Overview

Title: Volvelle Collection

Date(s): 1897-2004

Quantity: 5.25 linear ft. (12 boxes)

Copyright: Copyright has not been transferred to Yale University.


Preferred Citation: Volvelle Collection, Arts Library, Yale University Library.

Summary: Jessica Helfand, a graduate of the Yale School of Art Graphic Design Program (MFA ‘89) and a respected critic of visual culture, collected hundreds of examples of the volvelle format. In December of 2004, Helfand donated the collection to the Arts Library. Volvelles, or graphic wheels, are “various reckoning devices consisting of movable discs surmounted by or carrying other graduated or figured circles for calculating, for example, phases of the moon, the time of the rising or setting sun, or the times of the tides.”¹ They are efficient tools for collating a large amount of information into a compact delivery device, yet have also been used purely for novelty. Topics of the volvelles range from astronomy to pop culture and fashion. Several, such as language and geographic wheels, serve as educational tools; others have more technical and scientific applications. The volvelles are made of a variety of materials including many forms of paper and card stock, plastic, metal, and leather. Helfand’s book, Reinventing the Wheel, which was published by Princeton Architectural Press in 2002, served as the catalogue for an exhibition of the same title at The Grolier Club in New York City in the spring of 2004. The volume contains many of the volvelles that are a part of this collection, although some titles vary from those listed in this finding aid. Ms. Helfand also gave a number of books containing volvelles to the Library. The books are catalogued individually in Orbis, Yale’s online catalog, and can be found by conducting a Special Collections Subject search for “volvelle collection.” In addition to the volvelles, the collection contains one box of Helfand’s files relating to her book and to her Grolier Club exhibit.

Arrangement: The volvelles are arranged alphabetically by title within various size categories. Each volvelle title has a unique number; pamphlets, brochures, etc. that accompany volvelles are filed under the number of the respective volvelle. A box listing of Helfand’s files follows the listing of the volvelles.

For further information: Arts Library Special Collections
c/o Arts of the Book Reading Room
Yale University Library
P.O. Box 208240
New Haven, CT 06520-8240
Tel. (203) 432-1712
Fax (203) 432-0549

Inventory

Volvelles – Under 11”

Box 1


46. **Conoco Bronz-z-z Mile Dial.** [S.l.]: Continental Oil Co., 1940. *Wheel.*


49. **CS Auto Leasing.** [S.l.]: CS Auto Leasing, n.d.. *Wheel.*


52. **Date Computer.** [Miami, FL]: Harris, n.d. *Wheel.*

53. **Date Finder.** Houston, TX: Gardner Denver, n.d. *Wheel.*


Box 1 (cont’d)


Box 2


83. First Aid Wheel. La Crosse, WI: American Red Cross, 1942. Wheel.


117. **Key to the Steel Square Table of Tangents and Framing Chart.** Los Angeles, CA: B. F. McDonald Company, n.d. *Wheel and pamphlet.*


120. **Know Your U.S. and Know US.** Lederer, IN: Tom Sawyer Apparel for Real Boys, 1951. *Wheel.*


Box 3 (cont’d)


Box 3 (cont’d)


179. **Presidents Information Chart The United States of America.** [S.l.]: Carnation, n.d. *Wheel.*


Box 4


Box 4 (cont’d)


200. **South Bend Freshwater Fishing Dial.** South Bend, IN: South Bend, 1959. *Wheel.*

201. **Space Guide Mean Distance from Sun, Million Miles and Astronomical Symbol.** [S.l.]: [S.n.], n.d. *Wheel.*


203. **Spaulding Table Queen Bread Almanac States of the USA.** New York, NY: Spaulding Table Queen Bread Spec, Adv, Serv., 1957. *Wheel.*


Box 4 (cont’d)


238. Van Dyke Microtomic Twenty Inch Slide Rule. [S.l.]: Eberhard Faber Pencil Co., c. 1943. Wheel.


Box 4 (cont’d)


249. **Wizard of Fries Calculator Division Table.** [S.l.]: Burger King Corporation, 1981. Wheel.


**Volvelles - Under 14”**

Box 5


258. **Astrorama.** Los Angeles: Griffith Observatory, 1976 Wheel.


Box 5 (cont’d)


300. Learn a New Language with a Spin of the Wheel! [S.l.], n.d. [from a cereal box?]. Sheet.


Box 6 (cont’d)


---

**Volvelles -- Objects, 3 dimensional under 14”**

**Box 8**


Items not related to a volvelle in the collection:

362. Diagram: This Diagram Contains a Mathematical Delineation of All the Characters of Dodge’s Stenographic Alphabet. [S.l.]: J. Dodge, n.d. Diagram.


Volvelles — Objects, 3 dimensional over 14”

Box 10


Box 11


Helfand Files

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 12</th>
<th>Folder</th>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1      |        | Reinventing the Wheel  
Correspondence, notes and reviews | 2001-2002 |
| 2      |        | Volvelles exhibit at the Grolier Club  
Correspondence and notes | 2004, n.d. |
| 3      |        | Invitations, press release, review | 2003-2004 |
| 4      |        | Exhibit label copy, print-outs of thumb-nail images  
of volvelles and mock-ups for Timothy McSweeney’s Completely Unbelievable Story | [2004] |
| 5      |        | Digital images of volvelles on two compact disks | 2002 |
| 6      |        | “Revived forms of graphic volvellery”  
Miscellaneous publications | 2001, 2004 |