

The Future of Print Report: ¡Vamos Argentina!

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Photos of the "Meteors and Art" event, meteorite art installation, and the Tango Night event

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>

Research Question

The Future of Print team chose to explore ways in which library events could be used to increase engagement with specialty collections.

Philosophy

We worked with library staff to organize a series of speakers, art installations, and live demonstrations for the ASU community. Our intent was to highlight the culture of Argentina—dance, film, music, for example—in order to engage Library visitors with the contents of our Argentine print collection.

We observe that books are often more popular if they are mentioned in talk shows, podcasts, or are otherwise recommended by a notable individual. By programming a series of events based off of relevant cultural themes, we wanted to spark an interest in this collection of Spanish-language fiction books and in similar library holdings.

By inviting ASU professors, two prominent Argentine artists, and the curator for the Musical Instrument Museum to give talks, we hoped to inspire students to explore related content in our Argentine collection. Perhaps allowing students to participate in dancing the tango or drinking the traditional Yerba Mate would pique an interest in seeking out further reading materials on related topics. Additionally, many of our students are bilingual Spanish speakers or are learning the language. Acknowledging that our faculty are also interested in these topics, we intended to create opportunities for our communities to learn about, celebrate, and discuss the culture. By the end of the event series, we hoped that the ASU community would further value this particular collection.

Full Selection Methodology

With the renovation of the Hayden Library, many books were sent to ASU's high-density storage facility at the Polytechnic campus in Mesa. Dr. David Foster, Faculty Head of Spanish and Portuguese and Regents Professor in the School of International Letters and Cultures, requested that we bring back all books categorized as Spanish-language literature from the Americas. However, the size of this collection precluded moving every book. After much consideration, we decided to bring back just over 8,000 books which comprised ASU Library's collection of Argentine fiction, because Dr. Foster has done extensive research on the culture and theater of Argentina.

Thanks to the significant investment in staff time and effort, the Argentine collection was temporarily relocated to the second floor of ASU's Noble Library (PQ 7797-PQ 7798). A series of events were organized to highlight various aspects of the Argentine culture to draw attention to this collection.

Event Series

Seonaid Valiant, the Curator for Latin American studies at ASU Library, Rachel Leket-Mor, Open Stacks Curator, and Debra Riley-Huff, the Head of the Design Library, cooperated with the Future of Print team to host six events highlighting different aspects of Argentine culture. Rachel was responsible for much of the initial planning for programming and identifying speakers. All three of them reached out to the speakers, identified spaces, and facilitated the art installations.

We titled this series *¡Vamos Argentina! Books, Tango, and Meteors*. Guest speakers included:

- Julia Sarreal, Associate Professor, School of Humanities Arts and Cultural Studies, "If I finish my Yerba, I am fried': The Importance of Yerba Mate in Argentina"
- Cynthia Tompkins, Professor, School of International Letters and Cultures, "Affective Erasure: Representation of Indigenous Peoples in Argentine Cinema"
- Daniel C. Piper, Curator for Latin America and the Caribbean at the Musical Instrument Museum, "Argentinian Musical Instruments as Material Culture: Reflections on Collecting and Exhibiting Instruments at the Musical Instruments Museum"
- David William Foster, Regents' Professor, School of International Letters and Cultures, "The Peronista Archive of Photographer Sara Facio"

- Guillermo Faivovich and Nicolas Goldberg, artists from Buenos Aires, “Meteors and Art”

The artists from Buenos Aires had already been planning to host a lecture and art installation prior to this project. With the help of Debra Riley-Huff, we were able to incorporate this into an event that coincided well with our theme. Patricia Odle, in charge of communications and event planning at the library, also made it possible for the Tango Club, a student organization on campus, to teach a dance lesson in the Noble Library courtyard.

Assessment Mechanisms

Outreach to such a diverse campus proved to be rather challenging, but a total of 27 attendees signed in for our events. This does not include the estimated 58 attendees at the Faivovich and Goldberg event. This number also does not account for all of those who attended the Tango Night event.

Circulation

There were a total of 8,476 items from this collection that were housed in the Noble Library. Over the course of the event series, which lasted one month, two items were checked out.

- *Fausto y Otros Poemas* by Estanislao del Campo
- *Los Perros del Paraíso* by Abel Posse

Reflection

Successes

- One student who attended the Yerba Mate event was from Argentina. At the end, he asked where the Argentina book collection was located and left to browse the collection. Attending the event and participating in the discussion raised his awareness about our collections.
- The artists from Argentina are interested in a future collaboration with the Musical Instrument Museum, the ASU Museum, and ASU Library. They have plans to return to ASU after having a positive experience.
- As part of our project team, Debra Riley-Huff, Head of the Design Library and the Humanities Division Head, was able to leverage her relationships with the

Herberger Institute of Design and the Arts faculty for outreach purposes. She was also key in fostering relationships with the artists, Faivovich and Goldberg. She was in constant communication with them to facilitate the transportation of the art pieces, finding event and installation spaces, and ensuring other logistical concerns were addressed.

- Debra expressed that communicating with the artists was incredibly rewarding and fun. They were very responsive, despite being in another country, and were able to form a genuine friendship with Debra early on. In fact, they had been previously aware of the ASU meteorite collection and were the ones who initially reached out to initiate this partnership.
- The Herberger communications team was eager to assist in reaching out to their students and faculty. This collaboration, with existing relationships in the Herberger Institute, led to a successful turnout for the artists' talk.

Challenges

- We had a [poster](#) with the events printed and displayed at Noble Library and a few other library locations. When there were seven attendees at the first event, most of whom were library staff, we began discussing better outreach strategies. We realized that we had begun with the assumption that one outreach strategy would be sufficient for all of these events. In the future, a more targeted approach would be more effective. For example, we should consider what type of audiences would be interested in attending the event and how to reach them.
- Events were posted online at ASU Events as a single event listing. Even though the series carried on throughout the month, the listing got buried amongst other, more recent, listings for events happening around campus. Debra recommended that we requested a change so that each event in the *¡Vamos Argentina!* series would be listed separately. We were not able to have this change made until the last two events, which, perhaps relatedly, had the best attendance numbers.
- The print collection lacked feature signage. I brought [a sign](#) to each event to communicate the collection's physical location and the call number range in Noble Library.
- One person let me know that they walked to the room where the event was being held, saw library staff members, and thought it was a staff meeting. This could be due to insufficient signage and because the door had to be closed so as not to disturb those studying in the library, but the effect was to make students feel uninvited.

- One underlying issue is that this project grew into a larger scope than originally intended. Much of the planning was managed by those outside of the Future of Print project team, aside from some logistical decisions and communications. Although the library staff who organized the events made excellent faculty connections, it was challenging for our project team to keep track of decisions that were being made along the way.

Discussion

For future projects, it would be helpful to work with a liaison as they have existing faculty relationships and subject expertise. This will help us to communicate library activities and, ideally, spread information across campus. The speakers showcased their personal research and the topics were extremely educational, successfully capturing aspects of Argentine culture. Those who were able to attend engaged in conversation and appeared to have a positive experience. For example, students were able to directly ask faculty questions about their research. They were able to engage with the artists from Argentina and seemed taken in by the story they heard. In order to increase awareness concerning these exciting library projects, we might consider what worked and what didn't work for *¡Vamos Argentina!*.

We were able to test different outreach strategies and will continue to do so. Working with the Herberger Institute and specific student groups led to greater engagement from the ASU community. We learned that they are eager to collaborate and learn about what we are doing with our print collections. There were many opportunities to talk about the Future of Print project at each event.

Overall, the library was able to show support for faculty scholarship by highlighting their research and having informal discussions at the events. The relationship between ASU and the artists, Faivovich and Goldberg, was strengthened through this collaboration; they have kept in contact with Debra and already have made plans to return later this year.

Press

[ASU State Press](#)

[ASUEvents](#)

[Herberger Institute Events](#)

[ASU Alumni Events](#)

[Barro Art Gallery Instagram](#)

[ArtForum Magazine](#)

[TempeTourism.com](#)

[MutualArt.com](#)

[Phoenix New Times](#)

[SoundOff](#)

Appendix

Resources Mentioned:

- [Event Series Poster](#)
- [Future of Print Signage](#)