
Creator: Bissinger, Karl

Title: Karl Bissinger Papers

Date: 1950-1974

Extent: 2.4 linear feet

Abstract: Karl Bissinger (1914-), photojournalist and activist, was a friend of Julian Beck and Judith Malina, co-founders of The Living Theatre. Bissinger served as an occasional photographer of the Theatre and its performances. His Papers contain correspondence, ephemera, photographs, posters, and programs pertaining to Living Theatre productions.

Physical location: Researchers should contact Special Collections to request collections, as many are stored offsite.

Repository: University of California, Davis. General Library. Department of Special Collections.

Davis, California 95616-5292

Collection number: D-189

Language of Material: Collection materials in English

Biography

Karl Bissinger was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1914. He had a career as a photojournalist, serving as staff photographer at Flair and portraitist for Harper's Bazaar, Vogue, and Town & Country. His book, *The Luminous Years: Portraits at Mid-Century* (2003), contains examples of his portrait photography.

In 1955, Bissinger met the co-founders of the Living Theatre, Judith Malina and Julian Beck, in New York City after a protest against air raid drills. They became friends and Bissinger served as an occasional photographer of the Theatre and its performances.

After semi-retiring from photography, Bissinger went on to work for the American Friends Service Committee and the War Resisters League.

Source: Maronna, Michael. "Work As Though You Had Hope: An Interview with Karl Bissinger." *Nonviolent Activist: The Magazine of the War Resisters League*, July-August 1996.

Scope and Content

The Karl Bissinger Papers comprise 2.4 linear feet and span the years 1950-1974. The Papers contain correspondence, ephemera, photographs, posters, and programs pertaining to Living Theatre performances.

Arrangement of the Collection

The Papers are arranged into four series: 1. Literary Productions 2. Correspondence 3. Subject Files and 4. Photographic Materials.

Related Collections

D-138 Spicer, James and Morris Ploscowe. Collection

D-187 Living Theatre Archives

D-191 Mantegna, Gianfranco. Papers

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Bissinger, Karl--Archives.

Malina, Judith, 1926-

Beck, Julian, 1925-1985

Living Theatre (New York, N.Y.)

Experimental theater

Theater--United States

Stage photography

Photographers--United States

Access

Collection is open for research.

Acquisition Information

Acquired in 1975.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Karl Bissinger Papers, D-189, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis.

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Series 1. Literary Productions 1957-circa 1968

Physical Description: 11 folders

- Box 1:1 **[Bissinger, Karl]. Lists of names and notes circa 1962; undated**
Physical Description: 6 leaves
- Box 1:2 **[Bissinger, Karl]. Statement regarding General Strike for Peace circa 1962**
Physical Description: 3 drafts
- Box 1:3 **[Bissinger, Karl]. Statement regarding sit-in protesting resumption of nuclear testing circa 1962**
Physical Description: 4 drafts
- Box 1:4 **[Bissinger, Karl]. Statement regarding abuse of prisoners in "the tombs" undated**
Physical Description: fragment
- Box 1:5 **[Bissinger, Karl]. "The Tombs" undated**
Physical Description: 2 drafts
- Box 1:6 **Beck, Julian. "Times Square, March 3, 1962" undated**
Physical Description: photocopy
- Box 1:7 **Beck, Julian. "Mister Beck Without Reefer" Danbury Prison 1965 January 18**
Box 1:8 **Beck, Julian and Malina, Judith. "All the World's a Prison" 1957**
Physical Description: photocopy
- Box 1:9 **Beck, Julian and Malina, Judith. "Statement" 1963 October 17**
Physical Description: photocopy
- Box 1:10 **Gottlieb, Saul. "Times Square, March 3rd, 1962" undated**
Physical Description: carbon copy
- Box 1:11 **Unidentified author. "Notes from the First Year. Excerpts from the Diaries of Isha Manna Beck" circa 1968**
Physical Description: carbon copy

Series 2. Correspondence 1955-1973

Physical Description: 55 folders

Scope and Content Note

Arranged into three subseries: Outgoing, Incoming, and Collected.

Subseries 2.1 **Outgoing 1962-1972**

Physical Description: 9 folders

- Box 1:12 **Accra (Ghana) Assembly, (The World without a Bomb) 1962 June 21**
Physical Description: draft
- Box 1:13 **[Cornell], Tom circa 1972**
Physical Description: draft
- Box 1:14 **Heathoff?, undated**
Physical Description: draft
- Box 1:15 **[Hecht], Rose undated**
Scope and Content Note
notes on Living Theatre clipping
- Box 1:16 **: Kross, A.M., Correction Commissioner undated**
Physical Description: draft
- Box 1:17 **Sherwood, Madeleine undated**
Box 1:18 **Souza, Antonio undated**
Physical Description: 2 drafts
- Box 1:19 **Supply Co. 2nd Service Bn. 2nd Marine Division F.M.F. Camp Lejuene, N.C. 1972 April 4**
Box 1:20 **Unidentified recipient undated**
Physical Description: draft
-

Subseries 2.2 **Incoming 1955-1973**

Physical Description: 48 folders

- Box 1:21 **Baefes-Ridder?, Lia 1972 June 14**
Box 1:22 **Beck, Julian and Malina, Judith 1962-1973**
Physical Description: 19 postcards
- Box 1:23 **Beck, Julian and Malina, Judith 1964-1972; undated**
Physical Description: 21 letters, 1 telegram, 1 envelope
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- Box 1:24 **Beck, Mabel 1955-1971**
- Physical Description:** 5 letters
- Box 1:25 **Bjornstad, Kent 1972 August 31**
- Box 1:26 **Blyden, Bro. Herbert undated**
- Box 1:27 **Brown, Ken 1965**
- Box 1:28 **Buchsbaum, Peter A., ACLU of New Jersey 1973 January 12**
- Box 1:29 **Chaikin, Joseph 1966-1970; undated**
- Physical Description:** 2 letters, 1 envelope, 1 postcard
- Box 1:30 **Clarke, Eileen 1962; undated**
- Physical Description:** 2 letters
- Box 1:31 **Cornell, Tom 1972 November 13**
- Box 1:32 **Ferlinghetti, Lawrence 1964 March 4**
- Box 1:33 **Goodman, Paul 1968 June 27**
- Box 1:34 **Gottlieb, Saul 1965-1966; undated**
- Physical Description:** 11 letters, 1 postcard
- Box 1:35 **[Harriman], John undated**
- Physical Description:** 4 letters
- Box 1:36 **Hecht, Rose 1965**
- Physical Description:** 3 items
- Box 1:37 **Herscovitz, Marcia 1969 December 7; undated**
- Physical Description:** 2 letters
- Box 1:38 **Howard, Henry 1965 January**
- Box 1:39 **Kellum, Marimari? 1962 February 3**
- Box 1:40 **Knabe, Grete [Gypsy's mother] 1971 September 29**
- Box 1:41 **Leonardi, Alfredo 1966**
- Physical Description:** 8 letters
- Box 1:42 **Paulson, Elin undated**
- Box 1:43 **Perlman, Fredy and Lorraine 1963?-1964**
- Physical Description:** 2 postcards
- Box 1:44 **Peroni, Karl 1972 September 19**
- Box 1:45 **Rosenberg, Jack H. 1964 December 14**
- Scope and Content Note**
- signed and sent copy to K.B.
- Box 1:46 **Royaton, D'arcy 1960 May 16**
- Box 1:47 **Shari, [Dorothy] 1966**
- Box 1:48 **Spicer, Jim undated**
- Box 1:49 **Worley, Leonora 1964 September**
- Physical Description:** 2 letters
- Box 1:50 **Daniel undated**
-

Series 2. **Correspondence 1955-1973**

Subseries 2.2 **Incoming 1955-1973**

Box 1:51 **Daphne 1962**
Box 1:52 **David and Renee undated**
Box 1:53 **Margo undated**
Box 1:54 **Mary 1973**
Box 1:55 **Reggie undated**
Box 1:56 **Rufus undated**
Box 1:57 **Tedi 1965 September 6; undated**

Physical Description: 1 postcard, 1 letter

Box 1:58 **Tony undated**
Box 1:59 **Unidentified 1964-1968; undated**

Physical Description: 3 letters, 3 postcards

Subseries 2.3 **Collected 1961-1967**

Physical Description: 8 folders

Box 1:60 **Beck, Julian and Malina, Judith. New York Committee, General Strike for Peace to Simone Signoret 1961 December 29**
Box 1:61 **Itkin, The Most Reverend Michael Augustine (Western Orthodox of the Old Catholic Church) to North, Jonathan 1962 March 18**
Box 1:62 **Itkin, The Most Reverend Michael Augustine to New York Committee for the General Strike for Peace 1962 April 1**
Box 1:63 **Itkin, The Right Reverend Michael A. to New York Committee for a General Strike for Peace 1962 December 26**
Box 1:64 **Itkin, The Right Reverend Michael Francis to Support-in-Action 1967 April 25**
Box 1:65 **Wang, Arthur W. (Hill and Wang, Inc.) to Beck, Julian 1964 December 22**
Box 1:66 **Zurer, Oscar to Deputy Police Commissioner Walter Arm 1962 March 4**

Physical Description: carbon copy

Box 1:67 **Heather and Lee; Greeting notes to Kerin, Garrick, and the new Edenstar undated**

Physical Description: carbon copy

Series 3 Subject Files 1950-1974

Physical Description: 96 folders

Scope and Content Note

Arranged in alphabetical order by the name of the organization (or sometimes person) responsible for creating the material in each file. Contains printed material including an agenda, fliers, form letters, meeting minutes, a memo, pamphlets, posters, questionnaires, a report, and serial publications. Subjects include: opposition to protests against the Vietnam War, Living Theatre performances, avant-garde theater, the General Strike for Peace, opposition to the draft, involvement of clergy in peace movement, the Old Catholic Church, an artists' community, and New York City counter culture.

Box 6:2	American Report 1972 May-June
Box 5:1	Karl Armstrong Defense Committee circa 1972
Box 1:68	Anarcho-Feminists, Siren [newsletter] undated
Box 1:69	Angry Arts undated
Box 6:2	Basta Enough 1969 May
Box 1:70	Bell, Richard (Dick) M. 1967
Box 1:71	Bread and Puppet Theatre 1972
Box 1:72	Bridge Theatre 1965
Box 1:73	The Catholic Worker 1955
Box 6:2	Catholic Worker 1955-1962
Box 1:74	Charter Group for a Pledge of Conscience 1972
Box 1:75	Chelsea Theatre Center of Brooklyn 1972
Box 1:76	Cocteau, Jean 1950
Box 1:77	Merce Cunningham Studio undated
Box 1:78	Emergency Committee on Nigeria and Biafra 1969
Box 1:79	Environmental Action Coalition undated
Box 5:10	The Final Decline and Total Collapse of the American Avant-Garde," "Say Hello to the Dirty Half Dozen, Sierra Bandit, the American Playground and all the Superstars of the New Theatre," "Xanadu (class of '52) Revisited," in Esquire 1969 May
Box 5:9	Fliers 1955-1968; undated
Box 2:1	The Floating Bear 1962
Box 2:2	The Floating Bear 1964
Box 2:3	The Floating Bear 1967
Box 2:4	Friends of Malatesta undated
Box 2:5	Greenwich Village Peace Center circa 1972
Box 2:6	Harriman, John; Mimeo undated
Box 2:7	Harriman, John; Taxi: Poems 1969
Box 2:8	Indo-China Information Service 1971
Box 2:9	Indochina Resource Center, Indochina Chronicle 1972-1973
Box 2:10	International Revolutionary Solidarity Movement undated
Box 5:2	Johnson, James Hervey undated
Box 5:3	KNOW undated
Box 2:11	Labor Action for Peace undated
Box 2:12	Libertarian League 1965
Box 2:13	Living Theatre: Programs 1955-1966; undated
Box 2:14	Living Theatre: Histories circa 1959-1971
Box 6:1	Living Theatre: Fliers 1959-1973; undated
Box 2:15	Living Theatre: The Connection, [copies of articles] circa 1960
Box 2:16	Living Theatre: Beck, Julian. Songs of the Revolution 1963
Box 2:17	Living Theatre: "Openings/New York," the Brig, in Theatre Arts 1963 July
Box 2:18	Living Theatre: Emergency Committee for the Defense of the Living Theatre 1964
Box 2:19	Living Theatre: "How to Close a Theatre," "The Living Theatre and Larger Issues," "Interviews with Judith Malina and Kenneth Brown," "Epitaph for the Living Theatre," "The Brig," in Tulane Drama Review 1964 Spring
Box 2:20	"The Living Theatre in Exile" reprint from Tulane Drama Review 1966 Summer
Box 2:21	Living Theatre: Nichols, Robert "Peasant Life" [script] 1967 September
Box 2:22	Living Theater Poems 1968

Box 2:23 Living Theatre: "Legal Bulletin #1" 1968 September 10
 Box 2:24 Living Theatre: Travelers Insurance Co. policy 1968 October 25
 Box 2:25 Living Theatre: "Eight Steps from Paradise," in *Liberation* 1968 November
 Box 2:26 "The Living Theatre" in *WIN* 1968 November 15
 Box 2:27 Living Theatre: "Eight Steps from Paradise" in *Liberation News Service* 1968 November 20
 Box 2:28 *The Living Theatre*, special issue of *Yale/Theatre* 1969 Spring
 Box 2:29 "The Living Theatre" in *WIN* 1970 July
 Box 2:30 Living Theatre: "There's No Biz Like Show Biz," in *WIN* 1970 December 15
 Box 2:31 Living Theatre: Bibliographies circa 1971-1973
 Box 2:32 Living Theatre: Paradise Defense Fund 1971 August 24
 Box 3:1 Living Theatre: Brazil: Paradise Now?" in *WIN* 1971 October 15
 Box 6:1 Living Theatre: Seven Meditations on Political Sado-Masochism in *Fag Rag* 1973 Fall/Winter
 Box 3:2 Living Theatre: The Conquest of Bread" in *Peace News* 1974 October 18
 Box 3:3 Living Theatre: House, LeRoy undated
 Box 3:4 Mead, Taylor, *Taylor Mead: excerpts...* 1962
 Box 3:5 Miami Conventions Coalition circa 1972
 Box 3:6 Military Legal Center 1972
 Box 3:7 Movement for a New Society 1972
 Box 3:8 Naeve, Virginia circa 1964
 Box 3:9 National Council to Repeal the Draft 1973
 Box 3:10 National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam undated
 Box 3:11 Neighbors for Peace undated
 Box 5:11 New York Committee, General Strike for Peace 1961-1963; undated
 Box 6:3 New York Committee, General Strike for Peace undated
 Box 5:12 New York Military Counselors' Clearinghouse 1972
 Box 5:13 New York State Civil Defense Protest and Recreation Society 1960
 Box 5:4 New York Switchboard undated
 Box 3:12 NYC League for Sexual Freedom 1965
 Box 5:5 Old Catholic Church (The Most Reverend Michael Augustine Itkin) 1962; undated
 Box 3:13 Open Theatre undated
 Box 3:14 Photo Arts 1952 March

Scope and Content Note

Contains Bissinger photos.

Box 3:15 Poor People's Development Foundation undated
 Box 3:16 Project Air War 1972-1973; undated
 Box 3:17 Redress 1972
 Box 5:6 San Francisco Mime Troupe circa 1972
 Box 3:18 Sanders, Ed; *Ed Sanders' Catalogue #3* 1965
 Box 3:19 Sanders, Ed; *Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts #3* 1962
 Box 3:20 Sanders, Ed; *Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts #4* 1962
 Box 3:21 Sanders, Ed; *Fuck You: A Magazine of the Arts #5, vol. 7* 1964
 Box 3:22 Solidarity Bookshop 1972
 Box 3:23 Stoke Newington Eight Defence Group undated
 Box 3:24 Support-In-Action undated
 Box 3:25 Theatre at St. Clement's 1972
 Box 5:7 U.S. Committee to Aid the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam circa 1972-1973
 Box 3:26 War Resisters League 1972-1973; undated
 Box 3:27 War Resisters League, *WIN* 1967-1971
 Box 3:28 War Resisters League, *WIN* 1971-1972
 Box 4:1 Washington Square Methodist Church 1973 August 10
 Box 5:8 Westbeth: The Artists Community 1972
 Box 4:2 Women's Medical Center 1972
 Box 4:3 World Peace Council 1973
 Box 4:4 Unidentified 1963-1972; undated

Series 4 **Photographic Materials 1960; undated**

Physical Description: 28 folders

Scope and Content Note

Mainly photographic prints and contact sheets, with several negatives included. Most of the photographs are credited to Karl Bissinger. The bulk are images from Living Theatre performances and these are arranged in alphabetical order by play title.

- Box 4:6 ***The Apple* undated**
Physical Description: 5 prints
- Box 4:7 ***The Apple* undated**
Physical Description: 5 prints
- Box 4:8 ***The Apple* undated**
Physical Description: 4 prints
- Box 4:9 ***The Apple, Portraits of [Jack Gelber]* undated**
Physical Description: 2 prints
- Box 4:10 ***The Apple, Portraits of [Jack Gelber]* undated**
Physical Description: 8 contact sheets
- Box 4:11 ***The Apple* undated**
Physical Description: 5 contact sheets
- Box 5:14 ***The Apple* undated**
Physical Description: 5 prints
- Box 5:15 ***The Apple* undated**
Physical Description: 4 prints, 1 contact sheet (layout for publication)
- Box 4:12 ***The Brig* undated**
Physical Description: 2 prints
- Box 4:13 ***The Brig* undated**
Physical Description: 6 contact sheets
- Box 4:14 ***The Brig* undated**
Physical Description: 7 contact sheets
- Box 4:15 ***The Brig* undated**
Physical Description: 7 contact sheets (fragments)
- Box 4:16 ***The Brig, [Press conference at 14th street theatre during IRS "bust"]* undated**
Physical Description: 5 contact sheets

- Box 4:17 ***The Connection* undated**
Physical Description: 2 prints
- Box 4:18 ***The Connection* undated**
Physical Description: 3 contact sheets
- Box 5:16 ***The Connection*, portraits of [Kenneth H. Brown] circa 1960**
Physical Description: 1 print, 1 contact sheet
- Box 5:17 ***The Connection*, portrait of Jackie McLean 1960**
Physical Description: 1 print, 1 contact sheet
- Box 4:19 ***In the Jungle of Cities* undated**
Physical Description: 5 prints
- Box 4:20 ***In the Jungle of Cities* undated**
Physical Description: 3 contact sheets
- Box 4:21 ***Man is Man* undated**
Physical Description: 1 print, 1 negative
- Box 4:22 ***Man is Man* undated**
Physical Description: 1 print, 1 negative
- Box 4:23 ***Man is Man* undated**
Physical Description: 1 print, 1 negative
- Box 4:24 ***Man is Man* undated**
Physical Description: 1 print, 1 negative
- Box 4:25 ***Man is Man* undated**
Physical Description: 1 print, 1 negative
- Box 4:26 ***Man is Man*, Joseph Chaiken, Judith Malina undated**
Physical Description: 1 print, 1 negative
- Box 4:27 **Unidentified plays, Living Theatre undated**
Physical Description: 1 print, 1 contact sheet
- Box 4:28 **[14th Street Theatre] Julian Beck and Judith Malina undated**
Physical Description: 1 contact sheet
- Box 4:5 **Peace rally, New York General Strike for Peace, Julian Beck speaking undated**
Physical Description: 1 print