Joan E. Biren Queer Film Museum Collection

NMAH.AC.1216
Franklin A. Robinson, Jr.
2010
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Collection Overview

Repository: Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title: Joan E. Biren Queer Film Museum Collection
Identifier: NMAH.AC.1216
Date: 1931-2019
Extent: 5 Cubic feet (8 boxes, 13 map-folders)
Creator: Biren, Joan E.
Language: English
Some materials are in Dutch, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish.
Summary: Joan E. Biren (JEB) is an internationally recognized photographer and documentary artist. She assembled this collection as her Queer Film Museum. It consists of a variety of materials about and associated with queer films, both foreign and domestic.

Digital Content: Image(s): Joan E. Biren Queer Film Museum Collection

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Donated to the Archives Center in 2010 by Joan E. Biren.

Related Materials

Materials in the Archives Center
Archives Center Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Collection (NMAH.AC.1146) contains an addendum of material donated by Biren in 2011.

Materials at Other Organizations
Collections of Joan E. Biren's personal and professional papers are located at Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

Processing Information
Processed by Franklin A. Robinson, Jr., archives specialist, November, 2010; assisted by Theresa Worden, intern, Erin Walsh, intern, and supervised by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist.
Preferred Citation


Restrictions on Access

Collection open for research on site by appointment. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

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Biographical / Historical

Joan E. Biren (1944-), also known professionally as JEB, is an internationally recognized lesbian photographer and documentary artist. She grew up in Washington, D.C. graduating from Mount Holyoke College in 1966. She later pursued graduate study at Oxford University and the American University. Biren was a vocal and out lesbian joining the women's liberation in the late 1960s and the lesbian movement in the early 1970s. A member of the Furies, she was an associate of authors Rita Mae Brown and Charlotte Bunch.


Over many years she assembled a collection of ephemera and materials relating to queer film. One of the accepted definitions of the word queer is, "Of or relating to lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, or transgendered people". "Queer film" may be defined as any film or televised entertainment that has as a part of its subject matter or story line anything having to do with or pertinent to homosexuality (male or female), bisexuality, or transgendered people. Biren named her collection the Queer Film Museum and it was displayed in her home. The sign she created and hung on the basement door leading downstairs to the display of her collection (and coincidentally her laundry room) was meant to be ironic and read, "JEB's Queer Film Museum, Dirty Pictures & Clean Laundry". Biren amassed her collection, mostly by purchase, over the course of many years.

Some of the titles in the collection classified as "queer" were not specifically produced with the homosexual audience in mind but have come to be identified with homosexual culture, Greta Garbo's 1931 film Queen Christina for instance.
Scope and Contents

The collection contains material relating to lesbian-oriented motion pictures. The bulk of the collection consists of ephemera and film posters from theatrical releases in the United States. The collection also contains catalogues from video houses, film festivals, posters, and other material collected by Biren from on-line auction sites. Some of the items have Biren's annotations written within them. The collection contains material associated with United States releases and foreign releases. Production dates are year of first release. An oral history about the collection was conducted by intern Erin Walsh in 2019.

Arrangement

The collection is divided into two series.

Series 1: Posters and Ephemera, 1931-2010, undated

Series 2, Film Festival Programs, Queer Film Museum Files, and Related Material, 1975-2019, undated

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:
- Bisexuality
- Documentary films
- Homosexuality
- Lesbian and gay experience
- Lesbianism
- Motion pictures
- Transgender people
- Transvestites

Types of Materials:
- Advertising
- Catalogs
- Postcards
- Posters -- 20th century
- Posters -- 21st century
- Programs -- 20th century
Series 1: Posters, Ephemera, and Oral History, 1931-2019, undated

Series 1: Posters and Ephemera, 1931-2010, undated, contains posters and ephemera (primarily postcards, pressbooks, production stills, lobby cards, and advertising ephemera) for theatrical productions, both domestic and foreign, documentaries, and posters for film festivals. There is also material relating to televised work and promotional material relating to television stations carrying LGBT related programming. The two subseries are arranged alphabetically.

Subseries 1, Posters, 1966-2010, is arranged by size, then alphabetically within the folder.

Subseries 2, Ephemera, 1931-2010, undated, is arranged alphabetically by production title. This series includes postcards, mailings, lobby cards, pressbooks, advertising ephemera, and one set of trading cards (The Rocky Horror Picture Show).

Subseries 1.1: Posters, 1966-2010

Map-folder 1

Map-folder 1  Antonia's Line, 1995
Map-folder 1  Better Than Chocolate, 1999
Map-folder 1  Bound, 1996
Map-folder 1  But I'm a Cheerleader, 1999
Map-folder 1  Brother Outsider, 2003
Map-folder 2  Claire of the Moon, 1992
Map-folder 2  Dr. Jekyll & Mistress Hyde, 2003
Map-folder 2  Emilienne, 1975
Map-folder 2  Even Cowgirls Get the Blues, 1993
Map-folder 2  Fire, 1996
Map-folder 2  Forbidden Love, 1992
Map-folder 2  The Fox, 1967
Map-folder 2  French Twist, 1995
Map-folder 3  The Celluloid Closet (mounted on foam core), 1995
Map-folder 3  Desert Hearts (mounted on foam core), 1985
Map-folder 3  Forbidden Love (mounted on foam core), 1992
Map-folder 4  Fire, 1996
Map-folder 4  The Kids Are All Right, 2010
Map-folder 4  No Secret Anymore (mounted on foam core), 2003
Map-folder 4  The Real Ellen Story, 1997
Map-folder 5  Gia, 1998
Map-folder 5  Go Fish, 1994
Map-folder 5  The Group, 1966
Map-folder 5  High Art, 1998
Map-folder 5  The Hours, 2002
Map-folder 5  The Times of Harvey Milk, 1984
Map-folder 6  If These Walls Could Talk 2, 2000
Map-folder 6  The Incredibly True Adventures of 2 Girls in Love, 1995
Map-folder 6  I've Heard the Mermaids Singing, 1987
Map-folder 6  The Killing of Sister George, 1968
Map-folder 6  Kissing Jessica Stein, 2002
Map-folder 7  The Killing of Sister George (mounted on foam core), 1968
Box 8  The L Word (bus shelter size poster), 2003
Map-folder 8  Lustful Addiction, 2003
Map-folder 8  Myra Breckinridge, 1970
Map-folder 8  The Rocky Horror Picture Show re-release, 1998
Map-folder 8  The Secrets, 2007
Map-folder 8  When Night is Falling, 1995
Map-folder 9  Late Bloomer, 2004
Map-folder 9  The Legend of Lylah Clare, 1968
Map-folder 9  The Monkey's Mask, 2000
Map-folder 9  Personal Best, 1982
Map-folder 9  Saving Face, 2004
Map-folder 9  The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe, 1991
Map-folder 9  My Summer of Love, 2004
Map-folder 9  Therese and Isabelle, 1968
Map-folder 9  When Night is Falling, 1995
Map-folder 9  Windows, 1980
Map-folder 9  Word is Out, 1977
Map-folder 14  Silvia Ama a Raquel, 1978
Map-folder 10  Absolut Achievement Absolut Vodka (banner style advertisement)
Map-folder 10  Absolut Achievement Absolut Vodka (mounted on foam core)
Map-folder 10  15th Queer Film & Video Festival Vancouver Canada, 2003
Map-folder 10  Torino 18 Festival Internazionale di Film con Tematiche Omosessuali Torino Italy, 2003
Map-folder 11  "Queer Film & Video Festival Sing a Long The Wizard of Oz" Vancouver Canada, undated
Map-folder 11  
Revisions: Lesbian & Gay Film Festival SUNY Albany New York signed by Laura Catallo, 1991

Map-folder 12  
Way Out West Santa Fe New Mexico, 2004

Map-folder 12  
"The Second Northwest International Lesbian Gay Film Festival" Evergreen State College Olympia Washington (one mounted on foam core), 1989

Map-folder 12  
"The San Francisco International Lesbian & Gay Film Festival" San Francisco California, 2003

Map-folder 13  
"Seattle Lesbian & Gay Film Festival" Seattle Washington (mounted on foam core), 1997

Subseries 1.2: Ephemera, 1931-2010, undated

Box 1, Folder 1  
21, 2002

Box 1, Folder 2  
50 Ways of Saying Fabulous, 2005

Box 5, Folder 1  
99 Women publicity still mounted, 1969

Box 1, Folder 3  
200 American, 2003

Box 1, Folder 4  
Aimee & Jaguar, 1999

Box 5, Folder 2  
Aimee & Jaguar pressbook cover mounted, 1999

Box 1, Folder 5  
All My Children, undated

Box 1, Folder 6  
Bad Girls Behind Bars, 2005

Box 1, Folder 7  
Bar Girls, 1995

Box 1, Folder 8  
Bar Talk, 2002

Box 1, Folder 9  
Before Stonewall, 1984

Box 1, Folder 10  
Better Than Chocolate, 1999

Box 1, Folder 11  
Black Aura on an Angel, 2004

Box 1, Folder 12  
Blood and Roses, 1960
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box, Folder</th>
<th>Title and Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1, 13</td>
<td>Bound, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 4</td>
<td>Bound pressbook page mounted, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 14</td>
<td>Boys Don't Cry, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 15</td>
<td>Boys on the Side, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 16</td>
<td>Breaking Up Really Sucks, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 17</td>
<td>Brother Outsider, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 18</td>
<td>Brother to Brother, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7, 1</td>
<td>But I'm a Cheerleader and The Eyes of Tammy Faye beach ball advertising, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 19</td>
<td>By Hook or By Crook, 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 20</td>
<td>The Celluloid Closet, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 21</td>
<td>Chained Girls, 1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5, 5</td>
<td>The Children's Hour lobby card mounted and pressbook, 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 22</td>
<td>Christopher Street, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 23</td>
<td>Claire of the Moon, 1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 24</td>
<td>Class Queers, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 25</td>
<td>Club Q: The Legendary Dance Party for Women, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 26</td>
<td>Clean Sober and Positive, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 27</td>
<td>Dangerous Living – Coming Out in the Developing World, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 28</td>
<td>D.E.B.S., 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 29</td>
<td>Deep Inside, 1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1, 30</td>
<td>Desert Hearts, 1985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box 1, Folder 31  Desperate Remedies, 1994
Box 1, Folder 32  Dildo Diaries, 2002
Box 7, Folder 2  DirectTV LOGO compact mirror advertising, undated
Box 5, Folder 6  The Dirty Girls publicity still mounted, 1964
Box 1, Folder 33  Divided Loyalties, 2001
Box 1, Folder 34  Double Dare, 2004
Box 1, Folder 35  Drag Nuns in Tinseltown, 2005
Box 1, Folder 36  Eden's Curve, 2003
Box 1, Folder 37  Farm Family, 2004
Box 1, Folder 38  The Fluffer, 2001
Box 5, Folder 7  The Fourth Sex lobby card, 1961
Box 5, Folder 8  The Fox publicity still and tear sheets mounted, 1968
Box 5, Folder 9  The Fox lobby cards, 1968
Box 5, Folder 10  The Fox pressbook, 1967
Box 5, Folder 11  The Fox Candid Press newspaper, 1968
Box 1, Folder 39  The Fox, 1967
Box 1, Folder 40  Foxfire, 1995
Box 5, Folder 12  La Fuga lobby card, 1966
Box 1, Folder 41  Gasoline, 2003
Box 1, Folder 42  Gaydar, 2002
Box 1, Folder 43  Gay Hollywood, 2003
Box 1, Folder 44  Gay Propaganda, 2002
Box 1, Folder 45  Gia, 1998
Box 1, Folder 46  The Gift, 2003
Box 1, Folder 47  The Girl, 2000
Box 1, Folder 48  Girl Play, 2004
Box 1, Folder 49  Go Fish, 1994
Box 1, Folder 50  Gold, 2005
Box 1, Folder 51  Hearts Cracked Open, 2004
Box 5, Folder 13  Henry & June publicity still mounted, 1990
Box 7, Folder 2  Here TV "gay tv is here" necklace with sunscreen advertisement, undated
Box 1, Folder 52  Hide and Seek, 1996
Box 7, Folder Unknown  High Art instant 35mm camera advertising on box, 1998
Box 5, Folder 14  High Art advertisement mounted, 1998
Box 5, Folder 15  Higher Learning lobby card, 1995
Box 5, Folder 16  Hung Up lobby card, 1969
Box 1, Folder 53  I Am (formerly Out & About), 2010
Box 1, Folder 54  I Want What I Want, 1972
Box 1, Folder 55  If These Walls Could Talk 2, 2000
Box 5, Folder 17  If These Walls Could Talk 2 publicity still mounted, 2000
Box 5, Folder 18  If These Walls Could Talk 2 Lesbian News article, 2000
Box 1, Folder 56  In Good Conscience, 2004
Box 1, Folder 57  In Their Absence, 2003
Box 1, Folder 58  Just Because of Who We Are, 1986
Box 1, Folder 59  The Kids Are All Right, 010
Box 6, Folder 1  The Killing of Sister George pressbook, 1968
Box 1, Folder 60  Kissing Jessica Stein, 2002
Box 1, Folder 61  The L Word, 2003-2005, undated
Box 7, Folder 1  The L Word paper tiara advertising, 2003
Box 1, Folder 62  Ladies Tea, 2002
Box 1, Folder 63  The Lancebian, 2002
Box 1, Folder 64  Late Bloomers, 1996
Box 1, Folder 65  Laurel Canyon, 2002
Box 1, Folder 66  Let’s Get Frank, 2003
Box 6, Folder 2  Lianna Extra Perversion, 1983
Box 1, Folder 67  Love Life, 2003
Box 1, Folder 68  Madchen in Uniform, 1931
Box 6, Folder 3  Madchen in Uniform pressbook cover mounted, 1931
Box 1, Folder 69  Mango Kiss, 2004
Box 1, Folder 70  Mistaken Identity, 2005
Box 1, Folder 71  Mrs. Stevens Hears the Mermaids Singing, 2005
Box 1, Folder 72  My Summer of Love, 2004
Box 1, Folder 73  Nico and Dan, 2001
Box 1, Folder 74  No Secret Anymore: The Times of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, 2003
Box 7, Folder 2  No Secret Anymore: The Times of Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon promotional buttons, 2003

Box 1, Folder 75 Not All Parents Are Straight, 1988

Box 1, Folder 76 On the Low, 2005

Box 1, Folder 77 Out for a Change: Addressing Homophobia in Women's Sports, 1994

Box 1, Folder 78 P.S. Your Cat is Dead, 2002

Box 1, Folder 79 Paternal Instinct, 2004

Box 1, Folder 80 People Like Us: Making "Philadelphia", 2003

Box 6, Folder 4 Personal Best lobby card and advertisement mounted, 1991

Box 1, Folder 81 Piki & Poko Adventures in Starland, 2003

Box 1, Folder 82 The Politics of Fur, 2002

Box 6, Folder 5 The Politics of Fur poster, 2002

Box 1, Folder 83 Polyester, 1981

Box 1, Folder 84 Precious Moments, 2003

Box 1, Folder 85 Pretty Ladies, 2002

Box 6, Folder 6 Prey for Rock and Roll article from Lesbian News, 2003

Box 2, Folder 1 Queen Christina, 1933

Box 6, Folder 7 Queen Christina publicity still mounted and reproduction poster, 1933, undated

Box 6, Folder 7 Queer as Folk advertising fans, 2000

Box 7, Folder 2 Queer as Folk necklace advertising, undated

Box 2, Folder 2 Queer as Folk, 2000

Box 2, Folder 3 Queer Son, 1993
Box 2, Folder 4  The Rocky Horror Picture Show, 1980
Box 2, Folder 5  Rights and Reactions, 1987
Box 2, Folder 6  Rise Above, 2003
Box 2, Folder 7  The Runaway, 1972
Box 6, Folder 8  The Seducers publicity still mounted, 1970
Box 2, Folder 8  Show Me Love, 1999
Box 7, Folder 3  Showtime cable channel balloon advertising, 2002
Box 2, Folder 9  Stand By, 2003
Box 2, Folder 10  Stonewall, 1996
Box 2, Folder 11  Straight Out, 2003
Box 2, Folder 12  Summer Blues, 2002
Box 2, Folder 13  Superfag, 2003
Box 2, Folder 14  Talk to Her, 2002
Box 2, Folder 15  The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me, 2000
Box 2, Folder 16  Therese and Isabelle, 1968
Box 6, Folder 9  Therese and Isabelle publicity still and lobby card mounted, 1968
Box 2, Folder 17  The Times of Harvey Milk, 1984
Box 2, Folder 18  Tipping the Velvet, 2003
Box 6, Folder 10  Tipping the Velvet lobby card mounted, 2003
Box 2, Folder 19  Tom Clay Jesus, 2002
Box 2, Folder 20  Trembling Before God, 2001
Box 6, Folder 11  The Twilight Girls lobby card, 1961
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2, Folder 21</th>
<th>Unhung Heroes, 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 22</td>
<td>Venus Boyz, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 23</td>
<td>Wave Babes, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 2, Folder 24</td>
<td>When Night is Falling, 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 6, Folder 12</td>
<td>X Y &amp; Zee publicity still mounted and lobby card, 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 5, Folder 3</td>
<td>Triptych: Better Than Chocolate Go Fish and The Incredibly True Adventures of 2 Girls in Love, 1994-1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 7, Folder 1</td>
<td>High Art, 35 mm camera advertising, undated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 4, Folder 15</td>
<td>Oral History with Joan E. Biren (JEB), 2019-11-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This oral history was conducted by Erin Walsh (Archives Center intern) at Joan Biren's home on November 19, 2019.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Series 2: Film Festival Catalogues Queer Film Museum Files and Related Material, 1975-2010, undated

Series 2, Film Festival Programs, Queer Film Museum Files, and Related Material, 1975-2010, undated, includes film festival catalogues and ephemera related to festivals. This series also contains reference files Biren compiled on the titles in her collection and queer film in general. This series includes a program from the Persistent Vision 2001 convention. The Reel Affirmations catalogues for the years 1993 and 1996 are annotated by Biren.

Box 2, Folder 25  "Austin Gay & Lesbian International Film Festival" Austin Texas, undated

Box 2, Folder 26 Iris Films Festival Washington D.C., 1975

Box 2, Folder 27 Lesbenschwule Filmtage Hamburg Hamburg Germany, 2001

Box 2, Folder 28 Long Island Gay & Lesbian Film Festival Long Island New York, 2003

Box 2, Folder 29 National Gay and Lesbian Film Tour, 1991

Box 2, Folder 30 Netherlands Transgender Film Festival, 2001-2003

Box 2, Folder 31 Newfest New York Lesbian & Gay Film Festival New York New York, 2003

Box 2, Folder 32 The 4th Northwest International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival Olympia Washington, 1991

Box 2, Folder 33 Outfest Los Angeles California, 1997-2005

Box 2, Folder 34-37 "Philadelphia International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival" Philadelphia Pennsylvania, 1999

Box 2, Folder 38 Q Doc Portland Queer Documentary Film Festival Portland Oregon, 2007

Box 6, Folder 13 "Planet Q Lesbian & Gay Film Festival" newspaper Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, 1999

Box 2, Folder 40 Portland Lesbian and Gay Film Festival Portland Oregon, 2003

Box 2, Folder 41-52 Reel Affirmations Washington D.C., 1991-2004

Box 6, Folder 14 Reel Affirmations III Washington D.C., 1993

Box 3, Folder 1-4 Reel Affirmations Washington D.C., 2005-2008
Box 3, Folder 5  Reeling '96: The Chicago Lesbian and Gay International Film Festival Chicago Illinois, 1996

Box 6, Folder 15  Rehobeth Beach Independent Film Festival, 1999

Box 3, Folder 6-8  San Francisco Lesbian and Gay Film Festival San Francisco California, 1991, 1999, 2001

Box 3, Folder 9  Southwest Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, 2004

Box 3, Folder 10  Torino Film Festival Torino Italy, 2003

Box 3, Folder 11  Tranny Fest San Francisco California, 2003

Box 3, Folder 12  Queer Film Museum signage, undated

Box 3, Folder 13  Queer Film Museum display labels, undated

Box 3, Folder 14  Inventory, undated

Box 3, Folder 15  Descriptions, 2002-2004, undated

Box 3, Folder 16  Movie reviews, 2002-2010, undated

Box 3, Folder 17  Book reviews, 2004-2005, undated

Box 3, Folder 20  Vendors, 2002-2004, undated

Box 3, Folder 21  JEB's VHS only video collection, undated

Box 4, Folder 1  Moonforce Media, 1975-1980

Box 4, Folder 2  Persistent Vision, 2001

Box 4, Folder 3  Symposium: Out of the Closet and into the Vaults, 2006

Box 4, Folder 4  TLA Video catalogues, 1990-2005

Box 4, Folder 5  Wolfe Video catalogues, 1999, undated

Box 4, Folder 6  Frameline catalogues, 2002-2003
Box 4, Folder 7  Out in Video newsletter, 1991-1993
Box 4, Folder 8  MW Metro Weekly, 1999
Box 4, Folder 9  Diva Magazine, April 2002
Box 4, Folder 10 LVA: Lesbians in the Visual Arts and the Gay Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender Historical Society, 2002
Box 4, Folder 11 Advertisements, 1980-2005, undated
Box 4, Folder 12 Pamphlets, undated
Box 4, Folder 14 Clipping file: LGBT film and video, 1990-2000, undated
Box 6, Folder 16 Variety "Gay Hollywood" article, 2000

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