

Spalding Gray:

A Preliminary Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Gray, Spalding, 1941-2004
Title:	Spalding Gray Papers
Dates:	1959-2005, undated
Extent:	49 document boxes, 3 serial boxes, 1 oversize box (osb) (20.58 linear feet), and 3 electronic files (60 MB)
Abstract:	The papers of author, monologist, and actor Spalding Gray are rich in the materials Gray used to develop his on-stage improvisational monologues and resulting literary works. Included are performance notebooks, journals, notes and drafts for monologues, poetry, speeches, plays, and published and unpublished works, as well as a small amount of correspondence.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection No. 5188
Language:	English
Access:	Open for research. Audio and video recordings transferred to other Ransom Center departments require advanced notice for access in the Center's Reading and Viewing Room. To check on the access status and request use of these recordings, please contact the Center before arrival: reference@hrc.utexas.edu To request access to electronic files, please email Reference .
Restrictions on Use:	Certain restrictions apply to the use of electronic files. Researchers must agree to the Materials Use Policy for Electronic Files before accessing them. Original computer disks and forensic disk images are restricted. Copying electronic files, including screenshots and printouts, is not permitted.

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchase and gift, 2010 (2010-06-11-GP)
Processed by:	Matt Stine, Stephen Cooper, 2011 Born digital materials processed, arranged, and described by Chance Adams and Brenna Edwards, 2015-2022.

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

Scope and Contents

The papers of author, monologist, and actor Spalding Gray are rich in the materials Gray used to develop his on-stage improvisational monologues and resulting literary works. Included are performance notebooks, journals, notes and drafts for monologues, poetry, speeches, plays, and published and unpublished works, as well as a small amount of correspondence. The materials date from 1959 to 2004, with the bulk dating from the 1970s through the 1990s. The papers are arranged in three series: I. Literary and Performance Activities, 1964-2003; II. Correspondence, 1959-2005; and III. Personal and Career Related, 1974-2002.

The Literary and Performance Activities series is divided into three subseries: A. Published Works, 1981-1999; B. Unpublished Works, 1974-2001; and C. Notebooks, 1964-2003. Materials for *Impossible Vacation* (1992) make up the majority of Subseries A., with items spanning most of the creative process including notebooks, an outline, handwritten excerpts, and progressively more polished drafts culminating in photocopied sections of the published work with corrections throughout. The same types of materials are present for other works, including *Gray's Anatomy* (1993); *It's a Slippery Slope* (1997); *Life Interrupted* (2005); *Monster in a Box* (1992); *Morning, Noon and Night* (1999); *A Personal History of the American Theater* (1984); *Seven Scenes from a Family Album* (1981); and *Sex and Death to the Age 14* (1986).

Subseries B. includes a synopsis and drafts of the unfinished novel *Fear of Fear* as well as short story drafts. Gray sometimes incorporated these short stories into published works, and they are often the further development of a monologue performance. Also in this series are notes and typescripts of some monologues, mostly handwritten drafts of poetry, playscripts for Cello, Crossword, and Down in Heaven, speech typescripts, and notes and fragments related to unidentified works.

The bulk of Series I. is in Subseries C. The handwritten performance notebooks, heavily revised and annotated, are often the template for Gray's live performances, and the journals provide an unvarnished look into his daily thoughts and life. Both forms of notebook span from early in his career to a year before his death, and both provide deep insight into the development of his monologues and published works.

The correspondence in Series II. is mostly incoming with only a few letters from Gray to primarily personal acquaintances. Fan mail makes up the majority of the letters and is either in response to Gray's requests for audience feedback or correspondence from people who were moved by one of his performances. Also in this series are two form letter templates sent by Gray to family, friends, and acquaintances informing them he is either too overwhelmed by life or too busy working on a novel to reply.

The materials in Series III. include many newspaper and magazine clippings that document Gray's career from the 1970s-2000s, as well as some publicity photos, publishing contracts, transcripts of interviews, an Emerson College memory scrapbook, and a psychoanalytic questionnaire filled out by Gray presumably at the request of a psychologist. At the end of this series are magazines and journals containing articles by Gray and interviews, profiles, or reviews of his works and performances.

Related Material

The Ransom Center Film Collection has film related to *Swimming to Cambodia* and the Photography Collection has two portrait photographs of Gray.

Separated Material

Hundreds of audio cassette tapes and VHS tapes containing performances by Gray, from some of his earliest at places like the Kitchen and The Performing Garage in New York City to late career appearances at Lincoln Center, are cataloged separately and housed with the Ransom Center's Audio and Film Collections.

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1006011GP_002

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- Inside Out: The Dalai Lama Interviewed by Spalding Gray (Tricycle: The Buddhist Review, Fall 1991)
- The Late Blooming of a Monogamist (Manhattan File, June 1999)
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- Just Visiting Spalding Gray (Seven Arts, April 1995)
- Lost in Space at the Splendid Café (New York Stories, Summer 2000)
- Party Animal (New York, 11 September 2000)
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Open Secrets (Vanity Fair, June 1992)

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