



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

**A Finding Aid to the Rico Lebrun Papers,
1935-1975, in the Archives of American Art**

**Funding for the processing of this collection was
provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.**

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Creator:	Lebrun, Rico, 1900-1964
Title:	Rico Lebrun papers
Dates:	1935-1975
Quantity:	5.3 linear Feet
Abstract:	The papers of painter, muralist, and educator Rico Lebrun measure 5.3 linear feet and date from 1935 to 1975. Found within the papers are biographical materials; personal and business correspondence, including extensive correspondence between Lebrun and his gallery, Jacques Seligmann and Co.; writings, including illustrated notebooks; personal business records; printed material; 3 sketchbooks; and photographs of Lebrun, travels in Mexico, and his work.
Language:	English
Language:	The collection is in English.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

The papers were donated in 1974 by Lebrun's wife, Constance Lebrun Crown. Additional materials were donated by Crown in 1976.

Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Constance Lebrun Crown and David Lebrun conducted by Paul Karlstrom, November 23, 1974. Syracuse University also holds papers of Rico Lebrun.

Existence and Location of Copies

Portions of this collection are available on 35 mm microfilm reels 2709-2714 at the Archives of American Art offices, and through interlibrary loan. Researchers should note that the arrangement of the papers as described in this finding aid does not reflect the order of the collection on microfilm due to reprocessing.

Processing Information

A portion of the papers received a preliminary level of arrangement after donation and were microfilmed onto reels 2709-2714. The collection was re-processed and a finding aid prepared by Judy Ng in 2015, with funding provided by the Terra Foundation for American Art.

Preferred Citation

Rico Lebrun papers, 1935-1975. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Conditions Governing Access

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C. Research Center. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Conditions Governing Use

The Rico Lebrun papers are owned by the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Literary rights as possessed by the donor have been dedicated to public use for research, study, and scholarship. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical / Historical

Painter, muralist, and educator Rico (Frederico) Lebrun (1900-1964) lived and worked in New York City and Los Angeles, California and his modernist works were primarily influenced by traditional religious iconography and human suffering.

Born in Naples, Italy, Lebrun attended the Naples Academy of Beaux Arts after his military service in the Italian Army during WWI. He began his career as a stained glass designer and was offered a one year contract to work in Springfield, Illinois for the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company in 1924. At the end of the contract, Lebrun moved to New York City where he found work as a commercial illustrator for magazines such as *Vogue*, *Fortune*, and *The New Yorker*. After a return to Italy in the early 1930s to continue his art studies, Lebrun moved to New York City in 1936 where he taught at the Art Students League, painted his first mural commission for the Fogg Art Museum with Lewis Rubenstein, and found work as an artist for the WPA.

In 1938, Lebrun moved to Southern California and accepted a position at the Chouinard Art Institute, where his students would include Disney studio animators for *Bambi*. Lebrun continued to produce paintings while teaching, and his first solo exhibition was organized by Donald Bear, then director of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art. Beginning in 1947, Lebrun spent three years working on over 200 drawings and paintings for the Crucifixion series, which culminated in an exhibition at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

In the late 1940s and 1950s, he continued to teach at the Jepson Institute in Los Angeles and at other institutions, including the Instituto Allende in San Miguel, Mexico from 1952 to 1954. In 1958, while teaching at Yale, Lebrun was invited by professor and art critic Peter Selz to create a mural for Pomona College. He completed his plans for the mural during his year-long teaching residency at the American Academy of Rome in 1959, and completed *Genesis* in 1960. Lebrun died from cancer in 1964.

Scope and Contents

The papers of painter, muralist, and educator Rico Lebrun measure 5.3 linear feet and date from 1935 to 1975. Found within the papers are biographical materials; personal and business correspondence, including extensive correspondence between Lebrun and his gallery, Jacques Seligmann and Co.; writings, including illustrated notebooks; personal business records; printed material; 3 sketchbooks; and photographs of Lebrun, travels in Mexico, and his work.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged as 7 series.

Missing Title

- Series 1: Biographical Materials, 1948-1962 (4 folders; Box 1, OV 10)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1935-1973 (1.7 linear feet; Boxes 1-2, OV 10)
- Series 3: Writings, 1938-1964 (0.7 linear feet; Boxes 2-3)
- Series 4: Personal Business Records, 1940-1964 (0.3 linear feet; Box 3, BV 7)
- Series 5: Printed Material, circa 1940-1975 (0.8 linear feet; Box 3, BV 8-9)
- Series 6: Artwork, circa 1950-1965 (3 folders; Box 3)
- Series 7: Photographic Materials, 1950-1965 (1.6 linear feet; Boxes 4-6)

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Archives of American Art under the following terms:

Subjects:

Painters -- California -- Los Angeles
Painting, American

Types of Materials:

Photographs
Sketchbooks

Names:

Jacques Seligmann & Co.

Occupations:

Educators -- California -- Los Angeles
Muralists -- California -- Los Angeles

Series Descriptions/Container Listing

1: Biographical Materials, 1948-1962

4 folders; Box 1, OV 10

Biographical materials include a certificate from the National Academy of Design, citizenship records, curriculum vitae, and a transcript of an interview by Bill Gorman dating from 1962.

Materials are arranged by document type.

Box	Folder	
1	1	Certificate, National Academy of Design, 1962
1	2	Citizenship Records, 1948-1956
1	3	Curriculum Vitae, 1951
1	4	Interview Transcript, 1962

2: Correspondence, 1935-1973

1.7 linear Feet; Boxes 1-2, OV 10

Correspondence consists of letters to Lebrun regarding the exhibition, commission, and sales of his artwork, as well as correspondence from friends, colleagues, and family members. There is extensive chronological correspondence between Lebrun and his gallery, Jacques Seligmann and Co., and other correspondents of note include Julian Levi and Barry Robert Schachtman. Diagrams and plans for the mural *Genesis* can be found in correspondence with Pomona College. Letters of condolences to Lebrun's widow, Constance Lebrun, are filed at the end of the series.

A selection of letters has retained alphabetical arrangement by sender. The remaining correspondence retains arrangement in chronological order.

Box	Folder	
1	5	American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1952-1965
1	6	American Academy in Rome, 1960
1	7	American Federation of Arts, 1963
1	8	Art Gallery of Toronto, 1958
1	9	Art Students League, 1936
1	10	Ballet International, 1944
1	11	Ballet Theatre, 1951
1	12	Boston Public Library, 1957
1	13	Boston University, 1959
1	14	Brice, William, circa 1950-1960
1	15	Bruggers, 1952
1	16	California State Board of Equalization, 1956
1	17	Carnegie Institute, 1952-1964
1	18	Cober Gallery, 1960-1962

1	19	de Cordova and Dana Museum, 1957
1	20	de Young Museum, 1952-1957
1	21	Department of Municipal Art, City of Los Angeles, 1961-1964
1	22	Federman, Herrman, Stonehill, and Co., 1965
1	23-25	Frank Perls Gallery, 1952-1957
1	26	Fuegi, John, 1963
1	27	Garibay, Roberto, 1962
1	28	GCA Gallery, 1957-1960
1	29	Goodrich, Lloyd, 1960
1	30	Gorostiza, Celestino, 1962
1	31	Grippi Gallery, 1960-1962
1	32	Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, 1935-1963
1	33	Haskin, Don, 1963
1	34	Langsner, Jules, 1963
1	35-36	L.A. County Museum, 1962-1968
1	37	Meriden Gravure Company, 1961-1963
1	38	Mesches, Arnold, 1962
1	39	Museum of Modern Art, 1959-1962
1	40	National Academy of Design, 1948-1963
1	41	New York Post Office, 1936-1941
1	42-43	Newport Harbor Exhibition, 1962-1963
1	44	Obelisk Gallery, 1961-1962
1	45	Occidental College, 1956-1959
1	46	Patchen, Miriam, 1961-1962
1	47	Pearson, circa 1940-1960
1	48	Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1953-1963
1	49-55	Pomona College, 1956-1974
1	56	Price, Vincent, 1953-1955
1	57	Princeton University Art Museum, 1960-1961
1	58	Sanchez, Horatio, 1961-1962
1	59	Sandoval, Carlos, 1961-1963
1	60	Selz, Peter, 1968-1971
1	61	Tejada, Julio, 1962
1	62	University of California Press, 1959-1962
1	63	University of Southern California, 1961
1	64	Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 1961-1962
1	65	Worcester Art Museum, 1961-1962
1	66	Work Returned, 1958-1960

1	67-69	Work Out, 1958-1965
1	70-74	Chronological, circa 1937-1963
1	75-81	Chronological, 1938-1950
1	82-88	Chronological, 1951-1952
Box	Folder	
2	1-11	Chronological, 1953-1955
2	12-20	Chronological, 1956-1958
2	21-28	Chronological, 1959-1961
2	29-34	Chronological, 1962-1963
2	35-43	Chronological, 1964-1965
2	44-45	Chronological, 1966-1973 Oversized materials housed in OV 10.
2	46-47	Chronological, C.L. [Constance Lebrun], circa 1953-1965
2	48-50	Chronological, C.L. [Constance Lebrun], 1953-1965

Box
OV 10 Oversized Drawings from Box 2, Folder 44, 1966

3: Writings, 1938-1964

0.7 linear Feet; Boxes 2-3

Writings consist of original illustrated manuscript/notebooks, a studio notebook, and exhibition guestbook registers dating from the 1950s. Typescripts of Lebrun's autobiography, notes on drawing, and general remarks on art and other topics that appear as poetry are also included.

Typescript material has retained numerical ordering. The remaining materials are arranged by document type.

Box	Folder	
2	51	Autobiography (201), circa 1959
2	52	Autobiography (202), circa 1959
2	53	Autobiography (203), circa 1959
2	54	Autobiography (204), circa 1959
2	55	Autobiography (205), circa 1959
2	56	Autobiography (206), circa 1959
2	57-63	Notes on Drawing (207-216), circa 1959
2	64-69	Poetry (301-312), circa 1963
Box	Folder	
3	1	Poetry, "Agricultural Period" (313), circa 1959-1963
3	2	Poetry, "Capri" (314), circa 1963
3	3	Poetry, "Splendor as Idea" (315), circa 1959-1963

3	4	Poetry, "What <i>Not to Do</i> " (316), circa 1963
3	5	Poetry, Untitled (317), circa 1963
3	6	General Remarks on Art (318), circa 1959-1963
3	7	Guestbook, circa 1950-1960
3	8-9	Guestbooks, 1951, 1958
3	10	Illustrated Manuscript, circa 1950-1960
3	11-13	Illustrated Notebooks, circa 1953-1954
3	14	Studio Notebook, circa 1938-1941 Much of the writing is in Elaine Lebrun's handwriting.
3	15	Miscellaneous, 1961-1964

4: Personal Business Records, 1940-1964

0.3 linear Feet; Box 3, BV 7

Personal business records consist of account book/ledgers and studio inventories of drawings and other works. There are also receipts, invoices, and correspondence detailing the sale, loan, and exhibition of his works.

Materials are arranged by document type.

Box	Folder	
3	16	Account Book, 1945
Box		
BV 7		Account Ledger, circa 1945-1949
Box	Folder	
3	17	Inventory, Drawings, 1964
3	18	Inventory, Studio, 1958-1959
3	19-21	Loans, Exhibitions, and Sales, 1940-1963

5: Printed Material, circa 1940-1975

0.8 linear Feet; Box 3, BV 8-9

Printed material includes clippings; exhibition announcements and catalogs; periodicals; and reproductions of works of art. Two books, Lebrun's *Handbook on Deer*, which was given to Disney studio animators working on the film *Bambi*, and *Homage to Rico Lebrun*, which was compiled by Lebrun's students, are included.

Materials are arranged by document type.

Box		
BV 8		Book, <i>Handbook on Deer</i> , by Rico Lebrun, circa 1942

Box		
BV 9		Book, <i>Homage to Rico Lebrun</i> , 1964

Box	Folder	
3	22-23	Clippings, circa 1950-1965
3	24	Clippings, 1951-1963
3	25	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, circa 1940-1975
3	26-33	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1940-1975
3	34	Periodicals, 1931-1962
3	35	Reproductions of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
3	36	Miscellaneous, 1949-1957

6: Artwork, circa 1950-1965

3 folders; Box 3

Artwork consists of three sketchbooks of outlines, ideas, and pen and ink figure studies. Additional artwork can be found in the illustrated notebooks included in the Writings series.

Materials are arranged by document type.

Box	Folder	
3	37-39	Sketchbooks, circa 1950-1965

7: Photographic Materials, circa 1950-1965

1.6 linear Feet; Boxes 4-6

Photographic materials include Lebrun working on murals, models posing for works, and travel photos from Mexico that depict village scenes and images from a cattle slaughterhouse. There are also extensive copy prints, negatives, and glass plate transparencies of Lebrun's drawings and other works of art.

Materials are arranged by subject and document type.

Box	Folder	
4	1	Photographs of Rico Lebrun Working on Mural, circa 1950
4	2	Photographs of Rico Lebrun and Models, circa 1950-1960
4	3	Photographs of Model for <i>Genesis</i> Mural at Pomona College, 1960
4	4	Photographs and Negatives of Models, circa 1950-1965
4	5	Color Slides and Transparencies of Travel, circa 1955-1965
4	6	Color Slides and Photographs of Travel, circa 1950-1965
4	7-8	Photographs of Travel, circa 1950-1965
4	9-10	Photographs of Exhibition Installations, circa 1955-1965
4	11	Photographs and Negatives of Exhibition Installations, circa 1955-1965
4	12	Photographs and Negatives of Exhibition Installations, 1956-1962
4	13	Photographs and Negatives of Exhibition Installation, Newport, California, 1964
4	14	Photographs of Drawings/Sketches, Animals and Plants, circa 1950-1965

- 4 15 Photographs of Drawings/Sketches, Paintings, circa 1950-1965
- 4 16 Photographs of Drawings/Sketches, Men, circa 1950-1965
- 4 17 Photographs of Drawings/Sketches, Women, circa 1950-1965
- 4 18 Photographs of Mixed Media, circa 1950-1965
- 4 19 Photographs of Murals, circa 1950-1965
- 4 20 Photographs and Negatives of Sculptures, circa 1950-1965
- 4 21-23 Photographs of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
- 4 24-28 Photographs of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
Includes copy stand prints for (10-##), (16-##), (17-##), (18-##), and (19-##).
- 4 29-36 Photographs of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
Includes copy stand prints for (20-##), (21-##), (22-##), (23-##), (24-##), (25-##), (26-##), and (29-##).
- 4 37-40 Photographs of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
Includes copy stand prints for (30-##), (31-##), (32-##), and (34-##).
- 4 41 Color Transparencies of Works of Art, circa 1955-1965
- 4 42-43 Negatives of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965

Box Folder

- 5 1-6 Negatives of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
Includes copy stand prints for (7-##), (10-##), (16-##), (17-##), (18-##), and (19-##).
- 5 7-15 Negatives of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
Includes copy stand prints for (20-##), (21-##), (22-##), (23-##), (24-##), (25-##), (26-##), (29-##), and (30-##).

Box Folder

- 6 1-3 Negatives of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
Includes copy stand prints for (31-##), (32-##), and (34-##).
- 6 4-6 Black and White Glass Plate Transparencies of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
- 6 7-10 Color Glass Plate Transparencies of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965