Suzanne Miller
Papers, 1936-1995
1.5 cu. ft.

Processed by
Judith M. Friebert
&
Barbara A. Shirk
March, 1995
Revised November, 1995
Suzanne Miller’s papers, dating from ca. 1936-1995, reflect her career as an actress on television, stage, and screen, and also her gifts as theater director and writer. Her theatrical career and association with a number of eminent artists, actors and directors began in her native Toledo where she worked as an apprentice, and developed further after her move to New York at the age of nineteen. Her activities and associations are documented primarily in the form of correspondence, clippings, programs, photographs, and her own writings. Although far-ranging in scope, the materials primarily provide a glimpse into the personal and professional life of a talented and observant woman who experienced New York’s cultural environment of the 1950’s and 60’s. Much of Miller’s own writing is autobiographical and introspective.

Miller’s friendship with surrealist artist Joseph Cornell is a significant component of the collection. Included are over seventy letters, in photocopied form, written by him to Miller. In addition, there are original letters, collages, etc. from Joseph Cornell to Dorothy Benzian (friend of Suzanne Miller) and other Cornell-related correspondence received by Ms. Benzian. This material would be of great interest to scholars of twentieth century American art.

Miller started to write in New York, mostly in the form of journaling, poetry, and short fiction. After her move to southern California, Miller’s creative energies were almost exclusively devoted to writing, some of it intended for the screen.

There are no restrictions in access to the Miller collection. Any use of the materials for publication requires permission of her family.
Scone and Content

Miller’s papers trace her early life in Toledo, her New York experience, life in southern California, and her last two years in Toledo before her death. Most of the material documents her creative life and personal thoughts. Also reflected in the collection is her personal and professional association with a number of artists, actors, and directors, particularly Steve Allen, Stella Adler, Gladys Vaughan, Joseph Papp, Salome Jens, Anthony Zerbe, and Joseph Cornell. This documentation is primarily in the form of correspondence, clippings, programs, and photographs.

As stated above, Miller also created a considerable body of writing, including short stories, biographical sketches, poems, screen plays and an unfinished novel. Three slightly varying copies of*Gifted Observers*, one of the two screenplays, are included. All of Miller’s writings are unpublished. Her autobiographical novel is in fragments—some of it typed, other parts handwritten (including handwritten versions of the typed pages), and a number of preparatory sketches and notes.

A significant portion of Miller’s collection is the group of over 70 letters from surrealist artist Joseph Cornell, written to her from the late 1950’s until his death in 1972. These letters are in the form of photocopies. Along with these documents is additional information, both published and unpublished, on Cornell and his work that Miller collected. Miller’s own writings on the artist, albeit scant, provide rare insights into Cornell’s life, character, and their relationship; some of this is written as fiction.

There are also numerous original letters, collages, etc. from Cornell and his sister, Betty Benton, which were sent to Dorothy Benzian (Miller’s friend); the collection contains other Cornell-related correspondence received by Ms. Benzian.

The collection includes original letters from drama teacher and actress Stella Adler and director Gladys Vaughan, and one letter from actor Anthony Zerbe. Another important piece of correspondence is a letter from television personality and writer Steve Allen, written to the Canaday Center about his remembrances of Miller after her death. A considerable amount of correspondence from lesser known individuals is also contained within the collection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder Description</th>
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</table>
| 1   | Correspondence (outgoing), 1969-1986  
Correspondence (incoming)  
Joseph Cornell, 1962 (1 of 2)  
Joseph Cornell, 1962 (2 of 2)  
Joseph Cornell, 1964-1966  
Joseph Cornell, 1967-1969  
Joseph Cornell, 1970  
Joseph Cornell, 1971-1972  
Joseph Cornell, (n.d.)  
General, 1953-1994  
Clifford Terry Warner, 1956-1959  
Clifford Terry Warner, 1959-1964  
Re: Suzanne Miller (post-mortem, incl. letter from Steve Allen), 1994-1995  
Correspondence to Dorothy Benzian from:  
Betty Benton (Sister of Joseph Cornell), 1972-1971  
Joseph Cornell, 1972 (1 of 3)  
Joseph Cornell, 1972 (2 of 3)  
Joseph Cornell, 1972 (3 of 3)  
Edward Flower (attorney for Helen Batcheller) and Helen Batcheller (niece of Joseph Cornell), 1973-1975  
Denis R. Hurley (attorney for Betty Benton), 1974-1979  
clippings  
Suzanne Miller, 1955-1994  
Joseph Cornell, 1967-1992  
Others, 1961-1990  
Photographs  
Suzanne Miller, (ca. 1936-1997)  
Others  
Boxes by Suzanne Miller  
Collages by Joseph Cornell  
Programs and Fliers  
Suzanne Miller, 1953-1978  
Joseph Cornell, 1975-1978  
Writings  
Gifted Observors, screenplay (1st version of 3)  
Gifted Observors, screenplay (2nd version of 3)  
Gifted Observors, screenplay (3rd version of 3)  |
### Box-Folder Inventory (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writings (cont.)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31. Miscellaneous writings (Cornell references) (1 of 8)</td>
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<td>32. Miscellaneous writings (2 of 8)</td>
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<td>33. Miscellaneous writings (3 of 8)</td>
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<td>34. Miscellaneous writings (4 of 8)</td>
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<td>35. Miscellaneous writings (5 of 8)</td>
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<td>36. Miscellaneous writings (6 of 8)</td>
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<td>37. Miscellaneous writings (includes screenplay <em>Perils of Zenobia</em>) (7 of 8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>38. Miscellaneous writings (school papers) (8 of 8) 1992-1994</td>
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#### 2 R-4

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<tr>
<td>1. Novel (1 of 6)</td>
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<td>2. Novel (2 of 6)</td>
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<td>3. Novel (3 of 6)</td>
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<td>4. Novel (4 of 6)</td>
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<td>5. Novel (5 of 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Novel (6 of 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Video Tape and Film</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Miscellaneous (1 of 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Miscellaneous (2 of 2)</td>
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</tbody>
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### NOTE:

- **R-4=Range 4**
- * = Oversize cabinet, drawer 5
- **=Locked cabinet
- ^=Oversize area
Provenance

Suzanne Miller papers were donated by her brothers Alfred Kenngott and Robert Miller in December 1994. They also gave the Center authorization to photocopy the Cornell letters for the purposes of research. On October 26, 1995, Dorothy Benzian (friend of Miller’s) donated original letters, collages, etc. that she received from Joseph Cornell and other materials which relate to Cornell.

The literary property rights and copyrights remain with the donors, excepting the Cornell letters in which case those rights remain with the Cornell family.

Researchers bear full responsibility to acquire necessary permission to publish, although the Canaday Center may intervene in this process at its own discretion.