

**The New York Public Library  
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts  
Billy Rose Theatre Division**

**Will Steven Armstrong Designs,  
1946-1967**

**\*T-VIM 2013-214**

## Summary

**Main entry:** Armstrong, Will Steven.

**Title:** Will Steven Armstrong Designs, 1946-1967

**Size:** 3.5 linear feet (3 boxes)

**Preferred citation:** Will Steven Armstrong Designs, \*T-VIM 2013-214, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library.

## Biographical note

Stage designer Will Steven Armstrong (1930-1969) was born in New Orleans. He was a graduate of Louisiana State University and served in the U.S. Air Force in Korea. Armstrong received a Master's Degree from Yale University in 1957. After working as production designer for the Williamstown Summer Theatre (now Williamstown Theatre Festival) from 1955 to 1957, Armstrong came to New York to work under Boris Aronson, Jo Mielziner and Donald Oenslager. The American Shakespeare Festival (Stratford, Connecticut), Long Wharf Theatre, National Repertory Theatre, the Phoenix Theatre, and the New York City Opera were among the companies for which he designed sets, lighting, and costumes. His Broadway design credits include over 40 productions, winning a Tony award in 1962 for his set designs for *Carnival!* (Imperial Theatre, 1961). Armstrong also received an Obie award for his set designs for *Ivanov* (Renata Theatre, 1958). He was married to Jo Grady and they had a daughter, Sloane. Armstrong died while on vacation in New Mexico at the age of 39.

## Scope and content note

This collection contains 28 original costume and set designs by Will Steven Armstrong. American Shakespeare Festival Theatre productions included in the collection are *Coriolanus* (1965), *Julius Caesar* (1966), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1959), and *Romeo and Juliet* (1965). National Theatre productions represented are *Mourning Becomes Electra* by Eugene O'Neill (1967), and *The Rivals* by Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1965). There are also costume designs for *The Beaux Stratagem* by George Farquhar (1959), and a set and costume design for *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes (1959), both produced by the Phoenix Theatre. Other Broadway productions include *The Lion in Winter* by James Goldman, Ambassador Theatre (1966), *Tchin-Tchin* by Sidney Michaels, based on Francois Billetdoux's play, Plymouth Theatre (1962), and *The Wayward Stork* by Harry Tugend, Forty-sixth Street Theatre (1946).

## Container list

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
		<i>The Beaux Stratagem</i> - Phoenix Theatre, 1959
		Costume Designs Includes 2 color on brown paper costume designs with swatches; signed; mat frames; United Scenic Artists stamp on fronts.
2	2	#2 Archer - David King-Wood
2	2	#2 Lady Bountiful - Sylvia Short
		<i>Coriolanus</i> - American Shakespeare Festival Theatre, 1965
		Costume Designs Watercolor and pencil on board; signed; United Scenic Artists with initials WSA on versos.
1	1	Coriolanus ( <b>Includes 2 designs, 1 with swatch.</b> )
1	1	Lieutenant, Conspirators ( <b>Two designs on 1 board.</b> )
		<i>Julius Caesar</i> - American Shakespeare Festival Theatre, 1966
		Costume Designs Includes 13 color and pencil costume designs on 4 illustration boards; 1 has 2 cast names in pencil on verso.
1	4	Antony, Octavius, Lepidus Brutus, Cassius, Pindarus
1	4	Includes color samples painted on left side of design. Brutus, Portia, Cassius
1	5	Includes color samples for the Senate painted in upper right corner. Soothsayer, Julius Caesar, Calpurnia, Antony and Racer ( <b>Includes color samples painted on right side.</b> )
1	5	
		<i>The Lion in Winter</i> - Ambassador Theatre, 1966
		Costume Designs Includes 2 watercolor and pencil on illustration board designs; signed; notes in pencil and United Scenic Artists stamp with initials WSA on verso.
2	3	Eleanor
2	3	Henry
		Paint Elevations Includes 3 color paint elevations on 2 illustration boards; signed; United Scenic Artists stamp on fronts and versos; additional notes in pencil; covered with plastic
2	3	
		<i>Lysistrata</i> Phoenix Theatre, 1959
		Costume Design - Lampita Includes color and pencil on illustration board design.
1	6	
1	6	Set Design ( <b>Includes color on board; signed.</b> )
		<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i> - American Shakespeare Festival Theatre, 1959
		Characters in Costume Includes watercolor and pencil on paper drawings of 19 characters with names in pencil; pencil and black paint drawing of tree on verso.
2	1	
		<i>Mourning Becomes Electra</i> - National Repertory Theatre, 1967
		Set Designs Includes 2 black and white on grey paper designs; mat frames.
2	4	
		<i>The Rivals</i> - National Repertory Theatre, 1965
		Chiffon Drop Designs (?) Includes 5 watercolor and pencil on illustration board designs (possibly paint elevations); signed; United Scenic Artists stamp and additional notes in pencil.
3	1	Jack Absolute ( <b>Design is covered with plastic.</b> )
3	1	Bob Acres
3	2	Julia's
3	2	Lydia Languish

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|---|---|---|
| 3 | 2 | Mrs. Malaprop's Garden  |
|   |   | <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> - American Shakespeare Festival Theatre, 1965   |
|   |   | Set Designs   |
| 1 | 2 | Includes 2 watercolor and pencil on board designs; signed; United Scenic Artists stamp with initials WSA on front; covered with cellophane. |
|   |   | <i>Tchin-Tchin</i> - Plymouth Theatre, 1962   |
|   |   | Construction Drop - Paint Elevation   |
| 3 | 3 | Includes color on board; signed; United Scenic Artists stamp in lower right corner.   |
|   |   | <i>The Wayward Stork</i> - 46th Street Theatre, 1946  |
|   |   | Paint Elevations(?)   |
| 1 | 3 | Includes 2 color and pencil sketches on 1 board ; covered with cellophane   |
|   |   | Unidentified Set Design, ca. 1950s?   |
| 1 | 3 | Includes watercolor on board design (possibly Shakespeare play).  |