



# DELAWARE ART MUSEUM

## **George Benjamin Luks Papers, 1920-1994**

A Finding Aid to the Collection in the  
Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives, Delaware Art Museum

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### **Acquisition Information**

Acquired through the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1994

### **Extent**

2.5 linear feet

### **Processed**

2003 (revised 2016)

### **Abstract**

The collection represents the research of Arthur H. Lewis and contains correspondence, legal documents, interviews, and research notes.

### **Access Restrictions**

Unrestricted

### **Contact Information**

Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives  
Delaware Art Museum  
2301 Kentmere Parkway  
Wilmington, DE 19806  
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### **Preferred Citation**

George Benjamin Luks Papers, 1920-1994, Helen Farr Sloan Library & Archives, Delaware Art Museum

## Biography of George Benjamin Luks

American painter and graphic artist, 1867–1933

George Benjamin Luks was an American realist painter, best known for his images of New York and its inhabitants. Born in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Luks worked as a vaudeville performer before moving to Philadelphia to study art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He traveled through Europe, where he attended several art schools and developed a particular admiration for Velazquez, Frans Hals, and Manet.

In 1893 he returned to Philadelphia, taking a job as a newspaper illustrator at the *Philadelphia Press*. He befriended Everett Shinn, William Glackens, John Sloan, and Robert Henri. In 1896 Luks moved to New York and began to work as an illustrator for Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*. He drew the comic strip *Hogan's Alley*. He continued to paint, often depicting the streets and denizens of the Lower East Side, subjects which gained him little favor with art critics and jurors steeped in the genteel tradition. He painted thickly, often laying his paint on the canvas with a palette knife.

In 1907, the rejection of one of his canvasses from a juried exhibition at the National Academy of Design spurred the organization of a protest exhibition the following year at Macbeth Gallery. This watershed exhibition would become known as the exhibition of the Eight for the eight painters who collaborated to put it together. Known for his big personality and love of liquor, Luks was a vocal proponent of American painting in the early 20th century.

## **Scope and Contents Note**

The George Benjamin Luks Papers, 1920-1994 represent the research of Arthur H. Lewis. Much of the primary material was acquired through Samuel Ross Ballin, art collector and attorney with Milban, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy, in December 1979. The primary material (Series I) includes original correspondence between Luks and C.W. Kraushaar, the law firm of Root, Clark, Buckner & Howland, Ballin, and various members of the Luks family. The collection includes legal documentation of the divorce agreements between Luks and his second and third wives, Emma Louise Noble Luks (Frankenburg) and Mercedes Carbonell Luks, and primary material from Luks's brother, William (Will), the executor of the George B. Luks Estate, regarding the availability of information and works of art for exhibition and research purposes.

The secondary material (Series II), originating from Arthur H. Lewis, includes correspondence, interviews, and research notes. Interviews are recorded on audiocassettes.

## **Organization of the Papers**

Series I: Samuel Ross Ballin Material

    Subseries A: Correspondence

    Subseries B: Legal Documents

    Subseries C: Material Pertaining to William Luks

Series II: Arthur H. Lewis Material

    Subseries A: Research Material and Writing

    Subseries B: Note Cards

    Subseries C: Audiocassette Interviews, 1979-1981

## Description of the Papers

### Series I: Samuel Ross Ballin Material

#### *Subseries A: Correspondence*

##### Box 1

##### Folder

- 1 Correspondence, original – George Luks and Samuel Ross Ballin, 1920-c. 1933
- 2 Correspondence, original – Harry [\_\_\_\_] and “Bill” (William Luks?) regarding estate of George Luks, 1934-1935
- 3 Correspondence, original – 1969-1984
- 4 Correspondence, photocopy – 1920-1971 and undated

#### *Subseries B: Legal Documents*

##### Box 1

##### Folder

- 5 Divorce agreement between George and Emma L. Luks, 1921
- 6 Correspondence and inventories re. Kraushaar and divorce from Emma Luks, 1920-1934
- 7 Divorce agreement between and George and Mercedes Luks, 1930
- 8 Estate of George B. Luks – appraisal and memorandum of adjustments, 1934
- 9 Memorandum of Sale of oil painting *Noble Experiment*, 1949
- 10 Estate of George B. Luks – sale at Parke-Bernet Galleries, 1950

#### *Subseries C: Material Pertaining to William Luks*

##### Box 1

##### Folder

- 11 Correspondence re. Estate of William D. Luks, 1939-1954
- 12 *Sonnets to Ilor*, carbon copy
- 13 *We Went to the Zoo*, carbon copy

## Series II: Arthur H. Lewis Material

### *Subseries A: Research Material*

#### Box 2

##### Folder

- 1 Correspondence, 1980s
- 2 Correspondence and interviews – Arthur Lewis – 1980s
- 3 Copy of research material – Arthur Lewis
- 4 Research notes
- 5 Research notes
- 6 Research notes
- 7 Research notes
- 8 Research notes
- 9 “People I Interviewed”
- 10 List of people that should be interviewed
- 11 Institutions, libraries, galleries, etc. researched
- 12 *The American Magazine, 1890-1940*, Delaware Art Museum, 1979
- 13 Catalogs
- 14 Reviews of Luks’s works and bibliography
- 15 “My own involvement with Luks”
- 16 Attempts at Luks chronology
- 17 Brief sketch of George Benjamin Luks
- 18 George B. Luks a/k/a “Chicago Whitey”, Chapter One
- 19 Chapter Two
- 20 Chapter ?
- 21 “The Case of Dr. T”

### *Subseries B: Note Cards*

#### Box 3

##### Note cards

### *Subseries C: Audiocassette Interviews, 1979-1981*

#### Box 4

Samuel Ross Ballin, various dates, 1979-1981  
Daniel W. Luks and H. Andrea Luks, January 20, 1980  
Margaret (Peggy) Luks Malczynski, January 1980  
Elizabeth Luks Malczynski  
Lore Luks Van den Heuvel, January 17, 1980  
Mrs. Kraemer N. (Gertrude) Luks, January 17, 1980  
George B. Luks (Young George), January 1980

Mercedes Diaz Luks, December 1979, July 1980  
B.A. Bergman  
Antoinette Kraushaar, February 13, 1980  
John Clancy  
Helen Sloan, March 10, 1980  
Edgar P. Richardson  
Ira Glackens, April 2, 1980  
Bennard Perlman, March 19, 1980  
Andrew King Grugan, September 24, 1980  
Steward Klonis  
Lawrence Campbell  
Robert B. Koslosky  
Barbara Tweed, January 14, 1980  
William B. Hennessey, March 1980  
Ray Walsh  
Mrs. Mrs. Robert Impink  
Estelle Powers  
Louis Mozdy, November 27, 19[74]  
Bill O'Brien  
Sam Smith  
Ed Conrad  
Dr. Naysh Brennan  
Mrs. Sarah Cooper  
Edwin G. Fox  
Charles W. Delp  
Martin L. Cuff  
Joseph M. Hanney  
Margaret Crane, Fall 1980  
Albert S. Callan, Jr., September 15-16, 1980  
Elizabeth Olds, October 1980  
Frank Eliscu, October 1980  
Harry Burley, October 1980  
Mike Hanson, Fall 1980  
Joe Young, Fall 1980  
Mrs. John Williams  
Philip C. Jessup, January 6, 1981  
Elsie K. Belmont, January 13, 1981  
Elsie Driggs, January 14, 1981  
Iona Luks  
Joan Luks Fay  
Mrs. Spencer (widow of Dr. Spencer)