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Donald McKayle's high school era hat.

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# Donald McKayle

Dancing for all Time



The **UCI** Libraries 2018 Fall Exhibit

ON DISPLAY STARTING WEDNESDAY, NOV. 7, 2018

LANGSON LIBRARY MURIEL ANSLEY  
REYNOLDS EXHIBIT GALLERY



# Welcome to the UCI Libraries' 2018 Fall Exhibit!

*Donald McKayle: Dancing for All Time* examines the life and work of the late Donald McKayle, Distinguished Professor of Dance. Named by the Library of Congress and the Dance Heritage Coalition as “one of America’s irreplaceable dance treasures,” McKayle left indelible marks on the dance landscape throughout much of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

The exhibit utilizes the UCI Libraries’ Donald McKayle Papers (non-circulating) in Special Collections & Archives and materials from the performing arts collection in the general library stacks (circulating).

Special thanks to the Claire Trevor School of the Arts for sponsoring the reception décor for the exhibit opening on November 7, 2018.

*Donald McKayle: Dancing for All Time* was curated by Scott Stone, Research Librarian for Performing Arts and Derek Quezada, Outreach and Public Services Librarian, Special Collections & Archives; and was designed by Jen Betonio, Allan Helmick and Sylvia Irving.

The exhibit opening featured an exclusive conversation between:

Dennis Nahat  
THE DONALD McKAYLE LEGACY, Producing Manager and Theatre Ventures International, Founder/President

and

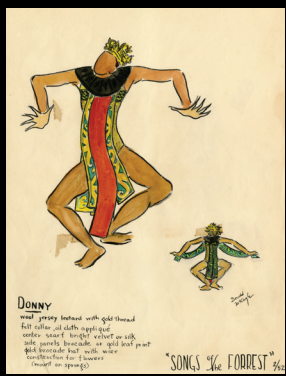
Debbie Blunden-Diggs  
Artistic Director, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company

Moderated by Jennifer Fisher, Associate Professor of Dance, Claire Trevor School of the Arts

This exhibit would not be possible without the consultation of Lea Vivante McKayle, Artistic Director/Executor, THE DONALD McKAYLE LEGACY. The Libraries are grateful for her support.

I hope you enjoy the exhibit and will invite others to come view it!

Lorelei Tanji  
University Librarian



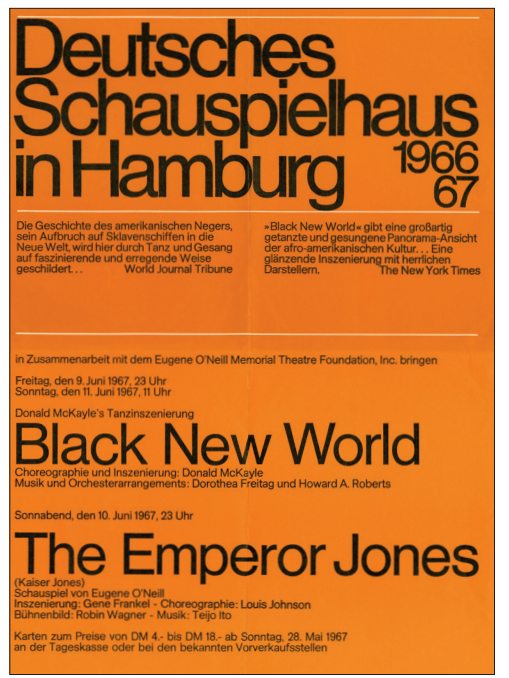
Costume rendering by Donald McKayle from “Songs of the Forest.”

Born in New York City in 1930 to his Jamaican-immigrant parents, McKayle grew up in the racially integrated East Harlem area. Although his parents weren’t in the dance industry, the family relished a joyous life that involved social dancing at parties. As his interests in dance developed, he was regularly exposed to the bustling New York City dance scene of the mid-20th century. After seeing the African-American dancer Pearl Primus perform live when he was a senior in high school, McKayle’s life was transformed by knowing that he needed to be able to move like her.

McKayle grew under the tutelage of esteemed dance figures like Jane Dudley, Sophie Maslow and Jean Erdman, all of the New Dance Group, and modern dance titaness Martha Graham. As his career trajectory advanced, McKayle began to choreograph works and teach his own students. Throughout, McKayle’s own choreographic voice was developing into one that didn’t just create works for movement’s sake, but for a purpose. Many of his works held a figurative mirror up to reflect what he experienced and saw—both good and bad—in American society around him. Even though he was constantly in demand on Broadway, in Hollywood, and on the international stage, McKayle was a dedicated and inspiring teacher to thousands of students both here at UCI and elsewhere. His influence will blossom in the dance-genealogy tree for generations to come.



Like a finely woven tapestry, the primary threads of Dancer, Choreographer, Teacher and Social Advocate—all important aspects of Donald McKayle’s life—come together time after time throughout this exhibit to create a picture that is greater than their sums.



Poster for “Black New World” performances June 9-11 at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg.

## Special Collections & Archives

preserves and provides access to the UCI Libraries’ collections of rare books, manuscripts, photographs and other rare and special material.

Major collections include the Southeast Asian Archive, the University Archives, the Critical Theory Archive, as well as in-depth collections on Orange County and California history, dance, performing arts, 20th century political pamphlets, artists’ and rare books, small press and others.

special.lib.uci.edu