



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

Patti Smith notebooks and manuscripts

1970s-2014

MssCol 23973

Compiled by Heather Lember, 2017.

Summary

Creator: Smith, Patti, 1946-

Title: Patti Smith notebooks and manuscripts

Date: 1970s-2014

Size: .42 linear feet (1 box)

Source: Purchased from Glenn Horowitz Bookseller, 2016.

Abstract: Patti Smith is an American musician, artist, poet, and author best known for her band, the Patti Smith Group, and her memoir, *Just Kids*. The Patti Smith notebooks and manuscripts consist of unpublished poetry and prose pieces, as well as song lyrics, notes, and reflections dating from the late 1970s to 2014.

Access: Advance notice required.

Preferred citation: Patti Smith notebooks and manuscripts, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Compiled by Heather Lember, 2017.

Creator History

Patricia "Patti" Lee Smith (1946-) is an American artist, author, poet, and musician. She grew up in New Jersey, and moved to New York City in 1967 to pursue a career as an artist and writer. In 1971, Smith began collaborating with the musician Lenny Kaye, who accompanied Smith on guitar while she performed her poetry. By 1974, she was singing with a full band known as The Patti Smith Group, who released their debut record, *Horses*, in 1975. The band's emergence coincided with the newly burgeoning punk rock scene in New York City, and they quickly followed up with *Radio Ethiopia* (1976), *Easter* (1978), and *Wave* (1979).

In the late 1970s, Smith met and eventually married MC5 guitarist, Fred "Sonic" Smith, and the couple relocated to Michigan in the early 1980s. During the decade Smith released one album, 1988's *Dream of Life*. The Smith family continued to reside in Michigan until 1994, when Fred died of a heart attack. In

1996, Smith moved back to New York City and released the album, *Gone Again*. This was followed up by *Peace and Noise* (1997), *Gung Ho* (2000), *Trampin'* (2004), *Twelve* (2007), and *Banga*(2012).

Although Smith had published many articles and books of poetry throughout her career, her greatest success came with the 2010 memoir, *Just Kids*, which earned Smith the National Book Award for nonfiction. The memoir chronicles her early years in New York City and her relationship with the artist, Robert Mapplethorpe. *Just Kids* was followed up by another memoir, *M Train*, in 2015.

Scope and Content Note

The collection dates from the 1970s to 2014, and contains three notebooks and a small assemblage of Patti Smith's writings. The materials include drafts of poems, lyrics, and articles; unpublished prose; and various notes.

The Original Lyric Book for *Wave* is from the late 1970s, and features lyrics for Smith's fourth studio album, *Wave*. The notebook contains lyrics to "Frederick," "Revenge," and "Dancing Barefoot." There are a number of unpublished reflections related to *Wave*, as well as lists of song titles that would ultimately appear on the record. There is also a compendium of pages with the title "Flowers" that comprise a collection of prose and ruminations about the art of Robert Mapplethorpe.

The Notebook of Lyrics and Comment contains an assortment of lyrics, notes, sketches, and drafts. Much of the notebook is devoted to Smith's fifth studio album *Dream of Life*, which includes lyrics for "Up There Down There," "People have the Power," "Going Under," and "Jackson Song.

The Notebook for *Dream of Life* is from the 1980s, and contains text related to the album *Dream of Life*, as well as short unpublished poems and lyrics. There are multiple iterations of lyrics to songs including, "Where Duty Calls," "People Have the Power," "Going Under," "Up There Down There," and "Paths that Cross."

Poetry and Manuscripts is a selection of five short pieces, which comprise loose handwritten pages composed between 1989 and 2012. There is a two page remembrance of the artist, Brion Gysin; a one page untitled piece, containing a mixture of prose and poetic verse; a thirteen page review of Edmund White's 1993 biography, *Genet*; a draft of Smith's poem, "Hecatomb," which was written as a remembrance to the Chilean writer, Roberto Bolaño; and a piece titled "We are all Pinocchio," which features excerpts of lines utilized in Smith's 2010 commencement address at Pratt Institute.

Arrangement: Materials are arranged chronologically.

Key Terms

Occupations

Authors
Musicians
Poets
Singers
Songwriters

Geographic Names

Manhattan -- New York (N.Y.)

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Manuscripts

Notebooks

Subjects

Poets, American

Punk rock music -- New York (N.Y.)

Rock musicians -- United States

Women rock musicians

Names

Bolaño, Roberto 1953-2003

Genet, Jean, 1910-1986

Gysin, Brion

Mapplethorpe, Robert

Smith, Fred, 1949-1994

White, Edmund, 1940-

Patti Smith Group

Container List

- b. 1 f. 1 *Original Lyric Book for Wave* 1970s
- b. 1 f. 2 Notebook of Lyrics and Comment circa 1986
- b. 1 f. 3 *Notebook for Dream of Life* circa 1987
- b. 1 f. 4 Poetry and Manuscripts 1989-2014