

McSweeney's:

An Inventory of Its Records at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	McSweeney's (Firm)
Title:	McSweeney's Records
Dates:	circa 1930s-2013 (bulk 2000-2012)
Extent:	118 document boxes (49.56 linear feet), 5 oversize folders (osf), 11 oversize boxes (osb), 2 custom boxes
Abstract:	The records of McSweeney's document the evolution of a startup quarterly literary journal into a highly influential small publishing house and creator of several serials, including <i>Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern</i> and the <i>Believer</i> , and a growing catalog of titles under its many book imprints. The bulk of the archive comprises mock-ups, dummies, art, and proofs used to produce McSweeney's publications.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-5307
Language:	English, French, German, and Spanish
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchase, 2013 (13-03-008-P, 13-05-019-P, 13-05-020-P, 13-06-002-P, 13-06-009-P)
Processed by:	Amy E. Armstrong, 2014
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Organizational History

Dave Eggers launched *Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* from his Brooklyn apartment in 1998. Eggers's new literary journal and accompanying daily humor website, *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, promised an "emphasis on experimentation." This was the second innovative publication started by Eggers; he was a co-founding editor of San Francisco-based *Might* magazine during the early 1990s, and after it ceased publication, Eggers moved to New York in 1997 to work at *Esquire*. Unhappy at *Esquire*, Eggers began planning *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* (named after a possible distant relative who often wrote to Eggers's mother), and sent an email to writers soliciting contributions and works rejected by other magazines. Though McSweeney's soon began publishing well-established and highly regarded writers including T. C. Boyle, Michael Chabon, Jonathan Franzen, Denis Johnson, Stephen King, Joyce Carol Oates, William T. Vollmann, Sarah Vowell, and David Foster Wallace, unpublished and emerging writers and artists continue to find a home for their work among McSweeney's many magazines and book imprints.

Though McSweeney's, based in San Francisco since 2003, has gradually expanded from the lone editor/designer/artist/publisher position originally occupied by Eggers, it remains a small publishing house overseen by a small group of editors and a staff of interns and volunteers that help publish the flagship *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, successful monthly magazine the *Believer*, and an ever-expanding catalog of books.

Each issue of the *Quarterly Concern* is completely redesigned, but the McSweeney's house style is immediately recognizable, often influenced by vintage typography and a distinct design aesthetic that honors the craft of bookmaking. Always willing to experiment, McSweeney's has published journal issues both in hardcover and paperback. There has been an issue with two spines, an issue with a magnetized binding, an issue housed in a cigar box, an issue that resembles a bundle of mail, an issue printed as a complete daily newspaper, and an issue that gave readers a look inside the head of one sweaty man. Many issues focus on a theme, and selected issues have paid tribute to Donald Barthelme; acquainted readers to the art of comics and modern forms of extinct literary genres; introduced international voices by featuring contemporary writing from Icelandic, Kenyan, Norwegian, South Sudanese, and Australian Aboriginal writers; and provided thoughtful non-fiction essays. The publication has been a finalist for the National Magazine Award several times and won in 2007 and 2010. The *Quarterly Concern* has had numerous stories appear in the *Best American Magazine Writing*, the O. Henry Awards anthologies, and the *Best American Short Stories*. It has also been profiled in design magazines and won the Print Design Regional Award and several AIGA design awards.

The *Believer*, easily identified by its iconic cover template designed by Eggers and illustrated with drawings by Charles Burns, is a monthly art and culture magazine featuring interviews, reviews, essays, schematic drawings, illustrations by Tony Millionaire, and regular columns by Nick Hornby, Greil Marcus, and Jack Pendarvis. The *Believer* is also home to the "Sedaratives" advice column founded by Amy Sedaris and featuring guest contributors from Janeane Garafolo to Weird Al Yankovich. The

magazine was founded in 2003 by Heidi Julavits, Vendela Vida, and Ed Park with the assistance of Dave Eggers and the McSweeney's staff. The magazine also puts out three special issues a year, dedicated to Art, Film, and Music. Andrew Leland began as managing editor of the *Believer* with the second issue and continued in the post for eight years and seventy-five issues. Editors have included Sheila Heti, Ross Simonini, Dominic Luxford, Andi Mudd, Jason Polan, and Casey Jarman. In addition to the *Believer* website, which contains exclusive online content, the publication maintains a blog called *The Believer Logger*, and in partnership with KCRW, the *Believer* co-produces a monthly podcast called *The Organist*.

McSweeney's first published the quarterly DVD magazine *Wholphin*, founded by Eggers and Brent Hoff (who became its editor), in 2005. The magazine highlighted selections of under-viewed, under-appreciated, new, and sometimes rediscovered short films and documentaries, obscure instructional videos, and international films. Issue 1 of the DVD was included with the *Quarterly Concern* #18 in Winter 2005/2006 and with the special "visual issue" of the *Believer*. *Wholphin* continued for fifteen issues and concluded in 2012. Directors and stars that have been featured in the short films include David O. Russell, Spike Jonze, Miranda July, Steven Soderbergh, Dennis Hopper, and Zooey Deschanel.

In February 2011, McSweeney's introduced a syndicated weekly children's puzzle page called *The Goods* for inclusion in national newspapers. The weekly page, edited by Mac Barnett, features puzzles, comics, riddles and jokes, cutouts, and fun "facts" written and illustrated by various picture book writers and artists. Forty-four installments of the weekly were compiled into a book, *The Goods: Volume I* (Big Picture Press, October 2013).

McSweeney's partnered with sportswriter Bill Simmons in 2011 to deliver *Grantland Quarterly*, a full-color print version of his web sports magazine, Grantland. McSweeney's involvement with the publication concluded after four issues.

McSweeney's published its first books in 2000 starting with a collection of satirical essays by Neal Pollack, *The Neal Pollack Anthology of American Literature*, quickly followed by the publishing house's first novel, *Lemon*, by Lawrence Krauser. *Lemon* perhaps set the tone for McSweeney's books when one reviewer called it "handsome, smartly written and deeply eccentric." Krauser and Eggers--always at the forefront of innovative experimentation--agreed to have Krauser hand-illustrate each dust jacket of the first 10,000 books, making each cover and book unique.

In addition to publishing fiction, McSweeney's Books also publishes non-fiction biographies, memoirs, criticism, and studies including William T. Vollmann's seven-volume treatise on violence, *Rising Up and Rising Down*; a long list of humor books including the "Baby, Be of Use" series by Lisa Brown and the popular Haggis-on-Whey encyclopedias; art books with portfolios by Marcel Dzama, Dave Eggers, and Art Spiegelman; and Beck's *Song Reader*, which is an album that exists only as individual pieces of sheet music, each richly illustrated by various artists.

McSweeney's other imprints include McSweeney's Rectangulars; Believer Books, which collects writings from the magazine's contributors; McSweeney's McMullens, publishing books for young children and young adults; Voice of Witness, a nonprofit series of oral histories documenting contemporary social injustices around the world; Collins Library, reprints of forgotten classics edited by Paul Collins; McSweeney's Poetry Series; and McSweeney's Insatiables, the food and cooking imprint, which from 2011 to 2013 published the quarterly food magazine *Lucky Peach*.

McSweeney's books have been recognized as frequent finalists and winners of many honors and awards, including the National Book Critics Circle Award, National Book Award, AIGA 365 Illustration Award Certificate of Excellence in Design, 50 Books 50 Covers Award, Print Design Regional Award, New York Public Library's Young Lion's Award, Independent Publisher Book Awards, the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award, and the *New York Times* Notable Book. Dave Eggers frequently has received awards for his contribution to literature and philanthropy, including the Literarian Award for Outstanding Service to the American Literary Community from the National Book Award in 2009.

McSweeney's has used its publishing platform to further many philanthropic endeavors initiated by Eggers including the establishment of a non-profit tutoring and writing center, 826 Valencia, in the Mission District of San Francisco. Under the umbrella organization 826 National, seven more centers have opened in Brooklyn, Chicago, Los Angeles, Ann Arbor, Seattle, Washington D.C., and Boston. Each tutoring center is partly funded by the published writings of its students and through the sale of unique supplies stocked in each center's themed storefront (such as the Pirate Supply Store in San Francisco and the Brooklyn Superhero Supply Co. in New York). In addition, many writers and artists donate their work in support of 826 National with the proceeds of many McSweeney's books going directly to further the work of the tutoring centers.

Selected Organizational History

- 1998 -*Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* and *Timothy McSweeney's Internet Tendency* founded by Dave Eggers
- 1999 -Staff expanded to include: Todd Pruzan (associate editor), Diane Vadino (editorial assistant), Sean Wilsey (editor-at-large), and Kevin Shay (web master)
- 2000 -Eggers launches McSweeney's Books by publishing *The Neal Pollack Anthology of American Literature*
- 2001 -Five books published by McSweeney's Books, including two novels
- 2002 -Eggers and Nínive Calegari co-found a non-profit tutoring and writing center, 826 Valencia, in San Francisco. Proceeds from Eggers's self-published novel, *You Shall Know Our Velocity*, are directed toward the establishment of 826 Valencia
- 2002 -The first book under the Collins Library imprint is published, *English As She is Spoke*
- 2002 -Eli Horowitz goes from McSweeney's volunteer to editor in order to edit William T. Vollmann's *Rising Up and Rising Down*

- 2003 -The *Believer* is launched. Andrew Leland joins as Managing Editor for second issue
- 2004 -Second tutoring center opens in Brooklyn, 826NYC
- 2004 -Eggers and Dr. Lola Vollen co-found Voice of Witness imprint, a non-profit series of books that use oral history to illuminate human rights crises around the world
- 2005 -Four more 826 tutoring centers open in Chicago, Los Angeles, Ann Arbor, and Seattle
- 2005 -Voice of Witness imprint publishes its first oral history *Surviving Justice*, in which recently exonerated prisoners tell of their wrongful conviction and imprisonment
- 2005 -DVD magazine *Wholphin* is launched
- 2006 -*What is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng* is written by Eggers with all proceeds used by Deng to establish the Valentino Achak Deng Foundation, which works to increase access to education in post-conflict South Sudan
- 2006 -McSweeney's distributor, Publishers Group West, declares bankruptcy owing McSweeney's approximately \$600,000
- 2007 -McSweeney's enters into contract with publisher/distributor Perseus Books Group
- 2007 -826 Boston opens
- 2009 -McSweeney's iPhone in-app subscription launched; the first of its kind
- 2010 -826DC opens
- 2010 -Andrew Leland leaves as managing editor of the *Believer*
- 2010 -Eggers launched ScholarMatch in response to the large number of qualified applicants to the college scholarship program at 826 Valencia
- 2011 -McSweeney's Insatiables food imprint launched quarterly food journal *Lucky Peach* and published its first cookbook, *Mission Street Food*
- 2011 -*Grantland Quarterly* is published; McSweeney's is partner for four issues
- 2011 -*The Goods* premiered in newspapers
- 2011 -McSweeney's McMullens children's book imprint launched with three picture books: *Here Comes the Cat* (Frank Asch and Vladimir Vagin), *Symphony City* (Amy Martin), *We Need a Horse* (Sheila Heti)
- 2012 -*Wholphin* ceases publication concluding with issue No. 15
- 2012 -Former editor and publisher Eli Horowitz leaves McSweeney's
- 2013 -*Lucky Peach* is no longer published by McSweeney's

Sources:

In addition to material found in McSweeney's Records, the following sources were used:

"Dave Eggers." *Contemporary Authors Online*, <http://galenet.galegroup.com> [accessed 5 August 2013]

DeBare, Ilana. "A Financial Thriller in the Publishing World." *San Francisco Chronicle*, 27 January 2007, <http://www.sfgate.com> [accessed 30 July 2013]

Goldberg, Matt. "Mighty McSweeney's." *The Village Voice*, March 30, 1999; 44, 12, p. 34

Max, D. T. "Next Generation McSweeney's." *The New Yorker*, October 18, 1999, p.212-213

McSweeney's. *The Art of McSweeney's*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2010

McSweeney's. www.mcsweeney.net. [accessed August 2013-February 2014]

Slocum, Mac. "What lit mag McSweeney's could teach news orgs about the iPhone." *Nieman Journalism Lab*, October 19, 2009, <http://www.niemanlab.org> [accessed 22 August 2013]

Scope and Contents

The records of McSweeney's document the evolution of a startup quarterly literary journal into an influential small publishing house that creates several serials and a growing catalog of titles under its many book imprints. The bulk of the archive comprises mock-ups, dummies, art, and proofs used to produce McSweeney's publications. The records are organized into four series: Series I. Serials, 2001-2012, undated; Series II. Book Imprints, 1950-2013 (bulk 2002-2013), undated; Series III. Editorial and Administrative Files, circa 1930s-2013 (bulk 2000-2012), undated; and Series IV. 826 National, 2002-2008, undated.

The McSweeney's materials lacked an overall physical order or arrangement when they arrived at the Ransom Center. McSweeney's unique history, including a staff primarily consisting of volunteers and interns with few permanent paid editors, all working in shifting capacities on multiple projects, precludes arranging the material strictly by person, function, or department. Therefore, the arrangement of materials was created by the Ransom Center to reflect the publishing house's two main divisions as represented in this body of material: serial publishing and book publishing. Also represented are general editorial and administrative activities as well as McSweeney's involvement with philanthropic projects, primarily the eight tutoring and writing centers operating under the umbrella organization 826 National. McSweeney's also operates a daily humor website, *McSweeney's Internet Tendency*, but it is not represented by material in this

archive.

As the Ransom Center acquired the McSweeney's records from an ongoing business operation, there aren't many documents associated with the active business aspect of the publishing house. For example, reports, budgets, business plans, circulation analyses, contracts, internal memoranda, and legal documents are not present. In addition, there is little correspondence between editors and staff or editors and authors. One exception is the large volume of cover letters that accompanied the unsolicited manuscripts and art submissions sent to McSweeney's from writers and artists from around the world. The primary strength of the collection resides in the materials that reflect McSweeney's dedication to the craft of bookmaking, love of language, and focus on the concept of "book-as-object."

Series I. Serials represents material associated with six serial publications: *The Believer*, *The Goods*, *Grantland Quarterly*, *Lucky Peach*, *Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, and *Wholphin*. The series is arranged first alphabetically by publication title and then chronologically by issue within each title. The flagship literary journal, *Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, and monthly mainstay the *Believer* are represented with the bulk of the materials in this series. Files are not present for every magazine or journal issue, and most of the files that do exist aren't comprehensive; therefore, it is not always possible to follow each issue through the publishing process from submission to final publication. The bulk of the material in this series includes some original manuscripts and art, edited and unedited proofs, article fact checks, cover dummies, and design mockups. Some of the manuscripts include notes by editor Eli Horowitz and some proofs contain layout remarks by founding editor Dave Eggers.

The production files for the monthly arts and culture magazine the *Believer*, as originally maintained by editor Andi Mudd, included a colored file folder for each issue with a checklist stapled on the front detailing the title of the piece or column, the author, the editor of the piece, the status of the copy edit (C/E), illustrations and images (IMGS), fact check status (F/C), and other notes. The original folders were not retained, but the checklist was removed, sleeved and placed at the front of the new folder. On occasion, a piece may have been originally planned for a particular issue but was cut or published at a later date; such material may be filed within either issue. Some documents of particular interest include Kevin Moffett's annotated copy of Dr. Leonard's catalog used for his essay published in issue 13, postcards included in issue 41 and mailed in by readers for the 2006 Believer Book Award Reader's Survey, comedian Janeane Garofalo's handwritten "Sedaratives" advice as guest columnist in issue 43, and the screenplay *Mexico* by Werner Herzog considered for, but ultimately not printed in, the 2012 Film Issue (Number 89).

There is very little material associated with the syndicated weekly children's puzzle page *The Goods*. Present are Brian McMullen's drawing that appeared in issue 9 and the *San Francisco Chronicle* page where the drawing was published. The first forty-four issues of the *Goods* were compiled into a book published in October 2013, and the proof for that book is filed in oversize box 3.

McSweeney's was associated with the sports journal *Grantland Quarterly* for four issues, and the archive contains cover dummies for issue numbers 1 and 4.

Lucky Peach, the food journal launched in 2011 and published by McSweeney's until 2013, is not well-represented in the archive and contains only partial proofs for issue 1 and the fruit stickers included in issue 2. Of particular interest is the hand-drawn logotype and cover lettering by Brian McMullen.

Most issues of the innovative literary journal *Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*, from number 8 through number 42, are represented to some degree in this series, and materials document the editing, design, and production of the journal through manuscripts, edited and unedited proofs, book and cover dummies, color swatches, original art, samples, mockups, and correspondence. Each issue has a completely different design, and many issues were guest-edited by writers and artists such as Michael Chabon, Chris Ware, and Paul Maliszewski. Original manuscripts from established writers such as Sherman Alexie, Ann Beattie, Michael Chabon, Roddy Doyle, Harlan Ellison, Denis Johnson, Stephen King, Joyce Carol Oates, Robert Olmstead, and Susan Straight, as well as emerging writers including Jessica Anthony, Daphne Beal, Doug Dorst, Adam Levin, and Wells Tower are filed under the numbered issue in which they appeared. This segment doesn't include material for the original first seven issues, but it does include dummies and booklets for the second edition of issue 4 published in 2010. Unsolicited submission cover letters and some manuscript submissions are filed in boxes 101 through 105 as part of Series IV. Editorial and Administrative Files.

As each issue of the *Quarterly Concern* has a new design, each issue represented in the archive contains unique material, but there are several items of particular interest. There were two goals for issue 10, titled *McSweeney's Mammoth Treasury of Thrilling Tales*, guest edited by author Michael Chabon. The first goal was to introduce writers to genre fiction by asking the most popular genre writers to contribute a piece and for non-genre writers to experiment in a new style. The second goal was to raise money for 826 Valencia tutoring center. Subscribers of the *Quarterly Concern* received a version printed by McSweeney's early Icelandic printer, Oddi, and rights for a separately sold edition were sold to Viking with proceeds going to the tutoring center. Included in the records are five folders of proofs containing author queries and authors' edits from contributors Dan Chaon, Michael Chabon, Michael Crichton, Harlan Ellison, Karen Joy Fowler, Glen David Gold, Laurie R. King, Stephen King, Elmore Leonard, Kelly Link, and Rick Moody.

Also of interest are the twenty-minute stories submissions for issue 12 contributed by authors such as Charles Baxter, Benjamin Cheever, Jennifer Egan, Myla Goldberg, Jonathan Lethem, David Shields, and Luis Alberto Urrea. A complete list of author submissions is included in the Index of Authors and Artists at the end of this finding aid.

Material associated with issue 16 provides a good overview of the publishing process and includes original manuscripts from Anne Beattie and Adam Levin with editor's notes, proofs with copy-edits, printing proofs, color swatches, comb samples, and an early handmade design mockup.

Determining fact from fiction is sometimes difficult with McSweeney's publications, as issue 17 (known as the bundle of mail) demonstrated. *The Yeti Researcher* journal was so realistic, it wasn't uncommon for people to believe the bundle of mail had been misdelivered and forward it to the fictitious Sgt. Maria Vasquez at the given address. Folder 17.8 includes one such journal with a handwritten note attached. Also included in this segment is an unopened issue, so the original look and feel of the issue is preserved. An open issue is accessible via the serials section of the Ransom Center Library.

Issue 33 was published as a full, multi-section, Sunday-edition-sized newspaper called the *San Francisco Panorama*. The paper included actual sports and comics sections, a magazine, and investigative journalism with contributions from 218 writers and artists. The archive contains the files on the Bay Bridge and Sarah Palin stories and the numerous fact checks. McSweeney's took great care in the design of each issue, and thorough research went into making a realistic and legitimate newspaper, as evidenced by the presence of two boxes of sample newspapers and two boxes of newspaper dummies.

Infamous issue 36 in the shape of a man's head demonstrates McSweeney's visionary design. The archive includes mock-ups of each work included in the issue as well as two dummy boxes, each containing various dummy booklets, postcards, and scrolls.

Series II. Book Imprints contains production material for many of the books published under McSweeney's eight imprints and is arranged alphabetically by imprint: Believer Books, Collins Library, McSweeney's Books and McSweeney's Rectangulars, McSweeney's Insatiabables, McSweeney's McMullens, McSweeney's Poetry Series, and Voice of Witness. Within each imprint, the material is in alphabetical order by author. Material within author files is in chronological order or in the logical order of production. For example, filed first are original submissions or manuscripts, then proofs, followed by materials associated with the design of the book. The majority of publicity material is filed within Series III. Editorial and Administrative Files.

As with the serials, the bulk of this series comprises edited and unedited proofs, design mock-ups, dummy covers and books, and some original manuscripts. Beck's album *Song Reader*, which was published entirely as vintage sheet music, contains numerous proofs, some with edits written in an unidentified hand, as well as two yearbooks from Austin High School that Beck acquired and submitted to McSweeney's as design samples. David Byrne's *How Music Works* includes an early chapter of Byrne's manuscript with Eggers's edits, as well as numerous revised proofs. Michael Chabon's *Maps and Legends* includes Eggers's original jacket design sketch. Perhaps the best example of the editorial relationship established between author and editor is apparent in the multiple drafts and edits between Eli Horowitz and Millard Kaufman for Kaufman's novel *Bowl of Cherries*.

William T. Vollmann's seven-volume study of violence, *Rising Up and Rising Down*, was one of McSweeney's most ambitious publishing projects. Though many publishing houses were interested in publishing the 4,000-page manuscript with additional pages of annotations, footnotes, and illustrations, most were daunted by the logistics of publishing such a work. In winter 2001, Eggers wrote to Vollmann and offered to publish it. At the time, McSweeney's had limited staff, and Eli Horowitz was hired, in part, to oversee the complicated process of editing, fact checking, and indexing the massive work. The archive contains twenty-one boxes of material including a copy of Vollmann's

hand-numbered manuscript, extensive fact checks, drafts with copy-edits and notes from Vollmann, and Vollmann's hand-picked image files.

Material associated with McSweeney's McMullens, the children's book imprint that launched in 2011, contains edited and unedited proofs, dummy books and covers, and dust jacket/poster proofs. McSweeney's playful experimentation in book design is evident in the mock-up, proofs, and dummies for *Hang Glider & Mud Mask* (Brian McMullen and Jason Jägel, 2012). The original blow dryer, which served as the inspiration for the heat-sensitive ink design of Jordan Crane's *Keep Our Secrets*, is housed in the Ransom Center's Personal Effects collection.

Surviving Justice: American's Wrongfully Convicted and Exonerated was the first book published under the non-profit oral history imprint Voice of Witness, and it is the most completely documented work in this segment. The material includes files for each exoneree profiled in the book along with binders containing fact checks with supporting court documents and articles (for preservation purposes, the material was removed from each binder), interview transcripts, drafts, and proofs of the edited interviews. Audio recordings of many of the interviews were transferred to the Ransom Center's Sound Recordings collection.

The final section of the book imprints series contains "non-McSweeney's anthologies," consisting of foreign editions of McSweeney's books published by Hamish Hamilton and McSweeney's content published by other publishers such as Chronicle Books, Big Picture Press, Vintage, and Knopf. Also included in this material is a promotional chapbook of a story written by Wells Tower. Tower quickly wrote the story about two brothers, primarily from the perspective of one brother. Not satisfied with the original story, he later decided to rewrite the story from the other brother's perspective. Both versions of the story were published first in *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* (numbers 23 and 30), and later in Tower's short story collection *Everything Ravaged, Everything Burned* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).

As the primary focus of the McSweeney's Records is the editorial and design processes, business files are present in very small numbers in Series III. Editorial and Administrative Files. The series is arranged into four subseries: A. Editor and Staff Files, 2002-2012, undated; B. Unsolicited Submissions and Correspondence, 2002-2011; C. Marketing and Publicity, 2000-2013, undated; and D. Art and Design, circa 1930s-2010 (bulk 2005-2010), undated, and includes correspondence, unsolicited submissions, and other material associated with the day-to-day operations of McSweeney's.

Subseries A. Editor and Staff Files contains material associated with Dave Eggers, Brent Hoff, Eli Horowitz, Andrew Leland, Brian McMullen, and Chris Ying. Many of McSweeney's editors began as volunteers and/or interns and worked in different capacities and positions on numerous McSweeney's publications and projects, making it difficult to assign them a specific job title or to particular publications. The subseries is ordered alphabetically by last name and concludes with a segment of material associated with various staff and interns. Materials related to Dave Eggers include his original drawings for the McSweeney's office at 849 Valencia and an editor's checklist he wrote with publisher Oscar Villalon. The bulk of material associated with Brent Hoff, Managing Editor of the film quarterly *Wholphin*, includes over forty film and

cinematography magazines and journals he collected for reference and research. Eli Horowitz held many positions at McSweeney's from volunteer carpenter to editor, designer, managing editor, and publisher; he is also a published author. His file titled "Misc Documents" contains some notes from his work on *Bowl of Cherries* and *The Instructions* and includes one of the few contracts in the archive, with Eric Hoffman and Gary Rudoren for their book *Comedy by the Numbers*. Two notebooks kept by *Believer* editor Andrew Leland are perhaps the most personal items in the archive. The notebooks begin in the summer of 2003 and contain daily "to-do" lists, editorial checklists, and other jottings giving a brief glimpse into the creative, interesting, and mundane aspects of being an editor. Designer and editor Brian McMullen also filled multiple roles at McSweeney's, including artistic director and founding editor and namesake of the children's imprint McSweeney's McMullens. Two items of significant interest are the literary journal *Dancing Star*, which McMullen submitted to McSweeney's as an application, and his original sketch of the McSweeney's McMullens logotype. Editor Chris Ying worked on several projects, including *Voice of Witness* publications, and co-founded and co-edits with David Chang (founder/owner of Momofuku group) the food journal *Lucky Peach*. One file includes his notes and sketches.

Subseries B. Unsolicited Submissions and Correspondence is composed of editor's correspondence, fan mail, general letters to McSweeney's, selected subscription cards (including one completed by David Foster Wallace), contest submissions, and cover letters that accompanied the many unsolicited book, short story, and non-fiction manuscripts, as well as poems, comics, and illustrations sent to the editors of McSweeney's. The editorial correspondence is in alphabetical order by last name and is mostly a small sample of incoming correspondence. Andrew Leland's correspondence file includes an outgoing package (appears to be unsent) containing a letter to one of Leland's former Oberlin College professors and three issues of the *Believer* (August 2003, December 2003/January 2004, May 2004). A photocopy of each cover and table of contents is filed with the letter in box 100.3, and the original issues were transferred to the serials section of the Ransom Center Library. McSweeney's original chronological order of short story submissions from 2005 to 2010 is maintained. Selected correspondence is listed in the Index of Correspondents at the end of the finding aid. Submission letters are not indexed.

Subseries C. Marketing and Publicity contains promotional material, McSweeney's catalogs, posters for McSweeney's events, book reviews, and press about McSweeney's, as well as printed material, such as subscription cards and rejection cards. The series is in alphabetical order by subject. Some items of particular interest include the Dzamamamazd card game designed by Marcel Dzama and given as a gift to re-subscribers and the *Animal Man* #1 comic book, which pays homage to the style and format of the *Believer* interviews.

Subseries D. Art and Design includes drawings and art used for merchandise and for general, unrealized, or unidentified projects. Included in this series are more than forty self-portraits drawn by actors, artists, filmmakers, and writers from Jonathan Ames to Sarah Silverman. McSweeney's planned to publish a book of self-portraits and many of these portraits were published in *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern* issue 34. This subseries also contains unidentified and/or unused color swatches, dummy books, covers, and mockups. Cards, photographs, and printed material that were loose and not

identified are arranged in a "Reference" file, with the presumption that these items were collected as samples for inspiration or other use, but a relationship to a specific McSweeney's publication or project isn't apparent.

Series IV. 826 National contains material associated with the eight 826 writing and tutoring center chapters located in San Francisco, New York, Boston, Washington D.C., Ann Arbor, Chicago, Seattle, and Los Angeles. Though each chapter is independently founded and managed, the umbrella organization 826 National provides support, leadership, and other resources to ensure the success of each chapter. McSweeney's staff and volunteers often work on projects that support the centers, including publishing books with all proceeds benefiting the organization, as well as offering design and editorial assistance with 826 publications. Included in the archive are postcards depicting Chris Ware's mural illustrating the development of the human race and its need for different modes of communication that adorns the exterior of 826 Valencia. Also included are assorted flyers and proofs.

Some documents in the McSweeney's records contain personal information and are redacted or restricted to protect an individual's privacy. Examples are Social Security and account numbers and personal records. The originals were removed and replaced with redacted photocopies, which have an identifying statement at the top.

Sticky notes were used frequently for editing purposes and affixed to numerous documents. For preservation purposes, pages bearing sticky notes were photocopied in order to preserve the document's original layout. Depending on the nature of the note, the sticky notes were removed but retained either in a plastic or paper sleeve or placed on the photocopy.

Selected correspondence from throughout the collection is listed in the Index of Correspondents at the end of the finding aid. In general, fan mail and unsolicited submission cover letters are not indexed.

The Index of Writers and Artists with Original Works located at the end of the finding aid contains a list of original or transcribed manuscripts, some unsolicited, that were submitted to McSweeney's for publication or consideration.

Descriptive terms used in the finding aid:

- **Advance proof** - A form of book privately released by the publisher before the book is printed for mass distribution, so errors can be caught before further printing. It is often sent to reviewers, distributors, book stores, etc. It generally lacks the final jacket design.
- **Bound proof** - In this collection, this term is used for a bound set of 8.5x11 proofs.
- **Chapbook** - Historically, it is a small book or pamphlet containing poems, ballads, stories, or religious tracts. The term is still used today to refer to short, inexpensive booklets.
- **Copy edits** - Edits that improve the formatting, style, and accuracy of text by correcting errors in spelling, grammar, and structure.
- **Cover dummy** - A book cover made of the material used in actual production

and shaped to the final form of the printed product, whereby its physical qualities can be previewed.

- **Dummy book** - Unprinted or partially printed samples of a projected publication and made of the material used in actual production to suggest the appearance of the completed work. Most of the dummy books in McSweeney's are white, blank books or other layouts, such as boxes or slipcases.
- **Jacket proof** - Proof, usually printed on paper, of book covering.
- **Manuscript** - Typed or computer printout of a work written by an author; may be a photocopy.
- **Partial Proofs** - Incomplete samples or a particular segment of copy, art, and layout produced at various stages in the production of the regular edition, in order to correct, add to, or check the development of a work.
- **Proofs** - Samples of copy, art, and/or layout produced at various stages in the production of the regular edition, in order to correct, add to, or check the development of a work. For McSweeney's, this includes computer printouts of the text layout used for copy-editing, color printers proofs used for color correction and layout, and page proofs.
- **Unbound signature proofs** - or gatherings, are a group or section of sheets, folded in the middle, and bound together with other gatherings into the binding.

Related Material

Ransom Center holdings that complement the records of McSweeney's publishing house include the papers of many authors published in McSweeney's publications, such as David Foster Wallace, Denis Johnson, Don DeLillo, and T. C. Boyle.

Separated Material

Unpublished, non-commercial audio CDs and cassette tapes were transferred to the Ransom Center Sound Recordings Collection and are described individually in a list at the end of this finding aid and in a [searchable database](#).

Unpublished, non-commercial moving image VHS tapes and DVDs were transferred to the Ransom Center Film Collection.

Computer disks, CD-ROMs, and other digital files were transferred to the Ransom Center Electronic Records Collection.

A hair blow dryer and microcassette recorder were transferred to the Ransom Center Personal Effects Collection.

Copies of McSweeney's books form the McSweeney's Library and were transferred to the Ransom Center Library. Issues from McSweeney's journals and magazines were transferred to the serials section of the Ransom Center Library:

Believer issues no. 1-99 (March 2003-June 2013) with some duplicates, lacking no. 11, 12, 14, 16, 25, 35, 39, 45, 49, 61, 67.

Grantland Quarterly issues no. 1-2.

Lucky Peach issues no. 1-7 (Summer 2011-Spring 2013) with some duplicates, lacking no. 4.

Timothy McSweeney's Quarterly Concern issues no. 1-3 (bundled reissue), no. 4 original and reissue, no. 5-43 (Autumn 1998-Spring 2012) with some duplicates, lacking no. 10, 13, 18, 23, 33, 36.

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Index Terms

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Horowitz, Eli.

Leland, Andrew.

McMullen, Brian.

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