La MaMa Archives:

We are the living archive of La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club. The Archive is one-of-a-kind resource that documents, preserves, digitizes and exhibits the legacy of the artists who have made a home at La MaMa since our founding in 1961. The records held by the Archive not only shed light on the Off-Off-Broadway and experimental theatre movements, but also reflect late 20th century US culture, American identity, poetic traditions, gay and lesbian life, US popular culture, Native American mythology, immigrant cultures, racial conflict, and other significant social and historical developments.

These collections have been used extensively by academics and students at all levels, resulting in a wide body of scholarship including monographs, articles, dissertations, documentary films, and more.
Searching the digital collections site

Our public-facing digital collections site allows artists, researchers and the public remote access to the Archive - anytime, anywhere.

One of the benefits of our digital collection site, catalog.lamama.org, is the ability to share information and improve the discoverability of our records through the search and browse functions.

You can search by name, year, production, format, or keyword. Use the Advanced Search section to narrow the focus. Use the Browse button to discover records by type.
Curated Collections

Explore collections of digitized material curated by La MaMa Archive Staff. These collections, while extensive, should not be considered complete. New material is added regularly or may not yet be digitized.

New collections are being created regularly as more material in the archive is processed and incorporated into the digital collections site.

An example of curated Collections currently available:

- 1970s La MaMa Programs and Flyers relating to the Open Reel Video Collection
- Bill Duffy Photo Collection
- James Gossage Photograph Collection
- Jerry Vezzuso Photograph Collection
- Poster Collection
- Digitized Footage Collection
- Script Collection

Clicking on the poster collection tab will open a page that shows links to all the object records in that collection!
Performance is an inherently ephemeral artform. Documenting work that is dynamic and ever-changing requires an approach that recognizes and accounts for the difficulty of capturing an experience.

To understand the way our cataloging system works within the La MaMa Archive, it is important to know that our collection site is structured within a modified FRBR (*Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records*) Model. This model is well suited to archiving performance events as it foregrounds “relationships” between creative works and their creators. These links allow records to be discoverable by creating a variety of access points into the production, work, entity or item.

*What this means in practical terms is that records are defined by how they relate to other records.*

This helps us build context around a production, performer, or object by showing us how it is connected to other records in our catalog.*
RECORD CATEGORIES:

Understanding how records are categorized may help you define and direct your research.

For example:

One work may be linked to multiple productions as shows are brought back, tour different locations, or are restaged over the years.

One entity may perform in several shows, or may work in several functions; directing one production, designing the lighting in another, acting in a third. Search by entity allows you to discover the related productions in which an artist has participated.

Objects: these records relate to physical or digital items held by the archive. These may be paper items such as scripts, photographs or programs; artifacts such as props, instruments and costumes; or born-digital files.

Entities: these records relate directly to the artists and organizations represented in the Archive. Relational links share information about the entity’s role within the record (e.g. performer, director, composer, set design, etc.)

Events: these records describe a specific production or special event (benefit, series, etc.)

Venue: these records describe the location of the related event

Work: these records refer to the conceptual work. In layman’s terms, this is can be thought of as the “intellectual property.” It is an abstract entity in that there is no single physically or linguistically fixed object; it is the concept, not the manifestation of the concept.
Object records share information about the physical item (such as format, size, and language) as well as link the object to its creator, associated event and other related records.

When determined, copyright information is also included. While La MaMa owns the physical materials in our collections, we do not always own the copyright to these materials. Consequently, materials on our site are shared for educational and research purposes only.

You are welcome to link to our online exhibitions or digital collections for educational and research purposes.
Events are designated as either Productions (theatrical run) or Special Events (e.g. series, festival, benefit).

By clicking on or searching for an event record, you will see information about cast and crew, venue, language, date and other identifying information. Through these points of data, records are linked to associated entity, work and object records.
For more information or to contact the Archive, please visit us online at catalog.lamama.org/About or email us at archives@lamama.org

To learn more about La MaMa ETC and discover our current season as well as other programs visit lamama.org