

January 12, 1965.

Mr. Lyle Bongé,
1433 West Howard Street,
Biloxi, Mississippi.

Dear Lyle Bongé:

I was much pleased to have a letter from you this morning for I have thought about writing you ever since Jonathan Williams was here. I was waiting until the exhibition dates for the next year had been fixed and now I am enclosing the schedule. So you see there will be plenty of time for any preparations either you or we have to make.

We show prints as the photographers make them and I have a predilection for the small - at least normal sized - print and there will be no complications because of enlarging, etc. We prefer to have the prints unmounted as we have supplies of glass and mounting boards in certain sizes and would rather do the matting here. I assure you that everything will be handled with care and consideration and that there will be no damages. We use a tape for mounting which leaves no traces of adhesives when the photographs are removed from the temporary mats before they are returned to the photographer. However, if you have prints already matted which you wish to show, we can arrange to hang them.

I would like to have about 100 prints, as I told Jonathan Williams, so there will be some latitude for selection and arrangement in the hanging. We have a new gallery and more room and I believe we will make quite a handsome display for you.

I wish you would send me a card with your telephone number so that - later - I could talk with you, answer any questions, and give you a better idea of just what we would like to have. Since your work has not been shown in Chicago, you may wish to make a survey of what you have done. I have always liked your work since I saw the first reproductions of it several years ago and was very enthusiastic about what Jonathan Williams had with him, wishing - of course - to see more.

When I write again, I shall send you a letter not quite so dry as this. You tempt me to wander into a Southern dissertation, for the best part of my life was spent in Kentucky and Tennessee, but I promise you will be spared this. And don't think any complex thoughts for the exhibition. There is nothing so awful, futile and hate provoking as the credo of some photographer-poet, photographer-philosopher, photographer-sociologist-humanity-lover. I am grateful you are not one of these. An anthology should be made of their pretentious nonsense to be exposed by a critic like Robert Brustein. But I must stop now and get in touch with you again. All good wishes now.

Sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.

July 28, 1965.

Mr. Lyle Bongé,
1433 West Howard Street,
Biloxi,
Mississippi.

Dear Lyle:

You must have known how much I have been thinking of you for here is a letter from you. I am happy to have it because I was worrying that you may have thought I had died or lost my memory. I have thought a great deal about the pictures and am delighted to hear that you have some already that you may send. Please do so, marking the package to my attention, addressed as follows: Department of Prints and Drawings, The Art Institute of Chicago, Michigan Avenue at Adams Street, Chicago, Illinois. I believe the best way to send it is by Express Collect.

It will be good to have these photographs now - if you can spare them - so that I will have some idea of their size, format, etc. in order to begin thinking about the exhibition. I look forward to seeing them more than I can tell you. For the last years I have lived with the belief that I first knew your name from a record album cover and I recall how much I wanted to find you then. Could this be true or is it just a dream?

There is a great deal I should like to write about, but if I did, I am afraid you would receive nothing. The big event of the summer was - for me - Kenneth Anger's visit to Chicago, but he has gone back to San Francisco. I told him about your pictures and want him to see them. Did you ever see his film, Scorpio Rising? He is at work on one now called KKKKK. (Kustom Kar Kommandos).

I am glad you liked your trip and hope I see the color pictures of Darolina someday. I always think of how well you do the subjects which man has made and set on top of creation and then gone off and left. And when you show him (as in the Mardi-Gras pictures) it is great and I hope we have a lot of that.

All good wishes now and I hope you send the pictures.

Sincerely,

Hugh Edwards, Curator of Photography.