



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

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

Judy Ng

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

2015 June 10

Archives of American Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives of American Art
Title:	Rico Lebrun papers
Identifier:	AAA.lebrico
Date:	1935-1975
Extent:	5.3 Linear feet
Creator:	Lebrun, Rico, 1900-1964
Language:	The collection is in English.
Summary:	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.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

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.

Available Formats

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 material described in the container inventory does not reflect the arrangement of the collection on microfilm.

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.

Restrictions

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

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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.

- 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 Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Painting, American

Types of Materials:

Photographs

Sketchbooks

Names:

Jacques Seligmann & Co

Occupations:

Educators -- California -- Los Angeles

Muralists -- California -- Los Angeles

Painters -- California -- Los Angeles

Container Listing

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

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Series 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 1, Folder 5	American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1952-1965
Box 1, Folder 6	American Academy in Rome, 1960
Box 1, Folder 7	American Federation of Arts, 1963
Box 1, Folder 8	Art Gallery of Toronto, 1958
Box 1, Folder 9	Art Students League, 1936
Box 1, Folder 10	Ballet International, 1944
Box 1, Folder 11	Ballet Theatre, 1951
Box 1, Folder 12	Boston Public Library, 1957
Box 1, Folder 13	Boston University, 1959
Box 1, Folder 14	Brice, William, circa 1950-1960
Box 1, Folder 15	Bruggers, 1952
Box 1, Folder 16	California State Board of Equalization, 1956
Box 1, Folder 17	Carnegie Institute, 1952-1964
Box 1, Folder 18	Cober Gallery, 1960-1962
Box 1, Folder 19	de Cordova and Dana Museum, 1957
Box 1, Folder 20	de Young Museum, 1952-1957

Box 1, Folder 21	Department of Municipal Art, City of Los Angeles, 1961-1964
Box 1, Folder 22	Federman, Herrman, Stonehill, and Co., 1965
Box 1, Folder 23-25	Frank Perls Gallery, 1952-1957
Box 1, Folder 26	Fuegi, John, 1963
Box 1, Folder 27	Garibay, Roberto, 1962
Box 1, Folder 28	GCA Gallery, 1957-1960
Box 1, Folder 29	Goodrich, Lloyd, 1960
Box 1, Folder 30	Gorostiza, Celestino, 1962
Box 1, Folder 31	Grippi Gallery, 1960-1962
Box 1, Folder 32	Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, 1935-1963
Box 1, Folder 33	Haskin, Don, 1963
Box 1, Folder 34	Langsner, Jules, 1963
Box 1, Folder 35-36	L.A. County Museum, 1962-1968
Box 1, Folder 37	Meriden Gravure Company, 1961-1963
Box 1, Folder 38	Mesches, Arnold, 1962 Image(s)
Box 1, Folder 39	Museum of Modern Art, 1959-1962
Box 1, Folder 40	National Academy of Design, 1948-1963
Box 1, Folder 41	New York Post Office, 1936-1941
Box 1, Folder 42-43	Newport Harbor Exhibition, 1962-1963
Box 1, Folder 44	Obelisk Gallery, 1961-1962
Box 1, Folder 45	Occidental College, 1956-1959

Box 1, Folder 46	Patchen, Miriam, 1961-1962
Box 1, Folder 47	Pearson, circa 1940-1960
Box 1, Folder 48	Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, 1953-1963
Box 1, Folder 49-55	Pomona College, 1956-1974
Box 1, Folder 56	Price, Vincent, 1953-1955
Box 1, Folder 57	Princeton University Art Museum, 1960-1961
Box 1, Folder 58	Sanchez, Horatio, 1961-1962
Box 1, Folder 59	Sandoval, Carlos, 1961-1963
Box 1, Folder 60	Selz, Peter, 1968-1971
Box 1, Folder 61	Tejada, Julio, 1962
Box 1, Folder 62	University of California Press, 1959-1962
Box 1, Folder 63	University of Southern California, 1961
Box 1, Folder 64	Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, 1961-1962
Box 1, Folder 65	Worcester Art Museum, 1961-1962
Box 1, Folder 66	Work Returned, 1958-1960
Box 1, Folder 67-69	Work Out, 1958-1965
Box 1, Folder 70-74	Chronological, circa 1937-1963
Box 1, Folder 75-81	Chronological, 1938-1950
Box 1, Folder 82-88	Chronological, 1951-1952
Box 2, Folder 1-11	Chronological, 1953-1955
Box 2, Folder 12-20	Chronological, 1956-1958
Box 2, Folder 21-28	Chronological, 1959-1961

Box 2, Folder 29-34	Chronological, 1962-1963
Box 2, Folder 35-43	Chronological, 1964-1965
Box 2, Folder 44-45	Chronological, 1966-1973 Oversized materials housed in OV 10.
Box 2, Folder 46-47	Chronological, C.L. [Constance Lebrun], circa 1953-1965
Box 2, Folder 48-50	Chronological, C.L. [Constance Lebrun], 1953-1965
Box OV 10	Oversized Drawings from Box 2, Folder 44, 1966

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Series 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 2, Folder 51	Autobiography (201), circa 1959 Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 52	Autobiography (202), circa 1959 Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 53	Autobiography (203), circa 1959 Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 54	Autobiography (204), circa 1959 Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 55	Autobiography (205), circa 1959 Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 56	Autobiography (206), circa 1959 Image(s)
Box 2, Folder 57-63	Notes on Drawing (207-216), circa 1959
Box 2, Folder 64-69	Poetry (301-312), circa 1963
Box 3, Folder 1	Poetry, "Agricultural Period" (313), circa 1959-1963
Box 3, Folder 2	Poetry, "Capri" (314), circa 1963
Box 3, Folder 3	Poetry, "Splendor as Idea" (315), circa 1959-1963
Box 3, Folder 4	Poetry, "What <i>Not to Do</i> " (316), circa 1963
Box 3, Folder 5	Poetry, Untitled (317), circa 1963
Box 3, Folder 6	General Remarks on Art (318), circa 1959-1963
Box 3, Folder 7	Guestbook, circa 1950-1960

Box 3, Folder 8-9	Guestbooks, 1951, 1958
Box 3, Folder 10	Illustrated Manuscript, circa 1950-1960
Box 3, Folder 11-13	Illustrated Notebooks, circa 1953-1954
Box 3, Folder 14	Studio Notebook, circa 1938-1941 Much of the writing is in Elaine Lebrun's handwriting.
Box 3, Folder 15	Miscellaneous, 1961-1964

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

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

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

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Series 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 4, Folder 1	Photographs of Rico Lebrun Working on Mural, circa 1950
Box 4, Folder 2	Photographs of Rico Lebrun and Models, circa 1950-1960
Box 4, Folder 3	Photographs of Model for <i>Genesis</i> Mural at Pomona College, 1960
Box 4, Folder 4	Photographs and Negatives of Models, circa 1950-1965
Box 4, Folder 5	Color Slides and Transparencies of Travel, circa 1955-1965
Box 4, Folder 6	Color Slides and Photographs of Travel, circa 1950-1965
Box 4, Folder 7-8	Photographs of Travel, circa 1950-1965
Box 4, Folder 9-10	Photographs of Exhibition Installations, circa 1955-1965
Box 4, Folder 11	Photographs and Negatives of Exhibition Installations, circa 1955-1965
Box 4, Folder 12	Photographs and Negatives of Exhibition Installations, 1956-1962
Box 4, Folder 13	Photographs and Negatives of Exhibition Installation, Newport, California, 1964
Box 4, Folder 14	Photographs of Drawings/Sketches, Animals and Plants, circa 1950-1965
Box 4, Folder 15	Photographs of Drawings/Sketches, Paintings, circa 1950-1965
Box 4, Folder 16	Photographs of Drawings/Sketches, Men, circa 1950-1965
Box 4, Folder 17	Photographs of Drawings/Sketches, Women, circa 1950-1965
Box 4, Folder 18	Photographs of Mixed Media, circa 1950-1965
Box 4, Folder 19	Photographs of Murals, circa 1950-1965
Box 4, Folder 20	Photographs and Negatives of Sculptures, circa 1950-1965

Box 4, Folder 21-23	Photographs of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
Box 4, Folder 24-28	Photographs of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965 Includes copy stand prints for (10-##), (16-##), (17-##), (18-##), and (19-##).
Box 4, Folder 29-36	Photographs of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965 Includes copy stand prints for (20-##), (21-##), (22-##), (23-##), (24-##), (25-##), (26-##), and (29-##).
Box 4, Folder 37-40	Photographs of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965 Includes copy stand prints for (30-##), (31-##), (32-##), and (34-##).
Box 4, Folder 41	Color Transparencies of Works of Art, circa 1955-1965
Box 4, Folder 42-43	Negatives of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
Box 5, Folder 1-6	Negatives of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965 Includes copy stand prints for (7-##), (10-##), (16-##), (17-##), (18-##), and (19-##).
Box 5, Folder 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 6, Folder 1-3	Negatives of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965 Includes copy stand prints for (31-##), (32-##), and (34-##).
Box 6, Folder 4-6	Black and White Glass Plate Transparencies of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965
Box 6, Folder 7-10	Color Glass Plate Transparencies of Works of Art, circa 1950-1965

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