JASPER JOHNS · SAMUEL BECKETT · VÉRA RUSSELL

Foirades / Fizzles

The working archive of the collaboration, circa 1966–1992



Jasper Johns at the Atelier Crommelynck, Paris, reviewing a proof of the flagstone imagery used throughout *Foirades / Fizzles*.

INTRODUCTION

Compact and focused, the present archive documents one of the most important projects of Jasper Johns's career: a pivot from language encountered publicly, in his most celebrated paintings, to language encountered privately, in the book.

Preserved by Véra Russell, the editor who conceived and directed the project, it documents the creation of *Foirades / Fizzles* (Petersburg Press, 1976), widely regarded as the most important artist's book of Johns's career and among the defining *livres d'artiste* of the postwar period. Through correspondence, photographs, proofs, production records, and Russell's own working papers, the archive traces the project from conception to publication and beyond, revealing how Johns transformed what began as a proposed literary collaboration into a monumental work shaped almost entirely by his own artistic concerns.

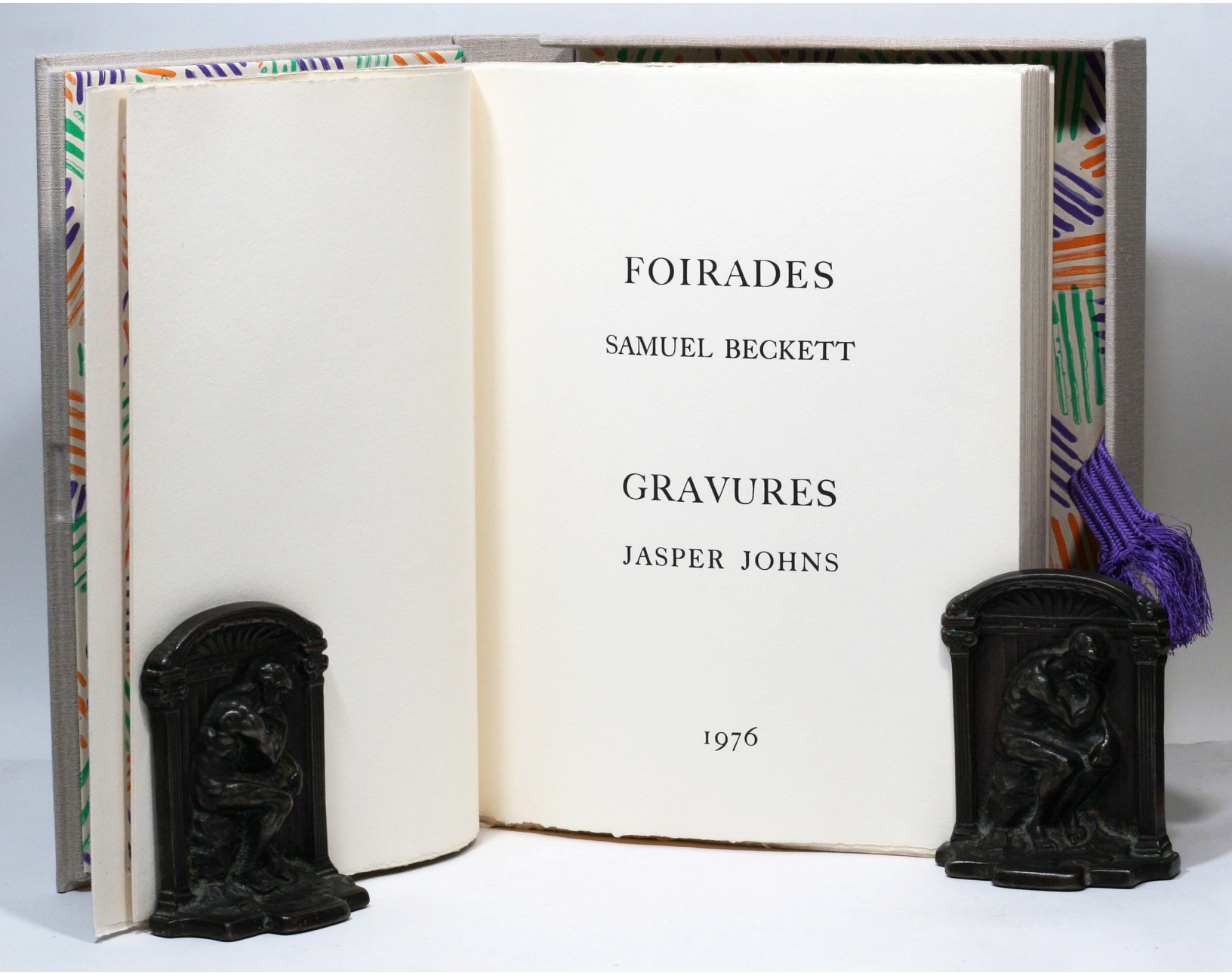
Created during Johns's collaboration with Aldo Crommelynck, Picasso's legendary printer, *Foirades / Fizzles* coincides with the period in which Johns became increasingly committed to intaglio printmaking. The etchings reprise the crosshatch, flagstone, and body-fragment imagery of his monumental *Untitled* (1972), while the project itself became one of the most ambitious graphic undertakings of his career. The archive captures this moment directly through letters, production documents, and photographs showing Johns and Crommelynck at work together in Paris. Few surviving archives document so closely the making of a major Johns print project.

Throughout Johns's career, language most often appears as a public artifact: flags, numbers, alphabets, maps, newspaper fragments, and other signs already circulating in the world. In *Foirades / Fizzles*, however, the locus of attention shifts from language in public space to language in private space. The archive shows Johns becoming increasingly absorbed not simply by Beckett's texts but by the conditions under which those texts would be read: their sequencing, translation, repetition, placement, and physical presentation. The relevant object is no longer the sign but the book; the relevant act is no longer seeing but reading.

THE BOOK

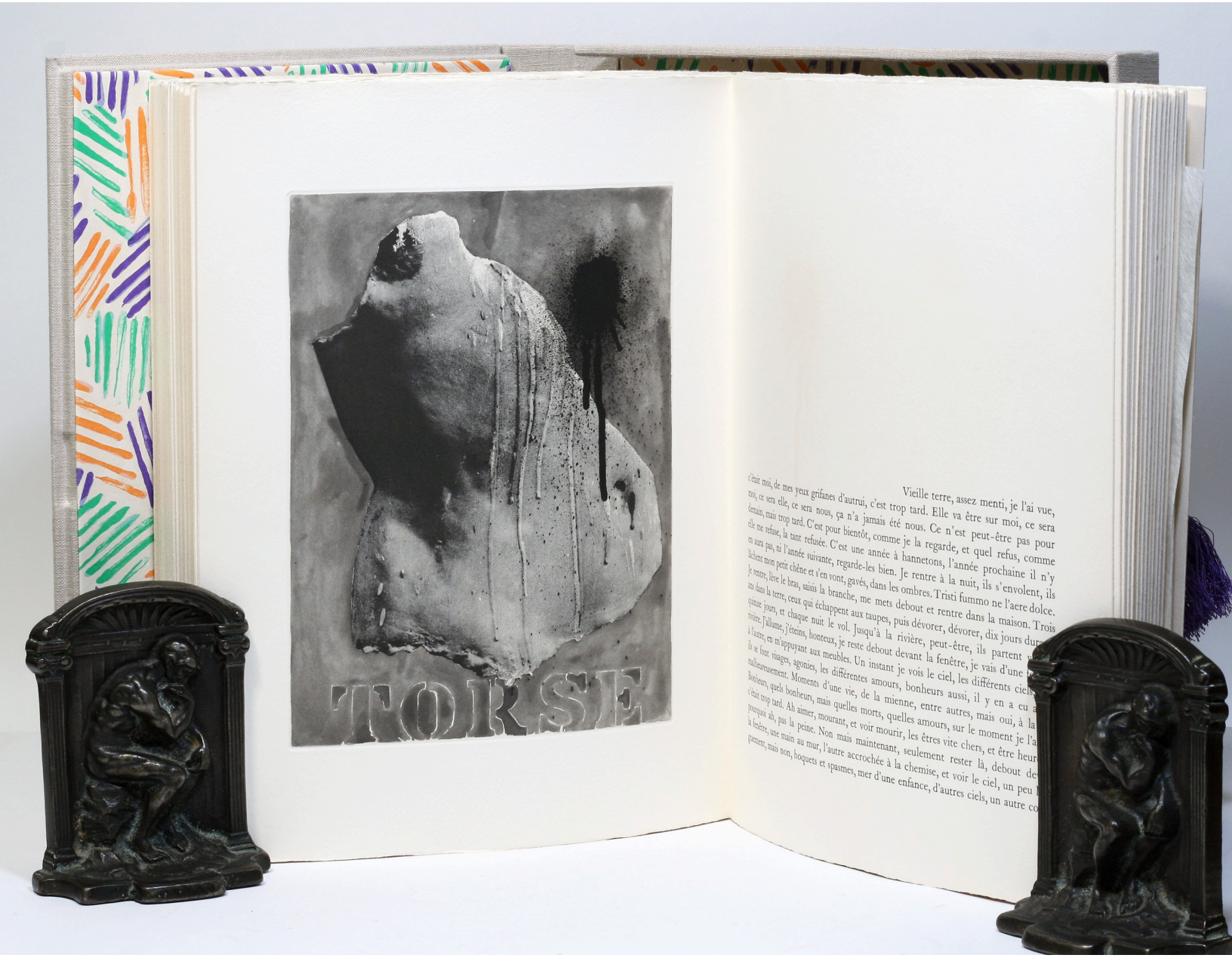
Foirades / Fizzles, 1976

One of the most celebrated artist's books of the twentieth century, and a major work within Jasper Johns's graphic *oeuvre*. The present copy is Véra Russell's own, one of only thirty Artist's Proofs.



Title page. "Foirades / Samuel Beckett / Gravures / Jasper Johns / 1976."

Thirty-three plates accompany the five *Foirades*, reprising the crosshatch and body-fragment imagery of Johns's work from the same period. Below, a torso built from the same visual vocabulary as his monumental *Untitled* (1972).



Pl. 02 — "Torse." Etching facing the French text.

Language recurs as visual material throughout the etchings. Here, English and French vocabulary — *buttocks / fesses*, *knee / genou*, *face / visage* — is layered into a dense typographic field spanning the gutter.



Bilingual plate. English and French body-part vocabulary, etched across the double-page spread.

One of two double-page colour plates in the edition, and the most immediately recognizable image in the book: red and black flagstone shapes, printed in aquatint, spanning the gutter in a pattern Johns would return to for years.

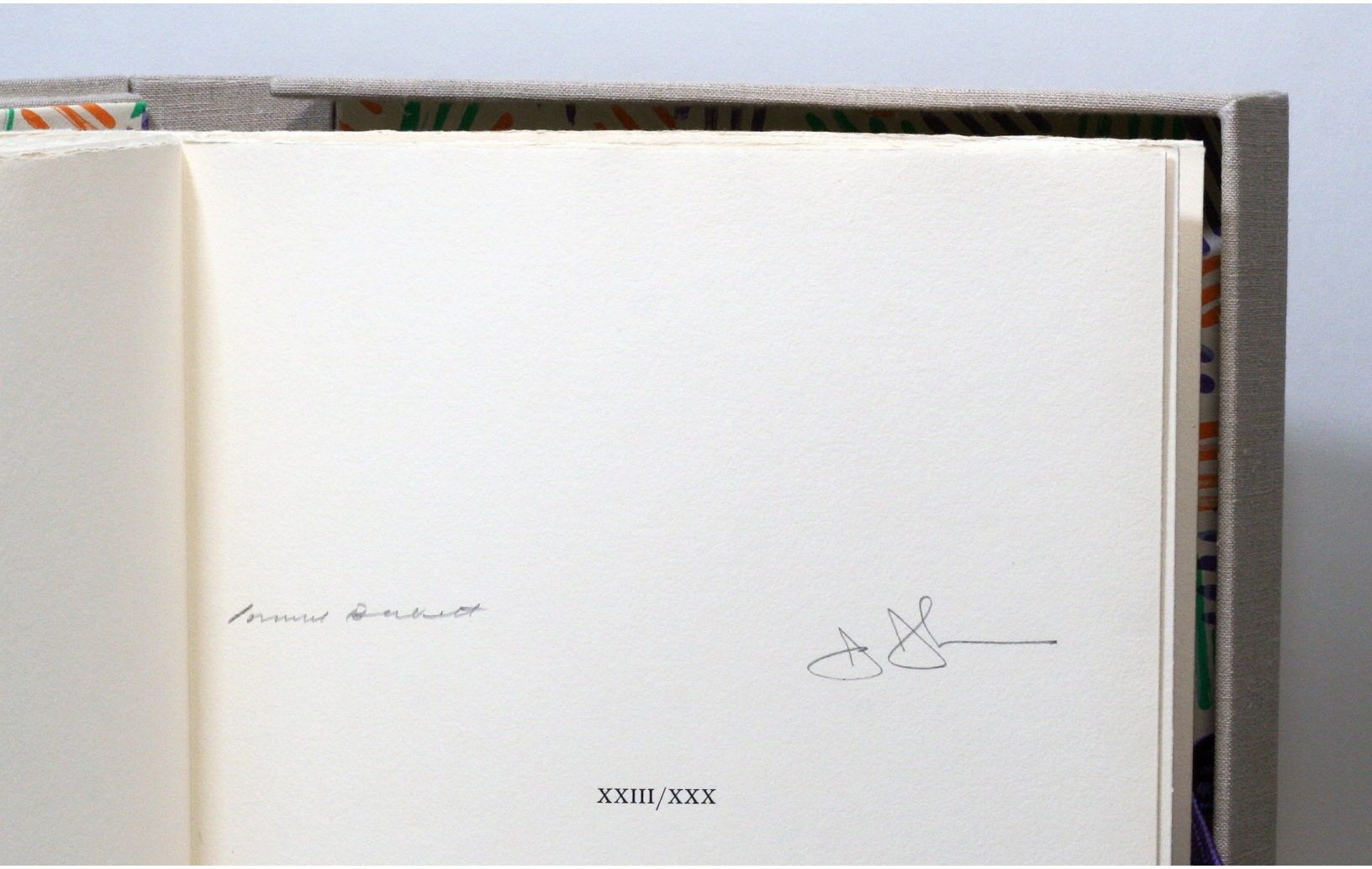


Colour plate. Flagstone imagery printed in red and black aquatint, spanning the double page spread.

COLOPHON

XXIII / XXX

Véra Russell’s own artist’s proof copy, one of thirty produced against an edition of 250. Signed in pencil by Beckett and Johns.



Colophon. Samuel Beckett’s pencil signature at left, Jasper Johns’s at right, with the proof number centered between them. The edition is preserved in its original linen-covered clamshell box.

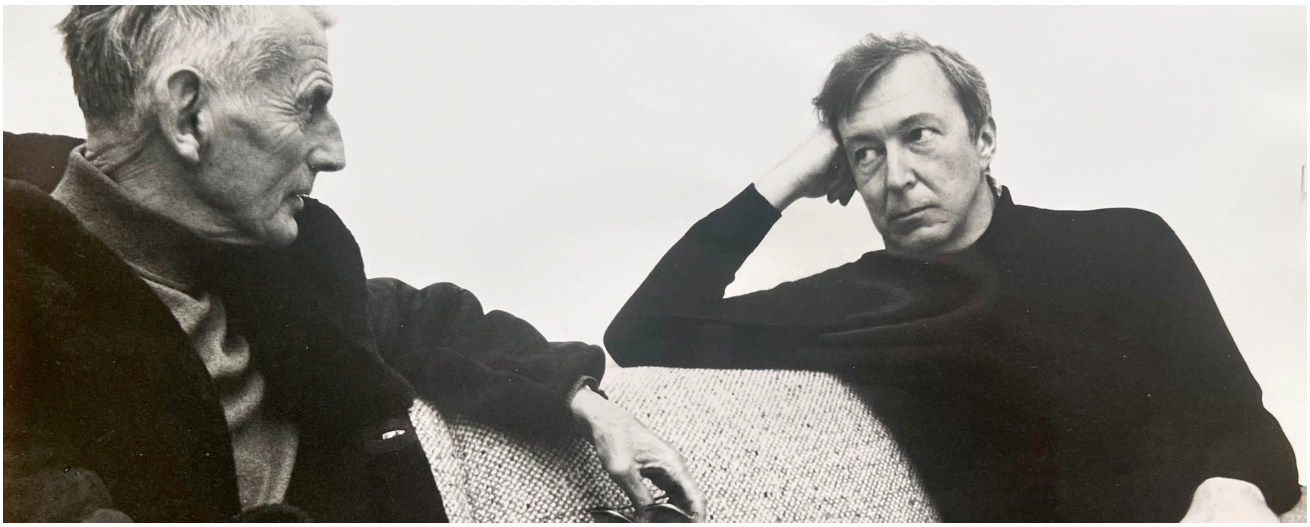
Johns extended his design into the enclosure itself, treating the box as a final plate rather than mere packaging.



The box, open. Lithographed crosshatch lining papers by Johns.

PRINCIPAL FIGURES

The Collaborators



Beckett and Johns, photographed together by Robert Doisneau.

Jasper Johns (b. 1930). Creator of the thirty-three intaglio etchings; the archive's central figure.

Samuel Beckett (1906–1989). Nobel Prize–winning author of the five source texts, translated from his own French.

Véra Russell (1911–1992), credited as Vera Lindsay. Originator, editor, and producer of the edition.

Aldo Crommelynck (1931–2008). Master intaglio printer, formerly Picasso's principal printer in Paris; *Foirades / Fizzles* marked the start of a long working partnership with Johns.

Paul Cornwall-Jones (1936–2018). Founder of Petersburg Press; brought Crommelynck into the project and guided the edition through production and publication.

Petersburg Press. London and New York publisher of the edition.

Robert Doisneau (1912–1994). One of France's most celebrated photographers; documented the making of the book in Paris.

A. J. ("Con") Leventhal (1896–1979). Beckett's friend and literary adviser; his essential intermediary throughout.

James Knowlson (b. 1933). Beckett's biographer; four letters in the archive document his later effort to secure it for his Foundation.

THE ARCHIVE

The Making of Foirades / Fizzles



The archive, assembled: eleven letters from Jasper Johns, 1972–1981, tracing the project from inception through publication and exhibition; fourteen notes and letters from Con Leventhal documenting Beckett's side of the collaboration; thirteen autograph notes and letters from Beckett himself, together with a typed, unsigned letter on the choice of texts; and Véra Russell's own retained correspondence — thirteen letters to Johns, eight to Beckett, and others to Paul Cornwall-Jones, Jim Knowlson, James Cuno, and Leo Castelli. Beyond the letters: the Outline of Project, working drafts of the book's Justification leaf, Cornwall-Jones's production correspondence, a photographic record of Johns at work with Crommelynck, and more.

THE ARCHIVE

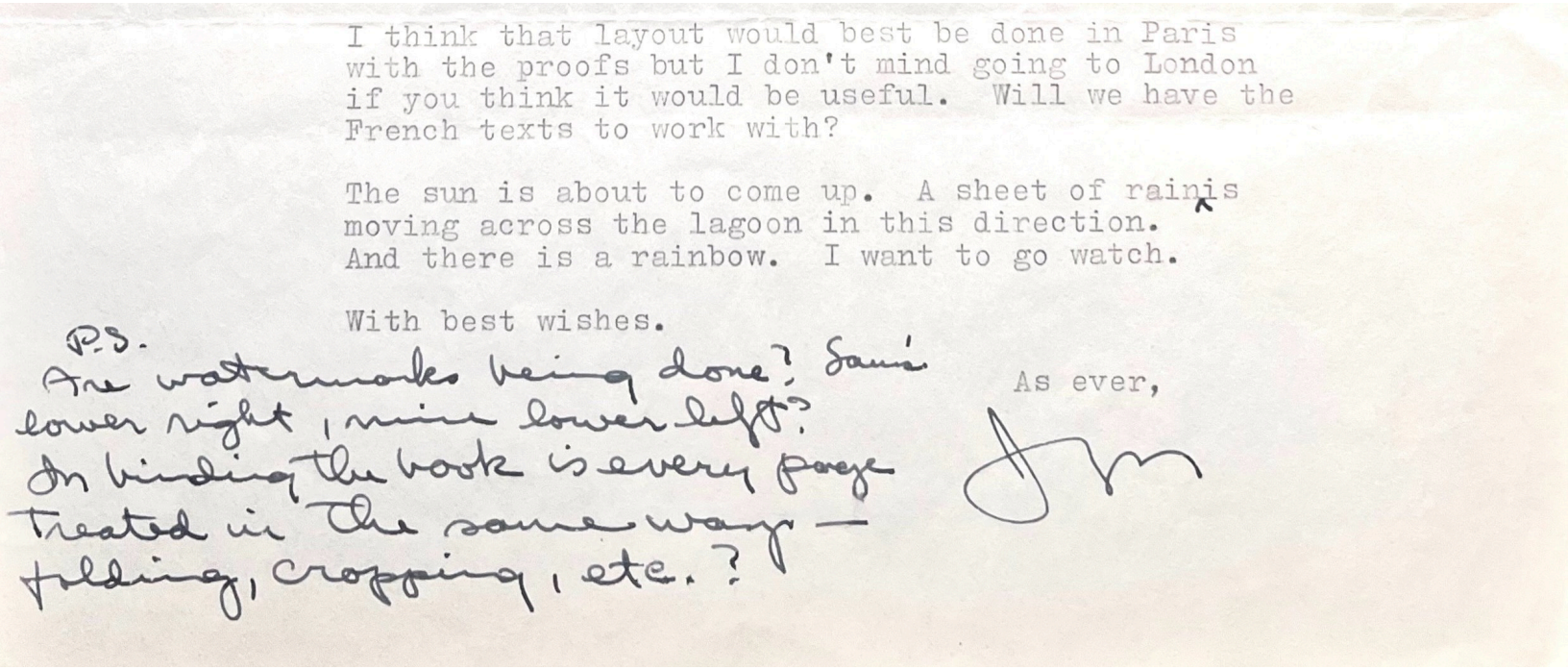
Contents Summary

The book	*Foirades / Fizzles* (Petersburg Press, 1976), Véra Russell's own Artist's Proof (XXIII/XXX), signed by Beckett and Johns.
Véra Russell correspondence	Her retained correspondence, principally with Johns (13 letters) and Beckett (8 letters), and various others including Paul Cornwall-Jones, Jim Knowlson, James Cuno, and Leo Castelli.
Jasper Johns correspondence	Eleven letters to Russell, 1972–1981, tracing the project from inception through publication and exhibition.
Samuel Beckett correspondence	Twelve autograph notes (10 with envelopes) and one autograph letter signed, 1966–1984, together with a typed letter, unsigned, of 23 Nov 1973 on the choice of texts.
A.J. ("Con") Leventhal correspondence	Fourteen autograph notes and letters, 1972–1976, further documenting Beckett's side of the collaboration.
Editorial & production archive	Trial title-pages, production notes, and the six-part Outline of Project, together with several working drafts of the book's Justification leaf in French and English, annotated with autograph corrections, and Cornwall-Jones/Petersburg Press correspondence on planning, production, and distribution.
Photographic archive	Eight photographs of Beckett and Johns together, and twenty-five further photographs (eighteen black-and-white, seven in colour) of Johns producing the etchings, together with fifteen colour slides. Eleven of the photographs are stamped verso "Doisneau-Rapho"; the remainder carry a "Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd" stamp.
Miscellaneous materials	The Petersburg Press prospectus for the edition; an inscribed presentation copy of Beckett's *Pour Finir Encore* (Les Éditions de Minuit, 1976); two *Hermathena* offprints featuring Beckett, one inscribed by Leventhal; a letter from the critic John Russell, Véra Russell's former husband; and period newspaper and magazine cuttings.

There are four core threads to the archive, centered on Johns, Beckett, Russell, and the making of the book.

I. Jasper Johns

Although *Foirades / Fizzles* originated as Véra Russell's project, Johns's intense engagement at every level — translation, sequence, typography, watermark placement, paper, format — made it his own.



I think that layout would best be done in Paris
with the proofs but I don't mind going to London
if you think it would be useful. Will we have the
French texts to work with?

The sun is about to come up. A sheet of rain is
moving across the lagoon in this direction.
And there is a rainbow. I want to go watch.

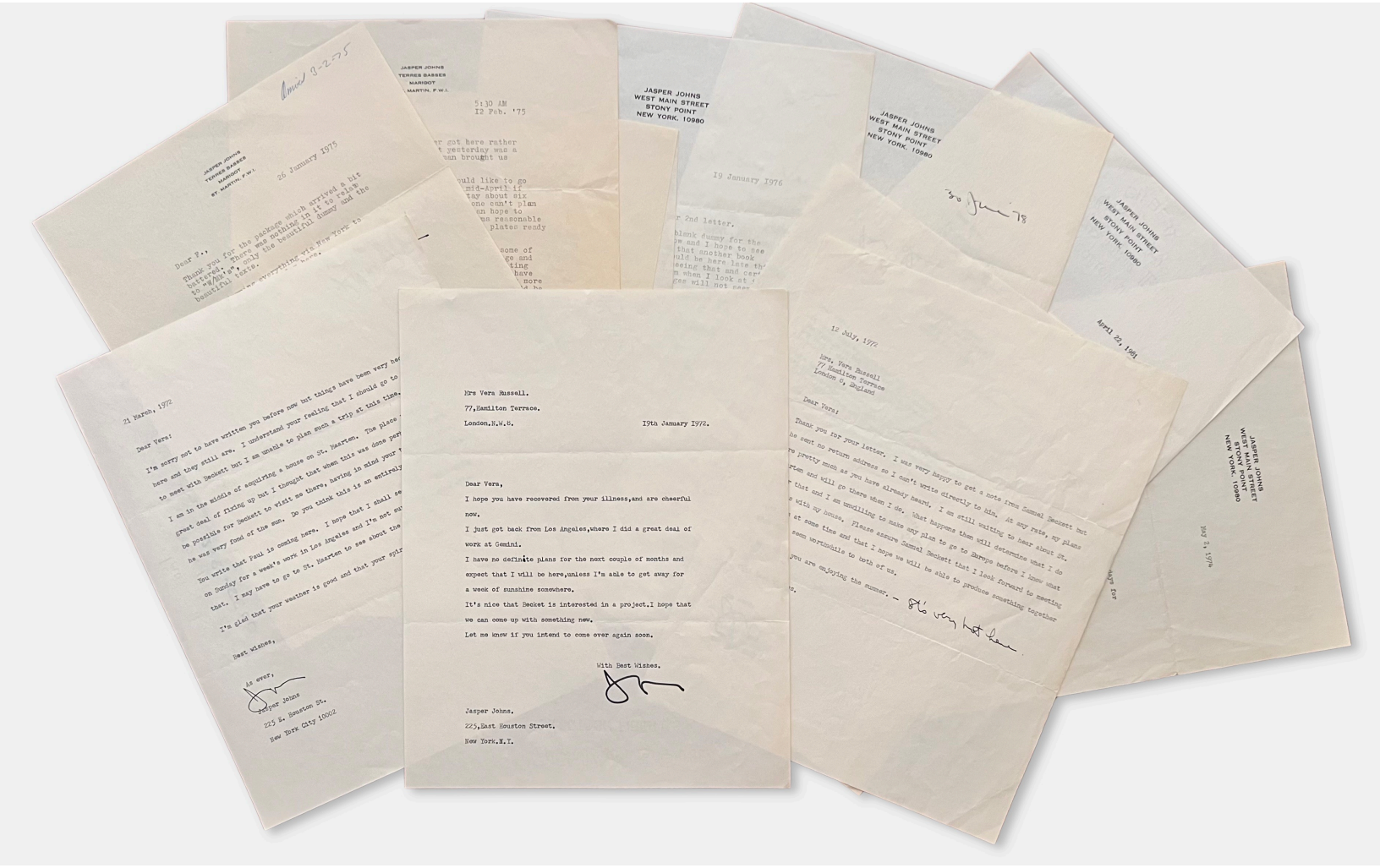
With best wishes.

As ever,

J

P.S.
Are watermarks being done? Sam's
lower right, mine lower left?
In binding the book is every page
treated in the same way —
folding, cropping, etc.?

Johns to Russell, 12 Feb 1975, 5:30 AM. One of eleven letters by Johns in the archive: production questions, watermark placement, and a description of dawn breaking over St. Martin. His enthusiasm was evident from the start: "It's nice that Becket [sic] is interested in a project. I hope that we can come up with something new" (19 Jan 1972). By November 1974 the concern had sharpened into specifics: "Sam's mark should be in the lower right corner and mine in the lower left." The run closes in 1981, when Johns responds to Russell's concern that recent exhibitions of his Working Proofs, curated by Christian Geelhaar, had not adequately acknowledged her role.



Eleven letters, 1972–1981. Johns’s correspondence in the archive, tracing the collaboration in his own hand across nearly a decade, gathered around one of the most significant projects of his career.

Selected excerpts from the correspondence.

“…It’s nice that Becket is interested in a project. I hope that we can come up with something new…” *(19 Jan 1972)*

“…I am in the middle of acquiring a house on St. Maarten… perhaps it would be possible for Beckett to visit me there, having in mind your telling me that he was very fond of the sun. Do you think this is an entirely unreasonable idea…” *(21 Mar 1972)*

“…I was very happy to get a note from Samuel Beckett but he sent no return address so I can’t write directly to him… I hope we will be able to produce something together that will seem worthwhile to both of us…” *(12 Jul 1972)*

“…I think the sixteenth or seventeenth would be better days for me but I will be here so call when you come…” *(2 May 1974)*

“…Sam’s mark should be in the lower right corner and mine in the lowere left. We had frost this morning and cardinals and blue-jays…” *(14 Nov 1974)*

“…There was nothing in it to relate to ‘W/Mk’s,’ only the beautiful dummy and the beautiful texts…” *(26 Jan 1975)*

“…Last night I found your December 18 letter in a book I had borrowed from a neighbor… John Cage who hates sun, waves and bugs arrives tomorrow…” *(27 Jan 1975)*

“…The sun is about to come up. A sheet of rain is moving across the lagoon in this direction. And there is a rainbow. I want to go watch…” *(12 Feb 1975, 5:30 AM)*

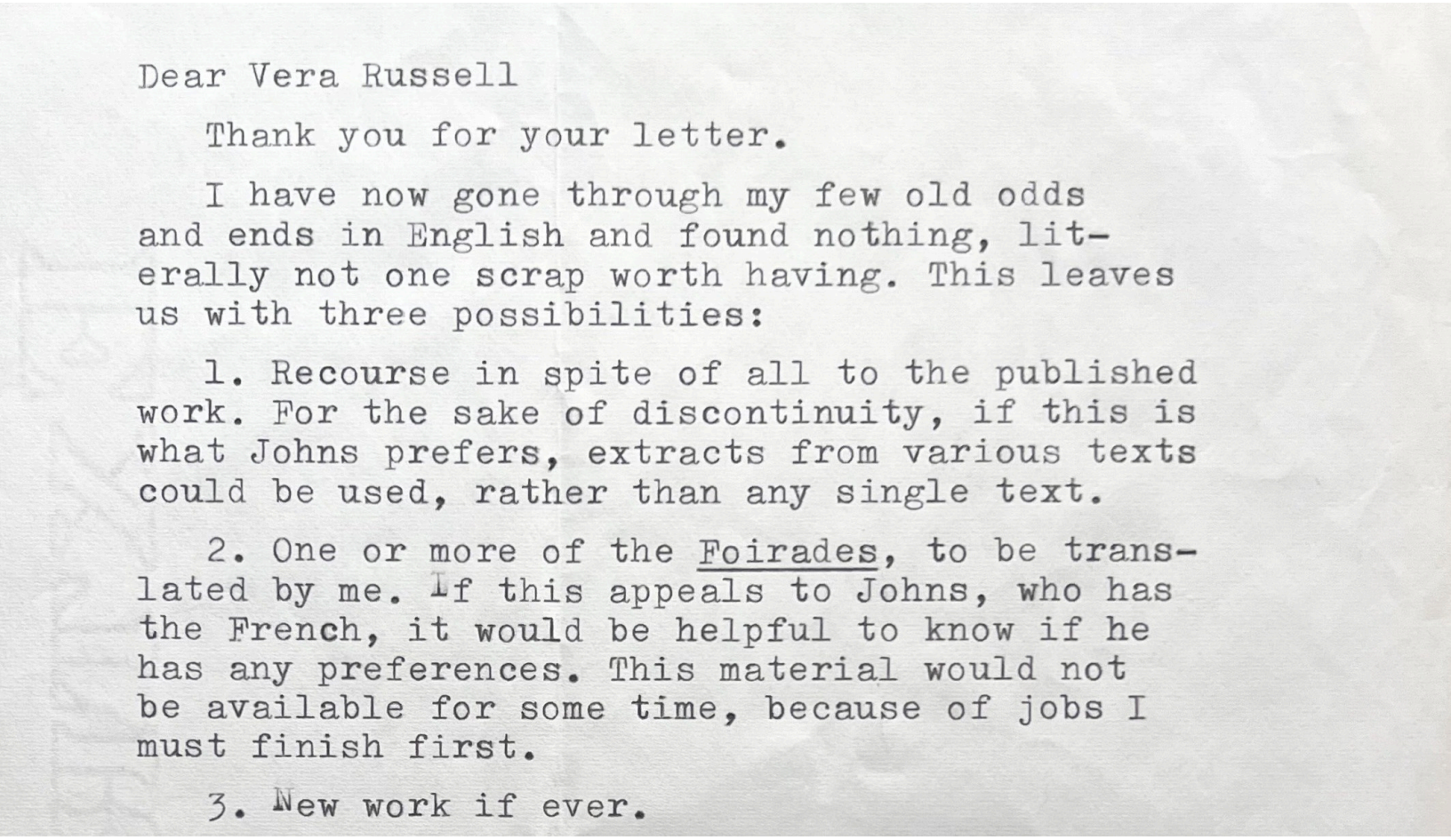
“…I certainly will consider your criticism when I look at it… the weather here is like an after-image of the weather there…” *(19 Jan 1976)*

“…I saw the A. Lord pots at the Stokes gallery and I hope you will look at them if you have a chance. They gave me great pleasure…” *(30 Jun 1978)*

“…I am sorry that you feel slighted because it was not mentioned that you were editor of the book…” *(22 Apr 1981)*

II. Samuel Beckett

Beckett’s participation was limited. The correspondence repeatedly shows him content to leave the book’s realization to others.



Dear Vera Russell

Thank you for your letter.

I have now gone through my few old odds and ends in English and found nothing, literally not one scrap worth having. This leaves us with three possibilities:

1. Recourse in spite of all to the published work. For the sake of discontinuity, if this is what Johns prefers, extracts from various texts could be used, rather than any single text.

2. One or more of the Foirades, to be translated by me. If this appeals to Johns, who has the French, it would be helpful to know if he has any preferences. This material would not be available for some time, because of jobs I must finish first.

3. New work if ever.

Beckett to Russell, 23 Nov 1973. One of fourteen Beckett letters and notes in the archive. Having searched his unpublished English work and found, in his words, “literally not one scrap worth having,” he offers three possibilities and defers the final choice to Johns. In 1975 he reports simply, “Have just corrected page proofs of Fizzles sent by Con. Quite a few mistakes. Hope I caught the lot”; by 1984, writing from London: “I don’t need a copy of Fizzles. Many thanks just the same.”



Beckett to Russell, across nearly two decades. His tone is warm and cordial throughout, even as the correspondence shows a man content to leave the book's realization to others, and rarely drawn into its particulars.

Selected excerpts from the correspondence.

"…I am extremely sorry to hear of your accident… I hope the worst is over and that you will soon be up and about again. Do not bother your head about the César. I am very touched by his gesture…" *(13 Apr 1966)*

“…I am leaving Paris for Xmas + the New Year. I shall be back Jan. 5 for a week at least and should be happy to meet you during that time if you are still in France…” *(23 Dec 1971)*

“…I suggest we meet for a drink and talk Tuesday April 18 at 7 p.m., Closerie des Lilas. If this is agreeable to you, do not trouble to confirm…” *(27 Mar 1972)*

“…I leave Sept. 3 next for Berlin… shall be away at least 5 weeks. Address uncertain but shall be in touch with Éditions de Minuit who will forward…” *(28 Aug 1972)*

“…I have now gone through my few old odds and ends in English and found nothing, literally not one scrap worth having. This leaves us with three possibilities…” *(23 Nov 1973)*

“…Have just corrected page proofs of Fizzles sent by Con. Quite a few mistakes. Hope I caught the lot…” *(19 Feb 1975)*

“…Patrick Magee is going on tour in USA early next year with readings from my works. He would like to include the Fizzles — some or all. Would Cornwall Jones object to this…” *(8 Nov 1975)*

“…Many thanks for kind remembrance. At Hyde Park Hotel from about May 21…” *(20 Apr 1976)*

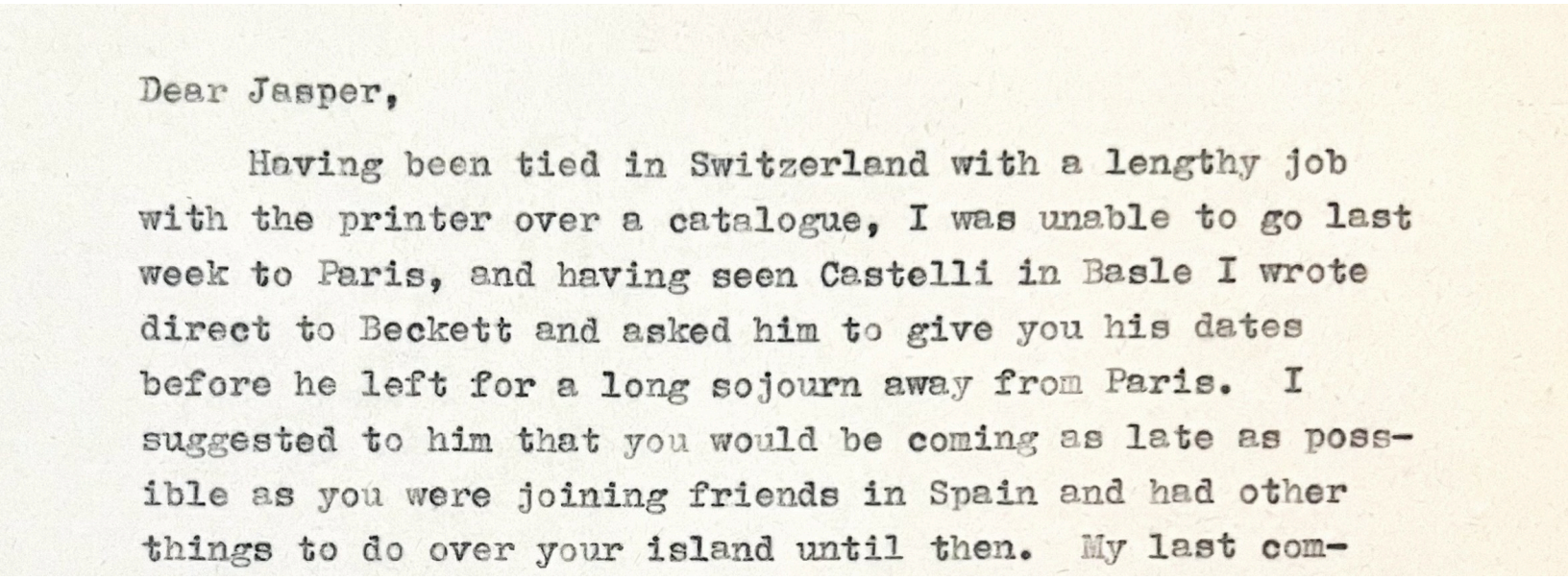
“…I’ll be back in Paris second half of January and hope we may meet then. Best wishes for ’83…” *(23 Dec 1982)*

“…I suggest we meet as follows: Saturday Jan. 22, 11 a.m., Hotel PLM–St. Jacques, 17 Bld. St. Jacques, Paris 14. If this suits you no need to confirm…” *(18 Jan 1983)*

“…I don’t need a copy of Fizzles. Many thanks just the same. Forgive me if I don’t propose a meeting…” — pleading exhaustion. *(26 Feb 1984)*

III. Véra Russell

Russell's own retained correspondence with Beckett and Johns traces her role as the project's originator and editor from start to finish: coordinating, with tact and resourcefulness, first a meeting between the two men and Petersburg Press, then the choice of text, the design, and everything that followed.



Dear Jasper,

Having been tied in Switzerland with a lengthy job with the printer over a catalogue, I was unable to go last week to Paris, and having seen Castelli in Basle I wrote direct to Beckett and asked him to give you his dates before he left for a long sojourn away from Paris. I suggested to him that you would be coming as late as poss-ible as you were joining friends in Spain and had other things to do over your island until then. My last com-

Russell to Johns, 3 July 1972. She reports having seen Castelli in Basle, having written directly to Beckett to fix a meeting date, and having decided — "I find it so marvellous" — to airmail Beckett's newest publication to Johns unprompted. Two months earlier she wrote to Beckett: "...thank you for coming to see me once again at the Closerie. Forgive me if I did not warn you that I was bringing Paul Cornwall Jones, but, I felt it essential that he spoke to you before he left for New York." Sixteen years later, in a letter to James Cuno, she wrote: "On the question of the material in your catalogue, it is a very grave lack that no thanks and no credit are given to either myself, Crommelynck the printer or Fequet and Baudier, the printers of the text... It is I who chose Jasper Johns against most people's wishes."



Véra Russell’s retained correspondence. Her side of the collaboration, in her own hand and typescript, spanning 1972 to 1988 — the fullest single voice in the archive.

Selected excerpts from the correspondence.

“…What a pleasure it is to receive your letter today, as I was feeling excessively out of touch with you…” *(22 Jan 1972, to Johns)*

“…I would ask if I could come and see you and propose another project which arose when I knew the ‘rights complication’ on Waiting for Godot…” *(early 1972, to Beckett)*

"…I was very sorry that your ideas and your work should have been appropriated without acknowledgment…" *(10 Apr 1972, from John Russell, her former husband)*

"…Whenever I meet Beckett I feel as if I am swimming in a very clear buoyant sea, and that life and death are fused …. and all shall be well…" *(8 May 1972, to Johns)*

"…I did not dare move my nose from the grindstone…" *(17 Jun 1972, to Cornwall-Jones)*

"…I was deeply sad that you had decided against this timing and I longed to be more closely and friendlily in your orbit…" *(25 Aug 1972, to Johns)*

"…I have dreamt of it for so long that your meeting seemed just a bigger and better dream… once the Beckett material exists it is over to your court…" *(23 Nov 1973, to Johns)*

"…I absolutely love the luminosity in Fizzle III and Fizzle V made we weep for the loneliness…" *(5 Mar 1974, to Johns)*

"…A monastic life for a fortnight in wonderful country should help to recharge the batteries…" *(16 Nov 1974, to Johns)*

"…I am so very conscious of my inability to use language properly…" *(2 Mar 1975, to Beckett)*

"…The whole project has become known as the 'pure' project…" *(4 Aug 1975, to Johns)*

"…I, as editor, have overseen that domain, but unfortunately I have been overwhelmed with so many exhibitions that I have found myself not up to date…" *(13 Aug 1976, to Johns)*

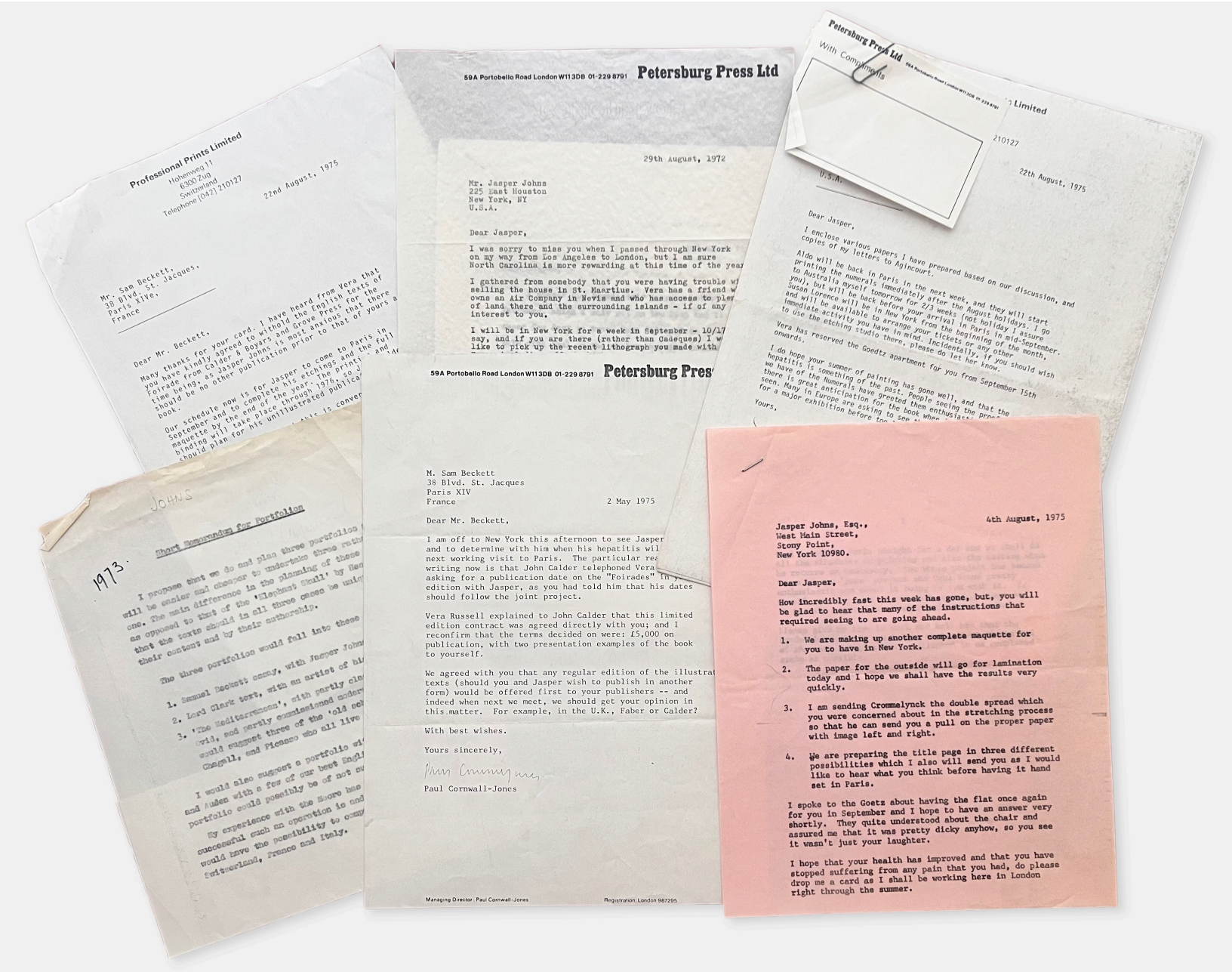
"…I found out that 'Foirade' is an ancient term only to be found in rare dictionaries… so I was amused and pass on the information which the public will rarely guess at…" *(c. 1977, to Johns)*

"…I don't like the number in the middle of page to signify. What? You are signing what…" *(undated, to Beckett)*

"…I am about the only one whose voice is never heard or thanked… without me, and Crommelynck and Baudier and Fequet, the book would never have seen the light…" *(10 Jan 1988, to Johns — a coordinated letter went to James Cuno the same day)*

IV. Making the Book

Behind the creative collaboration lay the ordinary, considerable labor of production: Crommelynck’s Paris atelier, and Petersburg Press coordinating an edition made across two countries and two languages.



Business and production correspondence, assembled. Cornwall-Jones coordinated the edition’s physical realization from London: a new maquette, paper sent for lamination, the stretching process for Crommelynck’s double-spread proofs, and more.

Five further stories round out the archive, quieter and more particular than the four threads above.

A Turn Toward Intaglio

Behind the collaboration lay a subtler story: what the project did for Johns as a printmaker.



Johns at work in the Atelier Crommelynck. In 1969, Johns had called etching an uncomfortable fit: “I don’t like the medium… It’s extremely seductive… I’ve always considered myself a literal artist.” By 1975, working in earnest on *Foirades / Fizzles*, he had come to master its full range — engraving, aquatint, drypoint, soft-ground, spit-bite, sugar-lift, burnishing, stop-out. In the words of critic Richard Field, quoted in a 1987 UCLA exhibition brochure, “no other artist has so deeply penetrated the languages and processes of printmaking.” The brochure calls *Foirades / Fizzles* Johns’s “most important campaign with intaglio printmaking.” Many of the photographs documenting these sessions bear the stamp of Robert Doisneau’s agency, Rapho — the celebrated photographer’s own record of Johns and Crommelynck at work.

The Credit Question

Even as the project's originator, Russell seems to have felt her place beside two such towering figures was never quite secure, a concern that resurfaces more than once in the correspondence that follows.

April 22, 1981

Dear Vera,

The exhibition of my Working Proofs opened in Basel in April 1979 and was shown in a number of museums in Europe before being exhibited at the Tate Gallery. I don't know whether you saw any of the earlier exhibitions, and whether your disapproval is with the exhibition generally or simply with the installation at the Tate.

I was very pleased when I saw it in London. I thought the space given to the work was very generous and that the installation made the development of each work seem as clear as possible.

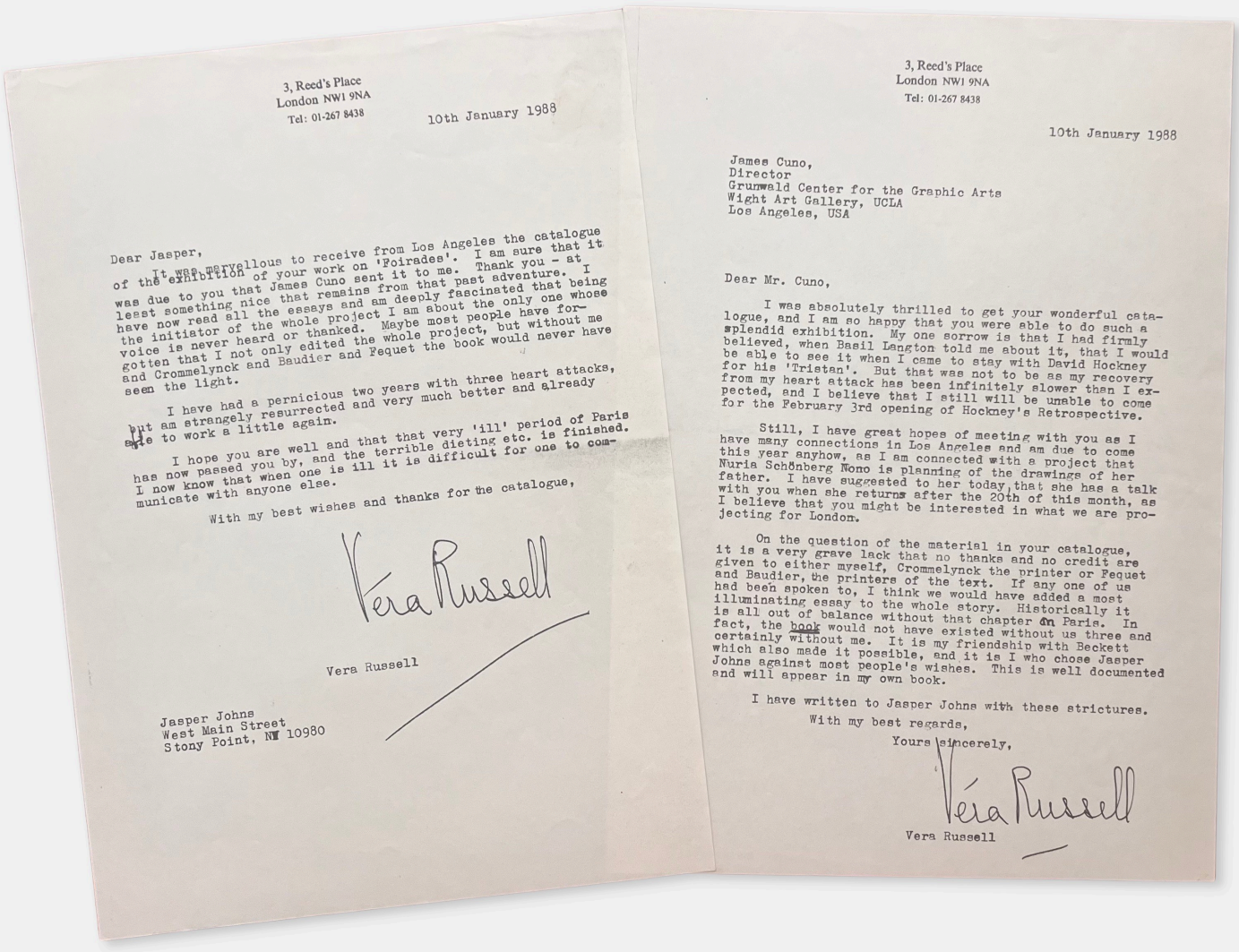
I hope you realize that the working proofs of the Fizzles etchings were not intended as an exhibition of the book, but were chosen by Christian Geelhaar in the context of this particular exhibition to show the working process and how changes are made in the different media.

I am sorry that you feel slighted because it was not mentioned that you were editor of the book. I believe that all exhibitions of the actual book have stated that you were editor, and I regret that you feel offended that your role was not mentioned in the context of this particular show.

With best wishes,

As ever,

Johns to Russell, 22 April 1981. Responding to a complaint about an exhibition of his Working Proofs, shown at Basel and the Tate Gallery. Johns explains the show was curated by Christian Geelhaar to illustrate his working process, not to credit the book's making — but concedes the point regardless: "I am sorry that you feel slighted because it was not mentioned that you were editor of the book."



3, Reed's Place
London NW1 9NA
Tel: 01-267 8438

10th January 1988

Dear Jasper,

It was marvellous to receive from Los Angeles the catalogue of the exhibition of your work on 'Foirades'. I am sure that it was due to you that James Cuno sent it to me. Thank you - at least something nice that remains from that past adventure. I have now read all the essays and am deeply fascinated that being the initiator of the whole project I am about the only one whose voice is never heard or thanked. Maybe most people have forgotten that I not only edited the whole project, but without me and Crommelynck and Baudier and Fequet the book would never have seen the light.

I have had a pernicious two years with three heart attacks, but am strangely resurrected and very much better and already able to work a little again.

I hope you are well and that that very 'ill' period of Paris has now passed you by, and the terrible dieting etc. is finished. I now know that when one is ill it is difficult for one to communicate with anyone else.

With my best wishes and thanks for the catalogue,

Vera Russell

Vera Russell

Jasper Johns
West Main Street
Stony Point, NY 10980

3, Reed's Place
London NW1 9NA
Tel: 01-267 8438

10th January 1988

James Cuno,
Director
Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts
Wight Art Gallery, UCLA
Los Angeles, USA

Dear Mr. Cuno,

I was absolutely thrilled to get your wonderful catalogue, and I am so happy that you were able to do such a splendid exhibition. My one sorrow is that I had firmly believed, when Basil Langton told me about it, that I would be able to see it when I came to stay with David Hockney for his 'Tristan'. But that was not to be as my recovery from my heart attack has been infinitely slower than I expected, and I believe that I still will be unable to come for the February 3rd opening of Hockney's Retrospective.

Still, I have great hopes of meeting with you as I have many connections in Los Angeles and am due to come this year anyhow, as I am connected with a project that Nuria Schönberg Nono is planning of the drawings of her father. I have suggested to her today, that she has a talk with you when she returns after the 20th of this month, as I believe that you might be interested in what we are projecting for London.

On the question of the material in your catalogue, it is a very grave lack that no thanks and no credit are given to either myself, Crommelynck the printer or Fequet and Baudier, the printers of the text. If any one of us had been spoken to, I think we would have added a most illuminating essay to the whole story. Historically it is all out of balance without that chapter on Paris. In fact, the book would not have existed without us three and certainly without me. It is my friendship with Beckett which also made it possible, and it is I who chose Jasper Johns against most people's wishes. This is well documented and will appear in my own book.

I have written to Jasper Johns with these strictures.

With my best regards,

Yours sincerely,

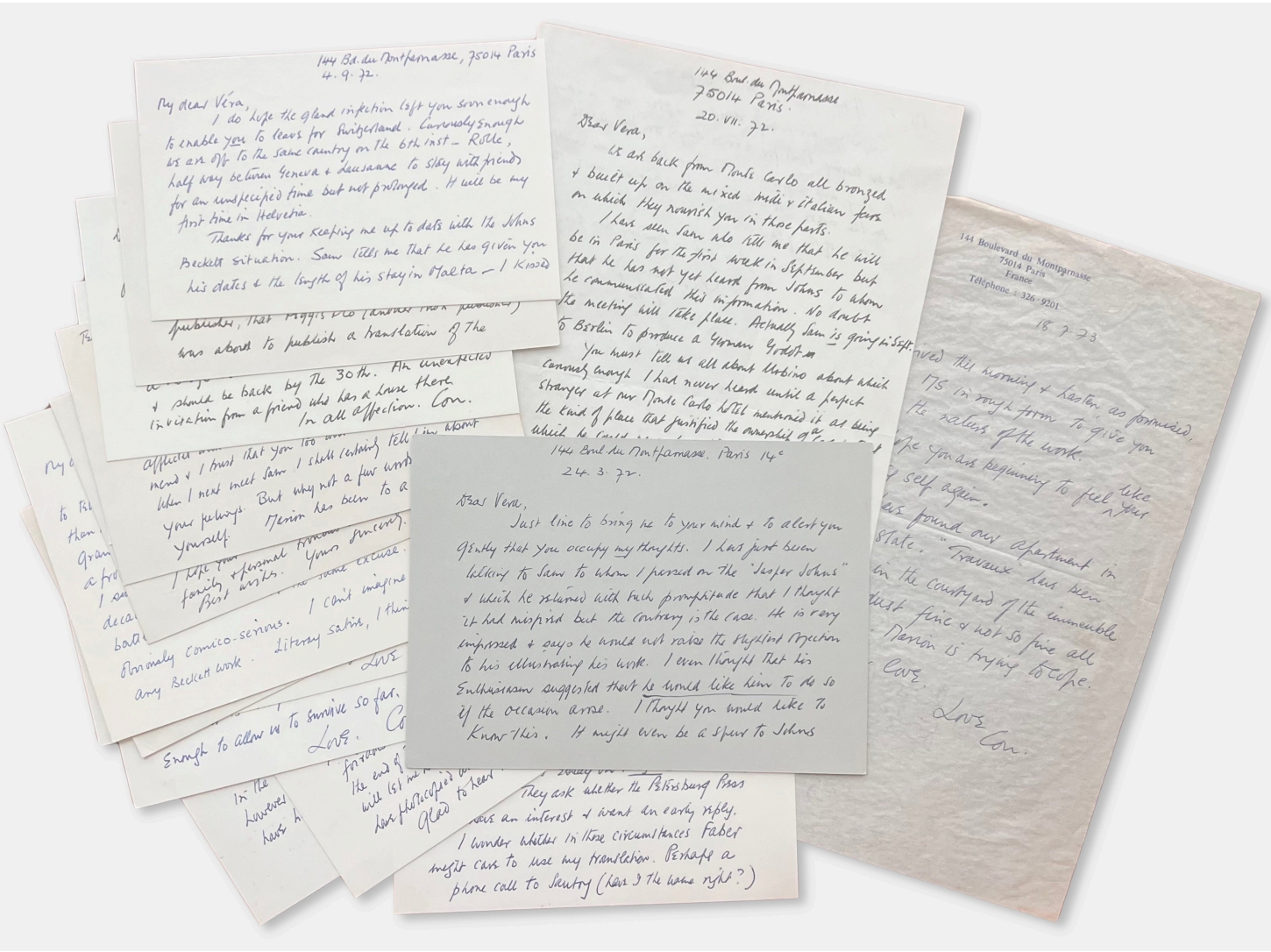
Vera Russell

Vera Russell

Russell to Johns and to Cuno, 10 January 1988. Seven years later, writing to Johns directly: “I am about the only one whose voice is never heard or thanked… without me, and Crommelynck and Baudier and Fequet, the book would never have seen the light.” The same day, writing to James Cuno, curator of a Johns retrospective, she laid out the omission at length: “it is a very grave lack that no thanks and no credit are given to either myself, Crommelynck the printer or Fequet and Baudier, the printers of the text… the book would not have existed without us three and certainly without me… It is I who chose Jasper Johns against most people’s wishes.” She closes by noting she had “written to Jasper Johns with these strictures” — confirming the two letters were a single, coordinated act: the same complaint, sent the same day, to the artist and to the institution writing his history.

The Intermediary

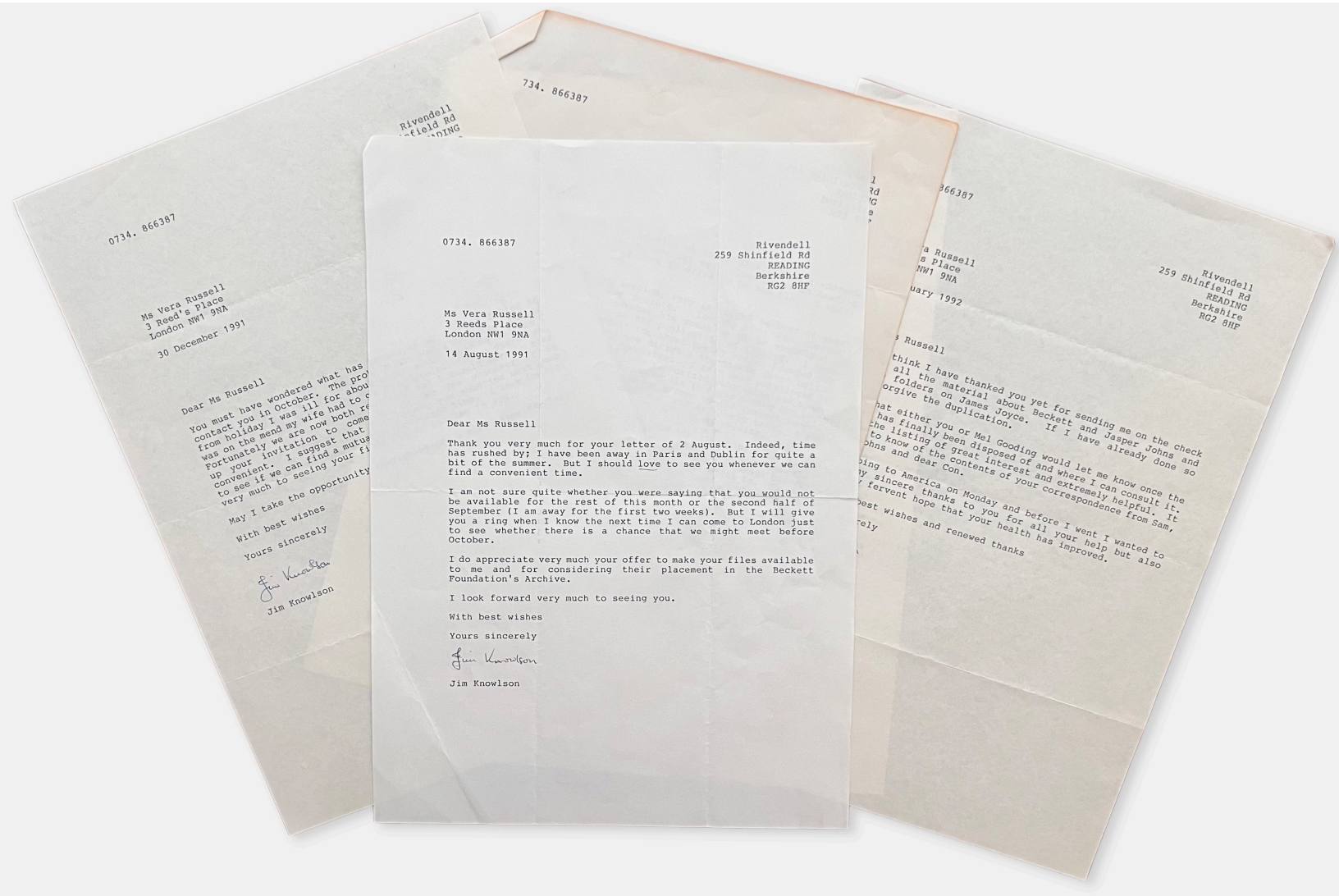
Con Leventhal's letters and notes to Russell show him acting as Beckett's intermediary. A note dated 24 March 1972 (bottom middle, below) documents Beckett's reaction to Russell's suggestion that Johns illustrate his work.



Leventhal to Russell, 24 March 1972. "He was very impressed + says he would not raise the slightest objection to his illustrating his work. I even thought that his enthusiasm suggested that he would like him to do so if the occasion arose." Leventhal was working other angles too: a parallel effort to broker an illustrated *Endgame* went nowhere.

The Knowlson Correspondence

In 1991–92, Beckett's biographer James Knowlson corresponded with Russell about her papers, welcoming, in his words, her offer to make her files available to him and to consider their placement in the Beckett Foundation's Archive.



0734. 866387

Rivendell
259 Shinfield Rd
READING
Berkshire
RG2 8HF

Ms Vera Russell
3 Reeds Place
London NW1 9NA

14 August 1991

Dear Ms Russell

Thank you very much for your letter of 2 August. Indeed, time has rushed by; I have been away in Paris and Dublin for quite a bit of the summer. But I should love to see you whenever we can find a convenient time.

I am not sure quite whether you were saying that you would not be available for the rest of this month or the second half of September (I am away for the first two weeks). But I will give you a ring when I know the next time I can come to London just to see whether there is a chance that we might meet before October.

I do appreciate very much your offer to make your files available to me and for considering their placement in the Beckett Foundation's Archive.

I look forward very much to seeing you.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Jim Knowlson

Jim Knowlson

Knowlson to Russell, April 1991 – February 1992. Five letters: a typed letter of April 1991, an autograph letter of 14 August 1991 (center), a letter of 30 December 1991, a typed letter (photocopy) of January 1992, and a further letter of February 1992. He thanks her for material on Beckett and Johns, discusses consulting her correspondence, and welcomes her offer to place her files with the Beckett Foundation's Archive — a placement that, in the end, never happened.

IN SUMMARY

A Singular Survival

Few archives bring together a major artist's book, the complete run of correspondence behind its making, and the working papers of the editor who conceived it. *Foirades / Fizzles* marks a distinct turn in Jasper Johns's graphic career, and the present archive is, to our knowledge, the most complete record of its creation to survive intact. Johns's letters rarely appear at auction; a decade-spanning run of his correspondence, alongside Beckett's own hand and Russell's retained papers as the project's originator, is rarer still. In 1991–92, Russell herself offered her files for consideration by the Beckett Foundation; biographer James Knowlson corresponded with her warmly on the subject, but the placement never went through, and the material has remained together, substantially as she kept it, until now.

Beneath the story told most visibly here — an unlikely convergence of two giants of late modernism, yielding a new chapter in Johns's career and one of the most celebrated artist's books of the century, uniquely documented in the present material — lies a quieter one: Russell's own. It is a story of perceived erasure, a slight that this archive goes a long way toward redressing.

VÉRA RUSSELL'S COPY OF FOIRADES / FIZZLES

JOHNS, (Jasper) & BECKETT, (Samuel). *Foirades / Fizzles*, SIGNED by the artist and the author, limited edition numbered XXIII/XXX [this being one of only thirty Artist's Proofs, from a full edition of two hundred fifty numbered copies and twenty Hors Commerce copies individually dedicated], edited by Véra Lindsay [Véra Russell], illustrated with 33 etchings, two of the double-page examples in colours, 13 by 10 inches, housed in its original linen-covered clamshell box with purple silk tassel, the lining with colour lithographs by Jasper Johns, text in French & English, the paper watermarked with the initials of Samuel Beckett and the signature of Jasper Johns, handmade paper by Richard de Bas, hand-printed by Fequet & Baudier in Paris, the binding conceived and executed by Rudolf Rieser in Cologne, protective tissue-guards throughout, in fine condition, Petersburg Press, 1976.