

PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Special Collections
Collection #004-04-04
Collection of Soviet Design Scrapbooks
c.1965-c.1990

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Number: Collection #004-04-04

Title: Collection of Soviet Design Scrapbooks

Creator: Providence Public Library, collector.

Dates: c.1965-c.1990

Quantity: 2 manuscript containers, 5 items (total 1 linear foot)

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Acquisition: Purchased, 2017-2020

Accruals: No accruals are expected.

Custodial history: Purchased from Bennett Penka Rare Books. Items 1 & 2 are believed to have been created by the same unidentified Ukrainian designer; items 3-5 are believed to have been created by a group of unidentified Soviet designers associated with the House of Culture.

Processed by: The collection was processed by Jessica Rogers-Cerrato in 2022.

Conservation: Not applicable.

Language: Materials are in Russian, Ukrainian, English, & German

RIGHTS AND ACCESS

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Providence Public Library, Special Collections department.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to use the following citation format:
[item number], [item title], Collection of Soviet Design Scrapbooks, Special Collections, Providence Public Library, Providence, R.I.

Property Rights: Providence Public Library owns the property rights to this collection. Consideration of the copyrights is the responsibility of the researcher.

INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS

Separated material	None.
Published description	None.
Location of originals	Not applicable.
Location of copies	Not applicable.
Publication note	Not applicable.
Subject headings	LCSH: Communism Communism and culture Cyrillic alphabet Popular culture--Soviet Union Printers--Soviet Union Soviet newspapers Soviet Union Ukraine AAT: comic strips newspaper clippings printed ephemera printers' ornaments product labels scrapbooks type specimens (documents)

SEE ALSO

- The Updike Collection on the History of Printing, Special Collections, Providence Public Library.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The Collection of Soviet Design Scrapbooks highlight interesting typography and design features, assembled using photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings, and commercial labels, among other ephemera. Given the apparent dedication with which the specimens were collected, these albums were most likely not merely decorative, but the working scrapbooks of graphic or type designers. The production of such self-made reference books was an interesting feature of life in the Soviet Union. With many books prohibited from circulation or simply out of print, graphic designers often resorted to creating entire collections of hand-compiled books such as these.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION

The Collection of Soviet Design Scrapbooks contains scrapbooks almost entirely filled with collages of newspaper clippings, labels, and other ephemera and photographic prints of type specimens glued to rectos and versos. Though the scrapbooks themselves were likely created between c.1965 and c.1990, the material within the scrapbooks largely ranges from the 1950s to approximately 1990, with some material of the early 20th century represented as well. The scrapbooks are largely composed of collages of typographically interesting and unusual newspaper clippings and commercial labels from various products. Also included are some photographic prints based on unidentified type specimen books from the late Russian and Soviet periods, as well as original shots of hand-lettered signs and banners. Occasionally, but not often, the typeface has been identified and noted in pen by the compiler.

Two scrapbooks in the collection (items #1 and #2) are part of a set that were produced by an unknown Ukrainian designer, most likely in Odessa, sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s. In addition to material in Russian and Ukrainian, there is also a small amount of material in German and English.

Three items in the collection (items #3, #4, #5) were previously owned by an unnamed family of artists and designers, who took part in designing the House of Culture (Dom kul'tury) of the workers' village of Maina in the Ulyanovsk region of Russia. These albums carefully preserve various magazine and newspaper fonts, as well as stylistic and design elements, such as candy wrappers and other everyday labels, representing the design of the late Soviet Union. Also included within the scrapbooks are several earlier examples of typographic design possibly dating to pre-World War II.

ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION

The items in this collection have been arranged chronologically by date of creation and arranged in a single series. Care was taken to keep the three items crafted by the same creator(s) together.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Item	Title	Date	Box	Folder
1	Scrapbook #1 Description: Oblong string-bound buckram boards, 103 leaves of thick card stock. Dimensions: 14.5 x 26.5 centimeters	c.1965	1	1
2	Scrapbook #2 Description: Green hard cover, predominantly photographs of unidentified type specimen books. Dimensions: 17.75 x 27.25 centimeters	c.1970	1	2
3	Scrapbook #3 Description: Thick cardboard covers, contains some loose materials. Dimensions: 21 x 28.5 centimeters	1975	2	1
4	Scrapbook #4 Description: Bright saturated colors, staple and tie bound, mixed media. Dimensions: 19.5 x 28.5 centimeters	1985	2	2
5	Scrapbook #5 Description: Handmade cover, tape bound. Dimensions: 20 x 28.5 centimeters	c.1990	2	3