbian and Gay Festival 1999
- b. 16 f. 4-5 Washington D.C. Celebration of Gay and Lesbian Films 1995
- b. 16 f. 6 Assorted Festivals and Film Shows 1995-2004
- b. 16 f. 7-10 Information and Applications for Submitting Work 1990s-2003

Posters

ACT UP

- b. 18 f. 1 ACT UP New York Activism, ART and the AIDS Crisis 1987-1993
- b. 18 f. 2 Bush  
There are two different posters.
- b. 18 f. 3 Clinton
- b. 18 f. 4 Frankfurt 1998
- t. 1 Ignorance Equals Fear, Silence Equals Death
- b. 18 f. 5 John Paul II
- t. 2 Books of James 2002
- t. 3 Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights 1990s
- b. 18 f. 6 Gay Mens Health Crisis 1993  
There are three interrelated posters.
- b. 18 f. 7 Hsieh. One Year Performance by Tehching Hsieh 1982

Posters (cont.)

- b. 18 f. 8 Silence (Still) Equals Death 1990s
- b. 19 f. 1 Poster of three people with their heads buried in sand [1980s-2000s]  
No identifiable sponsor.
- t. 4 AIDS Action Now [1980s-2000s]  
No identifiable sponsor.

Certificates, ephemera

Certificates

- b. 20 f. 1 Dance Theater Workshop to ACT UP 1988
- b. 20 f. 2 Heritage of Pride to DIVA-TV 1992
- b. 20 f. 3 Journalist to Journalist to Wentzy 2004

Ephemera

- b. 21 f. 1 Buttons, Badges 1990s-2000s
- b. 20 f. 4-5 Handouts, Postcards, and Stickers 1990s-2000s
- b. 21 f. 2 T-Shirt. Guantanamo 1993