

The Arquivos, Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives.



Mirha-Soleil Ross fonds

<https://arquivos.andornot.com/en/permalink/descriptions17849>

Collection: Archives

Material Type: Textual records
Moving image
Sound recording
Graphic material

Date Range: 1990–2008

Part Of: Mirha-Soleil Ross fonds

Creator: Mirha-Soleil Ross

Fonds Number: F0033

Physical Description: 172 cm of textual records
139 VHS
95 Audio cassettes
60 7" vinyl records
29 posters
approx. 25 photographs
23 Beta
14 Video 8
13 Hi8
10 ¼" open reels
8 CDs
3 U-matic
1 MiniDV
1 DVD

Extent: 1.72 m

Physical Condition: Some video tapes have degraded in their condition. Overall the textual material is in good condition, however some receipts have faded significantly.

History /

Biographical:

Mirha-Soleil Ross is a transsexual artist, activist, and sex worker best known for her video and performance art, and her role as editor of the zine GenderTrash from Hell.

Ross was born in and spent her childhood in a working class francophone neighborhood of Montréal. In the late eighties, she attended Université du Québec à Montréal for theatre studies, and began working in the sex industry under the names Jeanne B and Janou. She began documenting her experiences in sex work with video diaries at this time, and it is from this period that her first extant film, "Adventures in Tucking with Jeanne B," originates.

Ross moved to Toronto in the early nineties, by which time she was living and working openly as a transsexual woman. Before long, Ross and her partner Xanthra Phillipa MacKay began a period of intense activism and artistic output motivated by their experiences as trans women. This included the publication of four issues of GenderTrash From Hell -- a fiercely political zine that championed the rights of multiply marginalized groups like trans sex workers and trans prisoners and often included explicitly sexual creative work submitted by trans people -- as well as the documentary film "Gender Troublemakers." Through the latter part of the nineties, Ross continued her work in film and performance, often in collaboration with her partner Mark Karbusicky. With support from Karbusicky and Mackay, Ross produced the first Counting Past Two film festival in 1997 in order to feature films and other creative work by transsexual and transgendered people.

In 1997 Ross also founded and served as the first coordinator for MEAL-TRANS at the 519 Community Centre, a "social services program for low income and street-active transsexual and transgendered people" which included a weekly drop-in vegan meal (Vegan Voice 10). While all of her creative work generally addresses some aspects of trans experience, some of her films also serve a more clearly educational goal, such as "Madame Lauraine's Transsexual Touch" (2001) -- a sexually explicit film produced in collaboration with Viviane Namaste and Monica Forrester in order to educate the clients of trans sex workers on safer sex practices. As longtime vegan, Ross's dedication to animal rights influences the entirety of her oeuvre, but is particularly visible in films such as "G-SPrOuT" (2000), the film/performance piece "Yapping Out Loud" (2002) and her work hosting the "Animal Voices" radio program on CIUT 89.5. When Ross was given the position of Grand Marshall in the 2002 Toronto Pride Parade, she used the opportunity to celebrate the previous 20 years of actions by the Animal Liberation Front (Vegan Voice 10), as documented in her film "Proud Lives."

Ross returned to the Montreal, Quebec, area in 2008, where she continues to reside.

Scope and Content:

The fonds consists of materials related to Mirha-Soleil Ross' time living in Toronto, from the early 1990s until 2008, and include published work and drafts in multiple formats, correspondence, press materials, notes, financial records, and clippings. These materials document several aspects of Ms. Ross' life and work, including her activism, art-practice, community outreach, sex work, and interviews, as well as representing the type of media she herself was consuming and which in turn informed her work. Records are mostly focused on Toronto, Montreal, and Canada.

Storage Location: /01-/06 : C.02.02.01
/07-/12 : C.02.02.02
/13-/15 : C.02.02.03
AV 6.4-6.6

Copyright:	<p>All material in the collection may be accessed by researchers, but three different kinds of access restrictions have been placed on what researchers may do with these materials.</p> <p>Additionally, researchers should be aware that the names of trans people who appear in the collection may no longer be in use (e.g. pre-transition names, nicknames or otherwise). Researchers should use great discretion to ensure the protection of and respect for people's privacy. In particular, researchers should not use the former names of individuals in these instances, and should ensure they use the name which respects the current/most recent (e.g. at the time of death) name used by the individual. Exceptions may arise, for example, in the case of artistic/performance names and personas.</p> <p>Materials are either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) fully open to researchers to view and quote from at will 2) "25 years, no direct quotes": researchers may view the materials but are restricted from direct quotation, naming of subjects, any reproduction or licensing, until 25 years or until death of donor; 3) "50 years, no direct quotes": researchers may view the materials but are restricted from direct quotation, naming of subjects, any reproduction or licensing, for 50 years or until death of donor. <p>Additionally, regardless of Ms. Ross' status, researchers should not identify the full names of others in the collection unless they know that person to be deceased (or can logically assume that they are deceased based on date), they know the person to be a public figure who is out as trans, or until the 25-50 year access restriction period has passed. The folder list indicates how these access restrictions are applied to specific materials in the collection. The finding aid holds additional information for some records.</p>
Arrangement:	<p>Most of the materials were already organized into folders that reflect Ms. Ross's personal filing system, created to maintain records of her finished work and work in progress. In these cases, the original folders have been replaced with new ones but the contents and naming conventions have been kept. However, this arrangement reflects the fact that the donors' actively used and repurposed these materials. Since their filing conventions varied over time, folder titles can be inconsistent, or misleading, and similar or duplicate materials appear throughout the collection. The folders have been re-ordered into series that reflect the focus of Ms. Ross's work. Some loose materials such as notebooks were re-housed in folders during processing.</p> <p>Fonds has been arranged into eight series:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1-Correspondence and Interviews 2-Artwork 3-Activism 4-GenderTrash / GenderPress 5-Clippings 6-Counting Past 2 7-Animal Voices 8-Yapping Out Loud
Description Level:	Fonds
Accession Number:	2008-073, 2017-003