

Robert Rubens:

An Inventory of His Papers in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Rubens, Robert, 1937-1998

Title: Robert Rubens Papers

Dates: 1952-1990

Extent: 7 boxes, 1 oversize folder, 1 galley folder (2.9 linear feet)

Abstract: The papers of Robert Rubens consist of handwritten and typed manuscripts, loose notes and notebooks, printed materials, galley proofs, correspondence, clippings, and photographs.

RLIN Record #: TXRC03-A3

Language: English

Access: Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition: Purchase (R12577), 1992

Processed by: Rebecca Romanchuk, Patti Wardell, 2000; Stephen Mielke, 2003

Repository: [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

Biographical Sketch

Robert Rubens was born in 1937 as Robert Gilbert Ruben--adding the 's' to his name later in life. He attended high school at the Quaker-run Friends Select School in Philadelphia, serving on the school's newspaper and the editorial board for the school's literary magazine. He graduated in 1955, then attended Bard College in New York State. After graduating from Bard he worked for a short period in a Philadelphia book store before moving to London in 1961 to pursue a literary career.

In London Rubens worked as a reader for a publishing firm and as an editor on the *Transatlantic Review*. In 1963 his first short story to appear in print, "Two Weeks beyond Shoreditch," was published in *Winters Tale* 9. That same year he edited an anthology of short stories entitled *Voices* and worked to complete his first novel *The Operator* (1964).

In 1965 Rubens began collaborating with the famed Russian dancer and choreographer Leonide Massine as editor of Massine's autobiography *My Life in Ballet* (1968). He continued to publish short stories and wrote articles and reviews that appeared in *Auction*, *Contemporary Review*, *PEN Broadsheet*, *The Queen Magazine*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, and *Vogue*.

Rubens' second novel, *The Cosway Miniature*, did not appear until 1980, but was soon followed by four more novels: *A Night at the Odeon* (1981), *Artist Unknown* (1985), *A Shadow between Us* (1987), and *North of the Park* (1990).

Rubens died in London of pancreatic cancer in 1998 at the age of 61.

Scope and Contents

The papers of Robert Rubens consist of handwritten and typed manuscripts, loose notes and notebooks, printed materials, galley proofs, correspondence, clippings, and photographs. The papers are organized in two series: I Works, 1952-1990, nd (6 boxes); and II. Other Papers, 1964-1987, nd (1 box). All materials are in English and are generally in good condition.

Series I. Works, 1952-1990, nd

The Works series is divided into two subseries: A. Fiction and B. Non-fiction. The Fiction subseries contains the bulk of the materials in Rubens' papers and includes working notebooks, loose notes, and handwritten and typed manuscripts for five of his six published novels: *The Cosway Miniature* (1980), *A Night at the Odeon* (1981), *Artist Unknown* (1985), *A Shadow between Us* (1987), and *North of the Park* (1990). Material for his first published novel, *The Operator* (1964), consists only of dust jackets and a preliminary leaf. Rubens' first published short story, "Two Weeks beyond Shoreditch" (1963), is documented only with photocopies of two published versions. Also represented are eight other works of varying lengths

and two complete but unidentified pieces.

The Non-fiction subseries consists primarily of drafts and proofs of articles and book reviews, many of which were published in *Contemporary Review* and *PEN Broadsheet* (later *PEN Magazine*). Also present are materials relating to *My Life in Ballet* (1968), an autobiography of the Russian dancer and choreographer Leonide Massine. Rubens collaborated with Massine on the book, and the materials are especially revealing of Rubens' preliminary research. Included are journal entries of Rubens' stay at Massine's home in Naples, Italy, in 1965; letters between Massine and Rubens giving details of Massine's life; and ballet programs, photographs, and newspaper clippings relating to Massine's work. The manuscript for the autobiography is represented by a handwritten draft of only one chapter, although related notes are located in Series II. Other Papers under the heading "Notes and Notebooks." Of particular note in the Massine material is a 1960 choreography script for his *Comedia Umana*, and Massine's 1952 synopsis and notes for the ballet *Donald of the Burthens*. These are also the earliest dated materials in Rubens' papers, with the majority of items dating from the mid 1960s to the late 1980s.

Materials are arranged alphabetically in both subseries. Handwritten notes and manuscripts drafts similar to those in the Works series are also found with the notes and notebooks located in Series II.

Series II. Other Papers, 1964-1987, nd

The majority of Series II is comprised of five notebooks containing handwritten outlines, drafts, and notes related to various Rubens works. Included are materials for unidentified and unpublished pieces. Each notebook is undated and contains writings for more than one work. Several works, such as *My Life in Ballet*, are represented in more than one notebook.

Also in the series are incoming and a few outgoing letters, mostly related to Ruben's literary works and dating from 1965 to 1987. Rubens' correspondence with Leonide Massine is located in the Works series under *My Life in Ballet*. Correspondence and other materials related to Rubens' involvement with PEN is filed in Series II under the PEN heading. Arrangement in the series is alphabetical by subject heading.

Series I. Works, 1952-1990, nd

Subseries A. Fiction, 1963-1990, nd

Artist Unknown (1985) [working title *The Blue Mini*]

Handwritten manuscript fragments and notes, nd **Location 1.1**

Handwritten manuscript, nd **Location 1.2-4**

Typed manuscript with corrections, nd **Location 1.5**

Page proofs and layouts, 1984 **Location 1.6**

The Cosway Miniature (1980) [working title *Bonnie and Clive*]

Handwritten manuscript fragments and notes, nd **Location 2.1;**
of

Typed manuscript fragments with corrections, nd **Location 2.2**

Typed manuscript with corrections, nd **Location 2.3**

Typed synopsis with corrections, nd **Location 2.4**

Page proofs with corrections, nd

"Country Cousin"

Handwritten manuscript fragments, nd **Location 2.5; of**

Composite manuscript, nd **Location 2.5**

Typed manuscript with corrections, nd

Carbon copy manuscript with corrections, nd

"Day of the Wedding"

Typed manuscript fragment with corrections, nd **Location 2.6**

"For Those Who Believe"

Typed manuscript with corrections, nd **Location 2.7**

Carbon copy with corrections, nd

"Foreign Ground"

Typed manuscript with corrections, nd	Location 2.8
"In the Bush"	
Typed manuscript with corrections, nd	Location 2.9
<i>A Night at the Odeon</i> (1981) [working title <i>Blue Movie</i>]	
Handwritten manuscript and notes, nd	Location 2.10
Typed manuscript fragments with corrections, nd	
Typed manuscript with corrections, nd	Location 2.11
Dust jacket layout and biographical note, nd	Location 2.12
<i>North of the Park</i> (1990)	
Notes and clippings, nd	Location 3.1
Handwritten manuscript, nd	Location 3.2-3
Typed manuscript with corrections, nd	Location 3.4-5
<i>The Operator</i> (1964)	
Dust jackets and preliminary leaf, nd	Location 3.6
<i>A Shadow between Us</i> (1987)	
Handwritten manuscript fragment and notes, nd	Location 3.7
Handwritten manuscript, nd	Location 3.8
Typed manuscript fragments with corrections, nd	Location 3.9
Typed manuscripts with corrections, nd	Location 4.1-2
Typed and carbon copy manuscript fragments with corrections, nd	Location 4.3
Carbon copy manuscript with corrections, nd	Location 4.4
Photocopies of typed manuscripts with corrections, nd	Location 4.5-6; 5.1
Photocopy of typed manuscript fragment and handwritten corrections list, nd	Location 5.2

Handwritten and typed synopsis, nd	Location 5.3
Page proof fragments, nd	Location 5.4
"Stolen Matinees"	
Handwritten notes and manuscript, nd	Location 5.5
Typed manuscript with corrections, nd	Location 5.6
Carbon copies of typed synopsis with corrections, nd	Location 5.7
"Tea in a Tooth Mug"	
Composite manuscript fragment with corrections, nd	Location 5.8
Typed and photocopy manuscripts with corrections, nd	Location 5.9
"Too Clever by Half"	
Composite and typed manuscripts with corrections, nd	Location 6.1
"Two Weeks beyond Shoreditch" (1963)	
Photocopy from <i>Winter's Tale</i> 9, 1963	Location 6.2
Photocopy from later reprint, nd	
Unidentified, typed manuscripts with corrections for two short stories, nd	Location 6.3

Subseries B. Non-fiction, 1952-1983, nd

"Ann Jellicoe and Donald McWhinnie," <i>The Transatlantic Review</i> , photocopy, nd	Location 6.4
"The Archduke Louis Salvatore in Majorca," <i>Contemporary Review</i> , v. 233, no.1352, handwritten, typed, and carbon copy manuscript drafts, 1978	
"The Backward Glance--A Contemporary Taste for Nostalgia," <i>Contemporary Review</i> , v. 239, no. 1388, photocopy typescript and galley proof, 1981	
" <i>Edith Wharton, a Biography</i> by R. W. B. Lewis," <i>PEN Broadsheet</i> , no. 2, handwritten, typed, and carbon copy manuscripts with corrections, 1976	
" <i>Emerson and Literary Change</i> by David Porter," <i>PEN Broadsheet</i> , no. 2, carbon copy manuscript, 1979	

"Enquiry: Is the 'Writers in Residence' Scheme Succeeding?" *PEN Broadsheet*, no. 3

Handwritten, typed, and carbon copy manuscripts with corrections, 1977

Location
6.4

Photocopy page proof, 1977

Research materials, 1975-1976, nd

"The King We Lost: *Edward VIII* by Frances Donaldson," handwritten and carbon copy manuscripts with corrections, nd

"*A Little Order* by Evelyn Waugh," *PEN Broadsheet*, no. 5, carbon copy manuscript, 1978

My Life in Ballet (1968)

"Chapter XX: The 1960s," carbon copy manuscript fragment with corrections, nd

Location
6.5

Choreography script for *Comedia Umana*, 1960

Synopses and notes for *Donald of the Burthens*, 1952

Notes, clippings, and ballet programs

Photographs (10), nd

Location 6.6

Correspondence, 1965-1968, nd

"Old words, new meanings," typed manuscript with corrections, nd

Location
6.7

"The Pope's Visit to Spain," *Contemporary Review*, v. 242, no. 1406, 1983

Handwritten, typed, and photocopy manuscripts with corrections, nd

Location
6.7

Galley proof, 1983

Location gf

"Power and order: *Henry Adams and the Naturalist Tradition in American Fiction* by Harold Kaplan," photocopies of typed manuscript with corrections, nd

Location
6.7

"A Prince of Our Disorder: *The Life of T. E. Lawrence* by John E. Mack," *PEN Broadsheet*, no. 3, 1977

Typed and carbon copy manuscripts with corrections, nd

Location
6.7

Photocopy page proof, nd

"Profile: Denton Welch (1915-1948)," *PEN Broadsheet*, no. 4, 1977

Eric Oliver interview typescript, 1977

Location 6.7

Handwritten notes and manuscript, 1977

Typed and carbon copy manuscript with corrections, 1977

"Profile: Elizabeth Bowen," *PEN Broadsheet*, no. 2, handwritten, typed and carbon copy manuscripts with corrections, 1976

"*Ronald Firbank, Memoirs and Critiques* edited by Mervyn Horder," *PEN Broadsheet*, no. 4, typed and carbon copy manuscripts with corrections, 1977

"Sherlock Holmes revisited," *Contemporary Review*, v. 235, no. 1362, 1979

Handwritten, typed and carbon copy manuscripts with corrections, 1979

**Location
6.7**

Galley proof, 1979

Location gf

"*The Soul's Gymnasium and Other Stories* by Harold Action," *PEN Broadsheet*, no.13, photocopy typed manuscript, 1982

**Location
6.7**

"Stephen Spender speaks to PEN," *PEN Broadsheet*, no. 2, handwritten and carbon copy manuscript with corrections, 1976

"A Taste of Broadway," *The Sunday Telegraph*, clipping, 1962

"Television in the 1980's--The Medium in Maturity," *Contemporary Review*, v. 211, no. 1402, photocopy typed manuscript with corrections, 1982

"Theatres in Hammersmith," *Contemporary Review*, v. 235, no. 1367, 1979

Carbon copy manuscript with corrections, 1979

Location 6.7

Galley proof, 1979

Location gf

"T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion*--Forty years later," *Contemporary Review*

Handwritten, carbon copy and photocopy typed manuscripts with corrections,
nd

**Location
6.8**

Galley proof, nd

Location gf

The Unknown Majorca

Rubens, Robert, 1937-1998

Handwritten notes, nd

Location 6.8

Typed synopsis and book proposals, nd

"The Young Writers' Festival at the Royal Court Theatre," *Contemporary Review*, v. 234, no. 1361, 1979

Research materials and notes, 1979, nd

Location 7.1

Handwritten, typed, and carbon copy manuscripts with corrections, nd

Galley proof, 1979

Location gf

Unidentified, typed manuscript with annotations, nd

Location 7.2

Series II. Other Papers, 1964-1987, nd

Correspondence

Incoming literary correspondence, 1973-1987 **Location 7.3**

Outgoing literary correspondence, 1977

Incoming personal correspondence, 1965-1978, nd

Outgoing personal correspondence, nd

Notes and notebooks

Handwritten notes on various subjects, nd **Location 7.4**

[Notebook 1], includes drafts for *A Night at the Odeon*, a review of Mervyn Horder's *Ronald Firbank: Memoirs and Critiques*, and a listing of Rubens' short stories, nd **Location 7.5**

[Notebook 2], includes drafts for a review of Donat Gallagher's *A Little Order: A Selection from His Journalism / Evelyn Waugh* and *The Unknown Majorca*, nd **Location 7.6**

[Notebook 3], includes drafts for "Old Words, New Meanings" and a review of Mervyn Horder's *Ronald Firbank: Memoirs and Critiques*, nd **Location 7.7**

[Notebook 4], includes notes for *My Life in Ballet*, a biography of Antoine Watteau, and a draft for a review of Giorgio Bassani's *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, nd **Location 7.8**

[Notebook 5], include drafts for *A Shadow between Us*, a review of Muriel Spark's *Mandelbaum Gate*, a review of Iris Murdoch's *The Red and the Green*, an unidentified short story and several unidentified reviews, and notes for *My Life in Ballet* and a biography of Antoine Watteau, nd **Location 7.9**

[Notebook 6], includes notes for *My Life in Ballet*, Gerard de Nerval, and "Mr. F," nd **Location 7.10**

Subject files

Clippings, 1964-1978, nd **Location 7.11**

PEN

Correspondence, 1976-1978 **Location 7.11**

Brochures and clippings, 1976-1977

Rubens, Robert, 1937-1998

Postcard and receipt, 1977, nd

Index of Correspondents

Names in **bold** appear in the RLIN record.

- Able, Betty--7.10
- Anderson & Shepard--6.5
- Bachman & Turner--7.10
- Boas, Pamela--7.10
- B.T. Batsford Ltd.--7.10
- Chevalier, Jean-Louis--7.10
- Clancier, Georges Emmanuel, 1914- --7.11
- Collins?, Norman--7.10
- *Contemporary Review*--7.10
- Cooper, Lettice Ashley--7.10
- David Higham Associates--7.10
- "Donald"--6.5
- Elstob, Peter, 1916- --7.11
- *Encounter*--7.10
- English Centre of International PEN--7.11
- Farmer, David--7.10
- Friends Select School (Philadelphia, Pa.)--7.10
- Harry Ransom Center--7.10
- MacLean, A. D.--7.10
- Macmillan & Co.--7.10
- **Massine, Leonide, 1896-** --6.5
- McN_ --7.10
- Middletune Graphics--7.10
- National Assoc. of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies--7.10
- Oliver, Eric--7.10
- PEN Club Français--7.11
- Paterson, Elizabeth--7.11
- Pullein-Thompson, Josephine--7.11
- Szgnowski?, David--7.10
- Tatton-Brown, Anthea--7.10
- Tavernier, René--7.10-11
- Thwaite, Anthony--7.10
- Tuite, Simon--7.10
- Wade, Rosalind--7.10-11
- West, Anthony--7.10