

The Future of Print Project Summary: Beyond Books

By: Emily Pattni, Curation Specialist for the Future of Print

Project Dates: March 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020

Report Updated: November 23, 2020



About the Future of Print

ASU Library was awarded a \$381K grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to experiment with different ways in which libraries present print materials to the public. We know that information is more digitally accessible than ever before. As students turn to what is quick and convenient for them, ASU Library is exploring how to present our print materials in ways that remain engaging and relevant to the twenty-first century user. Through a series of book displays, The Future of Print team hopes to gain a sense for how students perceive print collections, how they use the library, and what it takes to engage them in physical books. For more information on our projects, visit <https://lib.asu.edu/futureprint>.

Project Background

Alexis Juarez and Carly Golding, students in the ASU Barrett Honors College, approached Ashley Gohr, First Year Experience Librarian and supervisor for ASU Library's Student Ambassador program, and myself, Open Stacks Curation Specialist, to create a book display as part of their senior thesis. The Student Ambassador program hires undergraduate students to work to support the success of their peers using library resources.

Their senior thesis research aimed to raise awareness around the challenges that individuals in the disability community face. This project marks the beginning of her efforts to promote and support disability inclusion. Alexis Juarez, an Urban Planning major with a minor in Global and Design Studies, is a Student Ambassador, and we have been fortunate to work with Alexis in the past to connect to our student communities. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in academic libraries and continue to advocate for inclusive and accessible library spaces. Her thesis partner, Carly Golding, is a Justice Studies major interested in raising awareness about disability issues, particularly the unique challenges faced by women with invisible disabilities.

The Collection

To create this collection, Alexis and Carly selected books and films that encouraged a dialogue around critical disability theory as well as empowered those within the disability community. Topics include disability studies, universal design, library studies, and community spaces. Alexis and Carly compiled these resources into [a spreadsheet](#) which Sam Mijal, the Library Information Specialist Lead in Open Stacks, used to request them for Hayden Library. The Library owned 84 of the titles and purchased 13 titles for this project. Alexis and Carly named the featured collection *Beyond Books: Creating Inclusive and Accessible Library Spaces* to invite exploration around how libraries and other community spaces practice and promote accessibility and inclusion. Bri Noon, a graduate student at ASU studying Social and Cultural Pedagogy, also offered their art about chronic illness to encourage interaction and learning. Their art and descriptions were displayed with the books and later incorporated into the library guide.

On March 1, 2020, the collection was made accessible to ASU communities. Due to Covid-19, Hayden Library was unexpectedly closed on March 18th. This prompted the creation of [a library guide](#) that captured elements of the physical display in an online environment. Alexis and Carly shared that this digital format turned out to be more accessible and had the potential to reach a wider audience. They encouraged the Library to explore using more digital featured collections in the future.

Thesis Defense

Alexis and Carly gave their honors thesis defense via Zoom on Friday, November 6, 2020, showcasing this research. They shared the results of a survey that received 136 student responses. In general, students shared that they wanted to see people with disabilities more prominently displayed in the Library whether it be via featured collections, student art, or events. The survey data also highlighted the need to continue offering materials that are both digitally and physically accessible. Finally, it was evident that many people did not view ASU Library as a community space, in contrast to public libraries. They mentioned feeling confused or intimidated to use the space, feelings that may be heightened for those with disabilities. A complete video recording of the defense is available on the library guide.

Discussion

Many of our featured collections have supported the research conducted by faculty and academic departments. *Beyond Books*, on the other hand, celebrates the academic accomplishments of our students by focusing on research they are conducting. Students in the Barrett Honors College are required to submit a research thesis or creative project before graduating. This gives them the chance to demonstrate their research skills and contribute to a particular field of study.

Many other ASU colleges expect their students to submit similar culminating projects that the Library can recognize and highlight. This project in particular is helpful to us as we strive to build community-inspired, inclusive, and accessible collections. In addition to continuing to highlight student research, the Library should explore pathways to partner with Student Accessibility and Inclusive-Learning Services (SAILS) at ASU. The students, with staff support, are also working to form a disability coalition at ASU, which would be a great future opportunity for collaboration.