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Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Isabel Leighton Papers

YCAL MSS 766



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2013

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	3
Requesting Instructions	3
Administrative Information	4
Immediate Source of Acquisition	4
Conditions Governing Access	4
Conditions Governing Use	4
Preferred Citation	4
Processing Information	4
Isabel Leighton (1901-1995)	4
Scope and Contents	5
Arrangement	5
Collection Contents	6
Series I: Writings, 1922-1980	6
Series II: Correspondence, 1931-1982	9
Series III: Photographs, circa 1890-1962	10
Series IV: Personal and Financial Papers, 1923-1984	11
Series V: Printed Material, 1922-1978	12
Series VI: Collages and Scrapbooks, 1922-1965	13
Collages	13
Scrapbooks	13
Series VII: Audiovisual Material, 1943-1964	14
Phonograph Records	14
Films	16
Selected Search Terms	18

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 766

CREATOR: Leighton, Isabel

TITLE: Isabel Leighton papers

DATES: 1890–1984

BULK DATES: 1922–1984

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 11.51 linear feet (35 boxes) + 1 art object

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Isabel Leighton Papers contain writings, correspondence, personal papers, audiovisual material, photographs, and printed material that document her career as an actress, playwright, journalist, screenwriter, and civic activist, promoting public measures to improve mental health. Writings include typescript drafts, many with minor revisions, for works including "The Sapphire Ring," "Katja," and "Mercenary Mary." Correspondence, while not extensive, includes files on theatrical projects such as "Spring Again," and files relating to her work as a naval correspondent in Asia during the Second World War. The scrapbooks document Leighton's theatrical performances in the 1930s, journalism in the 1940s, and broadcast production in the 1950s and 1960s. Photographs largely feature Leighton, though also include images of colleagues, acquaintances, and family members.

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

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.leighton>.

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

Bequest of Isabel Leighton, 1996.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Box 30 (Record Album Storage) and boxes 34-36 (16mm film): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Boxes 27-29, 31 (Record Album Storage): Use of originals is restricted. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Conditions Governing Use

The Isabel Leighton 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

Isabel Leighton Papers. Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Processing Information

Former call number: Uncat Za Ms 487.

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, and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing in 2013, including rehousing and minimal organization. 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.

Isabel Leighton (1901-1995)

Isabel Leighton, American actress, author, foreign correspondent, and civic activist, was born July 17, 1901 and died April 22, 1995. During her lengthy and diverse career she authored novels, plays, and magazine articles, was an associate editor of Vogue magazine, served as a naval correspondent in Asia during the

Second World War, and promoted mental health through public outreach and education. Leighton was married twice: to Frederic A. Willis, and to Arthur Hugh Bunker (Yale 1915, d. 1963).

Scope and Contents

The Isabel Leighton Papers contain writings, correspondence, personal papers, audiovisual material, photographs, and printed material that document her career as an actress, playwright, journalist, screenwriter, and civic activist, promoting public measures to improve mental health. Writings include typescript drafts, many with minor revisions, for works including "The Sapphire Ring," "Katja," and "Mercenary Mary." Correspondence, while not extensive, includes files on theatrical projects such as "Spring Again," and files relating to her work as a naval correspondent in Asia during the Second World War. The scrapbooks document Leighton's theatrical performances in the 1930s, journalism in the 1940s, and broadcast production in the 1950s and 1960s. Photographs largely feature Leighton, though also include images of colleagues, acquaintances, and family members.

Arrangement

Organized into seven series: I. Writings, 1922-1980. II. Correspondence, 1931-1982. III. Photographs, circa 1890-1962. IV. Personal and Financial Papers, 1923-1984. V. Printed Material, 1922-1978. VI. Collages and Scrapbooks, 1922-1965. VII. Audiovisual Material, 1943-1964.

Collection Contents

Series I: Writings, 1922-1980

2.71 linear feet (7 boxes)

The Writings series consists chiefly of typescript drafts (some corrected) of works by Isabel Leighton, including playscripts, telescripts, radio scripts, speeches, and essays. Some files include correspondence and other related material.

Arranged alphabetically by title. Unidentified works are filed at the end.

b.1	"About Face, Face Value, The Pathfinder"	undated
b.1	"America in the Saddle"	undated
b.1	"American Beauty" 3 Folders	1970
b.1	"Anchors Away"	undated
b.1	"Ant Samantha"	undated
b.1	"Broadway Pilgrims" 2 Folders	undated
b.1	"Chaplain of the Deep"	undated
b.1	"Children's Court"	undated
b.1	"The Christmas Seal"	undated
b.1	"Citizen of the World"	undated
b.2	"Confuse 'em and Use 'em"	undated
b.2	"The Consumer and the N.R.A."	1934
b.2	"Crown of Nettles"	1970
b.2	"The Dagger and the Rose"	undated
b.2	"Danger Ahead"	undated
b.2	"Days of Decision" 2 Folders	1970-1980
b.2	"The Debutante Racket"	undated
b.2	"Double Play"	undated
b.2	"Dressmaker's Story" 4 Folders	1940, undated
b.3	"Express to the Stars" 2 Folders	1940
b.3	"Fat Lady"	undated

b. 3	"Fight for Your Lady"	undated
b. 3	"The First Lady of the Land"	undated
b. 3	"The General Nobody Knows"	undated
b. 3	"The Good Listener"	undated
b. 3	"Good Night, Pleasant Dreams, God Bless You"	undated
b. 3	"Gulf Stream"	undated
b. 3	"Harry Content"	undated
b. 3	"Home Sweet Home"	undated
b. 3	"Honey Bear Goes to the Fair" <i>2 Folders</i>	undated
b. 3	"How Did They Get That Way?" <i>4 Folders</i>	1951-1966
b. 3	"Humanity's Traveling Salesman"	undated
b. 3	"Hypnosis is not a Parlour Game"	undated
b. 4	"I Met Mr. Justice Holmes"	undated
b. 4	"The Inconsistent Moon"	undated
b. 4	"Indian Operetta"	undated
b. 4	"Indian Summer"	undated
b. 4	"Katja the Dancer"	undated
b. 4	"Lombard Story"	1937
b. 4	"The Lonely Road"	undated
b. 4	"The Love Chase"	1922
b. 4	"Love for the Taking"	undated
b. 4	"Lucky Penny"	1940
b. 4	"Interview with Madam Chang Kai Chek"	circa 1945
b. 4	"Marie-Adelaide"	1941
b. 5	"Mary Jane Romps Home"	undated
b. 5	"Men Are Like That"	undated
b. 5	"Men Have Been Shot for Less"	undated
b. 5	"Mercenary Mary"	undated
b. 5	"The Miracle is Love"	circa 1950

b. 5	"Miss Higgins Sees Life Through"	undated
b. 5	"A Modern Look at the Ten Commandments"	undated
b. 5	"The Morning After"	1922
b. 5	"The Most Discussed Woman in America (Alice Longworth)"	1930
b. 5	"New York Heart-Beat"	undated
b. 5	"Odyssey to Freedom"	1944
b. 5	"Russia Plays Blind Man's Bluff"	undated
b. 5	"The Sapphire Ring"	undated
b. 6	"The Scarlet Cockatoo"	undated
b. 6	"Shortcut to Tokyo"	undated
b. 6	"Spring Again"	undated
b. 6	"Stage Door Canteen" <i>2 Folders</i>	1942
b. 6	"Strong Men are Weak"	undated
b. 6	"Success Story: U.S.A."	undated
b. 6	"Time Out For Love"	1937
b. 6	"Tomorrow"	1923
b. 6	"Tonnage Finds Wings"	undated
b. 6	"Travel"	undated
b. 6	"Tycoon"	undated
b. 6	"Wanderlust Anyone?"	undated
b. 6	"Wayward Bound"	1936
b. 6	"We Only Live Once"	1936
b. 6	"When Love was King"	undated
b. 6	"Womans Club" <i>2 Folders</i>	1946
b. 7	"Women's Rally Speech, Consumer's Drive"	1933 August 28
b. 7	"Literary miscellaneous"	undated
b. 7	Untitled Comedy <i>4 Folders</i>	undated
b. 7	Untitled <i>3 Folders</i>	undated

Series II: Correspondence, 1931-1982*0.83 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Series II consists of professional correspondence and letters of introduction relating to Leighton's service as an accredited war correspondent throughout Asia during the Second World War, and her research on the USS Marblehead; her resignation as Chairman of the Women's Division of the National Recovery Administration in 1933; and to other of Leighton's writings.

Organized into files by topic; files are not arranged in any particular order.

b. 8	War Correspondent <i>2 Folders</i>	1945-1946
b. 8	Letters of introduction	1945
b. 8	Marblehead Men <i>3 Folders</i>	1943-1944
b. 8	<i>My Boy Franklin</i>	1933-1945
b. 8	National Recovery Administration <i>2 Folders</i>	1933
b. 8	Swing, Raymond Gram	1934-1939
b. 9	<i>Who's Who in America</i>	1933-1945
b. 9	<i>The Aspirin Age</i>	1931-1962
b. 9	<i>Marie-Adelaide</i>	1941
b. 9	Unsorted <i>8 Folders</i>	1931-1982

Series III: Photographs, circa 1890-1962*0.75 linear feet (2 boxes)*

Photographs are chiefly of Isabel Leighton, dating from the 1920s to the 1960s, and include studio portraits and snapshots that document Leighton's career as an actress and journalist, as well as her civic activism. Also included are family photographs, the earliest of which dates to circa 1890.

b. 10	Photographs <i>43 Folders</i>	circa 1890-1962
b. 11 (Oversize)	Photographs <i>8 Folders</i>	1920s-1950s
b. 12 (Oversize)	Photographs of Isabel Leighton as a child, framed	circa 1901-1915

Series IV: Personal and Financial Papers, 1923-1984*0.63 linear feet (2 boxes) + 1 folder*

b. 13	Curriculum vitae	undated
b. 13	Passports	1945-1971
b. 13	Membership cards	1952-1954
b. 13	War Department identification card	1945
b. 13	Contracts, agreements and memos <i>6 Folders</i>	1923-1970
b. 13	Financial papers <i>2 Folders</i>	1943-1958
b. 13	<i>Spring Again</i> , financial papers	1943-1957
b. 14	Distinguished Citizen Award	1958
b. 14	Founders certificate	undated
b. 14	Kennel Club	1959
b. 14	Other papers	1947-1974
b. 14	Arthur Bunker obituary and other papers	1967, undated
b. 14	Youth Counseling League donation receipt	1984
b. 14	Mental health activism, papers and programs <i>3 Folders</i>	1942-1951
b. 17 (Oversize)	Drawing of Isabel Leighton by Christos Simatos	

Series V: Printed Material, 1922-1978*1.33 linear feet (4 boxes)*

b. 15	Sheet music	1922-1927
b. 15	Brochures and programs <i>2 Folders</i>	1941-1967
b. 15	Magazines <i>7 Folders</i>	1931-1978
b. 16	Magazines <i>7 Folders</i>	1929-1969
b. 16	Clippings <i>6 Folders</i>	1931-1966
b. 17 (Oversize)	Clippings <i>2 Folders</i>	1932-1964
b. 17 (Oversize)	<i>New Yorker</i> advertisement	1949
b. 17 (Oversize)	<i>Saturday Evening Post</i>	1943
b. 18 (Oversize)	Dust jackets	undated

Series VI: Collages and Scrapbooks, 1922-1965*1.42 linear feet (8 boxes) + 1 art object*

Clippings, photographs, and ephemera that document Isabel Leighton's creative and civic activities.

Organized into two subseries: Collages and Scrapbooks.

Collages

b. 18 (Oversize)	National Recovery Administration	1933
b. 18 (Oversize)	Arthur Bunker / Saint Luke's Hospital	1965
b. 18 (Oversize)	"Cavalcade of America" radio programs	1943-1944
b. 18 (Oversize)	Department of Labor Hearings, 81st Congress <i>2 Folders</i>	1951
b. 18 (Oversize)	Prince of Luxemburg	1941
b. 19 (Oversize)	Public appearances	circa 1947
b. 20 (Art)	Collage, framed	undated

Scrapbooks

b. 21 (Oversize)	Scrapbook	1926-1937
b. 21 (Oversize)	Clippings removed from scrapbook <i>2 Folders</i>	1926-1937
b. 22 (Oversize)	"Spring Again"	1941-1942
b. 23 (Oversize)	NRA Drive	1933
b. 24	Theater	1922-1926
b. 25 (Oversize)	"Is This Your Problem?"	1951-1952
b. 25 (Oversize)	Television	1951-1952
b. 25 (Oversize)	Vogue	1930s
b. 26 (Oversize)	Scrapbook	circa 1920-1950

Series VII: Audiovisual Material, 1943-1964

3.84 linear feet (10 boxes)

Box 30 (Record album storage) and boxes 34-36 (16mm film): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Boxes 27-29, 31 (Record album storage): Use of originals is restricted. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Organized into two subseries: Phonograph Records, and Films.

Phonograph Records

Associated mailing envelopes are stored in Boxes 32-33.

b. 27 (Record album storage)	<i>Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer/The Teddy Bear Picnic</i> Decca recording (1 10" disc)	undated
b. 27 (Record album storage)	"Isabel Leighton, interviewed by Frank Hogan, McCall's Magazine," Parts 1 - 2 (2 12" discs)	undated
b. 27 (Record album storage)	"Musical Cheers, the Isabel Leighton Show," Re-recorded from client tape, Empire Broadcasting (3 12" discs)	undated
b. 27 (Record album storage)	"A. L. Alexander Meditation Board," WOR, Rockhill Recording (3 12" discs)	1948 December 12
b. 27 (Record album storage)	"A. L. Alexander Meditation Board," WOR Recording (3 12" discs)	1948 December 12
b. 27 (Record album storage)	"A. L. Alexander Meditation Board," Empire Broadcasting (4 12" discs)	1949 January 30
b. 27 (Record album storage)	"A. L. Alexander Meditation Board," WOR recording (3 12" discs)	1949 June 19
b. 28 (Record album storage)	"Books on Trial, The Aspirin Age," MGM Recording Studio (5 12" discs)	undated
b. 28 (Record album storage)	"Your Better Tomorrow: Anxiety," Isabel Leighton, American Broadcasting Company (1 12" disc)	1956 January 25
b. 28 (Record album storage)	"Your Better Tomorrow: What Love Is/What Love is Not," Isabel Leighton, American Broadcasting Company (1 12" disc)	1956 January 25
b. 28 (Record album storage)	"Your Better Tomorrow: Popularity/Ambition," Isabel Leighton, American Broadcasting Company (1 12" disc)	1956 January 25
b. 28 (Record album storage)	"How Did They Get That Way?" Isabel Leighton and Dr. Robert Knight, WJZ-TV, part 2, Presto Recording Company (1 12" disc)	undated
b. 28 (Record album storage)	"Woman's Club, CBS Line," Empire Broadcasting (2 12" discs)	1946 July 10

Phonograph Records (continued)

b. 28 (Record album storage)	"Woman's Club, Marquis Child," Empire Broadcasting (2 12" discs)	1946 June 24
b. 28 (Record album storage)	"Woman's Club, Dr. Barbara Biber, Bank Street School," Empire Broadcasting (2 12" discs)	1946 June 27
b. 28 (Record album storage)	"Woman's Club, John Tasker [Harvard] and Bennett Art Programs," Empire Broadcasting (2 12" discs)	1946 June 18
b. 28 (Record album storage)	"Woman's Club, Louis Untermeyer Show," Empire Broadcasting (2 12" discs)	1946 July 9
b. 29 (Record album storage)	"Woman's Club, with Robert Parsons," WABC, Associated Recording studios (2 12" discs)	1946 June 11
b. 29 (Record album storage)	"Woman's Club, with Bennett Cerf," Empire Broadcasting (2 12" discs)	1946 June 5
b. 29 (Record album storage)	"Woman's Club, The Laurence Frank Show," Columbia Reference Recording, Columbia Broadcast Company (2 12" discs)	1946 May 16
b. 29 (Record album storage)	"Woman's Club, Doctor Laurette Bender Show," Empire Broadcasting (2 12" discs)	1946 July 11
b. 29 (Record album storage)	"Dorothy and Dick," WOR, Advertisers Recording Service (2 12" discs)	1945 June 19
b. 29 (Record album storage)	"When Strangers Meet," American Broadcasting Company (2 12" discs)	1954 February 25
b. 29 (Record album storage)	"Tex and Jinx Show," Isabel Leighton, guest, Reference Recording, National Broadcasting Company (2 12" discs)	1949 October 27
b. 30 (Record album storage)	"Cavalcade of America," Reference Recording, National Broadcasting Company (3 12" discs) "Shortcut to Tokyo," penned on packaging envelope. Side 2/5 broken. 30 (Record Album Storage): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	1943 August 9
b. 30 (Record album storage)	"Cavalcade of America," Reference Recording, National Broadcasting Company (3 12" discs) 30 (Record Album Storage): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	1943 May 10
b. 31 (Record album storage)	"When Strangers Meet," re-recorded, Empire Broadcasting (2 16" discs)	1954 January 8
b. 31 (Record album storage)	"When Strangers Meet, audition," American Broadcasting Company (1 16" disc)	1954 February 15
b. 31 (Record album storage)	"Musical Cheers, the Isabel Leighton Show," Empire Broadcasting (2 16" discs)	undated

Phonograph Records (continued)

b. 31 (Record album storage)	"Martha Dean, Isabel Leighton for rebroadcast," WOR (3 16" discs)	1950 January 20
b. 31 (Record album storage)	"Woman's Club audition, Isabel Leighton," Columbia Broadcasting Company (1 16" disc)	1946 April 29
Associated mailing envelopes		
b. 32 (Oversize)	Isabel Leighton, interviewed by Frank Hogan, McCall's Magazine"	undated
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Musical Cheers," Isabel Leighton Show, Empire Broadcasting Corporation	undated
b. 32 (Oversize)	"A. L. Alexander's Meditation Board" 2 Folders	1948-1949
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Books on Trial, The Aspirin Age," MGM Recording Studio	undated
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Your Better Tomorrow," Isabel Leighton, American Broadcasting Company	1956
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Woman's Club, CBS Line," Empire Broadcasting	1946
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Cavalcade of America, Shortcut to Tokyo," National Broadcasting Company	1943
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Cavalcade of America, [?] Girl"	1943
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Woman's Club," Marquis Child, Empire Broadcasting Corporation	1946
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Woman's Club," Dr. Barbara Biber, Bank Street School, Empire Broadcast	1946
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Woman's Club, John Tasker"	1946
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Woman's Club, Louis Untermeyer"	1946
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Woman's Club, Laurence Frank Show"	1946
b. 32 (Oversize)	"Woman's Club, Doctor Laurette Bender"	1946
b. 32 (Oversize)	"How Did They Get That Way?"	undated
b. 33 (Oversize)	"When Strangers Meet" 2 Folders	1954
b. 33 (Oversize)	"Musical Cheers," rerecorded for client, Empire Broadcast Corporation	undated
b. 33 (Oversize)	"Woman's Club," Columbia Recording Company	1946
Films		
Boxes 34-36 (16mm film): Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.		
b. 34 (Restricted Fragile)	"How Did They Get This Way?" American Broadcasting Company TV Productions (1 16mm reel)	1952 March 6

Films (continued)

b. 35 (Restricted Fragile)	"How Did They Get This Way?" American Broadcasting Company Productions (2 16mm reels)	1951-1952
b. 36 (Restricted Fragile)	"How Did They Get This Way?" American Broadcasting Company Productions (2 16mm reels)	1951-1952

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

Actors -- United States
Authors, American -- 20th Century -- Archives
Journalists -- United States
Mental health -- United States
Radio plays -- Production and direction
Television -- Production and direction
Theater -- United States
War correspondents -- United States
Women war correspondents -- United States
World War, 1939-1945 -- Journalists

Genres / Formats

Audiotapes -- United States -- 20th Century
Audiovisual materials
Motion pictures (visual works) -- United States
-- 20th Century
Photographs -- United States -- 20th Century
Scrapbooks -- United States -- 20th Century
Scripts (documents) -- United States -- 20th
Century
Television scripts -- United States -- 20th
Century

Occupations

Actors -- United States -- 20th Century
Authors -- United States -- 20th Century
Journalists -- United States -- 20th Century
War correspondents -- United States -- 20th
Century

Names

Leighton, Isabel