INVENTORY OF THE FIREHOUSE THEATER COMPANY ARCHIVES, 1963-1974

Lola Aguilar
Department of Special Collections
General Library
University of California, Davis
100 North West Quad
Davis, CA 95616-5292
Phone: (530) 752-1621
Fax: (530) 754-5758
Email: specoll@lib.ucdavis.edu
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Note
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Collection number: D-064

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Processed by:
Lola Aguilar
Encoded by:
Melissa Tyler
Date completed:
June 2004

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Firehouse Theater Company Archives,

Date (inclusive): 1963-1974

Collection number: D-064

Creator: Firehouse Theater Company

Extent: 4.7 linear feet

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

100 North West Quad
Davis, California, 95616-5292

Abstract: In the summer of 1963, University of Minnesota graduate student Marlow S. Hotchkiss, artist James F. Faber, actor John Shimek, and actor and director Charles Morrison III renovated an 1894 fire station in Minneapolis, Minnesota as the Firehouse Theater. The group conceived the theater as a venue for avant-garde drama and as a vehicle for new playwrights in the Twin Cities area. The company relocated to San Francisco in 1969. The Firehouse Theater Company Archives (1963-1974) includes scripts, scores, director's notes, posters, programs, photographic prints, films, workshop notebooks, reviews, correspondence, legal and financial documents, blueprints, and promotional material.

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

Language: English.

Access
Collection is open for research under regular Reading Room rules and copyright restrictions.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Firehouse Theater Company Archives, D-064, Department of Special Collections, General Library, University of California, Davis, California.

Acquisition Information
In 1974, Nancy Walter donated this collection to the Library. Additional material was donated in 1984 by Ms. Walter under her changed name, Norah Holmgren.

Processing Information
Lola Aguilar processed this collection and created its finding aid. Melissa Tyler encoded the finding aid.

Administrative History
In the summer of 1963, University of Minnesota graduate student Marlow S. Hotchkiss, artist James F. Faber, actor John Shimek, and actor and director Charles Morrison III renovated an 1894 firestation in Minneapolis, Minnesota as the Firehouse Theater. The group conceived the theater as a venue for avant-garde drama and as a vehicle for new playwrights in the Twin Cities area. The Firehouse Theater Company's first play, The Connection by Jack Gelber, opened on August 22, 1963. The evening included a post-play discussion between the audience and the cast and director, which became a regular feature of Firehouse Theater productions.

The Firehouse Theater Company changed direction in 1965 with the departure of Shimek and Morrison. Marlow Hotchkiss, now managing director, brought on Sydney Schubert Walter, a member of the Open Theater in New York, as artistic director. The theater group reincorporated as a non-profit organization and acquired grants from the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Hotchkiss and Walter also increased the number of original plays they produced and conducted workshops for the ensemble's personal development.

American playwright Sam Shepard premiered his play, Fourteen Hundred Thousand, in 1966 at the Firehouse Theater. In the same year, the group also performed Open Theater playwright Megan Terry's new play, Viet Rock. In 1968, the Firehouse Theater Company premiered Terry's new play, Jack-Jack, at the Firehouse Theater and in-house playwright Nancy Walter's first play, Rags. In addition to new plays, the Firehouse Theater Company continued presenting plays by Ionesco, Brecht, Beckett, and other Theater of the Absurd playwrights. Audience participation developed as part of the group's experimentation with acting as a shared discovery.

After losing their lease at the old fire station in Minneapolis in 1969, the Firehouse Theater Company relocated to San Francisco, where they opened a theater on California Street at Polk and experimented with communal living. Their first season in San Francisco opened with Blessings on March 20, 1970.

By 1974, many of the original Firehouse Theater group had left to pursue other interests. Sydney Walter returned to school to complete a doctorate in psychology. Marlow Hotchkiss decided to concentrate on films. He also moved out of the commune. Nancy Walter continued writing plays and books. The company's original group of actors also moved on. The Firehouse Theater Company no longer produced experimental works. Instead, they turned towards other styles of theatrical productions.

Sources:

Scope and Content of Collection
The Firehouse Theater Company Archives is arranged in three series: 1. Plays, 2. Business Records, and 3. Memorabilia. Items span the years 1963 to 1974. The first series is devoted to plays performed by the Firehouse Theater Company and includes scripts, scores, director's notes, posters, programs, films, photographic prints, and reviews. Scripts and scores primarily relate to Firehouse Theater playwright-in-residence Nancy Walter's plays. Business records include general correspondence, grant proposals and related correspondence, legal documents, financial documents, building records, workshop material, and promotional material. Memorabilia includes a scrapbook and a manuscript.

Related Collections
Other materials related to Firehouse Theater Archives may be found in the following collections at Special Collections: D-055: Cole, Toby Archives
Series 1. **Plays, 1963-1974.**

Physical Description: 201 folders
Scope and Content Note
Arranged alphabetically by play title. Includes posters, programs, photographic prints, reviews, scripts, scores, director's notes, and films.

**Box 1:1-4**

Physical Description:  
Note

**Box 1:5-7**
*Antigone*, 1969.

Physical Description:  
Note

**Box 1:8-9**

Physical Description:  
Note

**Box 1:10-13**

Physical Description:  
Note

**Box 1:14-17, Folio Box 5:1**

Physical Description:  
Note

**Box 1:18-19**

Physical Description:  
Note
INVENTORY OF THE FIREHOUSE THEATER COMPANY ARCHIVES, 1963-1974

Box 1:20-21  
**The Brig, 1964.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:22-23  
**The Caretaker, 1963, n.d.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:24-26  
**Carne Man, 1965.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:27  
**The Connection, 1963.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:28-29  
**The Dance of Death, 1964.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:30-31  
**Danton's Death, 1965.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:32-33, Folio Box 5:1  
**Doomeager, 1973.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:34-36, Folio Box 5:1  
**Dreamscapes, 1972-1973.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:37-39, Folio Box 5:2  
**Endgame, 1966, n.d.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:40-44, Box 4:1  
**Escape by Balloon, 1970-1972, n.d.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:45-48  
**Faust, 1969, n.d.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:49  
**A Few Skits and Songs about Things Right and Wrong with the World, the Church, and You, 1964.**
Physical Description: Note

Box 1:50-51  
**Fourteen Hundred Thousand, 1966.**
Physical Description: Note
<p>| Box 1:52 | <strong>The Future is in Eggs</strong>, 1966. |
| Box 1:55 | <strong>Grab and Grace</strong>, n.d. |
| Box 1:56-58 | <strong>Happy Days</strong>, 1968. |
| Box 1:59 | <strong>A House by the Stable</strong>, 1963. |
| Box 1:63-64 | <strong>The Immoralist</strong>, 1964. |
| Box 1:65-68, Box 4:2, Folio Box 5:3 | <strong>Iphigenia Transformed</strong>, 1966, n.d. |
| Box 1:69 | <strong>It Should Happen to a Dog</strong>, 1963. |
| Box 1:70-71, Box 4:3, Folio Box 5:4 | <strong>Jack or the Submission</strong>, 1966, n.d. |
| Box 1:84-87 | <strong>Krapp's Last Tape</strong>, 1967, n.d. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Physical Description</th>
<th>Note</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:89-91, Box</td>
<td><em>Lord Halewyn</em>, 1965.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:4</td>
<td><em>A Man is a Man</em>, 1968, n.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:6-9</td>
<td><em>Mortality or the Passion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire</em>, 1967.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2:13-14</td>
<td><em>Oh Dad, Poor Dad, Mamma's Hung You in the Closet and I'm Feeling So Sad</em>, 1965.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:15-17, Foli</td>
<td><em>Peer Gynt</em>, 1967, n.d.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:5</td>
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<td>2:25</td>
<td><em>Psychedelic Voyage</em>, n.d.</td>
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| Box 2:36 | **Santa Claus, 1963.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:37-39 | **Serjeant Musgrave's Dance, 1965.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:40-44 | **The Sideshow, 1966, n.d.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:45-48, Folio Box 5:6 | **A Song for All Saints, 1966, n.d.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:49-52, Folio Box 5:1 | **Stab and Dance, 1973-1974.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:53-56, Box 4:5, Map Case Ill:Drawer P | **Still Falling, 1971.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:57 | **Sweeney Agonistes, 1965.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:58-61 | **The Thing Itself, 1967.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:62 | **The Three Men of Gotham, 1965.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:63-66, Folio Box 5:1 | **Traveling Light, 1972, n.d.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:67-71 | **Trinity, 1968, n.d.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:72-74, Box 4:6-7, Folio Box 5:7 | **Victims of Duty, 1967, n.d.**  
| Physical Description:  
| Note |
| Box 2:75-79 | **Viet Rock, 1966.**  
| Physical Description:  
<p>| Note |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 2:80-84</th>
<th>Waiting for Godot, 1966.</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Physical Description:</td>
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<td>Note</td>
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<td>Box 2:85-87, Folio</td>
<td>Where's de Queen, 1966, n.d.</td>
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<td>Box 5:8</td>
<td>Physical Description:</td>
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<td>Note</td>
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<td>Physical Description:</td>
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<td>Note</td>
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<tr>
<td>Box 5:1</td>
<td>Physical Description:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Note</td>
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</table>


Physical Description: 44 folders
Scope and Content Note
Divided into seven subseries: General Correspondence, Grants, Legal Documents, Financial Documents, Building Records, Workshops, and Promotional Material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3:1</th>
<th>Subseries 2.1. General Correspondence, 1967-1974, n.d.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Physical Description: 1 folder</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranged chronologically. Does not contain correspondence relating to grants.</td>
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</table>


Physical Description: 4 folders
Scope and Content Note
Includes grant proposals and correspondence relating to grants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3:2</th>
<th>Grant proposal, n.d.</th>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Note</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3:3</th>
<th>Correspondence, Rockefeller Foundation, 1966-1970.</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Physical Description:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Note</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3:4-5</th>
<th>Correspondence, National Endowment for the Arts, 1966-1974, n.d.</th>
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<td>Physical Description:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Note</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Physical Description: 3 folders
Scope and Content Note
Includes insurance and corporation records with enclosed memoranda.

**Subseries 2.3. Legal Documents, 1963-1965.**


| Physical Description:  
Note |


- **Box 3:9**  
- **Box 3:10**  
- **Box 3:11**  
  Petty Cash, 1969  
- **Folio Box 5:9**  
- **Box 3:12**  
- **Box 3:13**  
- **Box 3:14**  
- **Box 3:15**  
- **Box 3:16-19**  

Physical Description:  
Note  
[Restricted]
Physical Description: 3 folders
Scope and Content Note
Includes blueprints, building permits, and construction and architectural reports for the theater in San Francisco.

Box 3:20
Physical Description:
Note

Box 3:21
Physical Description:
Note

Map Case III:
Drawer P
Physical Description:
Note

Physical Description: 10 folders
Scope and Content Note
Includes workshop notebooks and one film.

Box 3:22-29
Workshop Books no. 1-8, n.d.
Physical Description: 8 notebooks
Note

Box 3:30
Workshop Book, Faust, n.d.
Physical Description:
Note

Box 4:8
ESP Workshop on Beach, a film by Marlow Hotchkiss, 1969.
Physical Description:
Note

Physical Description: 14 folders
Scope and Content Note
Includes mailers, pamphlets, press releases, articles, one poster, and company photographs.

Box 3:31
Physical Description:
Note
<table>
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<th>Box</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
Physical Description:  
Note |
Physical Description:  
Note |
Physical Description:  
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Physical Description:  
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Physical Description:  
Note |
| 3:37 | Firehouse Theater, San Francisco pamphlet, n.d.  
Physical Description:  
Note |
Physical Description:  
Note |
Physical Description:  
Note |
| Map Case III: Drawer P | Firehouse Theater poster, n.d.  
Physical Description:  
Note |
Physical Description:  
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Physical Description:  
Note |

Physical Description: 2 items  
Scope and Content Note  
Includes a scrapbook and a manuscript.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Description:</td>
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<td>Note</td>
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<td>[manuscript]</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Size Box 6</th>
<th>Firehouse Theater scrapbook, 1963-1968, n.d.</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Note</td>
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