

**The New York Public Library
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center
Jerome Robbins Dance Division**

Guide to the

Louise Branch papers

1921-1949 (bulk 1937-1938)

(S)*MGZMD 319

Compiled by Allison Hughes, Palmer School of Library and Information Science, September 2013,
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Summary

Creator: Branch, Louise, 1901-1959

Title: Louise Branch papers, 1921-1949 (bulk 1937-1938)

Size: 1.68 linear feet (4 boxes)

Source: Received February 1960, donor unknown.

Abstract: Louise Branch (1901-1959) was a photographer and film producer who organized the 1937 Dance International 1900-1937 exhibition at Rockefeller Center. The Louise Branch papers include correspondence and planning materials for the exhibition, files relating to Branch's educational film company United Specialists, Inc., and some personal correspondence.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Library policy on photocopying and photography will apply. Advance notice may be required.

Copyright information: Donor retains copyright of materials. For permission to publish, contact the Curator, Jerome Robbins Dance Division.

Preferred citation: Louise Branch papers, Jerome Robbins Dance Division, The New York Public Library.

Processing note: Original order was maintained.

Creator history

Louise Branch (1901-1959) was the daughter of a prominent banking family from Richmond, Virginia. She lived primarily in New York City, and from 1931 to 1940 operated the English Bookshop on East 55th St., establishing an art gallery in its basement. After exhibiting a number of sculptor Malvina Hoffman's dance-inspired works in 1936, Branch began planning an international exhibition of artwork and dance performances. In the summer of 1937, she traveled to Europe seeking countries to participate in the event, which she hoped would "establish closer relations and better understanding among the nations." The exhibition, entitled Dance International 1900-1937, was held at Rockefeller Center from November 29, 1937, to January 2, 1938. Known as the "World's Fair of Dance," Dance International featured art, films, books, lectures, and dance performances from forty countries.

During the 1940s, Branch ran United Specialists, Inc., a company that produced educational films, particularly relating to animals and pet training. Branch was also a dog breeder and photographer, and in 1948 she collaborated with Blanche Saunders to provide the photographic illustrations for Saunders' book *Training You to Train Your Dog*. After World War II, Branch moved to Italy, where she lived until her death in 1959.

Sources:

Dance International 1900-1937: Exhibit of Arts Relating to the Dance: Catalogue, 1937.

"Louise Branch, 58, a Photographer," *The New York Times*, December 14, 1959.

Scope and content note

The Louise Branch papers primarily consist of material related to Dance International. All files dating from 1937 to 1938 concern the exhibition, documenting the International Dance Committee, chaired by Branch, and its work planning the festival, selecting the artwork and films to be shown, organizing the lectures and dance performances, and promoting the event.

Much of the collection is correspondence to and from Branch as well as other Dance International organizers—namely, C.M. Girard, Malvina Hoffman, Anne Morgan, Patricia Parmelee, and R.C. Schumacher. There are also several publicity files consisting of press releases and lists of newspapers, magazines, and radio shows that covered the exhibition. Other materials include committee meeting minutes, contracts, guest lists, schedules, budgets, and typescripts of speeches given at the festival.

Information about the exhibition's dance performances can be found in the Center Theater and Rainbow Room files, the latter of which also includes a binder of reservation lists and seating charts. The exhibition catalogue contains a comprehensive list of the artwork on display, while a more detailed list of the works by American artists, including prices, can be found in the "Art—American" file.

Material concerning United Specialists, Inc., including film treatments and scripts, can be found in the correspondence files dating from the 1940s, the Baruch Committee, and Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs files. The Eastman Kodak file consists of invoices for film and photography equipment. Also included in the 1940s correspondence files are some personal letters and documents related to Branch's attempt to travel to Europe during the end of World War II.

Additionally present in the collection are two typed letters by British novelist John Galsworthy, whose correspondence with Frank Harris was published by the English Bookshop in 1933 as *Autobiographical Letters of John Galsworthy*.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Key terms

Names

Branch, Louise, 1901-1959

Hoffman, Malvina, 1887-1966

Parmelee, Patricia

Rockefeller Center

Special formats

Press releases

Speeches

Container list

- b.1 f.1 Ambassador and Artist Lists, 1937
- b.1 f.2 Appointment Calendar, 1948
- b.1 f.3 Art--American, 1937-1938
- b.1 f.4 Baruch Committee on Physical Medicine, 1944
- b.1 f.5 Books, 1937
- b.1 f.6 Center Theater, 1937
- b.1 f.7 Committees of Honor, 1937
- b.1 f.8 Contracts, 1937
- b.1 f.9 Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, 1943-1946
- b.1 f.10-12 Correspondence, 1937-1949
- b.2 f.1-8 Correspondence, 1937-1949
- b.3 f.1 Correspondence, 1937-1949
- b.3 f.2 *Dance International 1900-1937 Catalogue*, 1937
- b.3 f.3 Eastman Kodak, 1940-1945
- b.3 f.4 European Trip, 1937
- b.3 f.5 Galsworthy, John, 1921
- b.3 f.6 Guests of Honor, 1937
- b.3 f.7-8 International Dance Committee, 1937
- b.3 f.9 Lists--Invitations, Publicity, Sponsors, Consuls, 1937
- b.3 f.10-11 Publicity, 1937-1938
- b.4 f.1-3 Publicity, 1937-1938
- b.4 f.4-5 Rainbow Room, 1937
- b.4 f.6 Speeches, 1937
- b.4 f.7 Sponsors, 1937