

# Valentine Hugo:

## An Inventory of Her Papers in the Carlton Lake Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator :</b>	Hugo, Valentine, 1887-1968
<b>Title:</b>	Carlton Lake Collection of Valentine Hugo Papers
<b>Dates:</b>	1872-1968
<b>Extent:</b>	21 boxes, 1 oversize folder (8.82 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	The papers of this French Surrealist artist encompass her career as a costume designer, artist, and radio broadcaster, as well as documenting her relationships with prominent French artists of the early 20th century, especially her husband Jean Hugo.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Manuscript Collection MS-04960
<b>Languages:</b>	Material written in English and French.
<b>Note:</b>	We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which provided funds for the processing and cataloging of this collection.
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research.

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition:</b>	Gifts and purchases of Carlton Lake, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1981, 2002 (G846, R5881, R6840, R6841, G12083)
<b>Processed by:</b>	Monique Daviau, Richard Workman, and Catherine Stollar, 2004
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Biographical Sketch

Born Valentine Marie Augustine Gross in 1887, French artist and author Valentine Hugo began her life in Capécure, a suburb of Boulogne-sur-mer. Daughter of musician Auguste Gross and Zèlie Dèmelin, Valentine developed a love for art, theatre, and music early in life.

While attending school in May of 1909, Valentine Hugo stood in the wings of the Théâtre du Châtelet watching Serge Diaghilev's Russian ballet company Ballets Russes perform for the first time. She would spend portions of the next six years sketching Ballet Russes dancers Karsavina and Nijinsky. In 1913, the Galerie Montaigne sponsored an exposition of Hugo's sketches in the foyer of the Champs-Élysées théâtre on the tumultuous opening night of Stravinsky's famed ballet *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

In the same year as her first successful exhibition, Hugo became friends with a number of prominent French artists including Roger de la Fresnaye, Léon-Paul Fargue, Erik Satie, and Jean Cocteau. The following year, Satie, Cocteau, and Hugo would collaborate on the ballet *Parade*; unfortunately, Hugo would not be part of its eventual production in 1917.

Valentine met her future husband Jean Hugo, grandson of the influential French author Victor Hugo, in 1917 at the home of Mimi and Cypa Godebski(a). In 1919 they were married with Cocteau and Satie as their only witnesses. Neither of Jean's parents consented to the marriage, perhaps contributing to its eventual demise.

In March of 1926, Valentine attended one of the first Surrealist expositions where she met Paul Éluard. Their meeting sparked a friendship that would continue until his death in 1952. In 1927, after working as costume designer on the set of *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, Valentine returned to Paris a full-fledged Surrealist; Jean Hugo, however, never embraced the Surrealist movement. In the years following their hurried nuptials, their tastes diverged leading to separation in 1929 and finally divorce in 1932. (Despite the end of their marital relations, Valentine and Jean remained friends until her death in 1968.)

Another Surrealist with whom Valentine had a brief romance was André Breton. From August of 1930 to October of 1932, Valentine lived, traveled, and worked with the self-declared leader of the Surrealists. During this time, Valentine befriended the rest of the Surrealists, namely Gala and Salvador Dali, Nusch Éluard, Max Ernst, Georges Hugnet, Renè Char, and Tristan Tzara.

In January of 1940, the Director of Radio-Mondial Jean Fraysse asked Valentine Hugo to work for his station. Her work at Radio-Mondial was short lived; Valentine quit in June when the station fell under German control after the invasion of France. Yet her work was not in vain, working on the radio for these six months prepared her for future radio broadcasts in the 1950s and 1960s.

In her latter years, she would rarely emerge from her home and preferred the solitude of her house to the bustling streets of Paris. She alone survived most of her acquaintances from youth; Erik Satie, Raymond Radiguet, Paul Éluard, Jean Cocteau, and André Breton all passed before Valentine's death in 1968.

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## Sources:

Bernheim, Cathy. *Valentine Hugo*. Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 1990.

Margerie, Anne de. *Valentine Hugo, 1887-1968*. Paris: J. Damase, 1983.

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## Scope and Contents

Correspondence, manuscripts, notes, journals, diaries, artwork, legal, financial and personal documents, photographs, printed material, and photocopies document the life of Valentine Hugo from 1872-1968. The material is organized into four series: I. Works, 1904-1965 (2.5 boxes), II. Letters, 1905-1968 (3.5 boxes), III. Recipient, 1902-1968 (9 boxes), and IV. Other Papers (6 boxes), 1872-1968.

Included in the Works series are a number of drafts of articles and notes relating to friends of Valentine Hugo such as Constantin Brancusi, Paul Éluard, Raymond Radiguet, and Erik Satie. Also present are a number of manuscripts for radio broadcasts written in the 1950s and 1960s about her early artistic career and acquaintances.

Correspondence with Valentine's mother Zèlie Gross comprises almost two thirds of the Letters series and a substantial portion of the Recipient series. Other notable correspondents in the Recipient series include Marie Laure, Romola Nijinsky, and André de Badet. Most of the materials in the Other Papers series are Valentine's own personal papers, such as her passport and birth certificate, and works or correspondence by other authors. A large part of materials in this series involves Jean Hugo, Valentine's husband. His journals (1919-1924) and correspondence with his family compose a large portion of Series IV. Documents, legal and personal, and works by Valentine's mother, Zèlie Gross, or father, Auguste Gross form a portion of Series IV. as well. Handwritten and photostat copies of letters received by Valentine Hugo from Edgard Varèse and Erik Satie comprise a segment of the Other Papers series. Some originals of the copied letters to Valentine Hugo from Edgard Varèse are also located in Series III. Recipient. The originals of the correspondence between Hugo and Satie can be found in the Carlton Lake Collection of Georges Hugnet Papers Third-party correspondence.

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## Related Material

Other materials relating to Valentine Hugo can be found elsewhere in the Ransom Center. The Carlton Lake Art collection contains a large amount of works by Valentine Hugo as well as a few pieces by her husband Jean Hugo. Additionally, the Georges Hugnet and the Jean Cocteau papers found in the Carlton Lake Manuscript collection contain substantial correspondence from Valentine Hugo. Photographic reproductions of artworks studied by Hugo are also available in Vertical Files.

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## **Index Terms**

### **Correspondents**

Badet, Andrè de, 1891- .  
Breton, Andrè, 1896-1966.  
Chalupt, Renè.  
Daudet, Charles.  
Deharme, Lise.  
Giraudoux, Jean, 1882-1944.  
Gross, Zèlie.  
Hugnet, Georges, 1906-1974.  
Hugo, Jean, 1894- .  
Laure, Marie, 1902- .  
Man Ray, 1890-1976.  
Nijinsky, Romola de Pulszky.  
Picabia, Francis, 1879-1953.  
Satie, Erik, 1866-1925.  
Tzara, Tristan, 1896-1963.

### **Subjects**

Art, French--20th century.  
Surrealism--France.  
Brancusi, Constantin, 1876-1957.  
Eluard, Paul, 1895-1952.  
Radiguet, Raymond, 1903-1923.  
Satie, Erik, 1866-1925.

### **Document Types**

Diaries.

Journals.

Photographs.

Sketches.

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**Series I. Works, 1904-1965, most nd**

A-Dq	<b>Box-Folder 113.1</b>
Agendas, (4th trimestre) 1944; 1952	<b>Box-Folder 113.2</b>
Drafts and notes for works on	
Autobiography	<b>Box-Folder 113.3</b>
Ballet	<b>Box-Folder 113.4</b>
Brancusi, Constantin	<b>Box-Folder 113.5</b>
Eluard, Paul	<b>Box-Folder 113.6</b>
Radiguet, Raymond	<b>Box-Folder 113.7-8</b>
Satie, Erik	<b>Box-Folder 113.9</b>
Various topics	<b>Box-Folder 113.10</b>
E-H	<b>Box-Folder 114.1</b>
<i>Histoire du rhinocéros, mangeur des roses</i>	<b>Box-Folder 114.2</b>
Horoscopes	<b>Box-Folder 114.3</b>
I-M	<b>Box-Folder 114.4</b>
Il ya a trente ans, 1950	<b>Box-Folder 114.5</b>
Introductions to broadcasts beamed to North and South America, 1939-1940	<b>Box-Folder 114.6</b>
Miscellaneous draft fragments	<b>Box-Folder 114.7-8</b>
N-Q	<b>Box-Folder 114.9</b>
R-Z	<b>Box-Folder 115.1</b>
[Radio Broadcast]	<b>Box-Folder 115.2</b>
<i>Le Sacre de printemps</i>	<b>Box-Folder 115.3</b>
<i>Trois souvenirs--Maurice Ravel</i>	<b>Box-Folder 115.4</b>
<i>Trois souvenirs de Ravel</i>	<b>Box-Folder 115.5</b>

Untitled

A-Z	<b>Box-Folder</b> 115.6
Article on "Le ballet fantastique"	<b>Box-Folder</b> 115.7
Plays	<b>Box-Folder</b> 115.8
Radio talks	
On first opening night of Les Ballets Russes	<b>Box-Folder</b> 115.9
On her early career	<b>Box-Folder</b> 115.10
Talk on the film <i>La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc</i>	<b>Box-Folder</b> 115.11

**Series II. Letters, 1905-1968**

A-B	<b>Box-Folder 115.12</b>
Baüer, Gèrard, 1950	<b>Box-Folder 115.13</b>
Breton, André	
1930	<b>Box-Folder 115.14</b>
1931	<b>Box-Folder 115.15</b>
1932 Jan.-Aug.	<b>Box-Folder 116.1</b>
1932 Sept.-1934 Jan.	<b>Box-Folder 116.2</b>
Drafts	<b>Box-Folder 116.3</b>
C-Z	<b>Box-Folder 116.4</b>
Gross, Zèlie	
1905-1908	<b>Box-Folder 116.5</b>
1909-1910	<b>Box-Folder 116.6</b>
1911	<b>Box-Folder 116.7</b>
1912	<b>Box-Folder 116.8</b>
1913	<b>Box-Folder 116.9</b>
1914	<b>Box-Folder 117.1</b>
1915	<b>Box-Folder 117.2</b>
1916	<b>Box-Folder 117.3</b>
1918	<b>Box-Folder 117.4</b>
1919	<b>Box-Folder 117.5</b>
1920-1921	<b>Box-Folder 117.6</b>
1922-1923	<b>Box-Folder 117.7</b>
1924-1925	<b>Box-Folder 118.1</b>



Hugo, Valentine, 1887-1968

Manuscript Collection MS-04960

1926

**Box-Folder** 118.2

1927

**Box-Folder** 118.3

1928

**Box-Folder** 118.4

1929

**Box-Folder** 118.5

1930

**Box-Folder** 118.6

1931-1952

**Box-Folder** 118.7

Hugo, Jean, 1918-1943, nd

**Box-Folder** 118.8

Unidentified

**Box-Folder** 118.9

**Series III. Recipient 1902-1968**

A	<b>Box-Folder 119.1</b>
Aurenche, Mme. B 1931-1933, nd	<b>Box-Folder 119.2</b>
B-Bh	<b>Box-Folder 119.3</b>
Badet, Andrè de, 1952-1968, nd	<b>Box-Folder 119.4</b>
Beaumont, Edith de, comtesse, 1940-1946, nd	<b>Box-Folder 119.5</b>
Beaumont, Etienne de, comte, 1925-1926, nd	<b>Box-Folder 119.6</b>
Bi-Bz	<b>Box-Folder 119.7</b>
Bonnefon, Jean de	
1915-1916	<b>Box-Folder 119.8</b>
1917-1918	<b>Box-Folder 119.9</b>
Brunoff, Lise de, 1915-1925, nd	<b>Box-Folder 119.10</b>
Ca-Cg	<b>Box-Folder 119.11</b>
Ch-Ci	<b>Box-Folder 120.1</b>
Chantrell, Lydie	<b>Box-Folder 120.2</b>
Cl-Cz	<b>Box-Folder 120.3</b>
Combes, Claudette 1961-1966, nd	<b>Box-Folder 120.4</b>
Cuevas de Vera, Tota, 1932-1934, nd	<b>Box-Folder 120.5</b>
D-De	<b>Box-Folder 120.6</b>
Daudet, Lucien	
1918-1922	<b>Box-Folder 120.7</b>
1923-1924, nd	<b>Box-Folder 120.8</b>
Deharme, Lise, 1928-1938, nd	<b>Box-Folder 120.9</b>
Despois, Henriette, 1928-1938, nd	<b>Box-Folder 121.1</b>

Df-Dz	<b>Box-Folder</b> 121.2
Durand, Fardel, Max, 1915-1916, nd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 121.3
E-F	<b>Box-Folder</b> 121.4
Ernst, Marie Berthe, 1930	<b>Box-Folder</b> 121.5
Ferry, Renè, 1913-1917	<b>Box-Folder</b> 121.6
Ga-Gi	<b>Box-Folder</b> 121.7
Giraudoux, Jean	
1910-1915	<b>Box-Folder</b> 121.8
1916-1918, nd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 121.9
Go-Gy	<b>Box-Folder</b> 121.10
Gross, Zèlie	
1909-1912	<b>Box-Folder</b> 122.1
1914	<b>Box-Folder</b> 122.2
1915	<b>Box-Folder</b> 122.3
1916	<b>Box-Folder</b> 122.4
1917-1920	<b>Box-Folder</b> 122.5
1922-1932	<b>Box-Folder</b> 122.6
1933	<b>Box-Folder</b> 122.7
1934	<b>Box-Folder</b> 122.8
H-I	<b>Box-Folder</b> 123.1
Hugo, François	
1917	<b>Box-Folder</b> 123.2
1918	<b>Box-Folder</b> 123.3
1919-1946	<b>Box-Folder</b> 123.4
Hugo, Jean	

1918-1919	<b>Box-Folder 123.5</b>
1920-1929	<b>Box-Folder 123.6</b>
1930-1938	<b>Box-Folder 123.7</b>
1940-1949	<b>Box-Folder 123.8</b>
1950-1958	<b>Box-Folder 124.1</b>
1964-1968	<b>Box-Folder 124.2</b>
Hugo, Pauline, 1920-1933, nd	<b>Box-Folder 124.3</b>
J-K	<b>Box-Folder 124.4</b>
La	<b>Box-Folder 124.5</b>
Lacretelle, Jacques de, 1922-1965, nd	<b>Box-Folder 124.6</b>
Laure, Marie	
1929-1931	<b>Box-Folder 124.7</b>
1932-1933	<b>Box-Folder 124.8</b>
1934-1938	<b>Box-Folder 124.9</b>
1939-1959	<b>Box-Folder 124.10</b>
Lb-Lz	<b>Box-Folder 125.1</b>
M	<b>Box-Folder 125.2</b>
Mater, Andrè	<b>Box-Folder 125.3</b>
Mays, M	<b>Box-Folder 125.4</b>
Menard-Dorian, Mme.	
1919	<b>Box-Folder 125.5</b>
1920-1921	<b>Box-Folder 125.6</b>
1922-1924	<b>Box-Folder 125.7</b>
N-O	<b>Box-Folder 126.1</b>

Nijinsky, Romola, 1923-1962	<b>Box-Folder</b> 126.2
P	<b>Box-Folder</b> 126.3
R-Sd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 126.4
Reveillez, Jeanne	
1906	<b>Box-Folder</b> 126.5
1908-1912	<b>Box-Folder</b> 126.6
1913-1915	<b>Box-Folder</b> 126.7
1916-1917, nd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 126.8
Se-Th	<b>Box-Folder</b> 127.1
Sert, Misia, 1916-1927, nd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 127.2
Stern, Charles, 1915-1916, nd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 127.3
Tèzenas, Suzanne, 1934-1966, nd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 127.4
Ti-Z	<b>Box-Folder</b> 127.5
Varèse, Edgard, 1913-1933	<b>Box-Folder</b> 127.6
Visiting cards	<b>Box-Folder</b> 127.7
Unidentified	
1906-1910	<b>Box-Folder</b> 127.8
1911-1966, nd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 127.9

**Series IV. Other Papers, 1872-1968**

Gross, Auguste, legal documents, 1872-1873	<b>Box-Folder 128.1</b>
Gross, Zèlie	
Works	
<i>Morale</i>	<b>Box-Folder 128.2</b>
Notes	<b>Box-Folder 128.3</b>
Legal documents, 1920	<b>Box-Folder 128.4</b>
Personal documents, 1949-1953	
Hugo, Jean	
Works	
Journal, 1919-1924	
283 pp	<b>Box-Folder 128.5-6</b>
273 pp	<b>Box-Folder 128.7-8</b>
Letters	
A-Z	<b>Box-Folder 128.9</b>
Daudet, Charles	
1930-1937	<b>Box-Folder 129.1</b>
1939-1957	<b>Box-Folder 129.2</b>
Recipient	
A-L	<b>Box-Folder 129.3</b>
Godebski, Jean, 1921-1925, nd	<b>Box-Folder 129.4</b>
Hugo, François, 1917-1925, nd	<b>Box-Folder 129.5</b>
Hugo, Marguerite, 1918-1926, nd	<b>Box-Folder 129.6</b>
Hugo, Pauline	

1910-1918	<b>Box-Folder 130.1</b>
1919 Jan.-Apr.	<b>Box-Folder 130.2</b>
1919 May-June	<b>Box-Folder 130.3</b>
1919 July-Dec.	<b>Box-Folder 130.4</b>
1920	<b>Box-Folder 130.5</b>
1921	<b>Box-Folder 130.6</b>
1922	<b>Box-Folder 130.7</b>
1923-1931	<b>Box-Folder 130.8</b>
Lockroy, Mme. Edouard, 1920-1924, nd	<b>Box-Folder 131.1</b>
M-Z, unidentified	<b>Box-Folder 131.2</b>
Mater, Andrè, 1919-1925	<b>Box-Folder 131.3</b>
Menard-Dorian, Mme.	
1918-1919	<b>Box-Folder 131.4</b>
1920	<b>Box-Folder 131.5</b>
1921	<b>Box-Folder 131.6</b>
1922	<b>Box-Folder 131.7</b>
1923 Jan.-July	<b>Box-Folder 132.1</b>
1923 Aug.-Dec.	<b>Box-Folder 132.2</b>
1924-1925	<b>Box-Folder 132.3</b>

## Hugo, Valentine

Legal documents, lease	<b>Box-Folder 132.4</b>
Financial documents, 1912-1963	<b>Box-Folder 132.5</b>
Legal documents, 1914-1968	<b>Box-Folder 132.6</b>
Personal documents, 1901-1966	<b>Box-Folder 132.7</b>

Certificate from Ministère de l'éducation nationale, 1906	<b>Box-Folder</b> os50
School examinations, 1905	<b>Box-Folder</b> 132.8
Photocopies and transcribed letters	
Satie, Erik, 1918-1957, nd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 132.9-133.1
Varèse, Edgard, 1915, 1958	<b>Box-Folder</b> 133.2
Unidentified envelopes	<b>Box-Folder</b> 133.3
La Fresnaye, Roger de, Works	<b>Box-Folder</b> 133.4
Various authors	
<i>La Danse</i> copy of November / December 1924 issue in hand of Hugo, Valentine	<b>Box-Folder</b> 133.5
Third-Party correspondence	<b>Box-Folder</b> 133.6
Unidentified	
Works	<b>Box-Folder</b> 133.7
Correspondence	<b>Box-Folder</b> 133.8