

Guide to the Doloris Holmes Papers, 1966-1996

*T-Mss 1989-007

Billy Rose Theatre Division



The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

New York, New York

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Doloris Holmes papers, 1966-1996.

Creator: Holmes, Doloris

Collection ID: *T-Mss 1989-007

Size: .5 lin. ft. (1 box).

Repository: The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.
Billy Rose Theatre Division. New York, New York

Abstract: Doloris Holmes is a performance artist and poet who founded and directs the White Mask Theatre in New York City. The collection contains correspondence, writings, clippings, photographs, programs, and other printed material reflecting Holmes' career in non-traditional performance and her interest in women in the arts.

Administrative Information

Source: The Doloris Holmes papers were given to the Billy Rose Theatre Division of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts by Doloris Holmes in three installments: July 1989, December 1995 and December 1996. The material was received in good condition.

Access: Collection is open to the public. Photocopying prohibited. Advance notice may be required.

Preferred Citation: Doloris Holmes Papers, *T-Mss 1989-007, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

Biographical Note

Doloris Holmes is a performance artist and poet who founded the White Mask Theatre. Her work has been exhibited in the New York area since 1962. In 1972 she went to Spain to visit a prehistoric cave and was profoundly influenced by the art she saw there. Her experience there led her to reexamine her life and her marriage to the poet Armand Schwerner. When she returned to the United States they divorced and she decided to pursue a new life dedicated to her artistic talents. Her first performance upon her return from Spain was called *Fish-Joy* and was about her thoughts and experiences in the cave. Her experience in the cave also inspired her to found the White Mask Theatre. In May, 1978 she took on a new name to symbolize her rebirth and new life. She chose the name Janais to honor both Janis Joplin and Anaïs Nin. Holmes has two sons, Adam and Ari Schwerner.

Scope and Content Note

The Doloris Holmes Papers consist of correspondence, manuscripts, clippings, promotional flyers, programs, photographs and printed material reflecting her career and interests.

Includes material on specific productions of the White Mask Theatre such as *Fish-Joy* and on women in the arts. A particular focus is Anaïs Nin; the collection contains photocopies of her letters to Holmes and a typescript of Holmes interview with Nin for the Archives of American Art. Also included is a copy of Holmes' fictionalized autobiography, *Lady of the Grape Arbor*, published by White Mask Press in 1993 and an annotated script she wrote entitled, *Searching for the Women of the Left Bank* in 1995.

Organization

- Series I: History of the White Mask Theatre
- Series II: Personal Papers
- Series III: Correspondence
- Series IV: Writings and Project of Doloris Holmes
- Series V: White Mask Theatre Publicity
- Series VI: Anaïs Nin
- Series VII: Photographs

Series Descriptions/Container List

Series I: History of the White Mask, 1969-1989

3 folders

Chronological

Papers organized by Doloris Holmes and documenting the history of the White Mask Theatre.

- b. 1 f. 1 Papers / Doloris Holmes, 1969-1980
1 folder
History of White Mask Theatre, Before and Beginning, Book I arranged by Holmes and contains clippings, programs, photographs, correspondence and other papers.
- b. 1 f. 2 Papers / Doloris Holmes, 1971-1989
1 folder
History of White Mask, Book II arranged by Holmes and contains programs, correspondence, clippings and photographs.
- b. 1 f. 3 Papers / Doloris Holmes, 1981-1989
1 folder
White Mask Theatre, Book III arranged by Holmes and contains programs, clippings, correspondence, photographs and writings.

Series II: Personal Papers, 1967-1994

1 folder
Miscellaneous personal papers, including Holmes' resume, reflect her career including her involvement in the visual arts. Includes material on her former husband, Armand Schwerer.

- b. 1 f. 4 Papers / Doloris Holmes, 1967-1994
1 folder

Series III: Correspondence, 1966-1996

1 folder
Correspondence, mostly incoming, to Doloris Holmes.

- b. 1 f. 5 Correspondence "A-Z", 1966-1996
1 folder

Series IV: Writings and Projects of Doloris Holmes, 1970-1995

6 folders
Alphabetical
This series includes the writings of Doloris Holmes. Included are biographical writings as well as poetry, essays and plays.

- b. 1 f. 6 *The lady of the grape arbor* / Doloris Holmes, 1993
1 folder
Inscribed copy of Holmes' fictionalized autobiography with promotional material.

- b. 1 f. 7 *Searching for the women of the Left Bank* / Doloris Holmes, 1995
1 folder
Annotated typescript of a two act play by Holmes. Characters include Djuna Barnes, Caresse Crosby, Anais Nin, Gertrude Stein and Antonin Artaud.
- b. 1 f. 8 *Venus is like a woman with 7 worlds circling inside* / Doloris Holmes, 1988
1 folder
A signed copy of a book of poems, #49 of the original 50.
- b. 1 f. 9 Miscellaneous writings / Doloris Holmes, 1970-1991
1 folder
Holmes' typed manuscripts consisting of poems, essays and ideas.
- b. 1 f. 10 Papers / Doloris Holmes, 1969-1977
1 folder
Proposals [1969-1970] by Doloris Holmes with clippings [1970-1977] about her oxygen utility dome.
- b. 1 f. 11 *The room of the white mask* (Motion picture), 1973-1974
1 folder
Publicity for *The Room of the White Mask*, a film by Doloris Holmes.

Series V: White Mask Theatre Publicity, 1970-1991

- 1 folder
Programs, flyers and press releases for the White Mask Theatre.
- b. 1 f. 12 Publicity / White Mask Theatre (New York, N.Y.), 1970-1991
1 folder

Series VI: Anais Nin Material, 1972-1995

- 3 folder
Biographical materials about Anais Nin. Included are photocopies of correspondence from Nin to Doloris Holmes.
- b. 1 f. 13 Interview / Anais Nin
1 folder
Transcript of an interview with Nin by Doloris Holmes for the Archives of American Art.
- b. 1 f. 14 Correspondence / Anais Nin, 1972-1975
1 folder
Photocopies of letters to Doloris Holmes.

b. 1 f. 15 Clippings / Anaïs Nin, 1977-1995
1 folder
Printed conference material and clippings on Anaïs Nin collected
by Doloris Holmes.

Series VII: Photographs, ca. 1979

1 folder
Performance photographs [1979 and n.d.] from the works of Doloris
Holmes.

b. 1 f. 16 Photographs / Doloris Holmes, ca. 1979
1 folder

Separated Materials

The following videotapes were given to the Theatre on Film and Tape (TOFT):

- A performance of *Dilating Pupils of the Banana Tree*, 1988
- A performance of White Mask Players at Fourth Friday Playwrights, Peggy Deane's NYC, 1988

- One photograph of Janis Joplin (n.d.) was given to the Music Division.
- Programs and clippings [1982-1995] on The Barry Harris Jazz Ensemble were given to the Music Division.