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Note

Collection number: D-136

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University of California, Davis
Davis, California

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Processed by:
Lola Aguilar

Encoded by:
Melissa Tyler

Date completed:
March 2004

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Bread and Puppet Theater Archives,

Date (inclusive): 1962-1981,

Date (bulk): (bulk 1964-1975)

Collection number: D-136

Creator: Bread and Puppet Theater

Extent: 3.3 linear feet

Repository: University of California, Davis. General Library. Dept. of Special Collections.
100 North West Quad

Davis, California, 95616-5292

Abstract: Founded by Peter Schumann, the Bread and Puppet Theater emerged as one of the first alternative theater groups of the 1960s and 1970s. Schumann incorporated religion and morality into the central anti-war theme of the plays. The Bread and Puppet Theater offered bread, baked by the group, to the audience at the beginning of every performance. Schumann believed that theater was as basic to life as bread. The Bread and Puppet Theater Archives (1962-1981, bulk dates 1964-1975) includes scripts, programs, monographs, and serials of the experimental theater.

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], Bread and Puppet Theater Archives, D-136, Department of Special Collections, University of California Library, Davis, California.

**Acquisition Information**

In 1975, Peter Schumann donated this collection to the Library. Material was added in 1981.

**Processing Information**

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

**Administrative History**

West German immigrant Peter Schumann (1934-) founded the Bread and Puppet Theater in New York in 1961. Influenced by the peace movement in New York, Schumann wrote radical anti-war plays for his puppet theater. He incorporated religion and morality into the central anti-war theme of the plays. The Bread and Puppet Theater offered bread, baked by the group, to the audience at the beginning of every performance. Schumann declared that theater was as basic to life as bread, hence the name. A street parade with masked puppeteers on stilts, oversized puppets up to twenty feet high, banners, and at times, over a hundred singing and dancing volunteers, preceded the plays. The plays contained little dialogue, usually spoken by a narrator. Schumann believed the plays' imagery communicated best in an outdoor setting, therefore most of the plays were performed outdoors. With only a small core of paid staff, the Bread and Puppet Theater relied on a fluctuating volunteer staff whose numbers changed according to each performance. Charging the audience a nominal fee, the group received most of its funds through grants and donations. The group performed in the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Australia.

The Bread and Puppet Theater expanded in 1970 when the group moved to Cate Farm in Plainfield, Vermont as theater-in-residence at Goddard College. They offered workshops in sculpture, mime, dance, story-making, puppet building and operation, music, and instrument making. The group also held workshops to produce Bread and Puppet publications. One of Schumann's plays, the *Domestic Resurrection Circus*, was first performed in 1971 at Plainfield as part of a two day festival. The festival became an annual event. Beginning in 1971, Universal Movement Theatre Repertory director Mark Amitin arranged performances for the Bread and Puppet Theater. After a cancelled series of performances for the North Jersey Cultural Council in 1973, Schumann severed his relationship with the booking agency. In 1974, Schumann moved the group to Glover, Vermont where the group opened a museum for their collection of Bread and Puppet Theater masks and puppets. The Bread and Puppet Theater continued to perform for national and international audiences.

**Sources:**


**Scope and Content of Collection**

The Bread and Puppet Theater Archives is arranged in seven series: 1. Works by Bread and Puppet Theater, 2. Business Records, 3. Reviews, 4. Ephemera, 5. Photographic Materials, 6. Realia, and 7. Added Materials. Items span the years 1962 to 1981, but the bulk of the collection dates from 1964 to 1975. The collection contains published and unpublished works by the Bread and Puppet Theater and its founder and director Peter Schumann. The Theater's scripts, programs, monographs, and serials are mainly pictorial. The collection contains audiotape recordings of "Bread and Puppet Theater Rehearsal" and two video recordings: "Bread and Puppet Theater" and "The Meadow's Green." Also included in the collection are reviews, flyers, posters, photographic prints, and other ephemera related to the Bread and Puppet Theater's performances. Realia from the Bread and Puppet Theater's anti-bicentennial performance of *A Monument for Ishi* at the University of California, Davis campus in 1975, includes two banners, a mask, a sign, and a deer puppet. Business records are primarily limited to correspondence, press releases, contracts, site information, and clippings concerning arrangements made by Universal Movement Theatre Repertory Director Mark Amitin and the North Jersey Cultural Council in 1972 and 1973.

**Related Collections**

Other materials related to the Bread and Puppet Theater may be found in the following collections at Special Collections: D-145: Universal Movement Theatre Repertory Archives
Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library’s online public access catalog:

**Subjects**

- Bread and Puppet Theater
- Schumann, Peter, 1934-
- American drama--20th century
- Experimental theater--United States
- Puppet theater
- Street theater
- Masks
- Theater--Moral and ethical aspects
- Theater--Political aspects
- Theater--Religious aspects

**Series 1. Works by Bread and Puppet Theater, 1964-1975**

Physical Description: 28 folders

**Scope and Content Note**

Divided into six subseries: Scripts, Programs, Monographs, Serials, Interview Transcripts, and Contributions to Serials.

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**Subseries 1.1. Scripts, 1965-1975**

Physical Description: 24 scripts

**Scope and Content Note**

Arranged alphabetically by title.

**Box 1:1**

*Attica- Fire.*

Physical Description:  
Note

**Box 1:2**

*Harvey McLeod- White Washing of the Dirty Sheets.*

Physical Description:  
Note

**Folio 4:1**

*Perez and Martina.*

Physical Description:  
Note  
[oversize handwritten fragment]

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**Subseries 1.2. Programs, 1964-1972**

Physical Description: 15 programs

**Scope and Content Note**

Arranged alphabetically by title.

**Box 1:3**

*Christmas Story- Nativity.*

Physical Description:  
Note
### Series 1. Works by Bread and Puppet Theater, 1964-1975

#### Subseries 1.2. Programs, 1964-1972

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 1:4</th>
<th><strong>Stations of the Cross- Three Short Pieces.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Physical Description:</strong> Note</td>
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Subseries 1.3. **Monographs, 1967-1974**

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<tr>
<th>Box 1:5</th>
<th><strong>Crash into the Grass, n.d.</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1:6</th>
<th><strong>Incredible Rain, 1973.</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Physical Description:</strong> Note</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Box 1:7</th>
<th><strong>Lament of the Frontier Guard, 1967.</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Physical Description:</strong> Note</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Box 1:8</th>
<th><strong>Mr. Miller Stories, No. 3, 1967.</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Physical Description:</strong> Note</td>
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<th>Box 1:9</th>
<th><strong>Parable of the Burning House, 1970.</strong></th>
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<th>Box 1:10</th>
<th><strong>Puppen und Masken: Das Bread and Puppet Theater, 1973.</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1:11</th>
<th><strong>Sauerkraut, 1973.</strong></th>
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<th>Box 1:12</th>
<th><strong>Stations of the Cross, 1974.</strong></th>
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Subseries 1.4. **Serials, 1966-1974.**

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Series 1. Works by Bread and Puppet Theater, 1964-1975


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<td>Note</td>
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<td>[manuscript newsletter]</td>
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<th>Box 1:21</th>
<th>Bread and Rosebuds; April 25, 1970; Nov. 1972.</th>
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<td>Note</td>
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<td>[newsletter]</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1:22</th>
<th>Sugar, no. 1, 3-5, 1974.</th>
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Subseries 1.5. Interview Transcripts, 1968

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Series 1. Works by Bread and Puppet Theater, 1964-1975

  Physical Description:  
  Note

  Physical Description:  
  Note

- Box 1:26 "God Himself: Problems Concerning Puppetry and Folkmusic and Folkart in the Light of God and MacNamara [sic]." *Sing Out!* 17, no. 1 (Feb./March 1967).
  Physical Description:  
  Note

  Physical Description:  
  Note

  Physical Description:  
  Note

  Physical Description:  
  Note
  [manuscript]

  Physical Description:  
  Note

  Physical Description: 7 folders
  Scope and Content Note
  Contains business records of the Bread and Puppet Theater.

  Physical Description: 57 items
  Note

- Box 1:30 Internal Memorandum from Peter Schumann to his Puppeteers, Feb. 23 (no year).
  Physical Description:  
  Note

- Box 1:31-32 "List of Plays We Must Do," n.d.
  Physical Description:  
  Note

  Physical Description: 2 chronologies
  Note

Box 1:34  
**Descriptions of Bread and Puppet Theater, 1967-1971, n.d.**  
Physical Description:  
Note  
[French and English]

Box 1:35  
**Bibliography, 1973.**  
Physical Description:  
Note

Physical Description: 6 folders  
Scope and Content Note  
Arranged chronologically. Contains national and international reviews and articles.

Box 1:36-40  
**1962-1973, n.d.**  
Physical Description:  
Note

Folio 4:3  
**1971-1973, n.d.**  
Physical Description:  
Note

Physical Description: 7 folders  
Scope and Content Note  
Contains catalogs, fliers, posters, prints, and other items connected to the Bread and Puppet Theater. Within each category, items are arranged chronologically.

Box 1:41  
**Catalogs, 1971-1972.**  
Physical Description:  
Note

Box 1:42  
**Fliers, 1962-1975, n.d.**  
Physical Description:  
Note

Folio 4:4  
**Oversize Fliers and Posters, 1964-1973.**  
Physical Description:  
Note

Map Case  
**Posters, n.d.**  
Physical Description:  
Note

Box 1:43-44  
**Prints, 1965-1974, n.d.**  
Physical Description:  
Note

Box 1:45  
**Other, 1965-1974.**  
Physical Description:  
Note
Series 5. Photographic Prints, 1968-1972

Physical Description: 17 prints
Scope and Content Note
Arranged by title.

Box 1:46-59


Physical Description:
Note
[b & w]

Box 1:60-61

Fire, 1968.

Physical Description:
Note
[b & w]

Box 1:62


Physical Description:
Note
[b & w]

Series 6. Realia, [1975]

Physical Description: 5 items
Scope and Content Note
Contains banners, mask, sign, and puppet from the Bread and Puppet Theater's 1975 performance of A Monument for Ishi at the University of California, Davis.

Box 2:1

Banners from A Monument for Ishi, [1975].

Physical Description:
Note

Box 3

Hunchback Witch mask from A Monument for Ishi, [1975].

Physical Description:
Note

Map Case
Ill:Drawer P

Sign from A Monument for Ishi, [1975].

Physical Description:
Note

Aisle 44a

Deer puppet from A Monument for Ishi, [1975].

Physical Description:
Note


Physical Description: 5 items
Scope and Content Note
Contains materials added after Peter Schumann donated the collection to the Library in 1975. Includes one monograph and sound and video recordings of Bread and Puppet Theater performances.

Box 2:2

Monograph, This Is, 1980.

Physical Description:
Note
Box 2:3-4  
**Sound recordings, "Bread and Puppet Theater Rehearsal," n.d.**  
Physical Description: 2 reel to reel tapes  
Note

Box 2:5  
**Video recording, "Bread and Puppet Theater," April 6, 1981.**  
Physical Description:  
Note  
[U-matic]

Box 2:6  
**Video recording, "The Meadow's Green," April 6, 1981.**  
Physical Description:  
Note  
[U-matic]