

# COKER, GYLBERT.

## Gylbert Coker papers, 1968-2001

Emory University  
Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library  
Atlanta, GA 30322  
404-727-6887  
rose.library@emory.edu



### Collection Stored Off-Site

All or portions of this collection are housed off-site. Materials can still be requested but researchers should expect a delay of up to two business days for retrieval.

---

## Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Coker, Gylbert.
<b>Title:</b>	Gylbert Coker papers, 1968-2001
<b>Call Number:</b>	Manuscript Collection No. 1042
<b>Extent:</b>	9.75 linear ft. (11 boxes)
<b>Abstract:</b>	Papers of African American academic Gylbert Coker including curatorial work, research materials, correspondence, printed material, and project documents.
<b>Language:</b>	Materials entirely in English.

---

## Administrative Information

### Restrictions on Access

Special restrictions apply: Use copies have not been made for all of the audiovisual material at this time. Researchers must contact the Rose Library in advance for access to these materials.

Researchers must contact the Rose Library in advance for access to unprocessed born digital materials in this collection. Collection restrictions, copyright limitations, or technical complications may hinder the Rose Library's ability to provide access to unprocessed born digital materials.

Collection stored off-site. Researchers must contact the Rose Library in advance to access this collection.

### Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

*Emory Libraries provides copies of its finding aids for use only in research and private study. Copies supplied may not be copied for others or otherwise distributed without prior consent of the holding repository.*

**Source**

Gift, 2006.

**Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Gylbert Coker papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

**Processing**

Arranged by record type.

---

**Collection Description****Biographical Note**

Gylbert Garvin Coker (b. 1944) is a noted art history scholar, curator, and actor/artist. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Visual Art from Pratt Institute (New York, New York) in 1972; a Master of Arts, American Civilization at New York University (New York, New York) in 1982; a Master of Arts, Art history from Hunter College (New York, New York) in 1999; and a Ph.D. in Art Administration from Florida State University (Tallahassee, Florida) in 2010. Her dissertation covered the multiculturalism policy in museums and was a case study on the Pensacola Museum of Art (Pensacola, Florida). Coker trained at New York institutions including the Guggenheim Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Coker was a curator at the Studio Museum in Harlem. She set up the art department gallery and curated exhibitions at the Southern University of New Orleans (SUNO), as well as curated exhibitions at Florida Agriculture and Mechanical University (FAMU). She was also the acting Executive Director for the Children's Art Carnival and co-curator of the Art Across the Park projects in New York City in 1980 and 1982, an outdoor exhibition on which she worked with Horace Brockington and David Hammons. From 1999-2005, Coker was responsible for developing exhibitions for the Zora Neale Hurston Museum in Eatonville, Florida, and later was the curator for the Thomasville Cultural Center in Thomasville, Georgia. She also curated an exhibition on Bob Thompson (1978); a retrospective of Benny Andrews (which was one of his last exhibitions before his death); and *Moulin Rouge: The Seeds of Modernity*, which took a second look at the influence of African American music and dance as well as the influences of African, Asian, Caribbean, and Latin American cultures.

As an art critic, Coker was one of the first African American scholars to write for the *Art in America* and *Arts* journals and was responsible for introducing the art work of Bill Traylor to the public through an exhibit in 1978. Her reviews appeared in the *Amsterdam News*, *The Village Voice*, and local arts magazines and newspapers in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Tallahassee, Florida. She also exposed the people living in the Georgia and Florida areas to the floral images of Robert Mapplethorpe, Carrie Mae Weems, and a curated a group show of contemporary female artists.

As an actor Coker worked on several soap operas and a number of off-off Broadway productions. She was also the personal secretary to Mrs. Countee Cullen, serving as adviser and cataloger to the Charles Alston Estate and to Mrs. Palmer Hayden.

**Scope and Content Note**

The collection consists of the papers of Gylbert Coker from 1968-2001. The papers relate to Coker's involvement in various art projects including Children's Art Carnival, Cityarts Workshop, Zora Neale Hurston Museum, and in particular, the Art Across the Park projects (1980 and 1982) in New York City. The papers include correspondence with artists as well as documents concerning planning and implementing the projects. The collection also includes significant writings by Coker in her role as art critic and researcher as well as writings by others. Included in the collection are also printed materials such as exhibit catalogues and flyers. There are also audiovisual materials documenting performances and interviews, as well as classes and exhibits.

**Arrangement Note**

Unprocessed collection.

---



---

## Container List

### Correspondence

Box	Folder	Content
Box	Folder	Content
1	1	No date
1	2	1976-1978
1	3	1981-1987

### Photographs

1	4	Art Across the Park, (New York, New York), 1980
1	5	Headshots
1	6	"Make a Face," exhibit, 1976 [photographer: Marilyn Nance]
1	7	Photographs (unidentified)

### Sketchbooks

1	8	Sketchbook [1]
1	9	Sketchbook [2]
1	10	Sketchbook [3]
1	11	Sketchbook [4]

### Subject files

1	12	The Actor's Gym
1	13	African American Art [1 of 2]
1	14	African American Art [2 of 2]
1	15	African American Genealogy
1	16	African Art [1 of 2]
1	17	African Art [1 of 2]
1	18	African Symbolism
1	19	Art Across the Park (New York, New York), 1980 [1 of 5]
1	20	Art Across the Park (New York, New York), 1980 [2 of 5]
1	21	Art Across the Park (New York, New York), 1980 [3 of 5]
1	22	Art Across the Park (New York, New York), 1980 [4 of 5]
2	1	Art Across the Park (New York, New York), 1980 [5 of 5]
2	2	Art Across the Park (New York, New York), Artist research files, 1980 [1 of 2]
2	3	Art Across the Park (New York, New York), Artist research files, 1980 [2 of 2]
2	4	Art Across the Park (New York, New York), Financial, 1980
2	5	Art Across the Park (New York, New York), Sketchbook and journal, 1980
2	6	Art Across the Park II (New York, New York), 1982 [1 of 2]
2	7	Art Across the Park II (New York, New York), 1982 [2 of 2]

- 2 15 Art Across the Park II (New York, New York), financial, 1982
- 2 16 Art Across the Park II (New York, New York), funding sources, 1982
- 2 17 Art Across the Park II (New York, New York), grant proposals, 1982
- 2 18 Artists Space (New York, New York), "The Nigger Drawings," exhibit
- 2 19 Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community
- 2 20 Biographical
- 2 21 Black Arts National Diaspora (New Orleans, Louisiana)
- 2 22 The Brooklyn Museum
- 2 23 CAPS applications, 1973-1974
- 2 24 Children's Art Carnival (New York, New York) [1 of 2]
- 2 25 Children's Art Carnival (New York, New York) [2 of 2]
- 3 1 City College of New York Art Library accessions, 1968-1970
- 3 2 Cityarts Workshop [1 of 2]
- 3 3 Cityarts Workshop [2 of 2]
- 3 4 Community Environments
- 3 5 Cullen, Ida
- 3 6 Curatorial work [1 of 2]
- 3 7 Curatorial work [2 of 2]
- 3 8 Fellowship applications
- 3 9 Florida Atlantic University, Schmidt Center Gallery
- 3 10 Fradkin, Lucy
- 3 11 Franklin Furnace Cric Crac exhibit, 1981
- 3 12 Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont
- 3 13 Henry Street Settlement House Exhibition, 1985-1986
- 3 14 Historical preservation
- 3 15 Howard University
- 3 16 Hunter College
- 3 17 International Black Photographers
- 4 27 Jackson, Jesse, 1988 presidential campaign, 1988
- 3 18 Just Above Midtown (New York, New York)
- 3 19 Langston Hughes House of Kuumba
- 3 20 Mental institutions
- 3 21 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City
- 3 22 National African American Museum
- 3 23 National Black Arts Festival (Atlanta, Georgia), 1988
- 3 24 National Conference of Artists
- 3 25 National Council of Negro Women
- 3 26 National Museum of American Art
- 3 27 New York State Council on the Arts

- 3 28 New York University
- 3 29 Notes
- 3 30 Philadelphia Museum of Art, Black History Month, 1984
- 3 31 Rockefeller Foundation in Museum Studies
- 3 32 Saar, Betye
- 3 33 Studio Museum in Harlem
- 4 1 University of Arizona Museum of Art
- 4 2 West Indies, Carnival [1 of 2]
- 4 3 West Indies, Carnival [2 of 2]
- 4 4 Whitney Museum of American Art (New York, New York)--Thelma Golden
- 4 5 Zora Neale Hurston Museum (Eatonville, Florida) [1 of 2]
- 4 6 Zora Neale Hurston Museum (Eatonville, Florida) [2 of 2]

### Writings

- 4 7 Alston, Charles
- 4 8 Articles [1 of 2]
- 4 9 Articles [2 of 2]
- 4 10 *Black Folk Art in America*, exhibit review
- 4 11 Blurbs for pamphlets and catalogs
- 4 12 Duncanson, Robert [1 of 2]
- 4 13 Duncanson, Robert [2 of 2]
- 4 14 Garvin, Fanita
- 4 15 Hammond, Harmony
- 4 16 Keckley, Elizabeth
- 4 17 Lewis, Edmonia [1 of 2]
- 4 18 Lewis, Edmonia [2 of 2]
- 4 19 Lewis, Norman
- 4 20 Naptime [1 of 2]
- 4 21 Naptime [2 of 2]

### Writings by Others

- 4 22 Backman, JoAnn, "A Visual Letter Home," playscript
- 4 23 Euba, Femi, "Riddles on the Ground," playscript
- 4 24 Jones, Gary Edwards, "Kinfolk," playscript
- 4 25 McDonald, Joseph, "Second Chance," playscript
- 4 26 Unidentified typescript

### Printed material

- 5 - Exhibit catalogs, brochures, fliers, newsletters
- 6 - Exhibit catalogs, brochures, fliers, newsletters

**Audio recordings**

- 7 - Gylbert Coker visual performance, undated
- 7 - Harmony Hammond interview, 1983
- 7 - Samella Lewis interview, undated

**Video recordings**

- 7 - Association of Art Editors, "The Future of the Art Magazines," February 2000 [3 cassettes]
- 7 - Buffalo Soldier, exhibition and seminar
- 7 - Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Summer 2000 boys program
- 7 - Zora Neale Hurston Festival, Carrie Mae Weems exhibit, 2001

**Born digital materials**

- 7 - "Correspondence 97/98," 3.5" floppy disk
- 7 - "Eatonville," 3.5" floppy disk
- 7 - "G. Projects 2000," 3.5" floppy disk
- 7 - "Projects," 3.5" floppy disk
- 7 - "Projects 2001-2001," 3.5" floppy disk
- 7 - "Thomasville works 2001-2002," 3.5" floppy disk

**Unprocessed additions**

- 8 - Printed materials, correspondence, photographs, and research files
  - 9 - Correspondence, clippings, photographs, and writing
  - 10 - Correspondence, printed material, writing
  - 11 - Photographs, printed material, notebooks, slides, floppy disks
-