Winter 2-27-1997

The Beat Generation

Agnieszka Taborska
Rhode Island School of Design, atabor@risd.edu

Paula Hunter
Rhode Island School of Design

Steen L. Jobe
Rhode Island School of Design

James O. Barnhill
Rhode Island School of Design

Helen Lee
Rhode Island School of Design

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_cabaret_programs

Part of the Acting Commons, Art Education Commons, Dance Commons, Fashion Design Commons, Fine Arts Commons, French Linguistics Commons, German Language and Literature Commons, History Commons, Modern Literature Commons, Music Commons, Other Arts and Humanities Commons, Other French and Francophone Language and Literature Commons, Other Languages, Societies, and Cultures Commons, Other Theatre and Performance Studies Commons, Performance Studies Commons, Playwriting Commons, Russian Literature Commons, and the Theatre History Commons

Recommended Citation
Taborska, Agnieszka; Hunter, Paula; Jobe, Steen L.; Barnhill, James O.; Lee, Helen; Waldman, Joshua; Fitzgerald, Nishira; Meilman, Brendan; Lawall, Ismael; Pitt-Smith, Zach; Walker, Kevin; Carroll, Tamara; Porter, Rhon; Schick, Maleese; Azcueta, Rhody; Umbricht, Kevin; Curry, Matthew; Kim, Jee-Eun; Lee, Michelle; Nealon, Marisa; Levi, Karelle; Riley, Hilary; Potter, Simon; and le Vaillant, Antoinette, "The Beat Generation" (1997). Programs. 13.
https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/liberalarts_cabaret_programs/13

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the RISD Cabaret 1987-2000 at DigitalCommons@RISD. It has been accepted for inclusion in Programs by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@RISD. For more information, please contact mpompeli@risd.edu.
In the 1950s the United States and the Soviet Union/Russia (the “first” and “second” worlds, the Western and Eastern power blocks) confronted each other in what is known as the COLD WAR. The West now, with the fall of the Soviet Union, claims triumph in that conflict, but in the 50s it was a standoff of mutually escalating deterrence. Everything in this Cabaret must be understood against the reality of that confrontation which kept the world on the brink of nuclear annihilation. In the face of that unsettling reality, Americans created what might be called a culture of disturbance and anxiety but one of tremendous energy and personal commitment. Nostalgia for the 1950s whether political (that’s when America was truly America) or aesthetic (love even simple clocks and kidney shaped tables) should be measured against that larger confrontation between Russia (our first Cabaret) and America (our 10th). Baruch Kirschenbaum, Dean of the Division of Liberal Arts

February 27 - March 2, 1997
Waterman Building, Top Floor

10th RISD Cabaret

The Beat Generation & the 1990s

and Jack Kerouac first met and started a movement which changed the face of postwar America and influenced the 1960s as well as the subculture of the 1970s and 1980s. In 1995 the exhibition devoted to the Beat Generation at the Whitney Museum “sanctified” the movement, classifying it as an important part of American cultural heritage. The present revival of poetry-reading and café culture makes the Beat spirit tangible even outside museum walls. The commercial world also eagerly appropriates the legend: The Gap store uses old photographs of Ginsberg and Kerouac to advertise khaki pants; Kerouac’s coat has been auctioned for 10,000 dollars.

We, however, dedicate our Cabaret to all free spirits who, as the debate on art and censorship resounds with new force, look upon the Beats as “rebels with a good cause.”

Agnieszka Tabarska

Thank you, Pina Biala, for your everlasting help.

David Chandler, for his technical assistance; Michael Fitz for sharing with us his memories about Beat clubs in Providence. God Hughe, for her everlasting help; John Jacobs, for sending me lots of fabric. Baruch Kirschenbaum, for sharing with us his memories of the Beat years in New York. Edward McAndrew for lending us his precious collection of the first editions of Beat writers. Gary Well for sharing with us his knowledge of Beat philosophy and Japanese haiku. Donald Martin, for his technical assistance, Catarina Sando for helping edit this program. Kevin Walker’s family, for supplying us with home videos from the 50’s. Josh Wood, for organizing the exhibition in the library.

Division of Liberal Arts, for sponsoring the Division of Foundation Studies, for letting us use their studios. We express our gratitude for the support of Professor Baruch Kirschenbaum, Dean of the Division of Liberal Arts, and Professor Jaroon Yoon, Dean of the Division of Foundation Studies.