



The New York Public Library
Jerome Robbins Dance Division

Guide to the

Lincoln Kirstein papers, Additions

1907-1989

(S) *MGZMD 418

Compiled by Kit Fluker, 2014

Summary

Creator: Kirstein, Lincoln, 1907-1996

Title: Lincoln Kirstein papers, Additions

Date: 1907-1989

Size: 7.6 linear feet (18 boxes, 1 volume)

Source: Unknown.

Abstract: Lincoln Kirstein was a ballet patron, writer, and general director of the New York City Ballet from 1948 to 1989. The Lincoln Kirstein papers, Additions (1907-1989) contain writings, correspondence, photographs, financial records, and contracts. The material primarily relates to Kirstein's art collection and interest in art; his charitable contributions; and his writing career. The collection also contains material related to Pavel Tchelitchew and to Kirstein's father, Louis Kirstein.

Access: Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult: <https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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Preferred citation: Lincoln Kirstein papers, Additions, (S) *MGZMD 418. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

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Related Materials:

Lincoln Kirstein family photo albums, *MGZEB 00-71. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

Lincoln Kirstein papers, (S) *MGZMD 123. Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

Creator History

Lincoln Kirstein (1907-1996) was a patron of the arts, known best for his influence on the development of ballet in the United States. He co-founded the New York City Ballet, and served as its general director from 1948 to 1989. Kirstein wrote extensively on dance and art.

Scope and Content Note

The Lincoln Kirstein papers, Additions (1907-1989) contain writings, correspondence, photographs, financial records, and contracts. The material primarily relates to Kirstein's art collection and interest in art; his charitable contributions; and his writing career. There are also letters and writings from Pavel Tchelitchev; photographs and memorabilia of Kirstein's father, Louis Kirstein; and Kirstein family photographs.

Correspondence primarily dates to the 1980s, and is arranged by correspondent or subject. The files include enclosures such as clippings and project proposals. There is not a large amount of correspondence with any one person. Subjects of the correspondence include the New York City Ballet; awards received by Kirstein; the deaths of Kirstein's siblings, George Kirstein and Mina Kirstein Curtiss; and museum exhibits, books, and other projects which Kirstein contributed to. There are a small number of letters from Curtiss dating to 1959. The New York City Ballet correspondence also includes a file on Kirstein's efforts to stage *The Sleeping Beauty*.

Writings by Kirstein include poems, articles, reviews, lectures, and notes, as well as contracts and correspondence related to his publications. Most of the writings are drafts of published articles; some have handwritten corrections. A small number of Kirstein's school writings from the 1920s are also present. The collection includes writings and a card file that were used in the preparation of *Lincoln Kirstein: The Published Writings, 1922-1977, A First Bibliography*. The card file contains bibliographic information and excerpts from Kirstein's writings. Bibliographic cards are also held in the Lincoln Kirstein papers, (S) *MGZMD 123, Series 3.

The collection contains a small number of writings about Kirstein. These include short biographies, a draft of a 1987 interview for *Parabola*, and reviews of Kirstein's 1967 play, *White House Happening*.

Financial and legal records consist of correspondence, invoices, receipts, legal agreements, and correspondence, primarily related to Kirstein's art collection and charitable contributions, including donations of artwork.

Kirstein's father, Louis Kirstein, was chairman of the board of directors at William Filene's Sons Company and sat on the National Labor Board. The collection contains a scrapbook of clippings created after his death in 1942; copies of articles he wrote; and memorabilia such as a program for a 1934 dinner celebrating the first anniversary of the National Recovery Administration (NRA). There is also a three-page draft of the Loss Limitation Provision of the NRA's 1933 Code of Fair Competition for the Retail Trade, in Franklin D. Roosevelt's hand.

The collection contains personal photographs dating from 1907 to the 1950s. The photographs are primarily of Lincoln Kirstein, Louis Kirstein, and other family members. The collection also contains photographic prints and negatives of artwork, mostly depicting subjects related to the history of dance. Some of these images were used in Kirstein's book, *Movement and Metaphor: Four Centuries of Ballet*. The *Movement and Metaphor* material includes some photocopies of reference material as well. There

are also photographic negatives of works by William Rimmer.

Kirstein was friends with artist Pavel Tchelitchev, and also executor of his estate. Material related to Tchelitchev includes letters that he wrote to Kirstein; letters he wrote to Frederick Melton; notes on his life and art; correspondence about his estate; transparencies and photographic prints of his art; clippings; and drafts of a lecture he gave on Gertrude Stein.

Arrangement: The collection is arranged in seven categories: Correspondence, Writings by Kirstein, Writings about Kirstein, Financial and Legal Records, Photographs, Louis Kirstein materials, and Pavel Tchelitchev materials. Correspondence is arranged alphabetically by correspondent or subject.

Key Terms

Subjects

Art -- Collectors and collecting

Genre/Physical Characteristic

Clippings (information artifacts)

Correspondence

Photographs

Names

Kirstein, Louis Edward, 1867-1942

Tchelitchev, Pavel, 1898-1957

New York City Ballet

Container List

Correspondence

- b. 1 f. 1 Awards 1983-1985
Awards received by Kirstein.
- b. 1 f. 2-4 Ballet Companies 1984-1988
Includes Dance Theatre of Harlem and the Royal Ballet.
- b. 1 f. 5 City Center of Music and Drama 1985-1988
- b. 1 f. 6 Mina Kirstein Curtiss 1959, 1986-1988
- b. 1 f. 7 George Kirstein 1986
- b. 1 f. 8-9 Museums and Galleries 1985-1989
Includes Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- b. 1 f. 10 Nadelman Family 1965-1968, 1982
- b. 1 f. 11-12 National Endowment for the Arts 1985-1986
Includes correspondence about the National Medal of Arts.
- b. 1 f. 13-22 New York City Ballet 1983-1988
Includes file on *The Sleeping Beauty*.
- b. 2 f. 1 New York State Theater 1983-1988
- b. 2 f. 2-4 New York Public Library 1986-1988
Includes correspondence about exhibits.
- b. 2 f. 5-7 Newspapers 1982-1987
Clippings and correspondence about articles.
- b. 2 f. 8 Royal Society of Arts 1985-1986
- b. 2 f. 9-10 School of American Ballet 1985, 1987
Letters of support for Lincoln Kirstein and resolution honoring him.
- b. 2 f. 11 Frances B. Schreuder and Berenice Bradshaw 1985-1986
- b. 2 f. 12 The White House 1985
- b. 2 f. 13-27 Miscellaneous Individuals 1936-1944, 1976-1989
Includes correspondence with Jerome Robbins.
- b. 2 f. 28-30 Miscellaneous Organizations 1985-1988
- b. 3 f. 1-5 Miscellaneous Projects 1985-1987
Balanchine Memorial, Shaw Memorial, television projects, Times Square Dance Center Project.

Writings by Kirstein

- b. 3 f. 6-17 1924-1978
- b. 4 f. 1-27 1979-1988
- b. 5 f. 1-13 Publisher Contracts and Correspondence 1959-1989
 - b. 17 Bibliographic Card File 1970s
 - b. 18 Bibliographic Card File 1970s

b. 5 f. 14-19 Writings about Kirstein 1960s-1987

Financial and Legal Records

b. 9 f. 3-11 Artwork and Artists 1957-1989

Loans, purchases, customs, shipping, and appraisals.

Charitable Contributions

b. 7 f. 12-14 1947-1967

b. 8 f. 1-8 1969-1988

b. 9 f. 1-2 1989

b. 10 f. 2-9 Correspondence 1955-1989

Regarding loans, estates, trusts, and lawsuits.

b. 10 f. 1 Insurance 1970-1982

b. 6 f. 1-11 Invoices and Receipts, A-H 1955-1989

Arranged alphabetically by company.

b. 7 f. 1-11 Invoices and Receipts, H-Z 1964-1989

Arranged alphabetically by company.

Photographs

v. 1 Family Album 1907-1940s

b. 10 f. 10-11 Personal 1910s-1950s

b. 11 f. 1-6 Artwork circa 1960s

Includes William Rimmer and *Movement and Metaphor* photographs.

b. 12 f. 1-5 Artwork circa 1960s

b. 13 f. 1-5 Artwork circa 1960s

b. 10 f. 12-14 Louis Kirstein 1933-1953

Includes draft of the Loss Limitation Provision of the NRA Code of Fair Competition for the Retail Trade.

Pavel Tchelitchew

b. 14 f. 1-9 1946-1958

Correspondence and writings.

b. 16 f. 1-3 1946-1952

Correspondence and writings.

b. 15 f. 1-6 1935-1957, 1980s

Clippings, programs, and photographs of artwork.