

HOLDER, GEOFFREY, 1930-2014

Geoffrey Holder and Carmen De Lavallade papers, circa 1900-2018

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Descriptive Summary

- Creator:** Holder, Geoffrey, 1930-2014
- Title:** Geoffrey Holder and Carmen De Lavallade papers, circa 1900-2018
- Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 1432
- Extent:** 252 linear feet (209 boxes), 1 oversized papers folder (OP), and 2 oversized bound volumes (OBV)
- Abstract:** Papers of Trinidadian American actor, dancer, and artist, Geoffrey Holder, and African American dancer, Carmen De Lavallade, including art portfolios, awards and honors, correspondence, ephemera, family papers, memorabilia, photographs, printed material, and scripts from circa 1900-2018.
- Language:** Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

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

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Source

Gift and purchase from Carmen De Lavallade, March 2018.

Custodial History

The Rose Library purchased part of the material and were gifted part of the material from Carmen De Lavallade, one of the two creators of the material. The materials were packed at the loft in New York City, New York, where they were being stored. Rose Library staff members, Carrie Hintz, Pellom McDaniels III, Meaghan O'Riordan, and Sarah Quigley, packed the material. Clancy-Cullen Moving & Storage moved the boxes from the loft to their warehouse for preparation for shipment via FedEx to Emory University.

Citation

[after identification of item(s)], Geoffrey Holder and Carmen De Lavallade papers, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Appraisal Note

Acquired by Curator of African American collections, Pellom McDaniels, III, as part of the Rose Library's holdings in African American literature and the arts.

Processing

Arranged and described at the box level by Carrie Hintz, Meaghan O'Riordan, and Sarah Quigley, March 2018. Hintz, O'Riordan, and Quigley organized and reboxed materials into archival boxes onsite in New York City, New York, at the loft where the materials were being stored. O'Riordan rehoused some of the larger boxes packed onsite upon delivery to the Rose Library, April 2018.

Collection Description**Biographical Note**

Geoffrey Holder (1930-2014) was a Trinidadian-American actor, voice actor, dancer, choreographer, singer, director, and painter. Holder was born in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on August 1, 1930, to parents who had emigrated to Trinidad from Barbados. He was one of four children. Holder attended Tranquility School and then secondary school at Queen's Royal College (Port of Spain). He made his debut as a dancer at the age of seven in the dance company ran by his elder brother, Boscoe Holder. Holder emigrated to New York City, New York in 1952 after choreographer, Agnes de Mille, saw him perform in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, and invited him to New York. He taught at the Katherine Dunham School of Dance (New York) for two years. Geoffrey Holder was a principal dancer with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet in New York City, New York, from 1955-1956. He made his Broadway debut in *House of Flowers*, a musical by Harold Arlen and Truman Capote.

Holder began his movie career in the 1962 British film, *All Night Long*. Notable roles in film include Baron Samedi in the 1973 James Bond film, *Live and Let Die*, and Punjab in the 1982 film, *Annie*. In the 1970s and 1980s, he was in commercials for 7Up. He won two Tony Awards for his production of *The Wiz*, the all-black musical version of *The Wizard of Oz*, including

Best Direction of a Musical and Best Costume Design. Holder was the first black man to be nominated in either category.

As a choreographer, Holder created dances for many companies, including the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater (New York), for which he provided choreography, music, and costumes for *Prodigal Prince* (1967). He also choreographed for the Dance Theatre of Harlem (New York). In 1978, Holder directed and choreographed the Broadway musical, *Timbuktu!*.

Holder was also a prolific painter and won a Guggenheim Fellowship in fine arts in 1956. A book of his photography, *Adam*, was published by Viking Press in 1986.

Carmen De Lavallade is an American actress, dancer, and choreographer. She was born on March 6, 1931, in Los Angeles, California, to black Creole parents from New Orleans, Louisiana. She was raised by her aunt, Adele, who owned one of the first African American bookshops on Central Avenue (Los Angeles). De Lavallade's cousin, Janet Collins, was the first full-time African American ballerina at the Metropolitan Opera Ballet in New York City, New York. De Lavallade began studying ballet with Melissa Blake at the age of 16. After graduation from Thomas Jefferson High School (Los Angeles), she was awarded a scholarship to study dance with Lester Horton.

De Lavallade became a member of the Lester Horton Dance Theater in 1949 where she danced as a lead dancer until her departure for New York City 1954 with Alvin Ailey, whom she had met in high-school. That same year, she made her Broadway debut partnered with Ailey in Truman Capote's musical, *House of Flowers*, where she met Geoffrey Holder. It was with Holder that De Lavallade choreographed her signature solo, *Come Sunday*, to a black spiritual sung by Odetta. The following year, De Lavallade danced as the prima ballerina in *Samson and Delilah* and *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera Ballet (New York).

De Lavallade made her television debut in John Butler's ballet, *Flight*. An introduction to 20th Century Fox executives by Lena Horne led to more acting roles between 1952 and 1955.

At the insistence of John Butler, she began teaching at the Yale School of Drama as a choreographer and performer-in-residence in 1970. She staged musicals, plays, and operas and eventually became a professor and member of the Yale Repertory Theater. Students during this time included Meryl Streep, Sigourney Weaver, Joe Grifasi, Christopher Durang, and Wendy Wasserstein.

Geoffrey Holder and Carmen De Lavallade married in 1955. They had one son, Léo Holder. Geoffrey Holder died in New York, New York, on October 5, 2014.

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of the papers of Geoffrey Holder and Carmen De Lavallade. Materials include art portfolios, awards and honors, books and periodicals, correspondence, ephemera, family papers, memorabilia, photographs, printed material, and scripts from circa 1900-2018. Correspondence includes letters between De Lavallade and Holder written in the early 1950s prior to marriage, as well as in the mid-1970s; letters from Janet Collins to Adina Williamson (a De Lavallade relative) dated from 1947-1953; and letters to Geoffrey Holder from Catherine Randolph, his first United States patron, circa 1950-1960. Other significant correspondents include William Dufty and Butterfly McQueen, and there are individual letters from a number of noteworthy figures. Sketchbooks include illustrations related to specific projects, including

set and costume designs. Scripts include a number of heavily annotated screenplays for films such as for *Doctor Doolittle*; *Live and Let Die*; *Krakatoa, East of Java*; and *Annie*. There are also multiple drafts of the script for the Broadway production of *The Wiz*, including Geoffrey Holder's production script.

Arrangement Note

Arranged by record type.

Container List

Art portfolios and sketchbooks

Box	Folder	Content
OBV1	-	Art portfolio [1]
OBV2	-	Art portfolio [2]
74	-	Art portfolios [1]
80	-	Art portfolios [2]
134	-	Art portfolios [3]
135	-	Art portfolios [4]
136	-	Art portfolios [5]
137	-	Art portfolios [6]
138	-	Art portfolios [7]
139	-	Art portfolios [8]
148	-	Art portfolios [9]
156	-	Art portfolios [10]
164	-	Art portfolios [11]
165	-	Art portfolios [12]
166	-	Art portfolios [13]
166	-	Art portfolios [14]
173	-	Art portfolios [15]
174	-	Art portfolios [16]
175	-	Art portfolios [17]
176	-	Art portfolios [18]
177	-	Art portfolios [19]
178	-	Art portfolios [20]
179	-	Art portfolios [21]
180	-	Art portfolios [22]
183	-	Art portfolios [23]
184	-	Art portfolios [24]
185	-	Art portfolios [25]
186	-	Art portfolios [26]
187	-	Art portfolios [27]
188	-	Art portfolios [28]
189	-	Art portfolios [29]
190	-	Art portfolios [30]
191	-	Art portfolios [31]
192	-	Art portfolios [32]
193	-	Art portfolios [33]

- 194 - Art portfolios [34]
- 195 - Art portfolios [35]
- 197 - Art portfolios [36]
- 198 - Art portfolios [37]
- 199 - Art portfolios [38]
- 202 - Art portfolios [39]
- 203 - Art portfolios [40]
- 204 - Art portfolios [41]
- 205 - Art portfolios [42]
- 206 - Art portfolios [43]
- 207 - Art portfolios [44]
- 208 - Art portfolios [45]
- 209 - Art portfolios [46]
- OP1 - Art portfolios [47]
- 140 - Art portfolios and original drawings [1]
- 141 - Art portfolios and original drawings [2]
- 142 - Art portfolios and original drawings [3]
- 143 - Art portfolios and original drawings [4]
- 144 - Art portfolios and sketchbooks [1]
- 145 - Art portfolios and sketchbooks [2]
- 146 - Art portfolios and sketchbooks [3]
- 147 - Art portfolios and sketchbooks [4]
- 114 - Artist files

Books and periodicals

- 58 - Books [1]
- 59 - Books [2]
- 60 - Books [3]
- 61 - Books [4]
- 62 - Books [5]
- 68 - Books [6]
- 69 - Books [7]
- 70 - Books [8]
- 71 - Books [9]
- 72 - Books [10]
- 75 - Books [11]
- 101 - Books, The Wiz
- 98 - De Lavallade, Carmen, books
- 23 - Periodicals [1]
- 57 - Periodicals [2]

- 63 - Periodicals [3]
- 67 - Periodicals [4]
- 73 - Periodicals [5]
- 84 - Periodicals [6]
- 86 - Periodicals [7]
- 87 - Periodicals [8]
- 89 - Periodicals [9]
- 93 - Periodicals [10]
- 109 - Periodicals [11]
- 147 - Periodicals [12]
- 148 - Periodicals [13]
- 149 - Periodicals [14]
- 150 - Periodicals [15]
- 151 - Periodicals [16]
- 152 - Periodicals [17]
- 153 - Periodicals [18]
- 154 - Periodicals [19]
- 155 - Periodicals [20]
- 203 - Periodicals [21]
- 204 - Periodicals [22]
- 205 - Periodicals [23]
- 206 - Periodicals [24]
- 207 - Periodicals [25]

Correspondence

- 26 - Birthday cards
- 34 - Correspondence [1]
- 35 - Correspondence [2]
- 37 - Correspondence [3]
- 38 - Correspondence [4]
- 40 - Correspondence [5]
- 41 - Correspondence [6]
- 43 - Correspondence [7]
- 46 - Correspondence [8]
- 47 - Correspondence [9]
- 48 - Correspondence [10]
- 49 - Correspondence [11]
- 50 - Correspondence [12]
- 51 - Correspondence [13]
- 52 - Correspondence [14]

- 53 - Correspondence [15]
- 54 - Correspondence [16]
- 55 - Correspondence [17]
- 56 - Correspondence [18]
- 64 - Correspondence [19]
- 65 - Correspondence [20]
- 66 - Correspondence [21]
- 76 - Correspondence [22]
- 77 - Correspondence [23]
- 78 - Correspondence [24]
- 82 - Correspondence [25]
- 85 - Correspondence [26] [RESTRICTED]
- 88 - Correspondence [27] [RESTRICTED]
- 106 - Correspondence [28] [RESTRICTED]
- 107 - Correspondence [29]
- 108 - Correspondence [30]
- 112 - Correspondence [31] [RESTRICTED]
- 114 - Correspondence [32]
- 129 - Correspondence [33]
- 130 - Correspondence [34]
- 161 - Correspondence [35]
- 162 - Correspondence [36]
- 163 - Correspondence [37]
- 96 - De Lavallade, Carmen, correspondence [1]
- 156 - De Lavallade, Carmen, correspondence [2]
- 157 - De Lavallade, Carmen, correspondence [3]
- 158 - De Lavallade, Carmen, correspondence [4]
- 159 - De Lavallade, Carmen, correspondence [5]
- 160 - De Lavallade, Carmen, correspondence and other correspondence
- 100 - Holder, Geoffrey, correspondence [1]
- 119 - Holder, Geoffrey, correspondence [2]

Photographs

- 98 - De Lavallade, Carmen, photographs
- 123 - Holder, Geoffrey, photographs
- 94 - Holder, Leo, photographs
- 116 - Holder, Leo, photographs and unrelated photograph album
- 10 - Photograph albums [1]
- 14 - Photograph albums [2]
- 16 - Photograph albums [3]

17 - Photograph albums [4]
19 - Photograph albums [5]
22 - Photograph albums [6]
29 - Photograph albums [7]
30 - Photograph albums [8]
32 - Photograph albums [9]
81 - Photograph albums [10]
83 - Photograph albums [11]
90 - Photograph albums [12]
92 - Photograph albums [13]
110 - Photograph albums [14]
113 - Photograph albums [15]
117 - Photograph albums [16]
118 - Photograph albums [17]
125 - Photograph albums [18]
126 - Photograph albums [19]
128 - Photograph albums [20]
144 - Photograph albums [21]
145 - Photograph albums [22]
146 - Photograph albums [23]
147 - Photograph albums [24]
167 - Photograph albums [25]
180 - Photograph albums [26]
181 - Photograph albums [27]
182 - Photograph albums [28]
183 - Photograph albums [29]
195 - Photograph albums [30]
196 - Photograph albums [31]
197 - Photograph albums [32]
199 - Photograph albums [33]
200 - Photograph albums [34]
201 - Photograph albums [35]
204 - Photograph albums [36]
21 - Photographs [1]
26 - Photographs [2]
36 - Photographs [3]
79 - Photographs [4]
120 - Photographs [5]
OP2 - Photographs [6]

- 169 - Photographs [7]
- 170 - Photographs [8]
- 171 - Photographs [9]
- 172 - Photographs [10]
- 207 - Photographs [11]
- 124 - Photographs, House of Flowers
- 127 - Photographs, party
- 12 - Photographs, portraits
- 97 - Photographs, Timbuktu!

Scripts

- 3 - Scripts [1]
- 4 - Scripts [2]
- 5 - Scripts [3]
- 7 - Scripts [4]
- 8 - Scripts [5]
- 9 - Scripts [6]
- 11 - Scripts [7]
- 13 - Scripts [8]
- 15 - Scripts [9]
- 18 - Scripts [10]
- 20 - Scripts [11]
- 23 - Scripts [12]
- 24 - Scripts [13]
- 25 - Scripts [14]
- 27 - Scripts [15]
- 28 - Scripts [16]
- 31 - Scripts [17]
- 33 - Scripts [18]
- 36 - Scripts [19]
- 39 - Scripts [20]
- 42 - Scripts [21]
- 44 - Scripts [22]
- 74 - Scripts [23]
- 131 - Scripts [24]
- 132 - Scripts [25]
- 133 - Scripts [26]
- 173 - Scripts [27]
- 174 - Scripts [28]
- 175 - Scripts [29]

- 199 - Scripts [30]
- 200 - Scripts [31]
- 201 - Scripts [32]
- 204 - Scripts [33]
- 2 - Scripts, King Kong, Live and Let Die
- 1 - Scripts, Once a Month, Timbuktu!, The Wiz
- 6 - Scripts, Sister Alice, etc.

Ephemera, personal papers, and printed material

- 107 - Awards and honors
- 144 - Clippings [1]
- 145 - Clippings [2]
- 146 - Clippings [3]
- 147 - Clippings [4]
- 121 - Clippings and early career
- 91 - Clippings and magazines
- 122 - Clippings, Spoleto
- 111 - Dance subject files and printed material
- 95 - De Lavallade, Carmen
- 98 - De Lavallade, Carmen, ephemera [1]
- 160 - De Lavallade, Carmen, ephemera [2]
- 104 - De Lavallade, Carmen, memorabilia and performance
- 105 - De Lavallade, Carmen, projects
- 23 - Ephemera [1]
- 101 - Ephemera [2]
- 109 - Ephemera [3]
- 161 - Ephemera [4]
- 162 - Ephemera [5]
- 163 - Ephemera [6]
- 169 - Ephemera [7]
- 170 - Ephemera [8]
- 171 - Ephemera [9]
- 172 - Ephemera [10]
- 207 - Ephemera [11]
- 108 - Ephemera, presidential
- 103 - Family papers and printed material
- 102 - Holder, Geoffrey and De Lavallade, Carmen, Yale
- 11 - Holder, Geoffrey, biography
- 100 - Holder, Geoffrey, notes
- 100 - Holder, Geoffrey, telephone books

- 119 - Holder, Geoffrey, printed material
 - 123 - Holder, Geoffrey, ephemera
 - 108 - Personal papers
 - 114 - Personal papers and biographical information
 - 97 - Printed material, Timbuktu!
 - 115 - Printed material
 - 26 - Telephone books
 - 99 - Telephone book
-