Burton Kramer Collection, circa 1957-2008, undated

The Burton Kramer Collection was donated to Rochester Institute of Technology in February, 2008 by Burton Kramer.

The Wallace Center
Graphic Design Archives
Rochester Institute of Technology
Rochester, New York 14623-0887

Administrative Information

Creator: Kramer, Burton, 1932-

Extent: 11 manuscript boxes, 6 oversize boxes, + 1 map drawer (12.4 linear feet)

Abstract: Collection of materials from graphic designer Burton Kramer. Includes extensive client publications: advertisements, posters, letterhead, brochures, reports, mainly from his firm Kramer Design Associates in Toronto, Canada.

Processed by: Amy Vilz, May 2011

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Preferred Citation: [Description and dates], Box/folder number, Burton Kramer Collection, RIT Libraries: Graphic Design Archives, Rochester Institute of Technology.

Acquisition: The Burton Kramer Collection was donated to Rochester Institute of Technology in February, 2008 by Burton Kramer.

Arrangement

Series I. Bibliographic records, circa 1958-2008, undated
   Subseries A. Writings on Kramer, circa 1964-2008, undated
   Subseries B. Writings by Kramer, circa 1975-2003, undated
   Subseries C. Exhibitions, circa 1975-1988, undated

Series II. Clients, circa 1957-2002, undated
   Subseries A. Publications, circa 1957-2002
   Subseries B. Packaging/promotional objects, circa 1963-1990, undated
   Subseries C. Design manuals, circa 1974-1997
   Subseries D. Posters and signs, circa 1960-1993, undated
Biographical Note

“That design is far more than an interesting way to earn a living, that design is an attitude, a way of life, a passion, a habit, a challenge, and incurable disease, for some a religion, and often a source of great joy.”

Educated at the Art Institute of Chicago, Yale University, and the Royal College of Art in London, Burton Kramer began as a graphic designer in the late 1950s for Will Burtin in New York City working on Upjohn’s Cell exhibit. Within a few years, he moved to Switzerland to work with Gottfried Honegger at Geigy Chemicals, and then as chief designer for the Erwin Halpern Agency. There, he earned notice for his work with such clients as Modissa, Derbystar, and Therma.

In 1965 he moved to Canada and created graphics and signage for Expo 67 with Paul Arthur + Associates before setting up his own firm, Burton Kramer Associates (later, Kramer Design Associates). Early clients included Clairtone, The Royal Ontario Museum, Shell Canada, Reed Paper, and Canadian government agency Ontario Educational Communications Authority (OECA). At this time, Kramer was a pioneer in promoting the International Style and the use of Helvetica in Canada.

Although best known for his visual identity design for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (“exploding C” logo), Kramer’s work is prevalent all over Toronto, including the Eaton Centre, Royal Ontario Museum, Union Station, St. Lawrence Centre, and Copps Coliseum. Beginning in 1978, he taught Typography and Corporate Identity Design for 21 years at Ontario College of Art and Design.

Kramer has received many honors. In 1974 he became one of the first Canadian designers to be a member of Alliance Graphique Internationale. He has also received The Order of Ontario (2002), and has been recognized in Canadian Who’s Who, Contemporary Designers, and Who’s Who in Graphic Design.


Scope and Content

The collection is divided into two series: Bibliographic records and Clients. Bibliographic records contain writings by and about Kramer, and a small amount of exhibition documentation (brochures and exhibit panels). Holiday broadsides created for the Halpern Agency, as well as Paul Arthur, and his own Kramer Design Associates, are also included in this series.

The second series, Clients, makes up the bulk of the collection. Consisting of samples of work produced by Kramer Design Associates, it offers some thirty years of coverage, emphasizing the late 1960s to late 1990s. Records include brochures, letterhead, reports, and directories. Previous professional work created for Geigy Chemicals and Swiss agency Erwin Halpern Advertising is also represented, with examples of work for Modissa, Therma, Erle ZF, Spindel, and Derbystar. These records contain advertisement tear sheets and posters.
Coverage of Canadian work is broad and encompasses graphics and visual identity programs for dozens of companies including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, North American Life, and the Royal Ontario Museum. Canadian government ministries and departments were also frequent clients. Examples include the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce (brochures, reports, and directories) and the Ontario Educational Communications Authority (OECA). Records for the OECA include Operation Moonvigil, a simulation game created in 1971 for students in grades five through nine. Although the collection focuses on Kramer’s work in Canada, coverage of his lauded designs for Expo ’67 is limited to a journal article, photostat of pictograms, and a few digital images [see folder 10.8].

Other types of records included in this series: posters and broadsides, promotional objects, and design manuals. Notable posters include those created for the Art Gallery of Ontario, Royal Ontario Museum, and Modissa. Promotional objects include examples of packaging for Noma Lites, buttons for numerous clients, clothing (t-shirts, ties, and scarf), and paper weights for Reed Paper and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Design manual materials range from logo reproduction sheets to complete manuals, and include those created for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Hospital for Sick Children, and OECA.

**Container List**

**Series I. Bibliographic records, circa 1958-2008**

*Scope and content*: Contains writings by and about Kramer, and exhibition material. A “+” sign indicates material is stored in oversize boxes.


15.2+ Erwin Halpern, circa 1963-1965; tear sheet, holiday broadsides.

15.3+ Paul Arthur + Associates, circa 1965-1966; holiday broadside, Graphic Design Consultants promotional booklet [2 copies].

**Subseries A. Writings on Kramer, circa 1964-2008, undated**

*Arrangement: Chronological.*

1.1 *Die Besten Plakate des Jahres*, 1964; includes ads for Derbystar, Modissa, and Therma.


1.3 “Burton Kramer,” 1975; in *107 Graphic Gesigners of AGI*.

1.4 “Burton Kramer- Designer,” 1986; in *Studio Magazine*, vol. 4 no. 1 (February 1986), pp. 37. [3 copies]


1.7  Other clippings, circa 1970-1993, undated

10.8-10.9  “Burton Kramer Archive,” 2008; images of Kramer’s work, Kramer Design Associates offices. [Original cd with jpeg files in accession file. See Archivist for access.]

**Subseries B. Writings by Kramer, circa 1975-2003, undated**

*Arrangement: Chronological.*

1.8  “Graphic Design in Canada,” 1975; in *IDEA* extra issue: *Graphic Design in Canada*, pp.110; also article on Kramer and Associates, pp. 96. [2 copies]


1.10  “Who is Teaching Corporate Identity Design to the Next Generation,” 1996; with Keith Rushton in *Studio*, vol. 14 no. 5 (September/October 1996), pp. 28.

10.7  “Comments,” 2003; speech given on the occasion of receipt of honorary doctorate from Ontario College of Design. [copy]

1.11  “It’s Not a Bird, It’s Not a Plane,” undated; in *Applied Arts Quarterly*. [tear sheets]

**Subseries C. Exhibitions, circa 1975-1988, undated**

*Scope and content: Contains exhibition booklets and panels.*

*Arrangement: Chronological.*

1.12  *C & D*, 1981; Ontario College of Art Communications and Design Department faculty exhibit booklet. [3 copies]


Drawer  OECA, undated; logo graphic exhibition panel.

18.1+  Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, circa 1975; logo on vehicles [mounted photo].

Drawer  Stelco, undated; cover graphic exhibition panel.
Drawer
School to School/Educational Exchange Program, undated; logo graphic exhibition panel.

Series II. Clients, circa 1957-2002, undated
Scope and content: Some dates are taken directly from Kramer’s descriptions of the material. A “+” sign indicates material is stored in oversize boxes.

Scope and content: Mainly consists of client brochures, letterhead, reports, and advertisement tear sheets. Work created for Canadian government ministries are listed under “Canada, Government of.”

Arrangement: Alphabetical by client.

2.1 Actors’ Fund of Canada, 1998; flier.
16.6+ Alliance Graphique Internationale, 1988; proof.
2.2 Amblin Resource Inc., 1992; letterhead.
15.4+ American Society of Magazine Photographers, 1960; journal covers.
2.4 Art Gallery of Ontario, circa 1975; exhibition photos.
2.5 BBR Canada Limited, 1966; brochure.
2.6 Bayly Engineering, undated; brochure.
2.7 Bedford Consulting Group, 1978; letterhead.
16.7+ Bell and Howell, circa 1960-1965; tear sheet.
2.8 Boigon & Armstrong, undated; letterhead, prospectus. [Prospectus cover proof in Box 18.2+].
2.9 Burns and MacEachern, 1971; envelope, book: Canadian Architecture 1960/70.

Canada, Government of

3.1 Ministry of Labour, undated; directory.

3.2-3.3 Ministry of Treasury, Economics, and Intergovernmental Affairs, 1970; report.


3.6-4.3 Ontario Educational Communications Authority, circa 1970-1979; annual reports, forms, brochures, *Operation Moonvigil* simulation game, photographs. [5 folders] [Note: Operation Moonvigil game in Box 13]


5.2-5.3 The Canada Council, circa 1975-1977; fliers, catalog, reports. [Directory cover in 15.5+]

5.4 Canadian Guild of Crafts, 1972; *Entr'acte* exhibit entry forms.

5.5 Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, circa 1995; letterhead.


5.6-5.7 Centre Inn, 1970; menus, brochures.

5.8 CentreStage, circa 1978; flier, letterhead.

5.9-5.10 Clairtone, circa 1966-1968; annual report, booklets, forms, letterhead.

5.11 Clarke Henning and Co., undated; letterhead.


5.13 Creative Playgrounds, undated; letterhead.

6.1 Credit Realty Group, circa 1980-1985; letterhead.

6.2 Decoustics, 1980s; letterhead, brochures.

16.8+ Derbystar, circa 1963; brochures, forms, tear sheets.


6.6 Energy Cost Control Services, circa 1975; letterhead.

15.6+ Enkalon, 1963; tear sheets.

15.7+ Erle ZF, 1964-1965; tear sheets.

6.7 Expo '67, 1965; pictograms.

6.8 Facscan, 1978; letterhead.


6.10 The Gemini Group, 1991; letterhead.

6.11 Graphic Designers of Canada, undated; brochure.

6.12 Gulf Canada, 1983; brochure.


15.8+ Herman Miller, circa 1979; newsletter, tear sheets.

6.15 Herman Smith Management Resources, undated; brochure.

6.16 Intercommerce, undated; brochure.

6.17 J.D. Looseleaf, circa 1978; letterhead.


15.9+ Knecht, circa 1965; tear sheets.

6.19 Krug Furniture, 1982; brochure. [2 copies]


7.2 Millcroft Inn, undated; brochure.

7.3    *Monocle*, 1957; journal.


7.4    National Yacht Club, 2001-2002; brochures.

7.5    Niagara Institute, 1975; brochures. [2 copies]

7.6    Noma, circa 1971; photo.

7.7    North American Life, circa 1986; annual report, letterhead.

7.8    Northern Telecom, 1982; letterhead.

7.9    Oak Sales, undated; letterhead.

7.10   Onex, circa 1980; letterhead.

7.11   Ontario College of Art, 1980; brochure.


7.15   Ontario Lottery Corporation, circa 1982; brochure.

7.16   Ontario Place, circa 1973; brochures.

15.10+ Orta, circa 1963; tear sheet.

7.17   Peter Hamilton Architects, circa 1985; letterhead.

15.11+ Photo Studio 13, 1962, 1964; tear sheet, photo.

7.18   Pogue Health Service, undated; letterhead.

7.19   Pop Shoppes, 1978; annual report.

7.20   Procter and Gamble, circa 1986; brochure.

7.21   Provo Power Company, undated; letterhead.

8.1    Reed Paper, circa 1974; letterhead, brochure.

8.2    Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, 1980; brochure.
8.3-8.5 Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, 1980, 1986; book: *Passionate Spirits*; booklet: *Creative Spark '86* [2 copies].


9.1 S + J Engineering, undated; letterhead.

9.2 St. Lawrence Centre, circa 1983; letterhead, brochure.


9.5 Sculptors Society of Canada, 1978; brochure.

9.6 Shaw Festival, 1975; brochure.


9.8 Spindel, circa 1962; brochures. [Tear sheet in 15.12]

9.9 Stelco, 1973; journal: *Scope.*


15.13 Tavolek Laboratorites, 1964; tear sheets.


9.14 Therma, 1964; brochure. [2 copies]

9.15 Tillsonburg Town Centre, circa 1980; brochure.


9.17 Toronto-Dominion Centre, 1985; brochures.

9.18 Toronto Medical Group, undated; letterhead.

9.19 Venturetek, circa 1974-1979; annual reports.


Subseries B. Packaging/promotional objects, circa 1963-1990, undated
Arrangement: Alphabetical by object type.


11.1-11.2 Buttons, 1970-1990; Centre Inn, Ontario Arts Council; Ontario College of Art Communications and Design Department; Ontario Educational Communications Authority; Research Corporation of The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada; Scarborough Board of Education; Scene (Toronto's Theatre Magazine); Toronto Folk Festival; “Design is where it's all at!”

15.16-15.18+ Clothing, 1975, 1988; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation [tie], Kite Festival [t-shirt], Reed Paper Limited [tie, scarf].

15.19+ Envelopes, 1964, undated; Research Corporation of The Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Tavolek Laboratories [Raticate sleeve].

15.20+ LP record, 1983; National Youth Orchestra Association of Canada.

Box 12 Paper weights, circa 1975, undated; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Reed Paper Limited, “YYY” [unknown client].

1.3 Other objects, circa 1975, 1988; Reed Paper Limited [lighter, key fob, napkin], Scarborough [balloon].

Subseries C. Design manuals, circa 1974-1997
Arrangement: Alphabetical by client.

17.2-17.3+ Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1974; Visual Identification Program [3 copies], Graphic Standards Manual, photo. [Manual cover proof in Box 18.3+]  

9.21 Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, 1995; corporate logo reproduction sheets.

9.22 Centenary Hospital, 1987; Signage Manual.

10.1 Cogeco Cable Canada, 1997; corporate logo reproduction sheet. [2 copies]

10.2 Gulf Canada Limited, 1983; Recruitment Advertising Guide.

10.3 The Hospital for Sick Children, 1981; Signage Manual.

10.4-10.5 National Research Council, circa 1983; Visual Standards for Publications. [3 copies]

16.1-16.2+ Ontario Educational Communications Authority, 1974; Corporate Design Manual. [1 cover + 1 manual].
10.6 Scarborough Board of Education, 1988; logo reproduction sheet.

**Subseries D. Posters and signs, circa 1960-1993, undated**

Scope and content: Mainly consists of posters by Burton Kramer + Associates; a few from his work at Erwin Halpern. Work created for Canadian government ministries are listed under “Canada, Government of.”

Arrangement: Chronological.

18.4+ Art Gallery of Ontario, circa 1970-1979; 50 x 50- Netherlands Graphics; Art of the Canadian Eskimo: Four Regions; French Printmakers of the 19th Century; Grafik; Graphic Communication Canada; International Graphics; Paris Today; Roy Lichtenstein + Jasper Johns; Spirits and Ancestors: The Sculpture of West Africa and the Congo; Steam and Sail; Symbols and Signs through the Ages: A Selection; Victor Vasarely; The Lost Party-David Blackwood; proof. [22 x 8.5”]

Drawer1 Artists-Athletes Coalition Olympic Poster Project, circa 1976; Canada 1976. [6 designs: 35 x 24” each]

18.5+ BBR, undated; We wish all our friends.... [24 x 18”]

18.6+ Burton Kramer Associates, 1968; holiday broadside. [24 x 18”]

**Canada, Government of**


Drawer Ministry of Transportation and Communications, circa 1984; The Great Lakes Seaway. [20.25 x 30”]

18.8+ Ontario Education Communications Authority, 1971, undated; Channel 19; The Third World; Art and Artists; Food for Thought. [28 x 20”]

Drawer Ontario Ministry of Education, 1968, 1972; Project Canada; Film Festival. [24 x 18” to 39 x 20”]

18.9+ CentreStage Company, undated; laminated sign. [15 x 24]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flat</th>
<th>Derbystar, 1964; Derbystar-Konvenium Heberlein &amp; Co. [3 pieces, 50 x 35” each]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.4+</td>
<td>Geigy Chemical Corporation, 1960; <em>The Man of God</em> holiday insert. [11 x 17”]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.10+</td>
<td>John B. Aird Gallery, 1993; <em>Indigenous People- A New Partnership</em>. [24 x 18”]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 18.11+| Mariposa, circa 1980-1985; *Pete Seeger and Michael Cooney: Mariposa Folk Festival; Mariposa Folk Festival: Out of the Past…Into the Future*. [18 x 24” to 26.5 x 9”]
| Flat | Modissa AG Zurich, circa 1960-1965; *Modissa*. [circa 50.25 x 35.25”]
| 18.12+| National Youth Orchestra of Canada, 1982; *Trans-Canada Tour*. [21.5 x 13.5”]
| Drawer | North American Life, 1988, undated; *Bienvenue a la nouvelle Nord-americaine*; plaque. [9 x 9” to 32 x 34”] |
| 18.13+| Ontario College of Art, 1981, 1987; *Faculty Exhibit; First Annual Tacky Ball*. [25 x 18”]
| 18.14+| Ontario Music Educators’ Association, 1982; *Conference ’82: the Challenge of Change*. [26.5 x 9”]
| Drawer | Ontario Science Centre, 1974; *In Praise of Hands: Benson & Hedges Salutes the First World Crafts Exhibition*. [28 x 20”]
| Drawer | Orta, undated; *Zahle weiss und rot….* [35.5 x 23.25”]
| 18.15+| Research Corporation of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, 1980; *Energy in the Design Process*. [22 x 8.5”]
| 16.5+| Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, 1992; *Jaworska Oesterle*. [9.5 x 9”]
| Drawer | The Royal Ontario Museum, circa 1968-1970; *Gallery of Mineralogy; The Origins of Chintz; Jensen Silver; New Guinea: Big Man Island; Arts of India and Nepal; Out of this World*. [28 x 20” to 31.5 x 23.5”]
| 18.16+| Sculptors Society of Canada, 1978; *Sculpture Canada ‘78*, 1978 [22 x 25.5”]
| Drawer | Shaw Festival, 1975; *Shaw Festival; Shaw Festival 1975*. [24 x 17.75” to 38 x 23.25”]
| 18.17+| Sheridan College School of Crafts and Design, undated; *Spring*. [23.5 x 8.75”] |
18.18+ Surfacing Textile Dyers and Printers Association of Ontario, 1982; 
*Surfacing: From Fabric to Fabric.* [28 x 8.25”]

Drawer Therma AG Schwanden GL, 1964; *Therma.* [36.75 x 35.5”]

18.19+ *Toronto Folk Festival,* 1980 [18 x 23.5”]

Drawer *Trade Typesetting Limited,* undated [29 x 21”]

Drawer Whyte Hooke Papers *Metric,* undated [33 x 23.25”]

16.3+ Unknown, undated; laminated sign: *North Wing.* [5 x 18”]

**Search Terms**

**Authors**
600 Kramer, Burton, 1932-

**Subject terms**
600 Kramer, Burton, 1932—Exhibitions
610 Container Corporation of America
650 Commercial artists—United States—History—20th century
650 Designers—United States—History—20th century
650 Graphic Arts—United States—History —20th century
650 Graphic Artists—United States—History—20th century

**Genre terms**
655 advertisements
655 brochures
655 buttons (information artifacts)
655 letterheads
655 photographs
655 posters
655 tear sheets

**Related Materials**

*Corporate Design Manual.* Concept, text and design by Burton Kramer Associates. 
Toronto: Ontario Educational Communications Authority, 1974. 