

James Brewton papers

Ms. Coll. 1125

Finding aid prepared by John Anderies.

Last updated on April 24, 2020.

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

26 August 2015

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Summary Information

Repository	University of Pennsylvania: Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts
Creator	Brewton, James, 1930-1967
Title	James Brewton papers
Call number	Ms. Coll. 1125
Date [bulk]	1951-1967
Date [inclusive]	1902-2014
Extent	2 linear feet (7 boxes, 5 oversize folders)
Language	English
Abstract	James Edward Brewton (1930-1967) was an American painter and printmaker who attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and exhibited works in Philadelphia and in Denmark. Brewton's early works are said to be expressionist and his later works incorporate graffiti and the influences of "pataphysics." His life was cut short by suicide at the age of 37. The collection is arranged in four series: I. Personal material; II. Artworks; III. Books and audiovisual materials; and IV. Artifacts and memorabilia.

Cite as:

James Brewton papers, 1902-2014 (bulk: 1951-1967), Ms. Coll. 1125, Kislak Center for Special

Biography/History

James Edward Brewton (1930-1967) was an American painter and printmaker. He was born in Toledo, Ohio to Bryant Young Brewton and Helen Ruth Nelson and attended Scott High School. As a young man he studied drawing at the Toledo Museum of Art and painting with John Charvet. Brewton enlisted in the Marines Corps and served in the Korean War, 1951-1954, rising to the rank of Sergeant, and earned the Korean Service Medal, the United States Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal. With funding from the G.I. Bill, Brewton studied art at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art at Oxford University from 1954 to 1955, and at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) from 1955 to 1958. His teachers at PAFA were Franklin Watkins and Hobson Pittman. While working a part-time job in Philadelphia at The Print Club, Brewton was exposed to the work of Danish painter Asger Jorn, who became a primary influence on Brewton's style. Other influences on his work were the other members of the European avant-garde art group CoBrA, as well as the surrealist writer André Breton and the symbolist writer Alfred Jarry and his imaginary metaphysical philosophy of "pataphysics."

Brewton's early works are said to be expressionist and his later works incorporate graffiti (which he called "anonymous and therefore for all mankind") and the influences of "pataphysics" (calling his works "Graffiti Pataphysic"). He painted portraits throughout his life and created prints employing drawing, painting, collage, ink-stamp, and photographic techniques. He also worked in three-dimensions, creating conceptual pieces and installations which brought together objects, graphics and print.

Brewton and his partner Barbara Murray Holland lived in Denmark for much of 1962. Together they had a daughter, Emily Brewton Schilling, who was born in Denmark that year. Brewton and Murray divorced in 1964. He married Anne Marie ("Nanie") Lafitte in February 1967. He committed suicide just three months later, dying from a gunshot wound to his head.

Brewton's works earned him several awards, including the Special Travel Award, PAFA, 1958; 154th Annual Philadelphia Water Color Prize, PAFA, 1958 (for his watercolor "The Deposition"); 155th Annual J. Henry Scheidt Memorial Prize, PAFA, 1959 (for his painting "The Suicide of Judas"); and the 45th Annual Delaware Show Water Color Prize (also for "The Suicide of Judas") and 46th Annual Delaware Show Oil and Sculpture Honorable Mention (for his painting "Une Saison En Enfer"), Delaware Art Centre, 1959. Following his death, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts established the Brewton Scholarship in his name.

His works have been exhibited at the Makler Gallery in 1964; Kenmore Galleries in 1965 and 1971; Galerie AP, Copenhagen in 1965; Socrates Perakis Gallery in 1967; Peale House of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1968; and the Woodmere Art Museum in 2012.

Today, Brewton's works may be found in collections at Friends' Central School (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Hood Museum of Art (Dartmouth College), and in private hands. The James E. Brewton Foundation was formed in 2008 by Brewton's daughter Emily Brewton Schilling and friends in order to find and save his artwork and to collaborate with educational and cultural institutions.

Scope and Contents

The collection is arranged in four series: I. Personal material; II. Artworks; III. Books and audiovisual materials; IV. Artifacts and memorabilia. The personal material includes correspondence and biographical information on James Brewton and his immediate family, including vital records such as birth and death certificates, and marriage and divorce documents. Also included are his military records from the United State Marine Corps, resumes, the contents of his wallet at the time of his death, and posthumous remarks by his Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts mentor, Hobson Pittman. Materials from several exhibitions of his works, mounted both during his lifetime and posthumously, include flyers, program booklets, price lists, loan forms, and posters. Also there are press clippings and reviews for these shows and about Brewton generally. Notebooks and ledgers owned by Brewson, only minimally used, may also be found in this series.

The second series of artworks includes a small number of Brewton's original work in the form of sketches, finger paintings, prints, and fragments which may have been used in his collage work. His major works are represented by reproductions in photographs, negatives, slides, and transparencies. These are identified by title when known, or by description from the James E. Brewton Foundation (such as "Missing Painting #3"), or by the designation "unidentified." There are also reproductions of others' works which may have influenced him.

The third series includes books and audiovisual materials which may have inspired him in his work, as well as two 16mm films and their transfers to DVD about Brewton.

The final series is artifacts and memorabilia: among the items included are the American flag from his veteran's funeral, his slide rule, shoe trees, and metal flask, as well as a roll of masking tape inscribed "Jim Brewton is a Beatnik!" and "Jim Brewton is a Cultured Beatnik."

Administrative Information

University of Pennsylvania, Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

26 August 2015

Finding aid prepared by John Anderies.

Access Restrictions

The bulk of this collection is open for research use; however, access to original audio/visual materials and computer files is restricted. The Kislak Center will provide access to the information on these materials from duplicate master files. If the original does not already have a copy, it will be sent to an outside vendor for copying. Patrons are financially responsible for the cost. The turnaround time from request to delivery of digital items is about two weeks for up to five items and three to seven weeks for more than

five items. Please contact Reprographic Services (reprogr@upenn.edu) for cost estimates and ordering. Once digital items are received, researchers will have access to the files on a dedicated computer in the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center. Researchers should be aware of specifics of copyright law and act accordingly.

Use Restrictions

Copyright restrictions may exist. For most library holdings, the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania do not hold copyright. It is the responsibility of the requester to seek permission from the holder of the copyright to reproduce material from the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

Source of Acquisition

Gift, Emily Brewton Schilling, 2014.

Controlled Access Headings

CORPORATE NAME(S)

- Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.
- United States. Marine Corps.

FORM/GENRE(S)

- Amateur films
- Audiovisual materials
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Collages
- Exhibition catalogs
- Notebooks
- Paintings (visual works)
- Photographs
- Prints (visual works)
- Sketchbooks
- Sound recordings

PERSONAL NAME(S)

- Brewton, James, 1930-1967
- Schilling, Emily Brewton

SUBJECT(S)

- Art
- Artists
- Exhibitions
- Expressionism (Art)
- Pataphysics

Collection Inventory

I. PERSONAL MATERIALS.

	Box	Folder
Anne Marie ("Nanie") Lafitte materials, 1962-1980, undated.	1	1
Biographical information: Remarks about James Brewton by Hobson Pittman, ca. 1968.	1	2
Biographical information: Resumes, undated.	1	3
Biographical information: United States Marine Corps service records, 1951-1967.	1	4
Biographical information: Vital records, 1930-1967.	1	5
Book jackets, undated.	1	6
Brewton Scholarship, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1973.	1	7
Correspondence, 1957-1975, undated.	1	8
Exhibitions: Delaware Art Center, <i>Annual Delaware Show</i> programs, 1959.	1	9
Exhibitions: Galerie AP, <i>The American Dream-Girl</i> , <i>Graffiti Pataphysic</i> exhibition flyer (incised by Erik Nyholm), undated.	1	10
Exhibitions: Kenmore Galleries, <i>Graffiti Pataphysic</i> exhibition material, 1965.	1	11
	Box	Folder

Exhibitions: Kenmore Galleries, <i>Graffiti Pataphysic exhibition material</i> (oversized), 1965.	49	2
	Box	Folder
Exhibitions: Kenmore Galleries, <i>Art Is the Way I Live: James Brewton</i> exhibition flyer, 1971.	1	12
Exhibitions: Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Peale House, <i>James E. Brewton Memorial Exhibition materials</i> , 1968.	1	13
Exhibitions: Socrates Perakis Gallery, <i>The Society for the Commemoration of Festivals and Fetishes</i> exhibit price list, 1967.	1	14
Exhibitions: Woodmere Art Museum, <i>Haunting Narratives: Detours from Philadelphia Realism, 1935 to the Present</i> catalog, 2012.	1	15
Exhibitions: Non-Brewton material (includes exhibitions at Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, Peale House (Rauschenberg), Philadelphia Museum of Art (Guggenheim Museum loans), Galerie St. Etienne (Egon Schiele), Jysk Kunst Galerie (Per Arnoldi), Pittsburgh International Exhibition of Contemporary Painting and Sculpture (various), The Germantown Art Association (announcement), The Print Club (entry forms), Nationalmuseum Bøgen (book jacket)), 1957-1968.	1	16
	Box	Folder
Exhibitions: Posters from Silkeborg Museum (1962, 1963-1964) and Socrates Perakis Gallery (1967), 1962-1967.	49	5
	Box	Folder
Lists of artworks, undated.	1	17
Notebooks: Blank composition book with clippings on cover, undated.	1	18
Notebooks: Blank "Kollegiebogen", undated.	1	19
Notebooks: "Bowindn [Bowdoin?] College" composition book, undated.	1	20

Notebooks: Ledger with clippings, undated.	1	21
Press clippings and reviews, 1959-2014.	2	1
	Box	Folder
Press clippings and reviews (oversized), 2014.	49	2
	Box	Folder
Wallet contents, undated.	2	2
Miscellaneous publications, undated.	2	3
	Box	Folder
Miscellaneous publications (oversized), undated.	49	2

II. ARTWORKS.

	Box	Folder
Negatives and slides of artworks: Black and white negatives of artworks, undated.	2	4-8
Negatives and slides of artworks: Color slides of artworks, undated.	2	9
Negatives and slides of artworks: Transparencies of artworks, undated.	2	10
Negatives and slides of artworks: "Unexpected relationships," transparency masked for printing, undated.	2	11
Original artworks: "Art fragments by Jim", undated.	2	12
Original artworks: "Clips possibly used in collages...", undated.	2	13

	Box	Folder
Original artworks: Cut-up and re-assembled profile of Asger Jorn, photograph on board, undated.	49	2
	Box	Folder
Original artworks: "Little arty things", undated.	2	14
Original artworks: Miscellaneous photos used in works (including Sands of the Kalahari, Rudolf Serkin photos, etc.), undated.	2	15
Original artworks: Originals for "Sunrise" and "Lulu", undated.	2	16
Original artworks: Pencil sketches on legal pad sheet of paper, undated.	2	17
	Box	Folder
Original artworks: Purple finger painting with scribble, undated.	49	2
	Box	Folder
Original artworks: Two dimensional design assignment mounted on board, undated.	2	18
Original artworks: Watercolor on board ("could be by a young Jim"), undated.	2	19
	Box	Folder
Original artworks: Sketchbook (11 x 14 in.), "notebook for Kobenhavn masterpiece," pen, pencil, and marker, undated.	49	1
Original artworks: Sketchbook (18 x 24 in.), pencil, ink, marker, acrylic, and spray paint, undated.	49	4
	Box	Folder
Photographs of artworks: Black and white photos of works in Kenmore Show, 1971.	2	20
Photographs of artworks: Color photographs of artworks, undated.	2	21

Photographs of artworks: "Exhaust Steam", undated.	2	22
Photographs of artworks: "Game for Children", undated.	2	23
Photographs of artworks: "Game for Children," halftone with overlay, marked up for printing, undated.	2	24
Photographs of artworks: "Graffiti (Trine #1, 1965)", undated.	2	25
Photographs of artworks: "Kobenhavn", undated.	2	26
Photographs of artworks: Missing construction (May 1967), undated.	2	27
Photographs of artworks: Missing painting #3, undated.	2	28
Photographs of artworks: Missing painting #13, undated.	2	29
Photographs of artworks: "Number Painting", undated.	2	30
Photographs of artworks: "Patatarget", undated.	3	1
Photographs of artworks: "Portrait of Asger Jorn", undated.	3	2
Photographs of artworks: "SAGA Lulu", undated.	3	3
Photographs of artworks: "Sunrise" (14/25), undated.	3	4
Photographs of artworks: "Ubu Becomes King", undated.	3	5
Photographs of artworks: "Unexpected Relationships", undated.	3	6
Photographs of artworks: Unidentified paintings, undated.	3	7-13
	Box	Folder
Posters: Prints and collage by Brewton, 1966.	49	5
	Box	Folder

Reproductions of artworks of others, 1902-1955.	3	14
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III. BOOKS AND AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL.

Conditions Governing Access note

Original film reels and audio discs (LPs) are restricted from access. Researchers interested in acquiring a digital copy will be financially responsible for the transfer from original and should contact the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts.

BOOKS.

	Box	Folder
Guy Atkins, <i>Asger Jorn</i> , London: Methuen, 1964.	3	15
Ove Brusendorff and Poul Henningsen, <i>Love's Picture Book: The History of Pleasure and Moral Indignation from the French Revolution to the Present Time</i> , translated by Elsa Gress, Copenhagen: Veta Publisher, 1961.	3	15
"Commentaire pour servir à la construction pratique de la Machine à explorer le Temps," <i>Cahiers du College de 'Pataphysique 2</i> , 1950.	3	16
"Le goûter des généraux par Boris Vian," <i>Dossiers du College de 'Pataphysique 18-19</i> , 1962.	3	16
Martin Gardner, <i>The Annotated Snark</i> , New York: Bramhall House, 1962.	3	17
William Mulvihill, <i>Sands of the Kalahari</i> , Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1960.	3	18
Silkeborg Museum, <i>Asger Jorn: Malerier</i> , Silkeborg: Silkeborg Museum, 1964.	3	18

Louis Untermeyer, <i>Pour toi: un poème</i> , New York: French & European Publications (annotated "pour J. de la part de Nanie"), 1966.	3	19
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David M. Wilson and Ole Klindt-Jensen, <i>Viking Art</i> , Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press (Additional Penn Copy), 1966.	3	19
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AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL (ORIGINALS RESTRICTED FROM ACCESS).

Conditions Governing Access note

Access to original audio/visual materials and computer files is restricted. The Kislak Center will provide access to the information on these materials from duplicate master files. If the original does not already have a copy, it will be sent to an outside vendor for copying. Patrons are financially responsible for the cost. The turnaround time from request to delivery of digital items is about two weeks for up to five items and three to seven weeks for more than five items. Please contact Reprographic Services (reprogr@upenn.edu) for cost estimates and ordering. Once digital items are received, researchers will have access to the files on a dedicated computer in the Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center. Researchers should be aware of specifics of copyright law and act accordingly.

	Box	Item
Alban Berg, <i>Lulu: Opera in 3 Acts</i> , Vienna State Opera, Columbia Masterworks SL-121; Two 12 in. sound discs (annotations and paint splatter on liner notes) [RESTRICTED], undated.	4	1
<i>Three Favorite Ballets: Stravinsky Conducts Firebird, Petrushka, The Rite of Spring</i> , Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Columbia Masterworks M3L 305; Three 12 in. sound discs [RESTRICTED], undated.	4	2
<i>Leonard Bernstein conducts Carl Nielsen Symphony No. 3 (Op. 27)</i> , The Royal Danish Orchestra, Columbia Masterworks ML 6169; 12 in. sound disc [RESTRICTED], undated.	4	3
Gunther Schuller, <i>Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee</i> ; Paul Felter, <i>Contrasts for Orchestra</i> , Minneapolis Symphony, Mercury Records SR90282; 12 in. sound disc [RESTRICTED], undated.	4	4

Serkin [plays] <i>Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto</i> , The Philadelphia Orchestra, Columbia Masterworks ML 6145; 12 in. sound disc [RESTRICTED], undated.	4	5
Franz Schubert, <i>Moments Musicaux, Op. 94 (Complete); Sonata in C Major (Unfinished)</i> , Rudolf Serkin, piano, Columbia Masterworks ML 5153; 12 in. sound disc [RESTRICTED], undated.	4	6
Igor Stravinsky, <i>Agon</i> ; Gunther Schuller, <i>Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee</i> , Boston Symphony Orchestra, RCA Victor Red Seal LSC-2879; 12 in. sound disc [RESTRICTED], 1966.	4	7
Shirley Temple, <i>On the Good Ship Lollipop</i> , Movietone Records MTM 1001 Monaural; 12 in. sound disc [RESTRICTED], 1965.	4	8
["Emily Shilling: Film to DVD Transfer"] film reel : color : 5 in., 16 mm [RESTRICTED], undated.	4	9
"Emily Shilling: Film to DVD Transfer" videodisc (DVD) : digital ; 4 3/4 in. (2 copies: Master and accessible use copy), undated.	3	20
[James Edward Brewton, 1930-1967 (WHYY-TV)] film reel: color : 14 in., 16 mm [RESTRICTED], undated.		5
James Edward Brewton, 1930-1967 (WHYY-TV) videodisc (DVD) : digital ; 4 3/4 in., undated.	3	20

IV. ARTIFACTS.

		Box
Memorabilia, undated.		6

Flag of the United States of America, folded into a triangle, from Brewton's funeral, 1967.

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