The Carla DeSola Sacred Dance Collection

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2020
Descriptive Summary

Title: The Carla DeSola Sacred Dance Collection
Dates: 1964-2016
Collection Number: GTU 2010-7-01
Extent: 20 linear feet (16 record boxes and 4 5" boxes)
Online items available  https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClG5oWfxeFGjRmxIPahDoxg
Repository: Graduate Theological Union
Berkeley, California 94709
Abstract: The collection documents the career of Carla DeSola and sacred dance: performances, writings, photographs, videos and teaching. She has been a leader and innovator in the sacred dance community since the Sixties.
Language of Material: English
Access
No restrictions.
Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
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Acquisition Information
The collection was donated over time by Carla DeSola. Box 8 (videos) was received in July-August 2010; boxes 1-7 were received 12/20/12; 10 more boxes (9 VHS, some Beta and Sony; 1 photos) were received 3/19/14.
Biography/Administrative History
Carla DeSola (1937 - ) is a leader in sacred dance in the United States. She founded successful sacred dance companies in New York City and the Bay Area. In the Bay Area, she has taught at Pacific School of Religion (PSR), part of the offerings by the Center for Art, Religion and Education (CARE). In 2008, she was declared a “Living Legacy” during the Sacred Dance Guild Golden Anniversary Festival. DeSola grew up in New York City in a non-religious Jewish family. She attended City College of New York and received a diploma in 1960 from Juilliard School of Music, Department of Dance, where Jose Limon was her major teacher. She continued her study of dance under Valerie Bettis (1919-1982). In 1992, DeSola received her MA from Pacific School of Religion. During the Sixties, she became interested in Catholicism, attending services in Dorothy Day’s Catholic Worker Community. She performed her first sacred dance during a worship service there. In 1974 she founded the Omega Liturgical Dance Company, which became based at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Upon her move to Berkeley, California, in the 1990s, she founded Omega West Dance Company. In 1980, she married Arthur Eaton (1917-2008), a native of the Bay Area and a social worker and psychotherapist. He filmed and videotaped many of the dances in the collection. Since 2014, Sister Martha Ann Kirk, Th.D., Professor of Religious Studies at the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas, has been working on a biography of DeSola. While the biography is still in process, she has promoted DeSola’s influence on sacred dance in modern times through posting biographical materials and sacred dance performances online. A grant from the Center for Art, Religion and Education supported the processing of the collection and the digitization of over 100 VHS tapes.
Scope and Content of Collection
Carla DeSola’s work as dancer, teacher and choreographer is documented. The collection consists of photographs and videos of performances and activities, along with announcements, clippings and ephemera.
Indexing Terms
Dance -- Religious aspects -- Christianity
Liturgics
Religious dance
Prayer
Spirituality
Modern dance -- Study and teaching
Omega Dance Company
Omega West Liturgical Dance Company
Pacific School of Religion
New York, NY
Berkeley, Calif
Dance
Dancer
Choreographer
Professor

DeSola-inventory.pdf