

La MaMa Archives **Catalogers' Manual**

Introduction

This document is meant to offer a general overview of the process we use to catalog La MaMa's archival materials. These guidelines were developed as an initial starting point; we will modify our cataloging workflow as needed. Think of our cataloging work as a collective, iterative process. Although we adhere to international standards and best practices, we're also working in territory that is in flux and for which no perfect solutions exist. Please keep track of issues, bugs, or absences that you notice as you catalog, and questions that arise for you as you go. We will continue to revise the structure of the catalog, the principles behind what we're doing, and the details of our cataloging workflow, going forward.

Catalog software

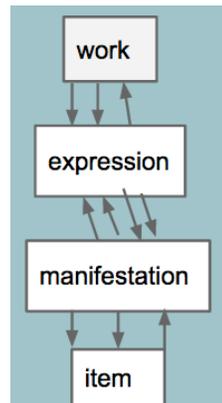
Our catalog was built on the open-source database software CollectiveAccess (collectiveaccess.org). CollectiveAccess is a cataloging platform used by many smaller institutions, including the New School's Special Collections and the Chicago Film Archives, among others. It comes pre-loaded with DublinCore and Library of Congress subject heading integration; and features other tools to foster archival best-practices. In addition to a highly customizable back-end, the package includes an optional front-end platform template.

For each item cataloged, we assign a unique identifier, and capture metadata for the 15 standard DublinCore elements, as well as information about the item's condition and storage location. For audiovisual documents, we capture additional PBCore-compliant metadata (most importantly, about "Instantiations"). For objects that exist as digital files, we capture PREMIS-compliant metadata including checksums, digital preservation levels, and the existence/location of preservation and access copies.

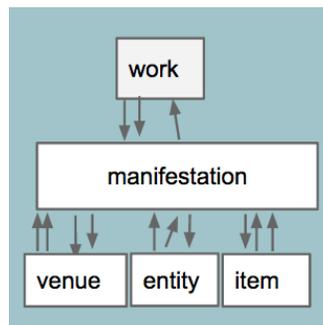
Structural principles.

La MaMa's catalog is organized around a set of hierarchies based on the FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records) model. FRBR is well-suited to creating a catalog of records that are organized around and related to *performance events*. It enables us to deploy a useful hierarchy of classes, and it foregrounds "relationships" between creative works and their creators.

Traditionally, FRBR looks like this:



We have adapted the traditional FRBR model, as follows:



Work: According to FRBR, a “work” is “a distinct intellectual or artistic creation.” For instance, La MaMa’s catalog contains a “Work” record for Jean Genet’s play “The Maids.” Work records should include (at a minimum) the author’s name and the date of its creation. It should also be linked to all its relevant “manifestations” (described below). You may also describe the plot and any other significant information surrounding its creation and initial reception.

Event, or Production: In FRBR language, this is the “manifestation.” That is, a specific production of a given work. To illustrate: La MaMa hosted several productions of “The Maids” in its early years—in October and December of 1964, in August of 1965, and in December 1971. These each have separate “Event” records, which detail significant information about the mounting of this particular production. Each of these “Event” records then relate back to the relevant “Work” record.

Objects: These are the items contained in our archives. An object might be a photograph, a production program or poster, a blueprint, a video, a clipping of a review, a costume, a mask—and so on. Copies of programs for, or photographs that document a

specific production of “The Maids,” for instance are all described in “Object” records. These records are also related to Entities (if authorship of the object can be determined) as well as a specific “Event” and one (or in some cases, several) “Work(s).”

Entity: These are individuals, resident theater companies, families, collectives, partner institutions, and other organizations that helped create or document each event. The director, performers, and crew that worked on “Maids” in 1971 are all “entities” related to 1971’s “Event” record. So are the costume designers, the videographers, and the photographers that documented the show.

Don’t stress too much over the theory behind FRBR. Once you learn the ins and outs of our cataloging workflow, FRBR logic will be either super clear or totally unimportant to the execution of your work.

We deploy several other metadata stands, in addition to FRBR, in the catalog, including DublinCore, and elements of PBCore and PREMIS. These standards map onto our catalog as follows:

DublinCore element	La MaMa’s catalog field
Title Description Date Source Language Identifier Rights	Title Description Date Source Language Identifier Rights
Creator, Publisher, Contributor	Related Entities
Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •LC Subject Headings •La MaMa-specific vocabulary (TBD)
Type	Core categories = paper document, A/V, photograph, artifact, poster
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Materials •Extent
Relation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Related objects (is version of, is referenced by, etc.) •Related entities (director, photographer, etc.) •Related productions (is manifestation of, etc.) •Related Works

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Related Venues (took place at, moved to, etc)
Coverage	Date, Venue

PBCore element	La MaMa's catalog field
Instantiation instantiationMediaType instantiationDimensions instantiationDuration instantiationFileSize	Measurements & Extent
instantiationEssence instantiationEssenceEncoding instantiationEssenceAspectRatio instantiationEssenceTrackFrameRate	Measurements

PREMIS element	La MaMa's catalog field
contentLocation	Storage Location
Event eventType eventDate	Preservation Event Preservation Event Date
preservationLevel	Digital Preservation Level
fixity	MD5 Checksum

Cataloging Workflow.

Object Records.

Although “Works” appears at the nominal top of our modified FRBR hierarchy, you won’t START the work of cataloging materials in the La MaMa collection with Works. You’ll generally start with Objects.

To start cataloging, select a physical folder containing materials, or one item. Then open up the Collective Access back-end, and start entering data, as follows:

- Go to “New” and pick “Object.” Here you’ll have to decide whether the object is an Artifact, Poster, Photograph, Audiovisual, or Document. Determining what type an object is sounds easy but can be tricky. The rules for determining what “type” of object a specific document is are as follows:

- “Artifacts” are three dimensional objects—puppets, props, costumes, masks, musical instruments, and so on.
- “Posters” are oversized theatrical posters.
- “Photographs” are photographic prints. This category is relatively straightforward with a few exceptions, e.g. do not catalog items such as newspaper clippings that feature photographic images as photographs. These should be called “documents.”
- “Audiovisual” are moving images contained on any kind of carrier and audio recordings.
- “Documents” refers to paper objects that are neither photographic prints nor oversized posters—show programs, news clippings, correspondence, flyers, scripts, production notes, sheet music, and so on.

Click on the appropriate type. This will enable you to create a new record, and bring you to the “basic info” screen.

- Fill in the fields on this “Basic Info” screen, as follows:

- “Status” should be “editing in process” until it gets final approval from the Project Manager.

- The Object ID is partly auto-fill and partly manual-fill. **Change the year in the Object ID field** to the year that the object was created. The system will then auto-fill the type of record and a six-digit identifying number. Thus, a program for the December 1964 production of “The Maids” will have an Object ID that looks something like this: OBJ.1964.0006.

If you are cataloging a folder that contains items created in different years, determine which object was created earliest, and use that earliest date as the date in the object identifier.

If, after thorough research, you really can’t figure out what date an object was created you may simply use the default year (the present year).

--Title. Give the object a title. Generally, the title should follow the following conventions: [Type of object]: “[Production title]” ([year]). Thus, A program for the 1971 production of “The Maids” will bear the title, “Program: ‘The Maids’ (1971).” Photographs of the same show will be titled: “Production Photographs: ‘The Maids’ (1971).” * If there were multiple productions of the same work in one year, add a corresponding lowercase letter to the year (e.g. “1971a”), as indicated in the production record. If you encounter a set of photographs whose authorship is known, you may wish to title this object record a bit distinctly as: [Type of Photograph] by [Photographer’s name]’s: [Production Title] [Year]. E.g. “Production Photographs by James Gossage: “Miss Nefertiti Regrets,” 1965.”

*Additional types of photographs include: “Headshot”; “Contact Sheet”; “Cropped Print”; “Polaroid”; “Snapshot”; or “Candid.”

--Title type. Choose from a drop-down list:

- published
- descriptive
- former
- popular
- translated
- other.

If the object title is “Program: ‘The Maids’ (1971),” for instance, the title type will be “descriptive.”

--Alternate Title and type. Indicate if this object might be known by an alternate title, and what type of title this is (e.g. translated or former).

--Alternate Identifiers. Indicate any other numbers that might have been inscribed on the item (most frequent in the case of photographs) or the file name (in the case of digital video) here.

--Date. This can be one date, multiple dates, or a range of dates. Use a human-readable form for writing the date, as in 4-23-1966. If the object itself contains an authentic date, use that. Otherwise, do some research to come up with the correct date. (Don’t put full faith in the date that’s listed on the master playlist or folder—these often indicate only the date on which a given production opened. However, these can be used if no other info is available.)

--Language. (That is, of this object.)

--Format. Choose from the drop down list. See Appendix A for format options.

--Materials. Indicate in list form what materials comprise the folder's contents. *Materials* is a free text field to accommodate a large and growing number of vocabulary items—but please draw from the Materials Facet of the Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus (<http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATHierarchy?find=&logic=AND¬e=&subjectid=300010357>), if possible. Common terms include:

- Cardboard
- Colored paper
- Construction paper
- Copy paper
- Laminated paper
- Newsprint
- Photographic paper
- Typewriter paper
- Waxed paper

If you find materials that cannot be described using those terms, use the AAT "New Search" field (<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat>) to locate the preferred term; add this new term to the internal controlled list. Ensure that any new terms fall under the Materials Facet. If they are instead nested in the Objects Facet, they are document genres rather than materials and should be employed in the Extent or Description fields. If you are unsure about the definition of any term, or about whether you need to add to the internal list, please discuss with the cataloging team.

--Measurements. Here you should specify the size and scope of the object, e.g:

- dimensions for posters and prints
- number of pages for booklets
- duration for AV materials
- file size for born-digital work
- the size of a costume (small, medium, large, extra large)

The units used in the measurement should be specified as inches, centimeters, pages, minutes, etc. (These units can be abbreviated, such as "11 cm x 12 cm", or "1 hour, 6 min.") For programs and photographs,

indicate the size of the paper. For newspaper reviews indicate column inches.

For digital video files, use the measurements field to describe dimensions and related information, like so:

Measurements	
Measurements 720x480	Type Dimensions
Measurements 2	Type Audio Channels
Measurements 30,308	Type Overall Bit Rate
+ Add measurements	

--Extent. Indicate numeric values and captions for the items within a folder--the number of copies of an item we hold, the duration of the video, and so on. (See dublincore.org/documents/usageguide/qualifiers.shtml#extent for more details.) The captions for the Extent field should draw from the Objects Facet of the Getty AAT (<http://www.getty.edu/vow/AATFullDisplay?find=&logic=AND¬e=&subjectid=300264092>). Common terms include:

- Cards
- Clippings
- Contracts
- Correspondence artifacts
- Envelopes
- Flyers
- Invoices
- Letters
- Memos
- Newsletters
- Notes
- Notebooks
- Packets

- Photocopies
- Photographs
- Press releases
- Receipts
- Scripts
- Theater programs

As with the Materials field list of terms, the Extent vocabulary is expandable. If you find additional genres in the collection, use the AAT “New Search” field (<http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/>) to locate the preferred term; add this new term to the internal controlled list. Ensure that any new terms fall under the Objects Facet. If they fall instead under the Materials Facet, they are materials rather than document genres and can be employed in the Materials field.

For digital video files, use the extent field to describe duration and file size, like so:

Extent	
Extent 01:13:57	Type Duration
Extent 16.81	Type GB
<input type="button" value="+ Add extent"/>	

Consult similar records for more precise indicators of how to describe the extent of video objects.

--Creators and Contributors. This field lets you relate this object to as many contributors (FRBR’s “entities”) as you think appropriate. Enter the name of each entity connected to this work and wait a moment while the spinning cursor shows that the database is searching to see if this entity already exists in the database. If this entity exists in the catalog, select them as they appear. If the entity you need does not exist in the catalog, click CREATE:

- A pop-up “Quick Add” window will open for you to enter the entity.
- Choose Individual, Organization, or Resident Company, as applicable to your entity.
- Enter the preferred and alternate names of the entity.
- Fill in the other fields, as appropriate.
- You may include a biographical note. You can write an original biographical note, or you can crib one from another source. If you quote another source, however, be sure include a full citation.

Be careful with this “Quick Add” screen, and only use it to add a minimum of information, and then only on the “Basic Information” screen.

Entities should also be described according to the "role" they played in the creation of a work (e.g., director, performer, photographer). Note: an entity may have contributed to an object in some way even if they are not the person primarily responsible for it's creation. Once you've related an entity to a record, an additional menu will pop up, allowing you to choose this entity's role. This pop-up window will contain a drop-down menu. Select the appropriate role to describe the contribution of the entity to this object and the event it relates to. (At the moment, we are sticking with a relatively limited list of possible roles for each creator or contributor), such as:

- Playwright
- Author
- Director
- Producer
- Curator
- Adapter
- Choreographer
- Music
- Performer
- Documenter
- Designer
- Press
- Panelist
- Contributor

You can relate as many entities to an object as you like.

--Description. Free text field. Here you should narratively describe the object using full sentences. Write this description as if it would appear as

the only information a user might see alongside a digital surrogate on the DPLA website. In other words, don't assume the reader of this description knows what production it relates to, or that it is held in the La MaMa Archives. Descriptions should read something like this:

"This folder contains: several promotional postcards and booklets announcing showings of Saito's visual art; a program for "Environmental Theatre of Kikuo Saito" and "Haftan (Advertisement for an Unfinished Film)," which was held at the Byrd Loft on Spring Street; several postcards from Ellen Stewart to Saito; and a packet of information relating to Saito's US immigration status, including an Application for Alien Employment under the Manpower Administration of the Department of Labor."

--Subject and Naming Authorities. Choose some broad and narrow terms that you think apply to this object using LCSH and LCNA. Feel free to use multiple subject terms, but keep the number of terms to 5 or less. Always relate objects to "La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club" (in the naming field) and Off-Off-Broadway Theatre" (in the subject field). Other common terms we use include:

- Stage photography
- Audiovisual materials
- Theater programs
- Experimental Theatre

You may wish to explore the "Keywords" browse function on our front-end (catalog.lamama.org) to see other commonly used terms.

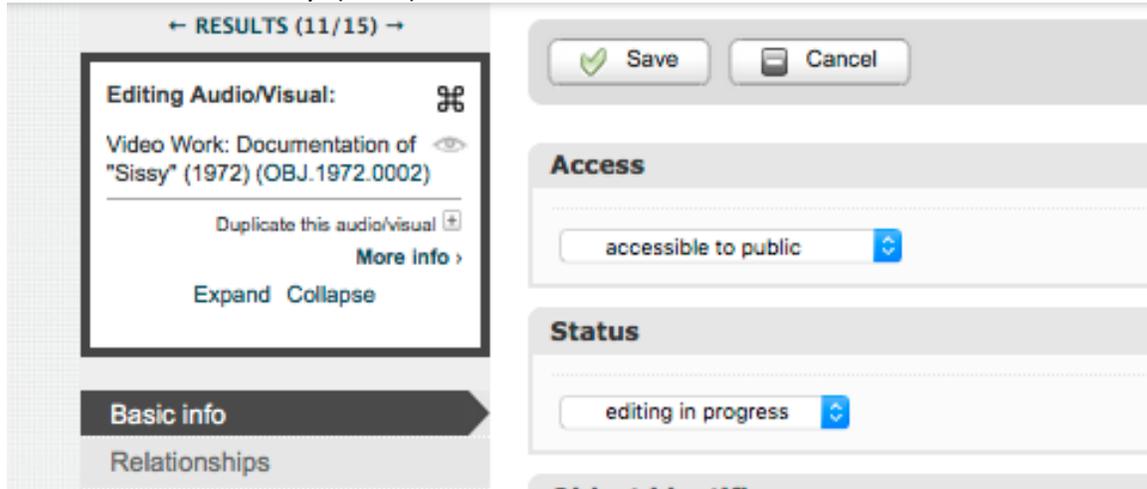
--References. Indicate here any secondary texts or websites that you found useful in creating this record.

--Catalogers notes. Here is the place to put notes that shouldn't appear on the front-end. This might be additional information about the object that you want other catalogers to know when reviewing this record later.

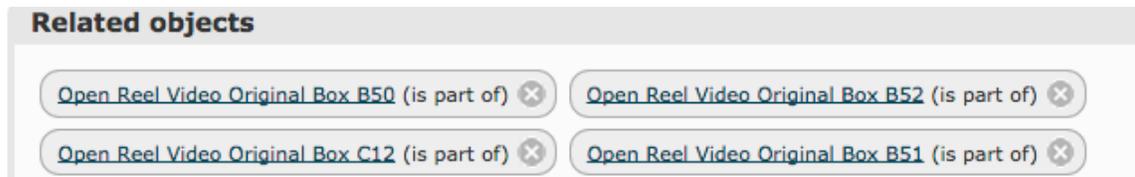
A special note about cataloging AV materials.

Although our CollectiveAccess instance uses DublinCore as its core metadata standard, it is flexible enough to permit us to extend it to include PBCore principles as well. When cataloging analog film and video items, catalogers should be careful to attend to the relationships between "assets" and "instantiations." (For more about this, see:

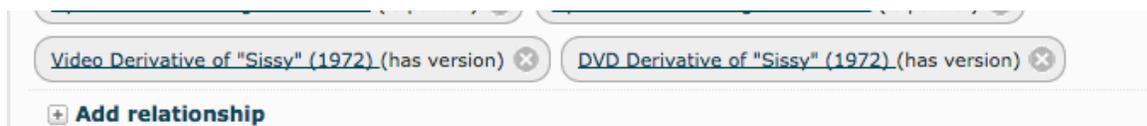
<http://www.pbcoreresources.org/article/2009/05/>) Items that contain documentation of performance events should receive at least two separate object records: one for the “asset”—the documentation itself—and one for the “instantiation”—the container that holds this documentation. So for instance, video documentation for the 1972 production of “Sissy” is described, on the one hand, by an asset record, “Video Work: Documentation of ‘Sissy’ (1972)”:



Additionally, this documentation is described by several instantiation records. First, there are records describing the camera originals, in this case ½ inch open reel video. In this case, the documentary record of the performance is spread across 4 separate reels; thus each reel requires its own catalog record:



We also hold copies made off of the camera originals; each of these get their own record, and are tagged as “versions” of the original document:



Each of these records should be “related” back to the original asset record, and to each other.

Event Records.

As indicated above, events are what in FRBR are referred to as “manifestations.” An “Event” record might detail, for instance, the production of “The Maids” that ran from October 21-25, 1964. Or it might document a benefit night. Or a tour.

Note, however, that when cataloging a cabaret night or dance event, the “Event” record will relate to the entire night; then, this Night/Event will then be populated by separate works. (e.g. An evening of dances wherein three separate companies stage one item each will relate to one Event record. Then, each of the dance items will get their own “Work” record.) In many cases, the work will be the playscript and the event will be a production run of this work. Take note: many of La MaMa’s productions were mounted multiple times in distinct productions, and/or taken on tour. If the production was mounted more than once, you’ll need to create a separate Event record for each instance. If it was just mounted once over the course of several days, that only requires one Event record.

- Go to “New” and pick “Event.” Here you’ll have to decide whether the event is a Production or a Special Event. (Special events are: benefits, festivals, series, Coffee House Chronicles, and other.) Click on the appropriate type. This will enable you to create a new record, and bring you to the “basic info” screen. This screen is similar, but not identical to, the basic info screen for objects.

- Fill in Access, Status, Object ID, Date, Creators, Description, Subject Terms, References, and Catalogers Notes fields as indicated above, in the directions for object cataloging. Specific instructions for “Event”-specific fields:

- Title. Here indicate the title of the show, with the year of production in parentheses at the end. If there was more than one productions of the same work in one year, use letters to enumerate: “The Maids (1964a).”

- Type of event. Choose from the drop down list.

- Production:

- Play
 - Adaptation
 - Dance
 - Cabaret
 - Performance Art
 - Musical
 - Reading
 - Showcase
 - Tour

- Special Event:

Coffee House Chronicle
Festival
Series
Benefit
Other

--Running time. How long was the production? If you don't know, leave this field empty.

Work Records.

Follow a procedure similar to the one outlined for object and event records. The main thing to focus on here is the description field. Describe the work as thoroughly as you can. Use the narrative written to describe "The Maids" as a guide.

Sidebar/additional screens.

In addition to the "Basic Info" screen there will be 8 other screens available via the left-hand sidebar:

- Relationships
- Media
- Storage Location
- Permissions & Rights
- Provenance
- Preservation Metadata
- Summary
- Log

Summary and Log will auto-fill; don't worry about these. But populate the other screens, as follows:

- Relationships.

This screen provides you with the opportunity to relate each object record, event record, and work record to other objects, events, and works—as well as venues. Populate these fields as appropriate.

- Related Works
- Related Objects
- Related Productions
- Related Special Events
- Related La MaMa Venues
- Related Tours
- Related Off-Site Venues

Provenance

If there's any clear indication on the object you're cataloging of who donated it, or its chain of custody, feel free to enter this in the free text field "Provenance description."

Storage locations

Indicate where the physical object related to the catalog record is located. If the object has been digitized, be sure to indicate both the physical storage location and the digital storage location.

At the highest level in the hierarchy, locations include:

- Show Files Cabinets
- Photo Files Cabinets
- Poster Drawers
- Video Shelves
- Club Files Cabinets
- Tour Files Cabinets
- Costume Closet
- Restrepo Puppet Room
- Main Exhibition Space
- SAMBA Server

Once you've created the record, you'll also need to put a sticker with the Collective Access-assigned Object Identifier somewhere on the folder or box in which these objects are stored (not on the object itself).

--Permissions and Rights

Indicate who holds the rights to the object, and under what terms.

--Media

Here you should link to digital surrogates of the objects in our catalog. If one already exists, import it into the record, and indicate (under storage locations) where exactly this digital file is located. This screen will in many cases auto-populate with metadata associated with the file—format, file size, md5 checksum, etc.

--Preservation metadata.

This field is designed to help us keep track of the preservation needs of materials, and to offer a field where we can record preservation events.

Venue Records.

We also want to relate objects and productions to “venues.” In some ways, the “venues” that La MaMa presented work in, over the years, are archival objects in and of themselves, complete with stories and histories that we need to record, at least in summary form, in the catalog. La MaMa’s primary venues (122 Second Avenue, 74a East 4th Street, and so on) have already been created, as have several off-site venues that La MaMa troupes regularly performed in—in Europe, Japan, and elsewhere. Use those when appropriate.

To create a new Venue record, go to “New” and pick “Venue.” Here you’ll have to decide whether the venue is a “La MaMa Venue,” a “Tour,” or an “Off-Site Venue.” La MaMa venues are all the spaces that the organization has inhabited over its 50+ year history. Tours are La MaMa-sponsored tours. The Off-Site venues option is a place to catalog theaters where La MaMa-incubated productions later appeared, or where La MaMa-presented productions originated. There have been a wide range of productions that moved from La MaMa to Off-Broadway or Broadway theaters; “Off-Site” Venue records enable us to record which productions moved where (via relationships).

Fill in the Access, Status, Object ID, and Cataloger’s notes fields as indicated above.

Title. We’ve created a controlled vocabulary of “preferred” spellings for La MaMa Venues (see Appendix B).

Alternate Titles. Here you can list alternate spellings, to maximize findability later on down the road.

Venue description. Here—especially for La MaMa venues—you should narrate the history of this venue. Include a physical description of the space (indicating any special features of the playing area) as well as key events in La MaMa’s life in this space—evictions, important productions that took place there, and so on.

Dates active. When did La MaMa occupy this space?

The Relationships tab for Venues should auto-populate—that is, if we are doing our job relating objects and productions and entities to venues as we go. But you may also relate to objects, entities, tours, special events, productions etc from here as well.

Appendix A: Object Formats

Artifact

- café equipment
- costume
- mask

prop
puppet
set
wig

Poster

[free text field]

Photograph

black and white
born digital
color
contact sheet
digital scan
print
oversize
slide

Audiovisual

Cassette
CD
Audio only
Mp4
Born digital
16mm
35mm
film
½ inch open reel
Betacam
DVD
VHS
Hi-8
U-Matic
Video
Digitized from analog
.Mov
XDCAM/BPAV

Document

blueprint
brochure
financial document
legal document
production notes

program
promotional material
review
script

Appendix B: Preferred Spellings of La MaMa Venues

Preferred term: 321 East Ninth Street

Use for “Three Twenty-One East Ninth Street”
“321 E. 9th Street”
“ 321 East 9th Street”

Preferred term: 82 Second Avenue

Use for “Eighty-Two Second Avenue”
“Eighty Two Second Avenue”
“82 2nd Avenue”

Preferred term: 122 Second Avenue

Use for “One Twenty-Two Second Avenue”
“122 Second Avenue”
“122 2nd Avenue”

Preferred term: 9 Saint Marks Place

Use for “Nine St. Marks Place”
“Nine Saint Marks Place”
“9 St. Marks Place”
“9 St. Marks Pl.”

Preferred term: 74A East Fourth Street

Use for “74 East 4th Street”
“74 E. 4th Street”
“74A E. 4th Street”
“74 East Fourth Street”
“74A East Fourth Street”
“Seventy Four East Fourth Street”

Preferred term: Annex / Ellen Stewart Theatre

Use for “The Annex”
“Ellen Stewart Theater”

Preferred term: The Club

Use for “Club”

Preferred term: First Street Workshop

Use for "1st Street Workshop"

Preferred term: Third Street Workshop

Use for "3rd Street Workshop"

Preferred term: 47 Great Jones

Use for "Forty Seven Great Jones"

"Great Jones Theater"

"Great Jones Space"

Preferred term: The Gallery

Use for "La Galleria"

Use for "Gallery"

Alternate name: "Exhibition space"