

# **GYSIN, BRION.**

## **Brion Gysin collection, 1939-1980**

Emory University  
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### **Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Gysin, Brion.  
**Title:** Brion Gysin collection, 1939-1980  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 995  
**Extent:** 6.5 linear ft. (11 boxes) and 4 oversized papers (OP)  
**Abstract:** Papers of author and artist Brion Gysin, including correspondence, sketchbooks, watercolor drawings, printed material, journals, and photographs.  
**Language:** Materials primarily in English and French with additional items in Arabic, German, Italian, and Spanish.

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### **Administrative Information**

#### **Restrictions on Access**

Unrestricted access.

#### **Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

#### **Source**

Gift, 2004.

#### **Custodial History**

Originally received as part of the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library.

#### **Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Brion Gysin collection, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

#### **Processing**

Processed by Elizabeth Chase, June 2006.

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## Collection Description

### Biographical Note

Brion Gysin was born on January 19, 1916, in Taplow, Buckinghamshire, England. Gysin first established himself as a painter, attending the Sorbonne from 1934-1935 and associating with figures such as Max Ernst, Yves Tanguy, and Salvador Dali. In 1935 he participated in the Surrealist Drawing Exhibitions, although his work was withdrawn by Surrealist founder Andre Breton. Gysin also attended the University of Bordeaux from 1949-1952 and Archivos de India at the University of Seville from 1952-1953. In 1939 he held the first single-artist exhibition of paintings at Galerie Quatre Chemins, Paris. A year later, Gysin immigrated to the United States, becoming a naturalized citizen in 1945. He worked in New York City as an assistant costume designer before moving to New Jersey to work as a welder in the shipyards. He was drafted into the United States Army during World War II; after the war ended he received one of the first Fulbright fellowships and traveled to Tangier, Morocco. Gysin is best known for inventing "cut-ups," a technique in which words are clipped from printed material such as newspapers and randomly arranged. His later innovations included permuted poems, in which a computer program rearranged six-word lines into all their possible combinations. Gysin also co-invented the Dreamachine with Ian Sommerville, collaborated on numerous works of poetry, film, and sound recordings with William Burroughs, and published two critically acclaimed historical narratives on slavery. Gysin died on July 13, 1986, in Paris, France.

**Biographical Source:** "Brion Gysin," *Contemporary Authors Online*, Gale, 2004.

### Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of papers of Brion Gysin from 1939-1980. The papers include correspondence, sketchbooks and watercolor drawings created by Gysin during his time in Morocco, newspaper clippings and magazine articles collected by or about Gysin, journals, photographs, and financial records. The correspondence contains letters from various friends and family members to Gysin, as well as a small amount of correspondence written by Gysin. The collection also contains a number of manuscripts and typescripts of Gysin's works, both published and unpublished, including Gysin's notes for *The Process*, as well as draft fragments of an early typescript and a final typescript of the novel, mock-ups for its publication, and a synopsis. Other significant works include typescripts for novels entitled *The Mountains of Paris* and *Hello: Yes: Hello*, a synopsis of William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch*, and numerous drafts of poems and scripts. The collection also contains various journals which document day-to-day activities from 1968-1973; as well as notebooks containing descriptions of his travels in Spain and Africa. Of particular interest are two notebooks which he kept while staying at the Beat Hotel in Paris in 1962-1963, and the original Dreamachine that Gysin co-invented with Ian Sommerville.

### Arrangement Note

Arranged by record type.

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## Container List

### Announcements

Box	Folder	Content
1	1	Art exhibitions
1	2	Film showings
1	3	Literary events
1	4	Performances
1	5	Works by Gysin

### Artwork by Gysin

1	6	Flip book, undated
1	7	Sketchbook [circa 1952]
1	8	Sketchbook, "A trip up to Jajouka with John Giorno," undated
1	9	Sketches [Africa, 6 items, signed, undated]
1	10	Watercolor drawings [Morocco, 11 items, signed, undated]
1	11	Watercolor drawings [Morocco, spiral bound notebook]
OP1		Watercolor painting, untitled, 1959
OP1		Watercolor and ink painting, "Sahara," 1958
OP1		Watercolor and ink painting, untitled, 1959

### Artwork by others

1	12	Robert Bassara
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### Correspondence

1	13	1952
1	14	1968
1	15	1969
1	16	1970
1	17	1971
1	18	1972
1	19	1973 January-April
1	20	1973 May-December
1	21	1974 January-April
1	22	1974 May-July
2	1	1974 August-October
2	2	1974 September-December
2	3	1975 January
OP2		1975 January
2	4	1975 February

2	5	1975 March-April
2	6	1975 May-July
2	7	1975 August-October
3	1	1975 November-December
3	2	1976 January-April
3	3	1976 May-July
3	4	1976 August-December
3	5	1977
3	6	1978
OP2		1978 November
3	7	1979
3	8	1980
3	9	Brion Gysin to others
3	10	Third party
4	1	Undated
4	2	Undated

**Ephemera**

- - Dreamachine

**Personal papers**

4	3	Bank statements
4	4	Dreamachine
4	5	Financial papers
4	6	Hospital records
4	7	Identification card, New York, 1943
4	8	Journal, [Spain, 1950-1951]
4	9	Journal, Spain, 1950-1951
4	10	Journal [Algeria, circa 1951]
4	11	Journal, 1968
5	1	Journal, 1969
5	2	Journal, 1970
5	3	Journal, 1971
5	4	Journal, 1972
5	5	Journal, 1973
5	6	Notebook, "1950-57 Kif Notes"
5	7	Notebook, "notes in the Beat Hotel 1962"
5	8	Notebook, "notes in the Beat Hotel 1963"
6	1	Notebook, [circa 1964-1965]
6	2	Notes [Africa, undated]

- 6 3 Notes, Morocco [circa 1950s]
- 6 4 Notes, miscellaneous
- 6 5 Power of Attorney, for the purpose of operating all rights concerning  
"Dreamachine," I.M. Somerville and B. Gysin, November 12, 1964
- OP3 Scrapbook [circa 1939-1960s]
- 6 6 Ticket, Cannes Film Festival, 1973

### Photographs

- 6 7 Brion Bysin, undated
- 6 8 Brion Gysin, 1900-1920s
- 6 9 Brion Gysin, 1930s
- 6 10 Brion Gysin, 1940s [includes one by Carl Van Vechten]
- OP5 Brion Gysin, talking to Bomba, circa 1940s)
- 6 11 Brion Gysin, 1950s [includes several by Carl Van Vechten]
- 6 12 Brion Gysin, 1960s
- OP5 Brion Gysin in makup for *Oedipus Rex*, Joe McPhillip's production for the  
America School in Tangier, 1967 (2 photos)
- 6 13 Brion Gysin, 1970s
- 6 14 Brion Gysin's father, undated
- 6 15 Brion Gysin, Photo collages for Jan Heman, London, 1972
- 6 16 Brion Gysin, Photo collages and paintings by Gysin
- 6 17 Other people
- 6 18 Dreamachine
- 6 19 Location, London, undated
- 7 1 Location, Morocco, Jajouka, undated [re Music School]
- OP5 Location, Morocco, Tangier, 1001 Nights, 1954
- 7 2 Location, Northern Africa, undated
- 7 3 Location, Paris, undated
- 7 4 Location, Sahara desert, 1952 [illustrations for *The Process*]
- 7 5 Location, unknown
- 7 6 Negatives

### Printed materials

- 7 7 Arabic
- 7 8 Brochure, *Société Africaine des Transports Tropicaux (S.A.T.T.) Compagnie  
Aéro-Africaine (A.E.R.A.F.)*, 1950
- 7 9 Business cards
- 7 10 Interview with Gysin, "On est de la ou l'on perd sa virginité"
- 7 11 Invitations
- 7 12 Magazine articles

- 7 13 Newspaper articles
- 7 14 Periodical, *Intrepid*, 1st anniversary issue, March 1965 [excerpt]
- 7 15 Press releases
- 7 16 Program, *XIVé Festival National de Folklore Marrakech*, May 25, 1973
- 7 17 Road map, *Maroc sud, regions de Mogador, Agadir, et Marrakech*

### Writings by Gysin - Musical scores

- 7 18 "Deadline"
- 7 19 "Dreams"

### Writings by Gysin - Poetry

- 7 20 "And I, Brion, went there," signed MS
- 7 21 "Breathe in the words...", TS
- 7 22 "Calling All Re Active Agents...", TS
- 7 23 "Card game for two players," MS, 1960
- 7 24 "Check Not Mate" [and others], MS and TS
- 7 25 "Come free the words, too...", TS
- 7 26 "The Dollar, Contd," [Fragment], TS
- 7 27 "Excuse me...", MS
- 7 28 "The Greaser's Song," TS
- 7 29 "I am that I am that I happen...", MS
- 7 30 "I have...", TS
- 7 31 "Kick that habit man," signed TS, 1959
- 7 32 "Love makes the World go round...", TS
- 7 33 "Permutations, Pop Poems, Portraits," MS [circa 1960s]
- 7 34 "Piedi Puliti," TS
- 7 35 Poem list, MS
- 7 36 "Poem of Poems" [Int. Lit. Annual #2], mock-up
- 7 37 "Pop Poems," TS
- 7 38 "Pop Poems" and "His Epitaph," TS
- 7 39 "The present shape of words...", TS
- 7 40 "Sweet Lover Death who'll rape my breath away...", TS
- 7 41 "The Soul stirs the clay," signed TS, 1951
- 7 42 "Tilda," TS
- 7 43 Untitled collection, MS and TS

### Writings by Gysin - Prose

- 8 1 "After the Deluge," TS
- 8 2 "All is a Prize," TS
- 8 3 "Am I the One?", TS, 1948

- 8 4 "Ariadne on Naxos, TS [incomplete], 1949
- 8 5 [Brion Gysin biographical notes] 1962
- OP4 "Brian Jones presents the Pipes of Pan at Joujouka"
- 8 6 *Brion Gysin Let the Mice In*, correspondence related to publication
- 8 7 *Brion Gysin Let the Mice In*, TS and other material
- 8 8 *Brion Gysin Let the Mice In* [first proof]
- 8 9 *Brion Gysin Let the Mice In* [second proof], part one
- 8 10 *Brion Gysin Let the Mice In* [second proof], part two
- 8 11 "Dear Eleauor," signed TS, 1951
- 8 12 "Eight Units of a Permutative Picture," signed TS
- 8 13 "El Barbi is young, handsome, always smiling...", TS
- 8 14 "The Foundering Ship," TS, 1949
- 8 15 "The Gardens of Spain," TS, 1951
- 8 16 [*Hello: Yes: Hello*], TS with TLS from William [Bill] Levy
- 8 17 "The Hostages," TS, 1951
- 8 18 *The Immortality Packet* [Fragments], TS
- 8 19 "Living With Islam," TS, 1952
- 8 20 "A man is burning in the middle of the marketplace," TS
- 8 21 "The Mountains of London," photocopy of TS, 1968
- 9 1 *The Mountains of Paris*, TS, 1970 [p. 2-73, incomplete]
- 9 2 *The Mountains of Paris*, TS [p. 2-87, incomplete]
- 9 3 *The Mountains of Paris*, TS [p. 1-187] (includes 3 page critique by unknown author)
- 9 4 *The Mountains of Paris*, TS [p. 188-325]
- 9 5 *The Mountains of Paris*, TS [p. 326-450]
- 9 6 *The Mountains of Paris*, TS [p. 451-568]
- 9 7 *The Mountains of Paris*, various chapters, TS
- 9 8 *The Mountains of Paris*, various incomplete drafts, TS
- 9 9 *The Mountains of Paris*, notes
- 10 1 "Naked Lunch," synopsis
- 10 2 "No Name Hotel," TS
- 10 3 "Not by Me," photocopy of corrected TS
- 10 4 "Notes on painting for shows at the ICA, London, and the '*Domaine Poetique*,' Paris 1960-63," TS
- 10 5 "Potiphar's Wife," TS
- 10 6 *The Process*, "Notes for the Process," MS
- 10 7 *The Process*, TS, draft fragments
- 10 8 *The Process*, TS, top copy of first version, chapters 1-4
- 10 9 *The Process*, TS, top copy of first version, chapters 5-9
- 10 10 *The Process*, TS, top copy of final version, chapters 1-4

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|----|----|---|
| 10 | 11 | <i>The Process</i> , TS, top copy of final version, chapters 5-16               |
| 11 | 1  | <i>The Process</i> , mock-ups of title page, epigraph, and new chapter openings |
| 11 | 2  | <i>The Process</i> , synopsis, 1970   |
| 11 | 3  | "T Message," photocopy of TS  |
| 11 | 4  | "The Sultan's Hobby," TS, 1951  |
| 11 | 5  | <i>The Third Mind</i> , galley proofs   |
| 11 | 6  | "Time in the Sun," TS, 1957   |
| 11 | 7  | <i>To Master A Long Goodnight</i> , galley proof                                |
| 11 | 8  | "The use of truly apposite quotations...", TS                                   |
| 11 | 9  | untitled cut-ups, TS  |

### Writings by Gysin - Scripts

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|----|----|---|
| 11 | 10 | <i>The Death of Love</i> , TS                                     |
| 11 | 11 | "The hall is dark," TS  |
| 11 | 12 | Heads Touch Heaven, TS [BBC script recorded by Douglas Cleverdon] |
| 11 | 13 | Horror Hotel, TS [variant title: Horror Hospital]                 |
| 11 | 14 | Massage, TS   |
| 11 | 15 | <i>Moon Over Marrakesh</i> , photocopy of TS                      |
| 11 | 16 | "Open with any Penny Arcade Peepshow material...", TS             |

### Writings by others

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|----|----|--|
| 11 | 17 | Beiles, Sinclair, "Listen to the book as you listen to the memory of voices," TS |
| 11 | 18 | Cohen, Ira, "And Night which has concealed"                                      |
| 11 | 19 | Peaches [Michael March], "blue tangerine," TS                                    |
| 11 | 20 | Taylor, Simon Watson, "Beyond the Word," broadcast TS                            |
| 11 | 21 | Unknown author, "Don't You Worry About Brion," MS                                |
| 11 | 22 | Unknown author, "The Trees," "The Swallow," "Karen-Ann," TS                      |
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