



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

A Finding Aid to the Demi and Arturo  
Rodríguez Papers, circa 1957-2016,  
in the Archives of American Art

Sarah Mundy

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Archives of American Art  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	Archives of American Art
<b>Title:</b>	Demi and Arturo Rodríguez papers
<b>Identifier:</b>	AAA.rodrartu
<b>Date:</b>	circa 1957-2016
<b>Extent:</b>	6.42 Linear feet
<b>Creator:</b>	Rodríguez, Arturo, 1956- Demi, 1955-
<b>Language:</b>	Multiple languages  The collection is in English and Spanish.
<b>Summary:</b>	The papers of Miami painters Demi and Arturo Rodríguez measure 6.42 linear feet and date from 1957 to 2016. The collection documents Arturo Rodríguez's career, travels, and childhood as well as the artwork of Demi, Rodríguez's wife and partner, and their relationship. Included are biographical materials, correspondence, interviews, writings, project and exhibition files, personal business records, printed material, artwork, and photographic materials.

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

The papers were donated by Demi and Arturo Rodríguez in increments from 1997 to 2016.

### Related Materials

Also found in the Archives of American Art is an oral history interview with Demi conducted on November 20, 1997 and an oral history interview with Arturo Rodríguez conducted on November 14, 1997 at Demi and Arturo's home/studio in Miami, F.L. by Juan A. Martínez for the Archives of American Art.

### Processing Information

The collection was processed and a finding aid prepared by Sarah Mundy in 2019.

### Preferred Citation

Demi and Arturo Rodríguez papers, circa 1957-2016. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

## Restrictions

One folder of samples of payments for sales is ACCESS RESTRICTED; use requires written permission. Contact Reference Services for more information.

Use of original papers requires an appointment and is limited to the Archives' Washington, D.C., Research Center. Use of archival audiovisual recordings and born-digital records with no duplicate copies requires advance notice.

## Conditions Governing Use

Authorization to reproduce a photograph of Demi by Ramon Guerrero for the purposes of publication requires written permission from Demi.

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## Biographical / Historical

Demi (1955- ) and Arturo Rodríguez (1956- ) are painters in Miami, Florida.

Demi was born in Camagüey, Cuba. In 1961, her father was executed by the Cuban government. Demi's mother struggled to take care of Demi and her sisters alone and Demi was sent to live with relatives in Puerto Rico in 1962. She came to the U.S. in 1971 where she was able to join her sisters and mother. Eventually Demi settled in Miami in 1978. She attended Miami-Dade College where she studied drama with the Prometeo Theater Group. In 1980, she met Arturo at one of his exhibitions. They married in 1984. Demi worked as a bookkeeper before she knew she could draw and paint. Her first attempts at creating art were in 1984 using a wedding photograph of herself and Arturo as her subject. Her first exhibition was in 1987 at the Cuban Museum in Miami. As she developed as an artist, children became the prime subjects in Demi's paintings. She was the recipient of the Florida State Visual Artist Grant for 1992 to 1993.

Arturo Rodríguez was born in Ranchuelo, Cuba, and showed an interest in art as a small child. Arturo and his family were exiled to Spain in 1971. While in Spain, his visits to see the paintings of Goya and Velázquez at the Prado Museum helped solidify his interest in art. Rodríguez settled in Miami with his family in 1973 where he eventually attended Miami Dade College. Arturo's works are often influenced by his relationship with Demi. In 1995, he created a series of collages using images of Demi as a way to deal with her cancer diagnosis. He has been the recipient of numerous awards including the prestigious Cintas Foundation Fellowship, Florida Arts Council Fellowships, and a Joan Mitchell Foundation grant.

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## Scope and Contents

The papers of Miami painters Demi and Arturo Rodríguez measure 6.42 linear feet and date from 1957 to 2016. The collection documents Arturo Rodríguez's career, travels, and childhood as well as the artwork of Demi, Rodríguez's wife and partner, and their relationship. Included are biographical materials, correspondence, interviews, writings, project and exhibition files, personal business records, printed material, artwork, and photographic materials.

Personal and professional correspondence is with artists, curators, galleries, museums, art historians, and collectors, including Shifra M. Goldman, Cris Hassold, Helen L. Kohen, collectors Judith and Bill Ladner, Minuca Villaverde, and others. Interviews include video and sound recordings of Demi and Arturo discussing lives and artwork, as well as one interview with Carlos Verdecia Jr. about Arturo. Writings include statements on artwork and autobiographical essays, lectures and talks, and notes. Project files

concern the exhibitions *The Rage of Children* (1991), *Walls & Murals: Mike Glier, Arturo Rodríguez & David Wojnarowitz*, and *Far from Cuba*. Other documentation includes a project overview for the Joan Mitchell Foundation, artwork for music album covers, and plans for a retrospective of Demi and Arturo's work that was cancelled due to lack of support.

Personal business records consist of files for donations, financial investments, gallery consignments, receipts, sales lists, and collector information. Printed material includes clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, journal and magazines, posters, programs, and several children's books illustrated by Arturo using the pseudonym Hieronimus Fromm. Artwork includes drawings and comics by Arturo, collages, drawings and sketches, and 30 sketchbooks belonging to Demi and Arturo. Photographic materials depict Demi and Arturo together and with others, Demi and Arturo's home and studio, exhibitions, still lives, travel, and works of art.

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## Arrangement

The collection is arranged as nine series.

- Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1957-2013 (Box 1; 4 folders)
- Series 2: Correspondence, 1978-2015 (Box 1; 0.8 linear feet)
- Series 3: Interviews, 1991-2010 (Boxes 1-2; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 4: Writings, circa 1975-2015 (Box 2; 0.3 linear feet)
- Series 5: Project and Exhibition Files, 1986-2015 (Box 2; 0.8 linear feet)
- Series 6: Personal Business Records, 1988-2012 (Boxes 2-3; 0.4 linear feet)
- Series 7: Printed Material, 1979-2016 (Boxes 3-4, 7, OV 8; 0.5 linear feet)
- Series 8: Artwork, 1963-2016 (Boxes 4-5, 7, OV 8; 1.5 linear feet)
- Series 9: Photographic Material, 1977-2012 (Boxes 5-7; 1.5 linear feet)

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Cuban American artists  
Women artists

Types of Materials:

Drawings  
Interviews  
Sketchbooks  
Sound recordings  
Video recordings

Names:

Goldman, Shifra M., 1926-2011  
Hassold, Cris  
Kohen, Helen L.  
Verdecia, Carlos, 1955-  
Wojnarowicz, David

Occupations:

Painters -- Florida -- Miami

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## Container Listing

### Series 1: Biographical Material, circa 1957-2013

#### *4 Folders (Box 1)*

Biographical materials include documents of Arturo Rodríguez's involvement in Karate and Judo; family histories that contain childhood photographs, notes, and other documents about Demi and Arturo's families; and Arturo's resumes.

Box 1, Folder 1	Childhood Documents, Karate and Judo, 1969-1979
Box 1, Folder 2-3	Family History, circa 1957-2013
Box 1, Folder 4	Resumes, circa 1996-2008

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## Series 2: Correspondence, 1978-2015

### *0.8 Linear feet (Box 1)*

General correspondence is with museums, collectors, artists, friends, galleries, and organizations. Other correspondence is with art historians Alejandro Anreus, Shifra M. Goldman, and Helen Kohen; collectors Judith and Bill Ladner and Mike Thomas; Cris Hassold regarding research on Demi for a book; art dealer Kurt Delbanco; and letters of recommendation for Demi and Arturo.

Box 1, Folder 5-11	General, 1978-2015 Includes a mixture of personal and professional correspondence with friends, collectors, museums, artists, organizations, and galleries.
Box 1, Folder 12	Anreus, Alejandro, 1999-2005
Box 1, Folder 13	Archives of American Art, 1996
Box 1, Folder 14	Delbanco, Kurt, 1986-1988 Kurt Delbanco was instrumental in adding Arturo's artwork to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection. The file also includes one electronic disc.
Box 1, Folder 15	Doctors Regarding Arturo, 2006-2015
Box 1, Folder 16	Friends, 1986-2010
Box 1, Folder 17	Friends to Arturo, 1978-2000
Box 1, Folder 18	Fuentes, Ileana, 1995-2005 Correspondence is regarding a controversial article written by Fuentes.
Box 1, Folder 19	Goldman, Shifra M., 2001-2002
Box 1, Folder 20	Gulf Coast Museum of Art, 2005
Box 1, Folder 21	Hassold, Cris, 1996-2005 Correspondence is regarding a book about Demi.
Box 1, Folder 22	Kohen, Helen L., 2005-2008
Box 1, Folder 23	Ladner, Judith and Bill, 1988-2015 Includes Demi's writings about Judith.
Box 1, Folder 24	Letters of Praise to Arturo, 2008
Box 1, Folder 25-26	Letters of Recommendation for Demi, circa 1995-2014 Includes a recommendation by Emilio Sanchez for Demi's Cintas Fellowship application.
Box 1, Folder 27	Letters of Recommendation for Arturo, 1987-2003
Box 1, Folder 28	Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987-1989 Includes a photograph of Arturo with his artwork.



Box 1, Folder 29      *Revista Encuentro de la Cultura Cubana Magazine, 2002-2005*

Box 1, Folder 30      Thomas, Mike, 2004-2010

Box 1, Folder 31      Villaverde, Minuca, 2011

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## Series 3: Interviews, 1991-2010

### *0.5 Linear feet (Box 1-2)*

The series contains seven electronic discs and five video and sound recordings of interviews with Demi and Arturo by BBC, CNN, Univision, and other media outlets regarding their careers, exhibitions, and Demi's experience with cancer.

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|------------------|--|
| Box 1, Folder 32 | Demi Interviewed by Boston TV Station at Brandeis University, 1998<br><i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i>  |
| Box 1, Folder 33 | Demi Interviewed by Coker College Students, October 25, 1996<br><i>1 Sound cassette</i>  |
| Box 1, Folder 34 | Demi Interviewed for League Against Cancer Institution Promotional Video, May 2001<br><i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i>  |
| Box 1, Folder 35 | Demi Interviewed by Lucy Pereda for Channel 6, 1991<br><i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i>   |
| Box 1, Folder 36 | Demi Interviewed by Megga TV at Arte America Exhibition, March 2008<br><i>1 videodiscs (dvd)</i>   |
| Box 2, Folder 1  | Demi Interviewed by Olga Connor for Radio Marti, July 5, 2003<br><i>1 Sound cassette</i>   |
| Box 2, Folder 2  | Demi Interviewed by Rosie Urango, 2008<br><i>1 electronic discs (cd) (Includes list of other records on disc that may be duplicates of other materials within the collection.)</i><br>The interview is in Spanish. |
| Box 2, Folder 3  | Conversations with Demi, 2010<br><i>1 electronic discs (dvd)</i><br>The conversations are in Spanish.  |
| Box 2, Folder 4  | Arturo Interviewed in BBC Documentary <i>Havana</i> , April 1990<br><i>1 videodiscs (dvd)</i>  |
| Box 2, Folder 5  | Arturo Interviewed by CNN, undated<br><i>1 electronic discs (dvd)</i><br>The interview is in Spanish.  |
| Box 2, Folder 6  | Arturo Interviewed by Univision, May 30, 2010<br><i>1 videodiscs (dvd)</i>   |
| Box 2, Folder 7  | Carlos Verdecia Jr., April 8, 2010<br><i>1 electronic discs (dvd)</i><br>Verdecia, best friend of Arturo, speaks about Arturo's personality.   |

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## Series 4: Writings, circa 1975-2015

### 0.3 Linear feet (Box 2)

Writings consist of Demi and Arturo's autobiographical statements and statements on their artwork; Demi's lectures at the Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart and Brandeis University; statements by Lynette Bosch, Giulio V. Blanc, Helen Kohen, Pedro J. Martinez-Fraga, and Armando Alvarez Bravo about Demi and Arturo's artwork; Demi's notes on the importance of Dr. Michael Karl; and Arturo's notes on painting techniques of the Old Masters.

Box 2, Folder 8-9	Autobiographical, circa 1982-circa 2000
Box 2, Folder 10	Lectures and Talks by Demi, 1998-2015
Box 2, Folder 11-12	Notes, circa 1975-circa 2012 Includes Demi's notes on the importance of Dr. Michael Karl and Arturo's notes on painting techniques from the Old Masters.
Box 2, Folder 13	Statements on Artwork by Arturo, circa 1990-2014 <i>Includes one electronic disc.</i>
Box 2, Folder 14	Statements on Demi's Artwork by Others, circa 2000 Includes statements by Lynette Bosch, Helen Kohen, Giulio V. Blanc, Pedro J. Martinez-Fraga, and Armando Alvarez Bravo.
Box 2, Folder 15	Symposium, <i>Art Against Child Abuse</i> , March 1998 <i>1 videocassettes (vhs)</i>

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## Series 5: Project and Exhibition Files, 1986-2015

### 0.8 Linear feet (Box 2)

The series contains images for the book *The School of Night*; a sketchbook and images for the Caravaggio Project; a report and project overview for Arturo's grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation; artwork, photographs, and correspondence for Arturo's cover art for the Grammy Award winning albums by musician Israel "Cachao" Lopez; and files for the *Walls* mural at the Norton Museum, *Far from Cuba* (1998), and *The Rage of Children* (1991).

Box 2, Folder 16	Book, <i>The School of Night</i> Images Used, 2014 1 electronic discs (cd)
Box 2, Folder 17	Caravaggio Project, Sketchbook and Images, 2008-2009 Includes one electronic disc of images of artwork.
Box 2, Folder 18-20	<i>Far from Cuba</i> (1998), 1998 Includes travel receipts, exhibition catalogs, clippings, and a photographs album.
Box 2, Folder 21	Joan Mitchell Foundation, Project Overview, 2014-2015
Box 2, Folder 22	Music Album Covers, Israel "Cachao" Lopez's <i>Master Sessions</i> , Vol. 1-2, 1994-1995 Includes correspondence with Andy Garcia, who sponsored the albums, and others; photographs and slides of the artwork; paper cut outs of artwork; and notes.
Box 2, Folder 23	<i>The Rage of Children</i> (1991), 1989-1991
Box 2, Folder 24	Retrospective Exhibition (Cancelled), 2011 Includes four electronic discs.
Box 2, Folder 25	<i>Walls</i> , Norton Museum Mural, 1986-1987 Includes photographs of Arturo, Demi, David Wojnarowicz, and Mike Glier during the project; photocopies of drawings; and correspondence.

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## Series 6: Personal Business Records, 1988-2012

### 0.4 Linear feet (Boxes 2-3)

The series contains donation forms for the League Against Cancer; Demi's loan papers for the Art in Embassies Program; financial investment records; travel receipts and schedules for personal and business trips to Spain, France, England, and New York; collector Jorge Pupo; and gallery files that include records for CDS Gallery in New York.

Samples of payments for sales is ACCESS RESTRICTED and is stored separately.

Box 2, Folder 26	Collector, Jorge Pupo, 2006-2010
Box 2, Folder 27	Donations, League Against Cancer, circa 2006
Box 2, Folder 28	Financial Investments, 1998
Box 2, Folder 29	Galleries, CDS Gallery, 1988-1993 Includes one sketchbook.
Box 3, Folder 1-2	Galleries, Various, 1993-2011
Box 3, Folder 3	Loan, Art in Embassies Program, 2003 Includes one electronic disc with images of paintings with the owners.
Box 3, Folder 4-15	Receipts, 1998-2008 Includes receipts for Demi's art materials, exhibitions, and travel to Europe.
Box 3, Folder 16	Sales and Price Lists, 1989-2012
Box 3, Folder 17	Stolen Painting, <i>I Hear the Water Dreaming</i> , 2009
Box 3, Folder 18	Travel Schedules, Italy, 2006
Box MMs038	Samples of Payments for Sales [ACCESS RESTRICTED]

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## Series 7: Printed Material, 1979-2016

*0.5 Linear feet (Boxes 3-4, 7, OV 8)*

Clippings, exhibition announcements and catalogs, magazines and journals, newsletters, posters, and programs featuring Demi and Arturo Rodríguez are in this series. Also included is Arturo's book *Myths in Black and White*, and several children's books that are part of a series illustrated by Arturo under his pseudonym Hieronimus Fromm.

Box 3, Folder 19	Book, <i>Myths in Black and White</i> by Arturo Rodríguez, 1979
Box 3, Folder 20-21	Children's Books Illustrated by Arturo Rodríguez, circa 1980
Box 3, Folder 22-23	Clippings, 1986-2016
Box 7, Folder 1	Clippings, 1993-1997
Box 3, Folder 24-29	Exhibition Announcements and Catalogs, 1987-2016
Box 3, Folder 30	Journals, 1999
Box 4, Folder 1	Magazines, 2003-2004
Box 4, Folder 2	Newsletters, 2000
Box 7, Folder 1	Posters, 2007
Oversize 8	Posters, 2001-2007
Box 4, Folder 3	Program, 1979-1999

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## Series 8: Artwork, 1963-2016

*1.5 Linear feet (Boxes 4-5, 7, OV 8)*

Artwork consists of childhood drawings and comics by Arturo Rodríguez, Demi and Arturo's Christmas card designs, drawings by Arturo to Demi, Demi's first and second painting attempts, painted sketches, loose sketches, and 30 sketchbooks belonging to Demi and Arturo. Preliminary sketches for "A Child that Suffers" and *The School of Night* are also contained within the sketchbooks.

Box 4, Folder 2	Childhood Drawings and Comics by Arturo, 1963-1968
Oversize 8	Childhood Drawings and Comics by Arturo, 1968
Box 4, Folder 5	Christmas Card Designs, 2012
Box 4, Folder 6	Collages, circa 1985
Box 4, Folder 7	Drawings Dedicated to Lorenzo Garcia Vega, circa 2010
Box 4, Folder 8	Drawing, Self-Portrait of Arturo as Gift to Demi, 1984
Box 4, Folder 9	Painting, Demi's First Painting, 1984
Box 4, Folder 10-11	Painted Sketches, circa 1984-2011 Includes Arturo's artwork and Demi's second painting.
Box 4, Folder 12-18	Sketches, 1982-2016
Box 7, Folder 2-3	Sketches and Drawings, 1982-2016 Includes ink drawings by Arturo when he was 17 years old.
Box 4, Folder 19-30	Sketchbooks, circa 1976-2007
Box 5, Folder 1-10	Sketchbooks, 2008-2016
Box 7, Folder 4	Sketchbooks, 2003-2010

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## Series 9: Photographic Material, 1974-2012

### 1.5 Linear feet (Boxes 5-7)

The series includes photographs, slides, 21 electronic discs, and 3 photograph albums of Demi and Arturo's wedding, their home and studio, exhibitions, travel, works of art that include Arturo's collage series *Demi*, and still lifes of toy soldiers by Arturo.

A photograph of Demi by Ramon Guerrero is publication restricted.

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| Box 5, Folder 11    | Albums, Demi and Arturo's Wedding, 1984  |
| Box 5, Folder 12    | Album, <i>Family Portraits</i> Exhibition, 2001  |
| Box 5, Folder 13    | Album, Made for Demi by Jose Asencio, 2008   |
| Box 6, Folder 1-9   | Demi and Arturo, 1980-2012<br>Includes Polaroids, photographs with the musician Bebo Valdés, Demi and Arturo in the Pometeo Theater Group, with children, and others. Also includes artwork by children in a few files and one electronic disc of a tribute to Lorenzo Garcia Vega.    |
| Box 7, Folder 5     | Demi and Arturo, 1980-2012   |
| Box 6, Folder 10-12 | Demi, 1978-2011<br>Includes two electronic discs of childhood and other photographs, a photograph of Demi by Ramon Guerrero, and at the opening of her exhibition <i>One More Day on Earth</i> .<br><br>A photograph of Demi by Ramon Guerrero in folder 11 is publication restricted. |
| Box 6, Folder 13-16 | Arturo, 1974-circa 2005<br>Includes one electronic disc of Arturo's family, photographs of himself with homeless people, at exhibitions, and with others.  |
| Box 6, Folder 17-18 | Home and Studio, 1992-circa 2012<br><i>2 electronic discs (dvd)</i>  |
| Box 6, Folder 19    | Exhibition, Photograph Album of Demi's Exhibitions, 1987-1988  |
| Box 6, Folder 20    | Exhibition, Photograph Album of Demi's First Exhibition at the Cuban Museum, 1987  |
| Box 6, Folder 21    | Exhibition, Scrapbook for <i>Crossings</i> , 1994<br>Along with photographs, the scrapbook also includes printed materials.  |
| Box 6, Folder 22    | Exhibition, <i>All for Love</i> , 2004<br><i>1 electronic discs (cd) (Includes list of contents on disc.)</i>  |
| Box 6, Folder 23    | Exhibition, Various, 2004-2009   |



- 1 videocassettes (vhs-c)*  
*2 electronic discs (dvd)*  
Includes exhibitions at the Gulf Coast Museum, for Arte America, and Arturo's exhibition *Arrivals and Departures*
- Box 6, Folder 24      Still Lifes, circa 1980
- Box 6, Folder 25      Travel, 1994-2008  
Includes a list of trips taken from 1983 to 2008.
- Box 6, Folder 26      Travel, 2009  
*2 electronic discs (dvd)*
- Box 6, Folder 27      Works of Art by Arturo, 1986
- Box 6, Folder 28      Works of Art, Collage Series *Demi* by Arturo, 1993
- Box 6, Folder 29-30      Works of Art by Demi, circa 1995-2010
- Box 6, Folder 31-32      Works of Art, circa 2004-2010  
*9 electronic discs (cd)*  
*1 electronic discs (dvd)*  
Includes images of the Ceramic mural at the home of actor and film producer Nat Chediak and murals at the office of Mike Thomas, footage of Arturo teaching Thomas's daughter to draw, and images from Arturo's web page.
- Box 6, Folder 33      Works of Art by Others, 1979
- Box 6, Folder 34      Others, Bebo Valdés, circa 2005

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