



Guide to the UNLV Libraries Collection on Claes Oldenburg's *Flashlight* Sculpture

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Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Historical Background	4
Scope and Contents Note	4
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Names and Subjects	5
Collection Inventory	6

Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Libraries. Special Collections and Archives
Contributor:	Dixon, Brock, 1918-2015
Title:	UNLV Libraries Collection on Claes Oldenburg's <i>Flashlight</i> Sculpture
ID:	MS-00970
Date [inclusive]:	approximately 1972-1981, 2011
Physical Description:	0.46 Cubic Feet (1 box)
Physical Description:	0.42 Linear Feet
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The UNLV Libraries Collection on Claes Oldenburg's <i>Flashlight</i> sculpture is comprised primarily of correspondence, photographs, and information dating from approximately 1972 to 1981, and 2011 about the planning and installation of the <i>Flashlight</i> at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) campus. The materials include correspondence between Brock Dixon, Dean of Administration, and the sculpture grant committee, the National Endowment for the Arts, and sculptors considered for the job such as Richard Serra and Claes Oldenburg. The collection also includes photographs of <i>Flashlight</i> maquettes and installation on campus and postcards depicting the <i>Flashlight</i> on the UNLV campus. Also included is a written history of the commissioned sculpture, a UNLV News Center article about the sculpture from 2011, and an autographed copy of <i>Claes Oldenburg: Large Scale Projects, 1977 to 1980</i> .

Preferred Citation

UNLV Libraries Collection on Claes Oldenburg's *Flashlight* Sculpture, approximately 1972-1981, 2011. MS-00970. Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Historical Background

In 1972, James McDaniel, architect for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), was developing plans to construct a performing arts complex on UNLV's campus. McDaniel envisioned two performance halls connected by a plaza where a sculpture would be the focal point. In 1972, UNLV submitted a grant application to the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) to commission, execute, and install a sculpture for UNLV's performing arts complex. The university received a \$45,000 grant from the NEA and in 1978 Brock Dixon, Dean of Administration, contacted Claes Oldenburg to commission the sculpture. The plan was approved in May 1979 to build *Flashlight*, a tower-like construction with lights directed up at the sky. However, Coojse van Bruggen, Oldenburg's collaborator and wife, felt that the plan for *Flashlight* was too mechanical and authoritarian. van Bruggen proposed a different approach to turn the structure upside down and use concealed fluorescent lamps to create a modest ring of hidden light to achieve an intimate effect. The alternate plan was accepted in January 1980 and *Flashlight* was installed in March 1981. *Flashlight* stands thirty-eight feet tall, weighs 74,000 pounds, and is located at the Performing Arts Center plaza between Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall and the Judy Bayley Theater.

Sources:

Brian Sodoma. "The Back Story: The Flashlight." UNLV News Center. Accessed September 20, 2019. <https://www.unlv.edu/news/article/back-story-flashlight>

Claes Oldenburg and Coojse van Bruggen. "Flashlight". Accessed September 20, 2019. <http://oldenburgvanbruggen.com/largescaleprojects/flashlight.htm>

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents Note

The UNLV Libraries Collection on Claes Oldenburg's *Flashlight* sculpture is comprised primarily of correspondence, photographs, and information dating from approximately 1972 to 1981, and 2011 about the planning and installation of the *Flashlight* at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) campus. The materials include correspondence between Brock Dixon, Dean of Administration, and the sculpture grant committee, the National Endowment for the Arts, and sculptors considered for the job such as Richard Serra and Claes Oldenburg. The collection also includes photographs of *Flashlight* maquettes and installation on campus and postcards depicting the *Flashlight* on the UNLV campus. Also included is a written history of the commissioned sculpture, a UNLV News Center article about the sculpture from 2011, and an autographed copy of *Claes Oldenburg: Large Scale Projects, 1977 to 1980*.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Materials are arranged in chronological order.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Acquisition Note

Materials were acquired periodically by UNLV Special Collections and Archives from a variety of sources; accession number 2019-092.

Processing Note

In 2019, as part of an archival backlog elimination project, Tammi Kim minimally processed the collection and wrote the finding aid.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Names and Subjects

- Art, Modern
- photographs
- Sculpture
- Oldenburg, Claes, 1929-2022
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas -- History

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
Correspondence, photographs, media article, written history, and planning materials on the installation of Claes Oldenburg's <i>Flashlight</i> sculpture, 1972-1981, 2011	box 01