Welcome to Our Newest Library

The NYU Shanghai Library opened its doors in August 2013, the result of expert and tireless planning, operational support, and on-the-ground assistance from librarians in New York and Abu Dhabi. Although currently housed in temporary quarters on the campus of partner institution East China Normal University the library is already delivering a rich array of services, from instruction in the use of NYU Libraries’ unparalleled electronic resources to the delivery of books from Washington Square. Experience in Abu Dhabi paved the way for a quick set-up in document delivery and collection building services and for integrating NYUShanghai into a seamless global library network.

The NYU Shanghai student body is 51% Chinese (the other 49% is international). “One of our recruiting goals was to make sure the staff speaks both Mandarin and English and can work comfortably in a bi-cultural Chinese and American environment,” says Dean of Libraries Carol A. Mandel. The result: a talented, versatile, service-oriented team excited to be in Shanghai. Recruitment for a library director is underway. Anthony Ferguson, who recently retired at University Librarian at the University of Hong Kong, served as interim director for the fall semester. The new NYUShanghai campus in Pudong will open in September 2014, including carefully designed permanent quarters for the library.

From a Global Philanthropist, A New Librarianship

Ming Chu Hsu (Stern ’89), a Hong Kong-based business leader and philanthropist, has made a major gift to enable the Libraries to create and fill a new position: Global Services Librarian. NYU now has portal campuses with full service libraries in New York, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai, as well as 11 additional academic centers across five continents. The new librarian will work collaboratively with colleagues across NYU Libraries and other NYU areas to design and sustain a suite of global library services that enhance access to library instruction, services and resources throughout this global network.

Hsu also made a gift to NYU to establish the Ming C. Hsu Global Scholars Program, providing financial support for students at NYU Shanghai. Her goal for both gifts, Hsu says, is to help NYU’s newest portal campus “achieve the highest level of academic excellence.” Hsu earned her BS in math and finance at Stern and went on to become one of the youngest women in math and finance at Stern and went on to become one of the youngest women to complete the Executive MBA program at Columbia University. Her philanthropic interests center on supporting the work of American service organizations in China and beyond to help them model sustainable programs for new, Chinese-based organizations.

Timothy Naftali Named Head of Tamiment Library

Dean of Libraries Carol A. Mandel has announced the selection of historian Timothy Naftali as Head of the Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives and co-director of NYU Center for the United States and the Cold War and of the Frederic Ewen Academic Freedom Center.

“Tamiment Library is one of the most distinguished special collections in the country devoted to the history of left politics, labor, and social protest movements,” says Mandel. “I am delighted that these unique archives will be stewarded and expanded by Tim Naftali, a prolific writer and scholar. He brings a vision for Tamiment shaped by his interest in the impact of social activism, past and present, and a deep commitment to public engagement with history.”

Naftali intends to create NYU’s first LGBT civil rights archive. He explains, “Only a few blocks from the Stonewall Inn, Tamiment is a natural home for records related to LGBT history, and it will become our country’s most recent civil rights struggle.” Naftali also envisions an initiative to facilitate the study of activism and digital dissent.

He says, “Public access to the materials of political dissent and activism is as much a measure of the freedom of a society as the openness of its official materials. I am eager to take Tamiment’s collections more completely into the digital age so that scholars and the interested public can more easily discover and benefit from them.”

Naftali comes to NYU from the New America Foundation, where he was a non-resident Senior Research Fellow. As the first director of the federal Nixon Library, Naftali oversaw the release of an estimated 1.3 million pages of presidential materials and 600 hours of Nixon tapes, and the creation of nearly 150 video oral histories. He wrote and curated the Library’s widely praised multi-media Watergate Gallery, which opened in 2011.

A native of Montreal, Naftali has a BA from Yale, an MA in American Foreign Policy and International Economics from Johns Hopkins, and MA and PhD degrees in History from Harvard. His latest book, a presidential biography of John F. Kennedy, will be published in 2014.
Conserving the Irreplaceable

Charlotte Priddle, librarian for printed books in Fales Library, was concerned about the book’s fragile condition: pages were loose, dirty, torn. Not that readers had been careless. It was just that there had been so many readers since the book was published in 1493.

Priddle took the volume down to the Barbara Goldsmith Preservation and Conservation Department in Bobst Library’s lower level. “When Charlotte brought the Nuremberg Chronicle into the lab, one of the first things Lou and I asked was how often it is used,” says Laura McCann, conservation technician for special collections. “Her answer surprised us.”

“All the time!” says Priddle. The Chronicle, a Bible-based world history written in Latin and translated into German, is an incunabulum—an early printed book—and one of the first to successfully incorporate text with illustrations. Priddle and Marvin Taylor, head of Fales Library, use it in their classes in book history, the history of printing, writing in the Middle Ages, Renaissance studies, religion, and many others.

A project as extensive as conserving a 520-year-old volume, measuring roughly 13 inches by 19 inches and more than three inches thick, involves a series of choices, says Di Gennaro. “In choosing treatment options, we always need to know how an item is going to be used and how often. This incunabulum spends way less time on the shelf than I expected. The final treatment needed to facilitate safe usage.”

The project drew on Di Gennaro’s knowledge of historical bookbinding. The binding, half pigskin over chamfered beechwood boards, he estimated, dates from the late 16th or early 17th century; the Ptolemaic map was inserted from a different edition, as evidenced by wormholes and incongruous staining; the bifolio endsheets were added sometime in the 19th century.

Di Gennaro used many techniques during 127 hours of conserving the Chronicle, including sewing in-situ loose gatherings back into the binding, mending tears with wheat starch paste, low suction vacuuming, even an injection of gelatin into the cracked wooden boards before adding a vellum support. Finally, he built a drop spine box to keep the Nuremberg Chronicle safe and clean. All told, the volume spent a year in the laboratory. “I was really a bit lost without it,” says Taylor.

ArchivesSpace: New Software, New Organization

ArchivesSpace, a next generation archival management system developed by NYU Libraries and its project partners, the libraries of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), is now both an open source web application to manage descriptive information for archives, manuscripts, and digital objects, and a membership community. ArchivesSpace integrates the best features of the two most widely used open source software systems in the field: Archon, developed by the UIUC Library, and the Archivists’ Toolkit (AT), developed jointly by the libraries of UCSD and NYU. The new ArchivesSpace membership community will ensure that ArchivesSpace continues to evolve.

Fifty-four institutions, ranging from very large (Harvard University, New York Public Library, Smithsoninan Institution) to very small (Santa Ana Public Library History Room, Litchfield Historical Society) joined ArchivesSpace as charter members, and more join every month. Membership includes technical support, software maintenance and development, and governance. The partners project that ArchivesSpace will become self-sustaining over the next two years, with membership fees levied on the basis of size. LYRASIS, an Atlanta-based non-profit membership organization providing services to libraries and cultural heritage organizations, is the organizational home of ArchivesSpace.

During the transition to a new support base, ArchivesSpace is being assisted with a grant to NYU of $599,000 from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which also funded the planning and development of ArchivesSpace over the past three years. The Gladys Krrieble Delmas Foundation also made a grant to NYU to help the membership organization in its start-up stage. More information is available at www.archivespace.org.

Colleting Tomorrow’s Past

A recent exhibition in Fales Library, Past, Present, & Future, asked a question: How do special collections collect? In an essay, Marvin J. Taylor, head of Fales Library, writes:

The Fales Library is a leader in envisioning new kinds of collecting that reflect postmodern modes of criticism. As Fales tracks and anticipates new areas of study, the curators comb current, near past, and historical cultures looking for a wide array of materials that help scholars, students, and all of us understand what it was like to be part of life at a given point in the past. We believe that the only way to understand the past is to engage with it in our time, as Heidegger noted, and to do that we have to think ahead. We try to determine what will be of use—not just what is “best”—for understanding the past in the future. Librarians, book dealers, and curators must work both separately and together to ensure that we pursue new directions while at the same time preserving, respecting, and reimagining the material that has been with us all along.

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New Faces

JESSICA MCGIVNEY
Librarian for Resource Sharing and Delivery Services
Formerly: Interim Loan Supervisor, CUNY Graduate Center
Education: MLS, CUNY Queens College; BA, English, Amherst College

I may have stayed in New York when I changed jobs, but I find that our uniquely global patron base underscores everything we do. I work with Access Services and the Libraries’ systems team to help make requesting and getting library materials easier and faster for users in New York and around the world. We do this by innovative use of technology and by building partnerships with local and national library consortia. Thinking globally inspires us to be creative about finding ways to expand our services.

MAUREEN CALLAHAN
Librarian for Archival Collections Management, Tamiment Library
Formerly: Public Policy Papers Archivist, Multidisciplinary Library, Princeton University
Education: MLS, Archives and Records Management, University of Michigan; BA, History, Bryn Mawr College

We have a major project underway in Tamiment to survey the web descriptions of all our archival collections. A large amount of our holdings was acquired before our catalog was electronic, and we can improve the descriptive quality of those finding aids to help researchers around the world decide whether to visit Tamiment in person, as many international scholars do. Of course, going forward, we envision enhanced digital access to our collections.

ARUNA MAGIER
Librarian for South Asian Studies
Formerly: Naga Language Instructor, University of Pennsylvania
Education: PNS, Indian History; MA, History; BA, History, Economics, & Politics, Osmania University; Hyderabad, India; MLS, Queens College, New York City; BEd, Annamalai University, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, India

South Asian Studies at NYU is a rapidly expanding interdisciplinary field. I have been building our collections on India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives and Bhutan. Acquiring materials from and about South Asia is challenging, but always exciting. For instance, I am working with organizations in South Asia to begin a new South Asian Documentaries initiative here at NYU, with screenings and presentations by filmmakers.

FLETCHER DURANT
Preservation Archivist
Formerly: Assistant Conservator, New York Public Library
Education: MSIS and Certificate of Advanced Study in Conservation of Library and Archival Materials, University of Texas, Austin; BA, History, Wesleyan University

In bringing my background as a rare book and manuscript conservator to a preservation role, I am happily returning to my library and archives roots. It is a creative challenge to identify and address the range of issues in collections as diverse as ours. For example, I am now rehousing a Tamiment Library collection of more than six thousand buttons from labor unions, civil rights organizations, and other political and social groups active in the twentieth century.

Scholarship Winners

Houda El Mimouni, a recent graduate of the Pratt Institute School of Information and Library Science, has won an Innovative Internship from the Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO) to work on User Experience and other digital projects at the Libraries.

Emmy Solis, reference associate for business and government documents, is a winner of the American Library Association’s Spectrum Scholarship.

DEAN’S AWARD WINNERS
L to r: Joseph Pawletko, Stacy Williams, Susan Hamilton, Dean Carol A. Mandel, Chela Scott Weber, Carol Arnold-Hamilton, David Perry, and Lou Di Gennaro

Winners of this year’s Dean’s Award for outstanding service joined Dean of Libraries Carol A. Mandel for a celebratory lunch at Gotham Bar and Grill on 12th Street in November. The winners include Stacy Williams and Carol Arnold-Hamilton, documents & reference assistants for Business & Government Information Services; David Perry, database administrator for Library ITS; Joseph Pawletko, lead software systems architect in Digital Library Technology Services; Susan Hamilton, accounts payable clerk at NYU Press; Lou Di Gennaro, conservation technician in the Barbara Goldsmith Preservation and Conservation Department; and Chela Scott Weber, assistant head for archival collections in Tamiment Library.

All winners were cited for long lists of accomplishments. A few highlights: only six months after joining the staff, Weber stepped in to temporarily manage Tamiment Library after the unexpected death in July 2012 of former Head of Tamiment Michael Nash, at the same time ably fulfilling her own substantial archival responsibilities. Perry’s “invaluable, innovative work” on an internal data project resulted in significant time savings for two departments. Hamilton completed “the complex implementation of a core new database system...with enthusiasm and grace” in five months, a month ahead of schedule. Pawletko has “a rare ability to bridge the interests, knowledge, and expectations of stakeholders from different areas” with “innovation, service, and collaboration.” Di Gennaro’s work ethic is “exemplified by his walk from Brooklyn to Manhattan” immediately after Hurricane Sandy to help salvage waterlogged materials at the NYU Medical Center. And Williams and Arnold-Hamilton are “incredibly adept at tracking down hard to find documents” and have “long track records of excellent service and collaboration with colleagues.”

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Early Keith Haring Work
On View in Fales Library


Curated by Andrew Blackley, the exhibition explores the textual content developed behind these video artworks and their transitional use in Haring's early performances and installations. All of the drawings, plans, poems, and exercises on view have been drawn from the archive at the Keith Haring Foundation, which the artist established in 1989 to perpetuate his artistic and philanthropic legacy.

“Keith Haring was one of the most important artists to rise from the downtown New York scene of the early nineteen eighties,” says Marvin Taylor, head of Fales Library, “but he is too often seen as merely a pop culture icon. Andrew Blackley has delved into his work with language and opened a whole new scholarly approach to Keith Haring.”

Keith Haring artwork ©Keith Haring Foundation