



The New York Public Library  
Billy Rose Theatre Division

Guide to the

**Lemuel Ayers theatrical designs**

1944-1951

\*T-Vim 1991-022

## Summary

**Creator:** Ayers, Lemuel, 1915-1955

**Title:** Lemuel Ayers theatrical designs

**Date:** 1944-1951

**Size:** 2 boxes (18 paintings), col, 60 x 88 cm; 2 boxes (18 paintings), col, 60 x 88 cm

**Source:** Designs: gift, 05/28/91

**Abstract:** Award winning designer of sets and costumes and a theatrical producer, Lemuel Ayers had a brief but brilliant career with extensive Broadway credits including HIGH BUTTON SHOES and OKLAHOMA! He was born in New York City and received a degree in architecture from Princeton University and one in drama from the University of Iowa. He died in 1955 at the age of forty. Collection consists of six costume and twelve set designs by Lemuel Ayers for the following productions: KISS ME KATE (1948), OUT OF THIS WORLD (1950), BLOOMER GIRL (1944), CYRANO DE BERGERAC (1946), INSIDE U.S.A. (1948), MUSIC IN THE AIR (1951), and ST. LOUIS WOMAN (1946). Executed in paint, ink and pencil on paper or illustration board, some have mat frames, a few are signed by Ayers, most are undated.

**Access:** Some collections held by the Dance, Music, Recorded Sound, and Theatre Divisions at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts are held off-site and must be requested in advance. Please check the collection records in **the NYPL's online catalog** for detailed location information. For general guidance about requesting offsite materials, please consult:  
<https://www.nypl.org/about/locations/lpa/requesting-archival-materials>

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## Creator History

Award winning designer of sets and costumes and a theatrical producer, Lemuel Ayers had a brief but brilliant career with extensive Broadway credits including HIGH BUTTON SHOES and OKLAHOMA! He was born in New York City and received a degree in architecture from Princeton University and one in drama from the University of Iowa. He died in 1955 at the age of forty.

## **Scope and Content Note**

Collection consists of six costume and twelve set designs by Lemuel Ayers for the following productions: KISS ME KATE (1948), OUT OF THIS WORLD (1950), BLOOMER GIRL (1944), CYRANO DE BERGERAC (1946), INSIDE U.S.A. (1948), MUSIC IN THE AIR (1951), and ST. LOUIS WOMAN (1946). Executed in paint, ink and pencil on paper or illustration board, some have mat frames, a few are signed by Ayers, most are undated.

## **Key Terms**

### **Genre/Physical Characteristic**

Costume design drawings  
Set design drawings

### **Subjects**

Theaters -- Stage-setting and scenery

### **Names**

Ayers, Lemuel, 1915-1955  
Arlen, Harold, 1905-1986  
Porter, Cole, 1891-1964