

**BLUE RAT GALLERY (ATLANTA, GA.)**  
**Blue Rat Gallery collection, 1983-2007 [bulk 1983-1987]**

Emory University  
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### **Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Blue Rat Gallery (Atlanta, Ga.)  
**Title:** Blue Rat Gallery collection, 1983-2007 [bulk 1983-1987]  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 1369  
**Extent:** 1 linear foot (2 boxes), 2 oversized papers (OP), 1 bound volume (BV), and AV Masters: 1 linear foot (1 box and CLP2)  
**Abstract:** Collection of materials documenting the Atlanta, Georgia, arts cooperative Blue Rat Gallery including administrative records, artwork, audiovisual material, photographs and scrapbooks, and promotional material.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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### **Administrative Information**

#### **Restrictions on Access**

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#### **Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

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#### **Source**

Gift, 2016

#### **Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Blue Rat Gallery collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

#### **Processing**

Arranged and described at the folder level by Sarah Quigley, August 2016.

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## Collection Description

### Historical Note

The Blue Rat Gallery, an Atlanta, Georgia, art collective, was founded in the Pershing Point Apartments in 1983. Pershing Point residents and artists Stephanie Ayers [Dean], Clark Brown, James Farmer, Karen Hennessee, and Chick Lockerman rented a vacant apartment in the building where they hosted the gallery's first show. They held only one exhibition in the apartment before moving temporarily to a vacant stable underneath Peachtree Street; after three shows in that location, they moved back to Pershing Point, this time to the basement. With demolition of the apartment building looming, the group moved one final time to 1044 West Peachtree Street, where they continued to live and host exhibitions, performances, and other events until 1987 when the group disbanded.

Popular with punks and other counter-cultural elements of Atlanta's Midtown neighborhood, shows at the Blue Rat frequently featured local artists working in a variety of genres and media. Such events as "Hang It and Show," where artists were invited to bring their work and display it on a first come, first served basis until the gallery was full, and a show where the gallery was opened and guests were invited to graffiti the walls, promoted the group's do-it-yourself ethos. Though the core collective consisted of the original five founders (later joined by Tim Barrett), numerous Atlanta artists exhibited or performed regularly at the space including Jay Wiggins, Bob Burden, Phreddie Vomit, The Nightporters, Kennan Raines, D'Angelo Dixon, Bobby Burns, Oliver David, Arms Akimbo, and Chris Wood along with his band The Restraints. The gallery also hosted an exhibition of works by nationally known folk artist Howard Finster and family members.

### Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of materials relating to the Blue Rat Gallery from 1983-2007 and includes administrative records, artwork, audiovisual material, photographs and scrapbooks, and promotional material. Administrative records contain artist agreements and biographies, financial records, a small amount of correspondence, meeting notes, and a guest register that includes names of visitors to numerous gallery shows. James Farmer's audiovisual recordings are primarily of gallery events, including audience footage; performances by The Nightporters, Teenz n Heat, and the Section Eight Dancers; poetry readings by Jay Wiggins, Phreddie Vomit, and Kennan Raines; and numerous exhibition openings. One film, "Carrot Man," was an attempt by Bob Burden, along with Clark Brown, James Farmer and others, to experiment with a live-action version of Burden's comic book *Flaming Carrot*.

Photographs and scrapbooks include both photography by Blue Rat artists and candid snapshots of events in various gallery spaces. The scrapbook includes photographs, clippings, and promotional material from Blue Rat events from 1983-1987. It was originally created by Karen Hennessee, then continued by Clark Brown around 1986. Promotional material contains clippings, fliers, post cards, stickers, and other items advertising events at the Blue Rat Gallery.

### Arrangement Note

Arranged by record type.

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## Container List

### Administrative records

| Box | Folder | Content  |
|-----|--------|--|
| 1   | 1      | Application for 501(c)(3) status, undated                              |
| 1   | 2      | Artist agreements, 1983-1987   |
| 1   | 3      | Artist biographies and resumes, undated                                |
| 1   | 4      | Bills and receipts, 1983-1986  |
| 1   | 5      | Budgets, circa 1985  |
| 1   | 6      | Business license, 1984-1985  |
| 1   | 7      | Correspondence, circa 1983-1986  |
| 1   | 8      | Floor plans and maps, undated  |
| 1   | 9      | Gallery guest register, 1983-1987 [1 of 2]                             |
| 1   | 10     | Gallery guest register, 1983-1987 [2 of 2]                             |
| 1   | 11     | Grant application, City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs, undated |
| 1   | 12     | History of Blue Rat Gallery, circa 1984                                |
| 1   | 13     | Insurance policies, 1984-1985  |
| 1   | 14     | Lease agreement, 1983  |
| 1   | 15     | List of exhibitions, 1983-1987   |
| 1   | 16     | Meeting notes, circa 1983-1984   |
| 1   | 17     | Price lists, undated   |
| 1   | 18     | "Ratroactive" exhibition planning documents, 1989                      |

### Artwork

|   |    |  |
|---|----|--|
| 1 | 19 | Burden, Bob, "Bob Burden con Sketch," The Atlanta Fantasy Fair, 1986     |
| 1 | 20 | Hennessee, Karen, original artwork from "Short Stories" exhibition, 1986 |

### Audiovisual material

|      |   |
|------|---|
| CLP2 | Arms Akimbo, untitled, 1984 [photography by Clark Brown, layout and design by Chick Lockerman] [original: phonograph record]<br>[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rvvkd][Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rvvj8]  |
| CLP2 | Dharma Bums, "Heaven Alone" and "Life Goes On," 1986 [photography, design and layout by Blue Rat; removed from Karen Hennessee scrapbook] [original: phonograph record]<br>[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rvvnp][Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rvvh4] |
| AV1  | Farmer, James, Atlanta Aquarium exhibition, Nightporters performance in basement gallery, and Chick Lockerman's apartment at Pershing Point building, 1984; 1044 West Peachtree barbeque and "Hang It & Show" exhibition, 1985 [original: Mini-DV]  |

- [Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrc8h]
- AV1 Farmer, James, cleaning and constructing basement gallery; Bob Burden's "Carrot Man" film shoot; Christmas Party, 1983 [original: VHS; copies: Mini-DV  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrbf3]
- AV1 Farmer, James, development and remodeling of 1044 West Peachtree, 1984 [original: Mini-DV]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrc9n]
- AV1 Farmer, James, edited compilation of Blue Rat Gallery videos, 1983-1986 [original: Micro SD card]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrckr]
- AV1 Farmer, James, exhibition, "Rat Piece," audience recording [original: VHS]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrc53]
- AV1 Farmer, James, footage used for edited compilation; James Farmer and Karen Hennessee apartment, undated [original: VHS]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrbrb]
- AV1 Farmer, James, Graffiti exhibition; Kennan Raines performance; Nightporters performance, circa 1985-1986 [original: Mini-DV]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrcls]
- AV1 Farmer, James, Kennan Raines performance; Karen Hennessee exhibition "Cocktails," circa 1985-1986 [original: Mini-DV]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrccl]
- AV1 Farmer, James, Phreddie Vomit and Teenz n Heat performance in basement gallery; audience recording, 1983 [original: VHS; copy: Mini-DV]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrcf6][Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrcgb]
- AV1 Farmer, James, Poetry Reading 1 and 2, featuring Jay Wiggans and Phreddie Vomit, 1983 [original: VHS]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrc3t]
- AV1 Farmer, James, Rat n Roll exhibition; Nightporters performances in stables gallery and basement gallery; First Anniversary Show, 1983-1984 [original: VHS; copies: Mini-DV]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrbq6]
- AV1 Farmer, James, Unknown footage of homeless men, undated [original: Mini-DV]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrcmw]
- AV1 Hennessee, Karen, "Short Stories" exhibition opening, 1986 [original: Hi-8]  
[Digital/digitized copy available in the Reading Room: id rrcd2]
- CLP2 The Nightporters, "Mona Lisa" and "Get the Feeling," undated [photography by Clark Brown; removed from Karen Hennessee scrapbook] [original: phonograph record]
- CLP2 The Restraints, "Wacka-Wacka" and "Roll Over Ronnie," 1982 [cover by Clark Brown; removed from Karen Hennessee scrapbook] [original: phonograph record]

**Photographs and scrapbooks**

- 1 21 1044 West Peachtree Street, undated [photographs by Clark Brown]
- 1 22 1044 West Peachtree Street, events and people, circa 1984-1987 [photographs by Stephanie Ayers Dean]
- 1 23 Blue Rat Hotel, basement gallery music room, undated
- 1 24 Blue Rat Hotel, events and people, circa 1983-1984 [photographs by Stephanie Ayers Dean]
- 1 25 Blue Rat Hotel, group photographs and unidentified audience, undated
- 1 26 Brown, Clark and Bobby Burns with unidentified person in kitchen of Blue Rat Hotel, undated
- 1 27 Dean, Stephanie Ayers, undated
- 1 28 Farmer, James, contact sheet with photographs of Clark Brown, James Farmer, Chick Lockerman, and D'Angelo Dixon, undated
- 1 29 Farmer, James, contact sheets and collages for Architecture Show, 1983
- OP1 1 Farmer, James, "Corset Series," 1982
- OP1 2 Farmer, James, photographs of unidentified exhibit/dancer, undated
- 1 30 Hennessee, Karen, photograph album pages, including images of The Restraints and others outside Blue Rat Gallery, undated [photographs by Clark Brown]
- BV1 Hennessee, Karen and Clark Brown, scrapbook, 1983-1987
- 1 31 Hennessee, Karen and Clark Brown, scrapbook, loose materials, circa 1983-1987
- 1 32 Hennessee, Karen, "Short Stories," exhibition opening, 1986
- 1 33 Hennessee, Karen, stables gallery, 1983
- 1 34 Promotional photographs of Blue Rat artists holding blue rat masks, undated
- 1 35 Section 8 Dancers, undated [added color by Karen Hennessee]
- 2 1 Stables gallery exhibition, circa 1983
- 2 2 Teenz n Heat, basement gallery, circa 1983
- 2 3 Unidentified artwork, undated
- 2 4 Wiggans, Jay, in front of graffiti wall, undated [photograph by Clark Brown]
- 2 5 Wood, Chris, circa 1984
- 2 6 Wood, Chris, paintings, circa 1984 [slides]

**Promotional material**

- 2 7 Annual report, 1984
- OP2 1 Banner, undated
- 2 8 Brown, Clark, "My Life as a Rat," exhibition cards, Kool Korner Gallery, circa 2007
- 2 9 Calendar, "Year of the Rat," 1984
- 2 10 Calendars, events, 1985-1987
- 2 11 Clippings and articles
- OP1 3 Clippings and articles, oversized

|     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| 2   | 12 | Fliers   |
| OP1 | 4  | Fliers, oversized  |
| 2   | 13 | Matchbook, Karen Hennessee, "Short Stories" exhibition, 1986 |
| 2   | 14 | Mock-ups and printing negatives                              |
| 2   | 15 | Post cards   |
| 2   | 16 | Press releases, circa 1983-1986                              |
| 2   | 17 | Programs, 1984-1986  |
| 2   | 18 | Stickers   |
| OP2 | 2  | T-shirt, undated   |

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