

Stakeholder Interviews and Academic Collections: Expanding the Audience for University Holdings

KRISTEN IEMMA, JULIA RENAUD and NICOLE SINTETOS

Abstract: This presentation will address the research process utilized in the creation of a collecting plan for Brown University's John Hay Library LGBTQ Collection in the Spring of 2018. We, four graduate students in Brown's Public Humanities program, were asked by the Director of the John Hay Library to create a collecting plan for this small, homogenous collection. With this plan, our intention was to shift the collection's focus to represent a multiplicity of queer experiences, including representing more People of Color, a wider range of sexual and gender identities, and greater social and economic diversity. While the tasks undertaken by our group in preparation for the drafting of this plan were numerous, including researching LGBTQ collections at neighboring universities and libraries and engaging with scholarly work to establish strong theoretical underpinnings for our process, a primary point of focus was stakeholder interviews. In addition to more traditional interviews with faculty, we prioritized interviews with graduate students, local alumni, archivists and librarians at other Providence institutions as well as members of the Providence community in the hopes of creating a collection that would serve the needs of a variety of publics. Through this process, we considered whether expanding the definition of "stakeholder," in the context of an academic collection can allow for a more diverse set of needs and interests to be represented in the materials selected, and can perhaps precipitate a shift in the user base of university special collections more broadly.

This project was undertaken by Kristen Iemma, Madison Mott, Julia Renaud, and Nicole Sintetos in the spring of 2018.

About the Authors:

Kristen Iemma holds an MSLIS from Pratt Institute, and is a graduate student at Brown University pursuing a PhD in American Studies and an MA in Public Humanities. Her research addresses institutional record keeping, state-controlled repositories, and attendant questions of representation, authority, and memory transmission. Her work has also addressed issues of information justice, digital rights, and privacy.

Julia Renaud holds an AB in American History & Literature and History of Art and Architecture from Harvard University, and is a graduate student at Brown University pursuing an MA in Public Humanities. She worked for several years in the archives of the Calder Foundation in New York. She is particularly intrigued by how public representations of America's complicated histories of labor, race, class, and gender reflect ongoing cultural negotiations of these charged topics.

Nicole Sintetos is a graduate student at Brown University, pursuing a PhD in American Studies and an MA in Public Humanities. Her scholarship considers the interplay of race, empire, and the built environment in the immediate postwar period. In the summer of 2017, she led an interdisciplinary and collaborative two week workshop to sites of Japanese incarceration

stemming from Phoenix, Arizona to Bainbridge Island, Washington. Before coming to Brown, she taught high school English and History in New Hampshire.