

# Guide to the Lesley Blanch Papers

OSB MSS 202



by Kristen E. Muenz

July 2018

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## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library  
P. O. Box 208330  
New Haven, CT 06520-8330  
(203) 432-2977  
beinecke.library@yale.edu  
<http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/>

**CALL NUMBER:** OSB MSS 202

**CREATOR:** Blanch, Lesley , author

**TITLE:** Lesley Blanch papers

**DATES:** circa 1850-2011

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 12.5 linear feet (20 boxes)

**LANGUAGE:** English

**SUMMARY:** The Lesley Blanch Papers contain correspondence, photographs, artwork, and printed material by Lesley Blanch or pertaining her life and work. Also included are personal and business papers related to her writings and estate, as well as a small amount of audio and born digital material.

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.blanch>

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## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.blanch>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to [beinecke.images@yale.edu](mailto:beinecke.images@yale.edu).

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.        box  
    item barcode

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## Administrative Information

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### Immediate Source of Acquisition

Purchased from Bookblast LTD., on the James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection Fund, 2016.

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### Conditions Governing Access

This collection is open for research.

Box 17 (audiocassettes): Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

Box 18 (born digital): Restricted fragile material. Access copies of digital files may be requested. For further information consult the appropriate curator.

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## Conditions Governing Use

The Lesley Blanch Papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

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## Preferred Citation

Lesley Blanch Papers. James Marshal and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

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## Processing Information

Collections are processed to a variety of levels, depending on the work necessary to make them usable, their perceived research value, the availability of staff, competing priorities, and whether or not further accruals are expected. The library attempts to provide a basic level of preservation and access for all collections and does more extensive processing of higher priority collections as time and resources permit.

This collection received a basic level of processing, including rehousing and minimal organization.

Information included in the Description of Papers note and Collection Contents section is drawn from information supplied with the collection and from an initial survey of the contents. Folder titles appearing in the contents list below are often based on those provided by the creator or previous custodian. Titles have not been verified against the contents of the folders in all cases. Otherwise, folder titles are supplied by staff during initial processing.

This finding aid may be updated periodically to account for new acquisitions to the collection and/or revisions in arrangement and description.

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## Lesley Blanch

Lesley Blanch (1904-2007) was an English writer, historian, artist, and traveller. Her works and journeys focused on Russia and the Middle East. She began her career as an artist, studying painting at the Slade School of Fine Art at University College London. She later became a journalist, serving as the features editor of *British Vogue* from 1937 to 1944. Her first book, *The Wilder Shores of Love*, was published in 1954. Over the course of her life, she wrote 12 books, and a posthumous collection of her memoirs was released in 2015. She was married to Robert Alan Wimberley Bicknell from 1930 to 1941, and to French novelist Romain Gary from 1945 to 1962.

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## Scope and Contents

The Lesley Blanch Papers contain correspondence, photographs, artwork, and printed material by Lesley Blanch or pertaining her life and work. Also included are personal and business papers related to her writings and estate, as well as a small amount of audio and born digital material.

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## Arrangement

Organized into seven series: I. Correspondence, circa 1950s-2009. II. Photographs, 1907-2013. III. Personal Papers, 1960-2008. IV. Business Papers, 1945-2009. V. Printed Material, 1850-2008. VI. Audiocassettes, circa 1944-1998. VII. Electronic Media, circa 2001-2011.

## Collection Contents

### Series I: Correspondence, circa 1950s-2009

1.25 linear feet

Contains correspondence and related materials such as photographs and drawings.

For additional correspondence, see photographs, personal papers, and business papers.

Arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Notable correspondents include Joan Bailey, Romain Gary, and Susan Train. General correspondence is placed at the end of the series.

b. 1	Aitken, Lex	1992–2005
b. 1	Bailey, Joan (2 folders)	1970s-1990s
b. 1	Bemelmans, Ludwig	1938–1939
b. 1	Beny, Roloff	1979
b. 1	Blanch, Lesley Contains an autographed card from Lesley Blanch to George Cukor.	1966
b. 1	Blanch, Martha Contains a postcard from Martha Blanch.	1955
b. 2	Gary, Romain (5 folders)	1967–2003
b. 2	Train, Susan (3 folders)	1968–2004
b. 3	Correspondence about the fire	1994
b. 3	Unsorted correspondence, postcards, related papers (14 folders) Contain letters from Edna Fleming, Gerald de Gaury, Nancy Mitford, Julian Barnes, Pat Kavanagh, and Gore Vidal.	circa 1957-2013
b. 3	Postcards (2 folders)	circa 1960-1989

**Series II: Photographs, 1907–2013***2.33 linear feet*

Contains primarily photographs with some correspondence and other related papers. A small number of items in this series have fire damage. This is due to a fire that destroyed Lesley Blanch's home in France in 1994.

b. 4	Photograph and invitation, Duke and Duchess of Windsor	circa 1960
b. 4	Photographs of friends and lovers	undated
b. 4	<a href="#">Photographs of Lesley Blanch and Romain Gary</a>	undated
b. 4	Photographs of Roquebrune and mentor (5 folders)	undated
b. 4	Photograph album of Blanch's house	undated
b. 5	Photographs of Blanch and ancestors	1907–1938
b. 5	Photographs of Lesley Blanch, various locations (7 folders)	circa 1944–2004
b. 5	Photographs of Lesley Blanch and Romain Gary, Hollywood	circa 1959
b. 20	Large photographs	undated

**Series III: Personal papers, 1960–2008***3.25 linear feet*

Contains objects and papers related to Lesley Blanch's personal affairs, including those of her estate.

b. 6	Address books (3 folders)	undated
b. 6	Datebooks (14 folders) Annual datebooks for 1977, 1990, 1995-1997, and 1999-2007.	1977–2007
b. 7	Calling cards	undated
b. 7	Christmas cards illustrated by Lesley Blanch	1950s
b. 7	Documents from estate	undated
b. 7	French legal documents	1960s-1990s
b. 7	Orange handbag	circa 1970s
b. 7	Souvenir register	undated
b. 19	Awards Includes the documents for the medal of Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (awarded to Blanch in 2004) and the documents appointing Blanch an Ordinary of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (2001), signed by Queen Elizabeth II.	2001, 2004

**Series IV: Business papers, 1945–2009***1.92 linear feet*

Contains material related to Lesley Blanch's career as a writer, including clippings of articles she wrote, reviews of her books, and papers related to *The Sabres of Paradise* (1960). Also included are documents and other papers related to an unauthorized biography of Lesley Blanch (Boston, Anne. *Lesley Blanch: Inner Landscapes, Wilder Shores*. London: John Murray, 2014.)

b. 8	Articles (2 folders)	circa 1960s-2006
b. 8	Articles on cinema	1945
b. 8	Book reviews, France (3 folders)	1977–2003
b. 8	Book reviews	1954–2012
b. 9	Photocopy of article by Blanch, The Seven Veils of Islam	1970
b. 9	Curriculum vitae	undated
b. 9	Gertrude Bell piece, related papers	1998
b. 9	Materials related to New College Library donation	1991
b. 9	Materials related to posthumous memoirs	2015
b. 9	Papers related to unauthorized biography	1995–2009
b. 9	Theater designs (2 folders)	1934–2006
b. 18	CDs and DVDs with material related to theater design Use of originals is restricted. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated
b. 18	GURR JOHNS 25/3/14 10 DRAWINGS - THEATRE DESIGNS (ADOBE RGB 1998/TIFFS+JPEGs 300 DPI @A4) MATTHEW HOLLOW PHOTOGRAPHY 2017-osb-0019-0006 <i>1 DVD-R 776175616 bytes (776.18 Megabytes. This reflects the size of the carrier media, but may not accurately reflect the extent of digital files available for research.)</i>	
b. 18	GURR JOHNS INTERNATIONAL Theatre Designs Lesley Blanch 2017-osb-0019-0007 <i>1 CD-R 174066816 bytes (174.04 Megabytes. This reflects the size of the carrier media, but may not accurately reflect the extent of digital files available for research.)</i>	
b. 18	Theatre Designs identified by lit exec via Paris archive research Lesley Blanch 2017-osb-0019-0008 <i>1 DVD-R 438632448 bytes (438.63 Megabytes. This reflects the size of the carrier media, but may not accurately reflect the extent of digital files available for research.)</i>	

## CDs and DVDs with material related to theater design (continued)

b. 18	GURR JOHNS INTERNATIONAL Lesley Blanch 2017-osb-0019-0009 <i>1 CD-R 432974976 bytes (432.97 Megabytes. This reflects the size of the carrier media, but may not accurately reflect the extent of digital files available for research.)</i>	
b. 10	Legal papers (7 folders)	1966–2006
b. 11	Eastern Eye, the Selected Writings of Lesley Blanch	undated
b. 11	Research materials related to Sabres of Paradise (6 folders)	circa 1958-1968

**Series V: Printed material, 1850–2008***6 linear feet*

Contains articles, notes, and publications collected by Lesley Blanch, with some material from her estate.

A small number of items in this series have fire damage. This is due to a fire that destroyed Lesley Blanch's home in France in 1994.

Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

b. 12	Articles	1850–1999
b. 12	Book jackets	undated
b. 12	Exhibition booklets	1975–2002
b. 12	<a href="#">Papers about Iran</a>	1976–1978
b. 12	Postcards, blank (3 folders)	undated
b. 12	Travel papers (2 folders)	1970s–2000s
b. 13	Christie's Monaco: Collection de M. Henri Clarke	1998
b. 13	Magazines (2 folders)	2006–2015
b. 13	Royal Society of Literature Review	2008
b. 14	Clippings (4 folders)	1954–2007
b. 14	Notes and clippings on friends	1978–1998
b. 14	Obituaries and related papers (2 folders)	1996–2007
b. 19	Articles and photocopies of articles	undated
b. 19	Vogue articles and related materials	undated
b. 20	Interviews and related papers (2 folders)	1970s, 2000s
	Books	1890–2004
b. 15	Poètes russes du XIXe siècle	1936–1954
b. 15	Annotated copy of Romain Gary: Le Caméléon	2004
b. 15	Prayer book from Violet Trefusius	undated
b. 15	Annotated copy of Three Sisters and Other Plays by Chekov	undated
b. 15	Une Sultane Martiniquaise a Constantinople	1937
b. 15	The Costume of the Theatre	1931

## Books (continued)

b. 15	Two books about Russian monasteries	1958
b. 15	The George Cukor Collection catalogue	1986
b. 15	Vers Ispahan by Pierre Loti Handbound volume.	1925
b. 15	Notes de Route by Isabelle Eberhardt Handbound volume.	undated
b. 15	Pages Choiesies by Pierre Loti Handbound volume.	undated
b. 15	Pages D'Islam by Isabelle Eberhardt	1932
b. 15	Looking Back by Shusha Guppy Autographed copy.	1991
b. 15	Annotated copy of Constantinople by Pierre Loti	1890
	Unbound books	
b. 16	Bakst: The Story of Bakst's Life	undated
b. 16	Oriental carpets	undated
b. 16	Pictures for the Tsar (2 folders)  Labelled "from Pictures for the Tsar" on original carrier. Possibly a partial copy of Photographs for the Tsar by Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii.	undated
b. 16	Tschechonin	undated
b. 16	Unbound book in Russian	circa 1900

**Series VI: Audiocassettes, circa 1994-1998***1 linear foot*

Contains audiocassettes with contents by or related to Lesley Blanch, including recordings of several memorial broadcasts aired after her death.

Restricted fragile material. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

Materials within this series maintain the original organization found at time of acquisition.

b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225287	Interval reading: Journey into the Mind's Eye <i>1 Audiocassette 00:18:54 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> Static is present. The program is in silence from 00:18:28-00:18:50. <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225287.u.mp3</a>  Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225279	Journey into the Mind's Eye, BBC Reading <i>1 Audiocassette 00:13:13 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> Static is present. The program is distorted at times. <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225279.u.mp3</a>  Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225303	Passions- Prog 4 of 5 - Journey <i>1 Audiocassette 00:13:19 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> Static is present. The program is distorted at times. <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225303.u.mp3</a>  Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225261	Romain Gary breakdown <i>1 Audiocassette 00:19:42 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> The program is distorted at times. The program is in silence from 00:14:31 until 00:15:48. High background noise is present. <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225261.u.mp3</a>  Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225295	Romain Gary L'Insaïsi <i>1 Audiocassette 01:16:01 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> The program is distorted at times. High amounts of hiss are present. <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225295a.u.mp3</a>  Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225311	Romain Gary: Une vie, une oeuvre <i>1 Audiocassette 01:17:13 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i> The program is distorted at times. Static is heard. <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225311a.u.mp3</a>  Note on tape label reads "Bad Quality."  Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.	undated

b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225220	<p>Roquebrune (Mangham, Mitford, Press &amp; Vale)  <i>1 Audiocassette 00:35:07 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>  The program is distorted at times. Audio is unbalanced. High background noise can be heard. The audio, at times, sounds hollow or unclear. Static is present. There are multiple sections of silence in the program.  <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225220a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested.  Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	undated
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225253	<p>"This is at start of reading", Prod: Sara Davies, Rdr: Juliet Stevenson  <i>1 Audiocassette 00:20:50 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>  High frequency background noise is present. The program is distorted at times. Static is present. High amounts of hiss are present.  <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225253.u.mp3</a></p> <p>Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested.  Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	undated
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225238	<p>Stimme der Hoffnung  <i>1 Audiocassette 01:19:45 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>  A high amount of hiss is present. Audio, at times, sounds hollow or unclear. The program is distorted at times. The program fades in and out during the last 35 minutes of the tape.  <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225238a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested.  Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	1994 August 29-30
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225170	<p>Stimme der Hoffnung, Prod Nr. 1505, 2054, 1508, 2636  <i>1 Audiocassette 01:57:22 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>  The program fades in and out from 00:00:50 until the end of the program. The program is distorted at times. There is a faint echo in the program at times.  <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225170a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested.  Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	1996 April 1-2
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225196	<p>Stimme der Hoffnung, Prod Nr. 2252, 2659, 2169, 2071  <i>1 Audiocassette 01:57:25 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>  The program fades in and out the entire time. The program is distorted at times.  <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225196a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested.  Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	1996 May 5-6
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225212	<p>Stimme der Hoffnung, Prod Nr. 2511, 2033, 2266, 2660  <i>1 Audiocassette 01:56:15 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>  The program fades in and out the entire time.  <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225212a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested.  Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	1996 May 11-12
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225188	<p>Stimme der Hoffnung, Prod Nr. 2172, 2072, 1541, 2085  <i>1 Audiocassette 01:56:27 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>  The program is distorted at times. High background noise is present. The program fades in and out from 00:03:00 until the end of the program. A faint echo is heard at times.  <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225188a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested.  Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	1996 May 13-14

b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225204	<p>Stimme der Hoffnung, Prod Nr. 1496, 2053, 1495, 2588  <i>1 Audiocassette 01:56:32 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>  The program fades in and out for the entire time. The program is distorted at times.  <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225204a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested.  Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	1996 March 25-26
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225162	<p>Teresa Cherfas interviews Lesley Blanch  <i>1 Audiocassette 01:32:57 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>  Crosstalk is present during the program. The program is distorted at times. Static can be heard.  <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225162a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>Music programming for the first 46 minutes. The referenced interview begins around 47:45.</p> <p>Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested.  Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	undated
b. 17, ■■■■ 39002099225246	<p>Writers' France: Writers on Paris 1920 on / The Riviera ; Lesley B. on Train Bleu and Maughan  <i>1 Audiocassette 00:53:32 Duration (HH:MM:SS.mmm)</i>  Clicks and pops are present. The program is distorted at times.  <a href="#">[Aviary] osbmss020239002099225246a.u.mp3</a></p> <p>Audiovisual material. Restricted fragile. Reference copies may be requested.  Consult Access Services for further information.</p>	1997 December 26, 1998 January 2

**Series VII: Computer media, circa 2001-2011***0.25 linear feet*

Contains born-digital material created by Lesley Blanch and recordings of memorial broadcasts aired after her death.

Restricted fragile material. Reference copies of electronic files may be requested. Consult Access Services for further information.

b. 18	Autobiography, floppy disk	2001 June
b. 18	F June 2001 Lesley Blanch first section - autobiog (22 /at /Ch to End) WP 6.0 W PROG 2017-osb-0019-0001 <i>1 3.5_floppy_disk 1474560 bytes (1.47 Megabytes. This reflects the size of the carrier media, but may not accurately reflect the extent of digital files available for research.)</i>	
b. 18	"Last Word: Lesley Blanch," CD recording of BBC Radio 4	2007 May 11
b. 18	BBC RADIO 4 Lesley Blanch "LAST WORD" 11 MAY 2007 2017-osb-0019-0002 <i>1 CD-R 292744076 bytes (292.74 Megabytes.)</i>	
b. 18	Memorial CD	undated
b. 18	Lesley Blanch Memorial CD 2017-osb-0019-0003 <i>1 CD-R 381221612 bytes (381.22 Megabytes.)</i>	
b. 18	New Yorker cartoon clips, CD <i>1 CD-R</i>	2011
b. 18	LESLEY BLANCH LEO LERMAN 2017-osb-0019-0005 <i>1 CD-R 503876016 bytes (503.88 Megabytes. This reflects the size of the carrier media, but may not accurately reflect the extent of digital files available for research.)</i>	
b. 18	"Une vie, une oeuvre: Lesley Blanch (1904-2007)," CD recording of France Culture	2008 May 22
b. 18	UNE VIE, UNE OEUVRE Lesley Blanch (1904-2007) - 22/05/2008 france culture 2017-osb-0019-0004 <i>1 optical_disk 635138828 bytes (635.14 Megabytes.)</i>	

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## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Artists -- Great Britain -- Archives  
Authors, British -- 20th Century -- Archives  
Journalists -- Great Britain  
Women travelers -- Great Britain