

**Register of the  
David Cannon Dashiell Papers  
1975-1996**

**Accession number: 2001-36  
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society**

**San Francisco, California**

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## **Descriptive Summary**

### **Title**

David Cannon Dashiell Papers, 1975-1996

### **Accession number**

2001-36

### **Creator**

Dashiell, David Cannon (1952-1993)

### **Extent**

7 Boxes, 5 OS Boxes, 2 cartons, 1 Flat File (18 Linear Feet)

### **Repository**

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society  
San Francisco, California

### **Abstract**

This collection documents the creative works of artist David Cannon Dashiell. This collection includes written, conceptual, and design works produced from the middle 1970s through 1993 when the artist died. Personal items in the collection are limited to a small cache of photographs and slides.

## **Administrative Information**

### **Acquisition**

Donated to the GLBT Historical Society by the Estate of David Cannon Dashiell in 2001 with additions made in 2003, 2015, and 2022.

### **Access**

Collection is open for research.

### **Publication Rights**

The GLBT Historical Society holds copyright to unpublished materials.

### **Preferred Citation**

[Identification of Item], David Cannon Dashiell Papers, 2001-36, The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society.

## **Biography**

David Cannon Dashiell was born on July 4, 1952, in Tokyo, Japan. His parents were Samuel Dashiell and Dorothy Cannon; he was the grandson of author Dashiell Hammett. Dashiell's father was a Cartographer for the United States government and lived, primarily, in South East Asia from the American occupation after the Second World War until the height of the Vietnam War. Dashiell thus spent his childhood abroad until he was returned to the United States in 1968 because his father felt that East Asia was becoming dangerous for non-military Americans. He spent the next several years moving from state to state before finishing his high school years in Florida.

Dashiell attended the California Institute of Arts (CalArts) in Valencia, California, where he worked with John Baldessari. From CalArts he received a BFA in 1974 and an MFA in 1976. After graduation, Dashiell moved to Los Angeles and worked at an architecture firm. While establishing himself in the field of graphic and industrial design, Dashiell sought to further explore his sexuality and felt San Francisco would be the ideal place in which to do that. He moved to the City in the early 1980s.

He resumed working as an artist in the context of the spreading AIDS epidemic and, in particular, his sense that he might be infected with the virus (at a point in time when HIV testing was not yet available). Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, Dashiell was a productive and respected conceptual artist; he focused on themes related to the AIDS epidemic, including sexuality, disease, medicine, and apocalyptic symbolism. His works were exhibited at many galleries across the country including Beyond Baroque in Venice, California, and the New Langton Arts in San Francisco. In 1993, he received the prestigious Adaline Kent Award from the San Francisco Art Institute. He died from AIDS on 30 June 1993, just a few days prior to his 41st birthday. His works are included in many private collections as well as the San Francisco MOMA, University Art Museum Berkeley, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

## **Scope and Content**

The David Cannon Dashiell Collection was donated to the GLBT Historical Society by the artist's estate. The Collection includes a wide sampling of the artist's work. Included in the collection are writing samples (e.g. poetry, plays, and scripts), photographs and slides of the artist's visual/conceptual work, printed materials detailing video and architectural works, and student works made during Dashiell's time as a student at CalArts. In addition to the many slides and photos representing the artwork, the collection includes personal photos of the artist's friends and family. The collection further includes a number of exhibition catalogs and brochures from his various shows as well as published features and reviews of his work. Very few personal papers are included in the collection. The Collection also includes creative and personal materials belonging to Lewis DeVries, Dashiell's partner during the last two years of his life. The collection is divided into 5 series: 1. Overview and Personal Information; 2. Creative Works; 3. Visual Items; 4. Student Work; and 5. Lewis DeVries Materials.

## Related Material at the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Historical Society

2001-37, *Habiliment* painting, GLBT Historical Society

### Collection Contents

A copy of the collection register is kept in the first box of the collection (1/0).

#### Series 1. Overview and Personal Information, 1981-1996

2 Boxes, 1 Carton

This series includes material dealing mostly with the artist and his work, including a resume, a short artist biography, a few correspondence items, and the artist's portfolio. Feature articles, reviews, and listings also are included in this series. One folder contains a few items that seem to be simply unrelated items from the artist's estate, including a "whoopee cushion," a torn book label, and several pieces of scrap paper. Also included in this series are grant applications and letters of recommendation.

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>	
1/1	Biographical Information	1992-1993
1/2	Death Notice	1993
1/3	Inventory list of Artist's Estate	1996
1/4	Personal Telephone Directory	1992
1/5	Mailing Lists	1992
8/4	Personal photographs and documents	1958-1993
C2/5	End of life ephemera from Sono Osato	1991-1993
1/6-1/8	Correspondence	
1/6	Housing	1993
1/7	Party Invitations	1981, 1991, 1992
1/8	Miscellaneous	1992-1993
1/9-1/11	Grants	
1/9	Applications	1991-1992
1/10	Letters of Support	1992-1993
1/11	Grants Received	1992-1993
1/12	Portfolio	1992
1/13	Insurance and Inventory of Art Works	1992-1993
1/14	Miscellaneous Items	n.d.
1/15-1/22	Feature Articles and Reviews	
1/15	<i>Artforum</i> , "Reviews"	1993
1/16	<i>Outlook</i> , "Situation"	1991
1/17	<i>Outlook</i> , "Healing Arts"	1992
1/18	<i>Shift</i> , "David Cannon Dashiell"	1990
1/19	<i>Venice Magazine</i> , "Art Galleries"	1991

1/20	<i>Visions Art Quarterly</i> , “Alternative Opportunities: A Report from the Bay Area”	1989
1/21	<i>Visions Art Quarterly</i> , “Showcase”	1991
1/22	Miscellaneous Articles	1989-1990
C2/2	Press clippings	1990-2005
1/23-1/24	Art Exhibition Flyers and Catalogs	
1/23	Folder A	1988-1993
1/24	Folder B	1987-1996
8/2	Show announcements	1988-2010
8/3	Posthumous vitae and reviews	circa 1990-2015

## Series 2. Creative Works, 1975-1993

3 Boxes, 3 OS Boxes, 1 Carton

This series contains the extant records of Dashiell’s creative work. This series contains items covering an approximately 20-year period. Dashiell’s creative output included: written work, conceptual work, and design projects. Note: Boxes 6, 7, and 10 are oversize boxes.

### **Box/Folder    Contents**

2/1-2/6	Written Works	
2/1	“Get Your Rocks Off” articles, <i>California Voice</i>	1983
2/2-2/4	Poetry	
2/2	1982	
2/3	1983	
2/4	1984	
2/5	Prose	n.d.
2/6	“An Imaginary Manifesto,” <i>Mirage #4</i>	1993
2/7-3/1	Conceptual Works	
2/7	“16 Plays”	1975-1977
2/8	Drawings Notebook	1989
2/9-2/11	“Invert, Oracle”	
2/9	Catalog	1989
2/10	Fourth Draft	1988
2/11	Fifth Draft	1989
11/3	“Invert, Oracle” cont.	
11/3	“Invert, Oracle” chart	1989
2/12-3/1	“Queer Mysteries”	
2/12	Exhibition Information and Description	1993
2/13	Programs	1993
2/14	Miscellaneous	1992-1993
3/1	Box #0744	1993
C2/3	Exhibition descriptions	1993
3/2-3/4	Design Works	
3/2	Buckler Residence and Furniture	n.d.
3/3	Dolor Residence Specs	n.d.

3/4	Graphic Design Projects	n.d.
	Design Works cont.	
8/1	Olympian Cowboys ephemera	1990
C2/4	Invitation to Memorial for Barry Allen Byfor	1990
6/1-6/4	Drawings	
6/1	Portrait of John Donahue	1985
6/2	Portrait of David Freedman	1985
6/3	Portrait of Steve Chivers	1985
6/4	Portrait of Carolyn Kemp	1985
11/1	Early pictograph drawings	circa 1975
11/2	“Behaviorist Religion”	1979
C2/1	A Lover’s Discourse journal	1984
7/1-7/9	Oversize Materials	
7/1	“AIDS: The Artists’ Response,” Sherman Gallery	1999
7/2	Ethan Wagner (Logo Original)	n.d.
7/3	Wanderers Elevation (Layout)	n.d.
7/4	“Queer Mysteries” Layout (Ads, Design)	1993
7/5	“Queer Mysteries” Exhibition Elevation	1993
7/6	“Queer Mysteries” Poster Design	1993
7/7	Posters: “(Studies for) A Lover’s Discourse” (1) and “Olympian Cowboys” (The Lab Theatre) (3)	n.d.
7/8	Doler House, “Big Tree Manor,” Blueprints (diazotypes)	
10/1	Oversize Materials cont.	
10/1	Portrait of Barry Byford mixed media art	1982
Flat File 1	“A Lover’s Discourse” elevations	1984
Rolled item 1	“Olympian Cowboys” cartoons	1990

### Series 3. Visual Items, 1975-1993

3 Boxes

This series includes over 1000 photographs and slides. The majority of the visual material documents Dashiell’s various creative projects. Also included in this series are slides and photographs of friends and family as well as photographs and slides of Dashiell’s visit to Europe.

#### **Box/Folder    Contents**

4/1	London and Amsterdam	n.d.
4/2	Florence and Venice	n.d.
4/3	Rome, Pompeii, and Florence	n.d.
4/4	Paris	n.d.
4/5-4/8	Pompeii Frescos (detail), Mounted Color Photos	
4/5	Folder A	n.d.
4/6	Folder B	n.d.
4/7	Folder C	n.d.
4/8	Folder D	n.d.

5/1	Identification Cards	1975, 1992
5/2	Personal Photos and Slides	n.d.
5/3	Barry Byford Family Photos	n.d.
5/4	"Carrie" Slides	n.d.
5/5	1993 March on Washington Slides	1993
5/6	Doler House, "Big Tree Manor"	1989
5/7	Bush Street Apartment	n.d.
5/8	Saturn, Rings, and Moons Slides	n.d.
5/9	"Invert Oracle" Exhibition Slides	1989
5/10	"Queer Mysteries" Exhibition Slides	1993
5/11	Inventory of Artist's Estate Photos and Slides	1985-1993
9/1	Miscellaneous photographs – erotica and creative	n.d.
9/2	Miscellaneous erotica slides	circa 1980-1990
9/3	Personal photo album (red)	n.d.
9/4	Personal photo album (white)	n.d.

#### **Series 4. Student Work, circa 1970-1976**

1 Carton, 2 Oversize Box

This series includes artistic works created by Dashiell during his time as a BFA and MFA student at Cal Arts.

#### **Box/Folder    Contents**

C1	Audiovisual materials (16mm film, ½" video tape, ¼" audiotape)	circa 1975
11/5	Cal Arts student work – miscellaneous [1]	1972-1973
12/0	Film and Performance Descriptions	circa 1976
12/1	Tropism Drawing	circa 1975
12/2	Habit Ritual	circa 1975
12/3	Self Portrait with Cat	circa 1970-1975
12/4	Cal Arts student work – watercolor and mixed media	1973
12/5	Cal Arts student work – drawings	1972-1973
12/6	Cal Arts student work – miscellaneous [2]	circa 1970-1976
12/7	Cal Arts student work – miscellaneous [3]	circa 1970-1976
12/8	Cal Arts student work – miscellaneous [4]	circa 1970-1976
12/9	Cal Arts student work – miscellaneous [5]	1974
12/10	Cal Arts student work – miscellaneous [6]	1974

## Series 5. Lewis DeVries Materials, circa 1900-1994

1 Carton

This series includes the architectural designs, personal and family photographs, and schoolwork of Dashiell's partner, Lewis DeVries. DeVries was Dashiell's partner for the last two years of his life, and died 14 months after Dashiell. He was an interior designer, architect, and porn star.

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>	
C2/6	Photographs and ephemera	1959-1994
C2/7	Miscellaneous plans [1]	n.d.
C2/8	Miscellaneous plans [2]	n.d.
C2/9	Miscellaneous plans [3]	n.d.
C2/10	Miscellaneous plans [4]	n.d.
C2/11	Miscellaneous plans [5]	n.d.
C2/12	Miscellaneous plans [6]	n.d.
C2/13	Bob's retreat plans	1988
C2/14	Truswell/Scott new design	n.d.
C2/15	Townhouse II and studies	n.d.
C2/16	Townhouse II	n.d.
C2/17	Thesis – Condos II	n.d.
C2/18	Back to back central entry court plans	n.d.
C2/19	Three flats	n.d.
C2/20	Portland two flat – renovation study	n.d.
C2/21	Village deli	n.d.
C2/22	Backyard retreat	n.d.
C2/23	Berkeley gate project outline	n.d.
C2/24	Modular units – country house study and factory photos	n.d.
C2/25	Townhouse III and project outline	n.d.
C2/26	Retreat house modular design	n.d.
C2/27	Ephemera	circa 1987
C2/28	Work references	1974
C2/29	Senior project – residential	1986
C2/30	Interior design photographs	circa 1990
C2/31	Rendering class slides	circa 1985
C2/32	Conceptual design projects sides	circa 1985
C2/33	Miscellaneous slides [1]	circa 1985
C2/34	Miscellaneous slides [2]	circa 1985
C2/35	Rendering examples	circa 1985
C2/36	Miscellaneous design photographs	circa 1985
C2/37	Personal photographs [1]	circa 1900-1990
C2/38	Personal photographs [2]	circa 1930-1980
C2/39	Personal photographs [3]	circa 1955
C2/40	Personal photographs [4]	1937, 1970
C2/41	Personal memorabilia	circa 1955-65
11/13	Oversize drawings	n.d.