Guide to the Robin Magowan Papers

YCAL MSS 612

by Beinecke staff

May 2017

P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/
# Table of Contents

Collection Overview .................................................................................................................. 3
Requesting Instructions ............................................................................................................... 3
Administrative Information ......................................................................................................... 3
  Immediate Source of Acquisition ........................................................................................... 3
  Conditions Governing Access ............................................................................................... 4
  Conditions Governing Use ..................................................................................................... 4
  Preferred Citation .................................................................................................................. 4
  Processing Information ......................................................................................................... 4
Biographical / Historical ............................................................................................................. 4
Scope and Contents ................................................................................................................... 5
Arrangement ............................................................................................................................... 5
Collection Contents ................................................................................................................... 6
  April 2012 Acquisition ......................................................................................................... 6
  July 2014 Acquisition .......................................................................................................... 9
  February 2016 Acquisition .................................................................................................. 10
  September 2016 Acquisition ............................................................................................... 11
  February 2017 Acquisition ................................................................................................. 12
Selected Search Terms .............................................................................................................. 13
Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
P. O. Box 208330
New Haven, CT 06520-8330
beinecke.library@yale.edu
http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/

CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 612

CREATOR: Magowan, Robin

TITLE: Robin Magowan papers

DATES: 1936–2015

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 27.42 linear feet (37 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The collection consists of correspondence, writings, notebooks, printed material, audiovisual materials, electronic media, and other papers documenting the life and work of poet and writer Robin Magowan. Writings include manuscripts and typescripts of poems and prose, including drafts and corrected copies of Lilac Cigarette in a Wish Cathedral (University of South Carolina Press, 1998), Memoirs of a Minotaur (Story Line Press, 1999), and other works. Includes correspondence and other papers relating to Magowan’s uncle, James Merrill.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.magowan

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at http://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.magowan.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
   - item barcode

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 26 (audiovisual materials): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Boxes 27, 35 (computer disks): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies of electronic files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Conditions Governing Use

The Robin Magowan Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Robin Magowan Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections as they are acquired, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization. Various acquisitions associated with the collection have not been merged and organized as a whole. Each acquisition is described separately in the contents list below, titled according to month and year of acquisition.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

Biographical / Historical

Robin Magowan (b. 1936) is an American poet, memoirist, and travel writer. He studied at Exeter, Harvard (B. A.) and Columbia (M.A.) and Yale, where he earned a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature. He taught at the University of Washington, and the University of California, Berkeley. In 1986 he founded the journal Margin; he served as editor until 1990. He is the author of books in several genres, including: *Lilac Cigarette in a Wish Cathedral*, *Memoirs of a Minotaur, And Other Voyages, Fabled Cities: Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, Kings of the Road Portrait of Racers and Racing, Birds in a Forest Swaying*, and *The Rim of Dawn*. He is the nephew of poet James Merrill.
Scope and Contents

The collection consists of correspondence, writings, notebooks, printed material, audiovisual materials, electronic media, and other papers documenting the life and work of poet and writer Robin Magowan. Writings include manuscripts and typescripts of poems and prose, including drafts and corrected copies of Lilac Cigarette in a Wish Cathedral (University of South Carolina Press, 1998), Memoirs of a Minotaur (Story Line Press, 1999), and other works. Includes correspondence and other papers relating to Magowan’s uncle, James Merrill.

Arrangement

Organized into five groupings: April 2012 Acquisition; July 2014 Acquisition; February 2016 Acquisition; September 2016 Acquisition; February 2017 Acquisition.
## Collection Contents

### April 2012 Acquisition

**23.0 linear feet (30 boxes)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 1</td>
<td>Publisher, family, and college correspondence; printed materials</td>
<td>1949 - 2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 2</td>
<td>Correspondence and printed material</td>
<td>1950s–1970s, 2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 3</td>
<td>Correspondence, primarily from family, including Magowan’s father</td>
<td>1953-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 4</td>
<td>Correspondence from Magowan’s mother and others</td>
<td>1953-2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 5</td>
<td>Photocopies of James Merrill correspondence from University of St. Louis, Missouri and elsewhere</td>
<td>1960s-1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 6</td>
<td>Correspondence, printed material relating to art and gardening, and printed ephemera</td>
<td>2000-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 7</td>
<td>Typescripts including Green Dizzy Screaming Sun-Abyss; Harvard graduation material</td>
<td>1958-2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 8</td>
<td>Publishing agreements, photographs, family genealogy, family correspondence, and typescripts including Maya Revisited, Paul Clouded, Lilac Cigarette in a Wish Cathedral, The Wanton Current, and others</td>
<td>1958-2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 9</td>
<td>Corrected typescripts for Lilac Cigarette in a Wish Cathedral and other writings</td>
<td>1970s-1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 10</td>
<td>Corrected typescripts and photocopies</td>
<td>1970s-1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 11</td>
<td>Photocopies of typescript of Maya Revisited and other works, clippings</td>
<td>1970s-1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 12</td>
<td>Typescripts for Fabled Cities of Central Asia, and other works, subject files, correspondence, wedding photograph, clippings, and a wooden box and coins</td>
<td>1971-2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 13</td>
<td>Photocopies of typescripts and other papers</td>
<td>1980s-1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 13a</td>
<td>Photocopies of typescripts and other papers</td>
<td>1980s-1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 14</td>
<td>Writings including Trinidad, Birds, Connecticut, A Robin’s life, Collected Incongruities, and poems</td>
<td>1980s-2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 15</td>
<td>Writings, including poems, prose relating to gardening, and manuscript of autobiography (“The Minotaur”)</td>
<td>2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 16</td>
<td>Typescripts including The Wanton Current and others</td>
<td>2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 18</td>
<td>Notebooks, bachelor’s thesis, address book, and writings</td>
<td>1950s-1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 20</td>
<td>Notebooks including poetry, diaries, Japan and central Asia travel notes, and translations; typescripts; manuscripts; postcard</td>
<td>1950s-1980s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Container Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 21</td>
<td>1950s-1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 22</td>
<td>1973-1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 23</td>
<td>1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 24</td>
<td>undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 25</td>
<td>1960s-2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 24</td>
<td>1958-2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 26</td>
<td>1963-2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**b. 21**  
Notebooks kept in London and elsewhere

**b. 22**  
Notebooks including drafts of poems and prose, clippings, typescripts, and college coursework

**b. 23**  
Notebooks, writings, including drafts of poems, typescripts, and clippings

**b. 24**  
“Planters” notebook

**b. 25**  
Printed materials, typescripts, manuscripts, and correspondence

Printed materials include ephemera, newsletters, clippings, and James Merril materials. Typescripts and manuscripts include *The Poems of Jeufre Rudel*, *Literary Criticism of Andre Gide*, and *A Different Person*. Correspondence includes letters and postcards from Sonta Angelo, Micaela di Leonardo, Mark O’Brien, and others.

**b. 24**  
Planter’s notebook, newspapers, Harvard graduation materials

**b. 26**  
Audiovisual materials

Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

**b. 26**  
Robin Magowan. Poetry Program

1 Audiotape Reel; 1/4 inch; diameter 7 inches  
Duration: 00:32:59  
Static can be heard on the audiotape reel.  
Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile.

**b. 26**  
McGovern, N. W. Poets

1 Audiotape Reel; 1/4 inch; diameter 7 inches  
Duration: 00:19:03  
Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile.

**b. 26**  
Robin Magowan. Poetry

1 Audiotape Reel; 1/4 inch; diameter 7 inches  
Duration: 00:29:48  
Static can be heard on the tape.  
Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

**b. 26**  
Jimmy? Dub #2

1 Audiotape Reel; 1/4 inch; diameter 7 inches  
Duration: 00:31:13  
Program begins abruptly.  
Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

**b. 26**  
Robin Magowan. KUSP

1 Audiocassette  
Duration: 00:31:01  
A high amount of hum and hiss can be heard on the tape. Static can also be heard. Right channel recorded at a lower level than the left channel throughout the tape.  
Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Page 7 of 13
Robin Magowan. Poetry Lecture
1 Audiocassette
duration: 01:02:07
The program begins and ends abruptly.
A note with the audiocassette reads: Dear Robin and Juliet, I hope you enjoy this tape. With appreciation and affection, Helen.
Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Robin Magowan Memoirs of a Minotaur, from Merrill Lynch to Patty Hearst to Poetry October 4, 2006 Litchfield County Writers Project & UConn Torrington Campus
Call Number: 2012-ycal-36-0001
1 DVD-R
Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

CULTIVATING LIFE Spring-Season 3 TV show Interview with Robin Magowan
Call Number: 2012-ycal-36-0002
1 DVD-R
Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Lisa Starr / Robin Magowan Juliet Mattila / Bhuchung Sonam Reading and Discussing Their Work April 23, 2008 Litchfield County Writers Project & UConn Torrington Campus
Call Number: 2012-ycal-36-0003
1 DVD-R
Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Reading by Carol Asher & Robin Magowan © P. Decker
Call Number: 2012-ycal-36-0004
1 CD-R
Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Photocopies of Virgil Burnett correspondence with Robin Magowan 1970s-1990s

Photocopies of Virgil Burnett correspondence with Robin Magowan 1970s-1990s
### July 2014 Acquisition

1.33 linear feet (2 boxes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 30</td>
<td>Notebooks and manuscripts</td>
<td>1970–2006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# February 2016 Acquisition

*1.5 linear feet (2 boxes)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 32</td>
<td>Correspondence</td>
<td>1945-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 33</td>
<td>Drafts of poems and translations</td>
<td>2012-2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## September 2016 Acquisition

**1.33 linear feet (2 boxes)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b. 34</th>
<th>Correspondence</th>
<th>circa 1990s-2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. 35</td>
<td>Electronic media</td>
<td>2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 CD-R</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.
**February 2017 Acquisition**

0.25 linear feet (1 box)

| b. 36 | Self portrait in the Rose Garden, typescript | circa 2012 |
Selected Search Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library’s online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects
American poetry -- 20th Century
American poetry -- 21st century
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Poets, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Poets, American -- 21st century -- Archives

Genres / Formats
Audiovisual materials
Born digital

Occupations
Poets -- United States -- 20th Century
Poets -- United States -- 21st century

Names
Magowan, Robin
Merrill, James, 1926-1995