

Al Hirschfeld:

An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

- Creator:** Hirschfeld, Al, 1903-2003
- Title:** Al Hirschfeld Collection
- Dates:** 1951-1982, undated
- Extent:** 23 items in 23 oversize folders (osf) (0.54 linear feet)
- Abstract:** The Al Hirschfeld Collection contains twenty-one drawings and two prints of plays, films, and theater personalities. Among the many performers shown are Carol Burnett, Alec Guinness, and Margaret Leighton. Many of the drawings appeared in *The New York Times*; others were used by film and television studios for publicity purposes. Five drawings were published in the 1982 Limited Editions Club edition of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.
- Call Number:** Performing Arts Collection PA-00114
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- Language:** English
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Administrative Information

Acquisition: Purchases, 1967 (R3487), 2009 (10-06-002-P); 2 drawings transferred from Art Collection, 1 drawing transferred from Crain Collection

Processed by: Esther L. Mes, 2001; Helen Adair, 2006, 2010; Daniela Lozano, 2017

Repository: [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

Biographical Sketch

The graphic artist and caricaturist Al Hirschfeld was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1903. Hirschfeld moved to New York City at the age of twelve, and before he was twenty he was creating art for motion picture companies. With the help of his friend Miguel Covarrubias, he perfected a unique drawing style marked by long fluid pen strokes. He studied at the Art Students League (circa 1918), worked for David Selznick (1921) and Warner Brothers (1921-1924), and established a studio in Paris (1924-1925). He became the theater correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune* in Moscow (1927-1928), and a freelance artist for *The New York Times* beginning in 1929. Hirschfeld became famous for his stylized and perceptive caricatures of theater and public personalities. After the birth of his daughter, Nina, in 1945, Hirschfeld concealed her name in almost all of his drawings. A documentary about his life, *The Line King: Al Hirschfeld*, was released in 1996. Hirschfeld died in 2003 at the age of 99.

Scope and Contents

The Al Hirschfeld Collection, 1951-1982, undated, contains sixteen drawings and two prints of plays, films, and theater personalities. Many of the drawings appeared in *The New York Times*; others were used by film and television studios for publicity purposes. Productions represented include *The Alamo* (film), *The Night of the Iguana* (stage and film versions), *The Rose Tattoo*, *St. Joan*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *West Side Story*. Among the many performers shown are Carol Burnett (caricatured as Blanche du Bois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*), Alec Guinness, and Margaret Leighton. This inventory includes an Index of Subjects which lists each of the individuals depicted in this collection.

A 2006 addition to the Al Hirschfeld Collection contains five drawings published in the 1982 Limited Editions Club edition of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. This addition is not represented in the Index of Subjects.

Productions

The Alamo (film, 1960), drawing	Container osf 18
The Horse's Mouth (1958), drawing	Container osf 6
I Can Get It for You Wholesale (1962), drawing	Container osf 7
The Night of the Iguana	Container
Stage version (1961), drawing	Container osf 8
Film version (1964), drawing	Container osf 1
The Rose Tattoo (1951), drawing	Container osf 9
St. Joan (1956), drawing	Container osf 10
Waiting for Godot (1961), drawing	Container osf 11
West Side Story (1957), drawing	Container osf 12

Individuals

Burnett, Carol, as Blanche du Bois in A Streetcar Named Desire (1965), drawing	Container osf 13
Guinness, Alec, in Dylan (1964), drawing	Container osf 2
Leighton, Margaret, in The Night of the Iguana (1962), drawing	Container osf 3
Mohyeddin, Zia, in A Passage to India (1962), drawing	Container osf 4
West, Mae, print, undated	Container osf 14
Tennessee Williams: His Influence and Realization, drawing, circa 1959	Container osf 15

Others

Americans in London, at the Caprice Restaurant, drawing, 1951	Container osf 16
Performers in roles that made them famous, print, undated	Container osf 17

Reefer Man, drawing, undated	Container osf 5
A Streetcar Named Desire (Limited Editions Club edition, 1982), drawings	
Blanche DuBois	Container osf 19
Harold Mitchell (Mitch)	Container osf 20
Negro Woman	Container osf 21
Stanley Kowalski	Container osf 22
Stella Kowalski	Container osf 23

Index of Subjects

- Adams, Maude--osf 17
- Adler, Larry--osf 16
- Allen, Fred--osf 17
- Arliss, George--osf 17
- Bacall, Lauren--osf 17
- Barrymore, John--osf 17
- Belmore, Daisy--osf 9
- Bergman, Ingrid--osf 16
- Bernhardt, Sarah--osf 17
- Bolger, Ray--osf 17
- Burnett, Carol--osf 13
- Burton, Richard--osf 18
- Calin, Mickey--osf 12
- Campbell, Patrick, Mrs.--osf 17
- Capp, Al--osf 16
- Carlisle, Kitty--osf 16
- Carnovsky, Morris--osf 17
- Channing, Carol--osf 17
- Chrysler, Walter--osf 16
- Clark, Bobby--osf 17
- Clark, H. B.--osf 17
- Cohan, George M.--osf 17
- Coote, Robert--osf 6
- Cornell, Katharine--osf 17
- Cowl, Jane--osf 17
- David, Thayer--osf 10
- Davis, Bette--osf 8
- Delevanti, Cyril--osf 18
- Disney, Walt--osf 16
- Draper, Paul--osf 16
- Fairbanks, Douglas, Jr.--osf 16
- Fontanne, Lynn--osf 17
- Ford, Henry, II--osf 16
- Gardner, Ava--osf 18
- Garland, Judy--osf 16
- Gaxton, William--osf 17
- Gillette, William--osf 17
- Goetz, Augustus--osf 16
- Goetz, Ruth--osf 16
- Gordon, Ruth--osf 16
- Gough, Michael--osf 6
- Gould, Elliott--osf 7
- Guinness, Alec--osf 2, osf 6
- Haas, Dolly--osf 16
- Harris, Julie--osf 17
- Hart, Moss--osf 16
- "Headwaiter Mario"--osf 16
- Hirschfeld, Al--osf 16
- Hoffman, Jane--osf 9

- Howard, Cordelia--osf 17
- Hull, Henry--osf 17
- Johnson, Arch--osf 10
- Johnson, Gully--osf 6
- Jones, W. G., Mrs.--osf 17
- Kanin, Garson--osf 16
- Kaufman, George S.--osf 16
- Kaye, Danny--osf 16
- Keith, Ian--osf 10
- Kerr, Deborah--osf 18
- Kert, Larry--osf 12
- Lawrence, Carol--osf 12
- Leighton, Margaret--osf 3, osf 8
- Lenihan, Winifred--osf 17
- Leroy, Ken--osf 12
- Love, Phyllis--osf 9
- Lunt, Alfred--osf 17
- Lyon, Sue--osf 18
- MacGrath, Leueen--osf 16
- Mansfield, Richard--osf 17
- Martin, Mary--osf 17
- Massey, Raymond--osf 17
- Maxwell, Frank--osf 10
- Mayer, Louis B.--osf 16
- McKenna, Siobhan--osf 10
- Meredith, Burgess--osf 11
- Merighi, Augusta--osf 9
- Merman, Ethel--osf 17
- Miller, Gilbert--osf 16
- Miller, Kitty--osf 16
- Minotis, Alexis--osf 15
- Mohyeddin, Zia--osf 4
- Moore, Dick--osf 10
- Moore, Victor--osf 17
- Morgan, Mike--osf 6
- Mostel, Zero--osf 11, 17
- Murray, Don--osf 9
- Nathan, Vivian--osf 9
- O'Neal, Patrick--osf 8
- Olivier, Laurence--osf 17
- Paxinou, Katina--osf 15
- Purdy, Richard--osf 10
- Reed, Florence--osf 17
- Rivera, Chita--osf 12
- Robinson, Bill--osf 17
- Roth, Lillian--osf 7
- San Marco, Rossana--osf 9
- Sardi, Vincent--osf 16
- Selznick, David O.--osf 16
- Sherwood, Robert--osf 16
- Shubert, Lee--osf 16

- Skinner, Otis--osf 17
- Smith, Kent--osf 10
- Sorel, Sonia--osf 9
- Stapleton, Maureen--osf 9, osf 17
- Streisand, Barbra--osf 7, osf 17
- Sundstrom, Florence--osf 9
- Taylor, Laurette--osf 17
- Toretzka, Ludmilla--osf 9
- Tozere, Frederic--osf 10
- Truman, Margaret--osf 16
- Turleigh, Verno--osf 6
- Valez, Kay--osf 6
- Wager, Michael--osf 10
- Wallach, Eli--osf 9
- Waters, Ethel--osf 17
- Webb, Alan--osf 8
- Weber and Fields--osf 17
- Welles, Orson--osf 16, osf 17
- West, Mae--osf 14
- Wilder, Thornton--osf 16
- Williams, Tennessee--osf 15
- Wynn, Ed--osf 17