

Mudd Club 1978-1983
The Stephen Mass Papers

Broadway Windows and Project Space
February 3 – March 9, 2024
Reception Wednesday, February 28th 5–7PM

In collaboration with NYU Fales Library and Special Collections, 80WSE Gallery presents an exhibition featuring materials from The Stephen Mass Papers, focusing on the legendary Mudd Club venue in New York City (1978-1983) through photographs and extensive notes. Located at the street-level Broadway Windows gallery and the Project Space at 80WSE, the exhibition materializes the file structures of the archive and select visual documents contained within the collection.

The archival extracts provide rare insight into an important epicenter of downtown art, music, fashion, and culture at a transitional point in New York City and American life marked by rapid urban gentrification and the dawn of The Reagan Era. Within this atmosphere, post-punk musicians, independent designers, contemporary artists, and celebrities coalesced to animate the Mudd Club ‘cabaret’.

Acquired by Fales in 2019, the Stephen Mass Papers spans 16.75 Linear Feet in 24 manuscript boxes, 3 half manuscript boxes, 2 small flat boxes, 2 oversize flat boxes, 1 media box, 1 oversize folder in shared housing, and 1 sound reel in shared housing, including 33.92 Megabytes in 167 computer files, 1 sound tape reels, 1 videocassettes (u-matic), 10 audiocassettes, and 6 film reels.

“Stephen Mass is an entrepreneur who co-founded the Mudd Club located at 77 White Street in downtown New York City in 1978 along with art curator Diego Cortez and Anya Phillips. The venue became a focal point of the downtown music, art, and cultural scene in the late 20th century, showcasing the intersections of popular and avant-garde performance culture, gender and sexuality, celebrity culture, music, visual art, fashion, film, and nightlife.

The Stephen Mass Papers (inclusive dates 1940-2019, bulk dates 1978-2009) documents the founding and operation of the Mudd Club in New York City, Mass’s other entrepreneurial ventures in New York, and his nightclubs and restaurants in Berlin, as well as his personal life and family history. Consisting of both paper and electronic formats, the collection includes extensive notebooks and notes containing the planning and working notes for Mass’s various endeavors, financial and legal documents, promotional materials for events (such as posters, flyers, and newsletters), ephemera (differentiated from promotional material, as promotional material Mass collected from other clubs or organizations), press coverage, and photographic materials such as prints, negatives, and slides.”

—Fales Library and Special Collections

The Fales Library & Special Collections comprises 350,000 volumes of book and print items, over 11,000 linear feet of archive and manuscript materials, and about 90,000 audiovisual elements.

Organized by Howie Chen with Emily Dotsikas in collaboration with Nicholas Martin, Fales Library and Special Collections.

Produced by Jon Huron

80WSE Gallery is located at 80 Washington Square East
For more information, please contact Jon Huron at jlh403@nyu.edu

Broadway Windows gallery is a series of five street-level display windows located at the corner of Broadway and East 10th Street. The installations can be viewed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

80WSE Gallery

Founded in 1974, 80 Washington Square East, NYU is a not-for-profit gallery presenting contemporary and historical exhibitions. The gallery exhibits in two further locations, at Broadway Windows at Broadway and East 10th Street, and Washington Square Windows.

Curator Howie Chen and Gallery Manager Jon Huron.

