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Guide to the Lee Breuer Papers

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By Rosemary K. J. Davis

October 2021

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
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CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 1392

CREATOR: Breuer, Lee , author

TITLE: Lee Breuer papers

DATES: 1920-2020

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 65.17 linear feet (124 boxes + 1 broadside)

LANGUAGE: English (Latin script)

SUMMARY: This collection contains correspondence, writings, photographs, posters, puppets, printed material, personal papers, realia, and other materials created by or relating to the life and work of Lee Breuer.

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

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 <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.lbreuer>.

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

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Lee Breuer and Maude Mitchell on the Edwin J Beinecke Book Fund and the Adele Gutman Nathan Theatrical Collection Fund, 2020.

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Box 115 (Audiovisual material): Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 116 (Computer media): Restricted fragile. Reference copies of electronic files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 125: Restricted until 2045. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Use

The Lee Breuer 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

Lee Breuer Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Lee Breuer

Esser Leopold "Lee" Breuer (1937-2021) was an American theater director, writer, poet, lyricist, educator, and filmmaker whose work expanded the boundaries of storytelling in the theater. His work has been produced on six continents. By blending disciplines and techniques from widely different cultures, he created a unique performance genre fusing sound and musical components, visual arts, and arresting movement/dance/puppetry into groundbreaking forms.

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His father was an architect for the military and the family moved frequently during Breuer's childhood. Breuer attended UCLA as an undergraduate and after over ten years of making theater in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Paris, and Great Britain; with periods of study with the Berliner Ensemble, and the Polish Laboratory Theatre, Breuer moved to New York and co-founded Mabou Mines Theater Company in 1970 with JoAnne Akalaitis, Philip Glass, Ruth Maleczek, Frederick Neumann, and David Warrilow.

Breuer directed 13 Village Voice Obie Award-winning performances and received Obies for direction, playwriting, and sustained achievement. Breuer penned over a dozen plays including the *Animations* trilogy (1968-1978), and *The La Divina Caricatura* play cycle (1978-2013), all of which he directed. He received wide critical acclaim for his groundbreaking experimental approach, including for his pioneering use of amplified sound on stage, and puppetry in myriad forms. Later collaborating notably with puppeteer/designer Basil Twist on *Un tramway nommé désir* for the Comédie-Française.

Breuer's work as a director includes radical adaptations. *The Gospel at Colonus*, his unprecedented merger of Greek theatre and gospel service became a classic of the contemporary stage, as did his post-Brechtian reinterpretation of Ibsen: *Mabou Mines DollHouse*.

Over the years, Breuer received numerous awards and fellowships including a Guggenheim, two Fulbrights, a MacArthur Fellowship, the Helen Hayes Award, The Edinburgh Herald Archangel Award for sustained achievement, a sustained achievement award for experimental theater from the Egyptian Minister of Culture, and the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres from the French Ministry of Culture. He was also nominated for numerous honors including a Pulitzer, a Grammy, and an Emmy. In 1988 Breuer officially declined a Tony Nomination for Best Book for a production of *The Gospel at Colonus*.

Breuer's large family included his five children, daughter Clove Galilee, sons Lute Ramblin' Breuer, Alexander Tiappa Klimovitsky, Mojo Lorwin, and Wah Mon, and three grandchildren. All of Breuer's children are artists, and all collaborated with him, as have their mothers: Ruth Maleczek (*Haji, Lear, Summa Dramatica*), Polina Klimovitskaya, Liza Lorwin (*The Gospel at Colonus, The Warrior Ant, Peter & Wendy*) and Leslie Mohn (*Pootanah Moksha, The Warrior Ant*).

Breuer and Maleczek, who met at UCLA, were married in 1978; they separated approximately two decades later but continued to work together. In 1999, Breuer met actor/dramaturg Maude Mitchell at the Sundance

Theatre Lab. They became partners, later marrying. In 2004, Obies were awarded for Breuer's direction and for Mitchell's performance as Nora in *Mabou Mines Dollhouse*, adapted from the Ibsen by Breuer and Mitchell. Breuer and Mitchell continued working, living, and traveling extensively together for over twenty years until Breuer's death.

In 2019, *Getting Off: Lee Breuer on performance with Stephen Nunns* (Theater Communications Group), and *La Divina Caricatura* by Lee Breuer with photographs by Beatriz Schiller (Seagull Books) were both published. *The Fifth Voyage* written by Breuer and edited by two of his sons, Wah Moh and Mojo Lorwin, was published posthumously by the Performing Arts Journal in 2021.

Content Description

This collection contains correspondence, writings, photographs, posters, puppets, printed material, personal papers, realia, and other materials created by or relating to the life and work of Lee Breuer.

Arrangement

Organized in three series: I: Writings and personal papers, 1920-2019. II: Professional papers, 1950-2020. III: Awards and objects, 1978-2020. IV: Production recordings,

Collection Contents

Series I: Writings and personal papers, 1920-2019

19.67 linear feet (42 boxes)

This series contains writings, drafts, photographs, journals, correspondence, printed material and other documentation related to Lee Breuer's life as a playwright, theatrical director, and co-founder of the Mabou Mines theater group. The personal papers in this series include notes, correspondence, and ephemera.

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 1	Personal papers 8 Folders Papers include correspondence, clippings, programs, notebooks, and other papers.	circa 1920s-1990s
b. 2	Maps, clippings, and other related travel papers 2 Folders	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 2	Personal papers 2 Folders	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 3	Personal papers 2 Folders	circa 1920s-2010s
b. 3	Correspondence	circa 1930s-1970s
b. 3	Biographical notes	undated
b. 3	Photographs	circa 1960s
b. 4	Personal papers 3 Folders	circa 1920s-2010s
b. 5	Address books 2 Folders	undated
b. 5	Business cards 3 Folders	undated
b. 6	Address and contact lists 4 Folders	undated
b. 7	Medical and financial records	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 8	Medical and financial records 3 Folders	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 9	Medical and financial records	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 9	Early writings 7 Folders	circa 1950s-1970s
b. 10	Early writings 4 Folders	circa 1950s-1970s

b. 11	Early writings <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1950s-1970s
b. 12	Printed material <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 13	Printed material <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 14	Printed material <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 15	Printed material <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 16	Printed material <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 17	Printed material <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 18	Notes and drafts <i>12 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 19	Notes and drafts <i>8 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 20	Notebooks and journals <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 21	Notes and drafts <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 22	Notes and drafts <i>6 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 23	Notes and drafts <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 24	Notes and drafts <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 25	Notes and drafts <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 25	Calendar and address books	circa 1950, undated
b. 25	Personal papers	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 26	Notes and drafts <i>12 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 26	Personal papers <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 27	Notes and drafts <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s

b. 27	Notebooks	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 28	Notes and drafts <i>6 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 29	Personal papers <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 29	Notes and drafts <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 30	Notes and drafts <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 31	Notes and drafts <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 32	Notes and drafts <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 33	Notes and drafts <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 34	Notes and drafts <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 35	Notes and drafts <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 36	Notes and drafts <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 37	Notes and drafts <i>6 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 38	Notes and drafts <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 39	Notes and drafts <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 40	Printed matter	2007-2008
b. 40	Unidentified drawing Artwork is inscribed with "for Lee*" and signed by Mary Frank.	undated
b. 41	Notes and drafts	undated
b. 42	Correspondence and notes	circa 2009-2019
b. 42	Notes, drafts, and clippings <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2010s

Series II: Professional papers, 1950–2020*37.5 linear feet (70 boxes + 1 broadside)*

This series contains teaching materials, papers related to Breuer's theatrical and film works, clippings, photographs, reference materials, props, posters, and other materials related to Lee Breuer's work as a dramatist, director, and educator. The professional papers within this series contain correspondence, press materials, and extensive working files related to productions directed by Breuer and work produced by the Mabou Mines theater group, including *Gospel at Colonus*, *La Divina Caricatura*, and *Mabou Mines Dollhouse*.

Box 115: Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 116: Born-digital material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies of electronic files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Box 125: Restricted until 2045. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 43	Mabou Mines--Dollhouse	circa 2003-2008
b. 43	Professional papers 3 Folders	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 44	Yi Sang	circa 2000s
b. 44	Gospel at Colonus	circa 2005
b. 44	Professional papers 2 Folders	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 45	Colonus	circa 2003-2004
b. 45	Bagdad cafe	circa 2003-2005
b. 45	Cantata	circa 2002-2004
b. 45	Colonus programs	circa 2008-2011
b. 45	Professional papers	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 46	Writings by others 5 Folders	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 47	Printed material 4 Folders	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 48	Writings by others	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 48	Printed material 4 Folders	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 49	Printed material	circa 1980s-2010s

b. 49	Writings by others <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1982-2011
b. 50	Correspondence <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 51	Correspondence <i>6 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 52	Correspondence <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 52	Clippings and notes	circa 1950s-1980s
b. 53	Lulu Noire <i>6 Folders</i>	circa 1994-1995
b. 54	Lulu Noire <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1990s
b. 55	Lulu <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1990s
b. 55	B. Beaver animation	undated
b. 55	Dog's life	undated
b. 56	The wood complains	undated
b. 56	A play	circa 1958
b. 56	The line	circa 1958
b. 56	Red horse	circa 1960s-1970s
b. 56	Divinia	undated
b. 57	Prelude to a death in Venice	circa 1980s
b. 57	Suzie cinema	circa 1980s
b. 57	Hajj	circa 1980s
b. 57	Gospel at Colonus <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1980s-2000s
b. 58	Gospel at Colonus <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 59	Gospel at Colonus <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 60	Sister Suzie Cinema	circa 1980s
b. 60	Gospel at Colonus <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1980s-2010s

b. 61	Gospel at Colonus <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 62	Gospel at Colonus <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 63	Warrior Ant <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1980s-1990s
b. 64	Warrior Ant <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1980s-1990s
b. 65	Warrior Ant <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1980s
b. 65	White boned demon	circa 1996
b. 65	The Quantum <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 2000s
b. 66	The Mahabharanta	undated
b. 66	Epidog	circa 1996
b. 66	Writings, notes, and other papers <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 67	Writings, notes, and other papers <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 67	Summa Dramatica	circa 2000s
b. 68	Peter and Wendy	circa 1990s-2000s
b. 68	Animal Magnetism	circa 1990s-2000s
b. 68	Ecco Porco <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2000s
b. 69	Ecco Porco <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2000s
b. 70	Red Beads <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 70	Dollhouse	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 71	Dollhouse <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 72	Dollhouse <i>6 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 73	Dollhouse <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s

b. 74	Dollhouse <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 75	Dollhouse <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 76	Dollhouse <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 77	Dollhouse <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 78	Dollhouse <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 79	Dollhouse <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 80	Dollhouse	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 80	Trafi	circa 2009
b. 80	Two Little Indians	circa 2002
b. 80	Bagdad Cafe	circa 2000s
b. 80	Shangilia	circa 2004-2010
b. 81	Pataphysics <i>4 Folders</i> Includes materials related to "Summa Dramatica" and "Porco Morto".	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 82	Pataphysics Includes materials related to "Summa Dramatica" and "Porco Morto".	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 82	Choephoroi <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1998-2006
b. 83	Choephoroi	circa 1998-2006
b. 83	Yi Sang Counts to Thirteen	circa 2004
b. 83	Opera of the Stones	circa 2010
b. 83	Curse of the Starving Class	circa 2010
b. 83	Sex in a Coma	circa 2008-2012
b. 83	Glass Guignol <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 2010s
b. 84	Glass Guignol <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 2010s
b. 85	Glass Guignol <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 2010s

b. 86	Glass Guignol <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 2010s
b. 87	Glass Guignol <i>6 Folders</i>	circa 2010s
b. 88	Glass Guignol <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 2010s
b. 88	Un tramway nommé Désir <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 89	Un tramway nommé Désir <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 90	Un tramway nommé Désir <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 90	Antigone <i>2 Folders</i>	2008-2011
b. 90	Shalom Shanghai	2013
b. 91	La Divina Caricatura <i>6 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 92	La Divina Caricatura <i>5 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 93	La Divina Caricatura <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 93	Glass Guignol	circa 2010s
b. 94	Drafts and notes <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 94	La Divina Caricatura <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 95	La Divina Caricatura <i>4 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 96	La Divina Caricatura <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 96	A Coffin in Egypt	circa 1963-2017
b. 96	Madea	circa 2017-2018
b. 97	Film, television, and teaching materials <i>4 Folders</i> Contains writings, press materials, correspondence and other documentation related to Lee Breuer's teaching, as well as film and television adaptations of Breuer's writings and other productions by Mabou Mines including "La Divina Caricatura" and "The Gospel at Colonus."	circa 1980s-2010s

b. 98	Film, television, and teaching materials <i>4 Folders</i> Contains writings, press materials, correspondence and other documentation related to Lee Breuer's teaching, as well as film and television adaptations of Breuer's writings and other productions by Mabou Mines including "La Divina Caricatura" and "The Gospel at Colonus."	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 99	Film, television, and teaching materials <i>4 Folders</i> Contains writings, press materials, correspondence and other documentation related to Lee Breuer's teaching, as well as film and television adaptations of Breuer's writings and other productions by Mabou Mines including "La Divina Caricatura" and "The Gospel at Colonus."	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 100	Photographs <i>21 Folders</i> Contains photographs of Lee Breuer and others in theatrical productions including "The Gospel at Colonus," "Summa Dramatica," "Ecco Porco," "A Prelude to Death in Venice," and many others.	circa 1980s-2010s
b. 100	Press and programs <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1960s-2010s
b. 101	Press and programs <i>18 Folders</i>	circa 1960s-2010s
b. 101	Grants and fundraising materials <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 102	Grants and fundraising materials <i>3 Folders</i>	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 102	Cairo materials <i>2 Folders</i> Contains programs, clippings, and other materials related to the Cairo International Festival for Contemporary & Experimental Theatre and other events in Cairo, Egypt.	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 103	Cairo materials <i>3 Folders</i> Contains programs, clippings, and other materials related to the Cairo International Festival for Contemporary & Experimental Theatre and other events in Cairo, Egypt.	circa 2000s-2010s
b. 103	Programs	circa 2005-2013
b. 103	Correspondence, agendas, and clippings	circa 2001-2020
b. 103	Four Score	undated
b. 103	Medea	undated
b. 103	Lonely Planet	undated
b. 103	Pataphysics Penyeach	2009
b. 103	True Crit	undated

b. 104 (Oversize)	Newspapers and ephemera <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 105 (Oversize)	Newspapers and ephemera <i>2 Folders</i>	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 110	Printed material	circa 1970s-2010s
b. 111	Printed material	circa 1970s-2010s
	Audiovisual materials Box 115: Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information. Box 116: Born-digital material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies of electronic files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated, circa 2000s
b. 115	Discovering Homeboyz <i>1 Videocassette (VHS)</i>	undated
b. 116	DVDs <i>6 DVD-Rs</i>	undated, circa 2000s
b. 116	The Gospel at Colonus budget files <i>2 CD-Rs</i>	undated
	Computer media	undated
b. 116	Floppy disks <i>2 Floppy Disks</i>	undated
b. 117	Posters	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 117	Promotional materials	undated
b. 117	Unidentified drawings	undated
b. 118	Posters	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 124 (Broadside)	Posters	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 125	Financial records <i>2 Folders</i> Restricted until 2045. For further information consult the appropriate curator.	circa 2003-2006

Series III: Awards and objects , 1978-2020*9.67 linear feet (13 boxes)*

This series contains awards received by Lee Breuer and others, along with props, objects, and puppets used in productions related to Breuer and the Mabou Mines theater group, including puppets from *La Divina Caricatura*.

Materials roughly maintain order found at time of acquisition.

b. 106	Awards	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 107	Awards	circa 1990s-2010s
b. 108	Props and objects	undated
b. 109	Props and objects	undated
b. 112	Props and objects	undated
b. 113	"Choreophorae" set model by Narelle Sissons	undated
b. 114	Silver plate	undated
b. 117	Obie award certificates for "Dollhouse"	2004
b. 117	Awards	1978-2020
b. 119 (Oversize)	Vase	undated
b. 120 (Oversize)	Wig	undated
b. 121 (Oversize)	Suli puppet and related costumes This puppet was designed by Eric Novak for a production of "La Divina Caricatura" at La Mama Theatre in New York, New York.	2013
b. 122 (Oversize)	John Ham Jones puppet This puppet was designed by Eric Novak for a 2013 production of "La Divina Caricatura" at La Mama Theatre in New York, New York.	2013
b. 123 (Oversize)	Rose the Dog puppet and related materials This puppet, which received an Obie Award, was originally designed by Julie Archer for a production of "An Epidog" then remade for "La Divina Caricatura" (2013) at La Mama Theatre in New York, New York. Notation on box lid indicates that the inspiration for the puppet "came from [the] dog Lee got Clove on the Navajo reservation." Clove Galilee played the part of "Leslie" in the 1996 premiere production of "An Epidog" staged at HERE Arts Center.	2013

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.

Genres / Formats

Born digital
Videocassettes

Occupations

Dramatists -- United States -- 21st century

Subjects

Dramatists, American -- 20th Century
Dramatists, American -- 21st century
Dramatists, American -- Archives
Experimental theater -- United States -- 20th Century
Experimental theater -- United States -- 21st century
Puppets
Theater -- Production and direction -- United States
Theatrical posters, American
Theatrical productions

Corporate Body

Mabou Mines

Names

Maleczek, Ruth
Mitchell, Maude