

The Ray Browne Conference for
POPULAR CULTURE STUDIES

**Collections, Curation, and Collectors:
An Exploration of Gathering**



March 6-7, 2020

Pallister Conference Room, Jerome Library
Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio

Access the conference schedule at:
bgsu.edu/raybrowne

PRESENTED BY THE POPULAR CULTURE SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION

BGSU | **Popular Culture**
SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION
BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY

WELCOME!

Welcome to The Ray Browne Conference for Popular Culture Studies. We're so glad that you could join us this weekend and delighted to showcase the popular culture scholarship of our 21 presenters.

This year's conference theme, ***Collections, Curation, and Collectors: An Exploration of Gathering***, invited contributors to consider how popular culture studies seeks the collector, amasses a collection, and is, itself, an act of curation.

The first day of our conference begins with a Brown Bag Lunch Screening of ***The Amsterdam T-shirt Project*** introduced by the filmmaker, conference keynote speaker and BGSU Teaching Professor Dr. Matthew Donahue. We hope you'll take the time to ask Dr. Donahue about his popular culture studies scholarship in our post screening Q&A.

Our Friday afternoon panels explore collection as a process of categorization, present the insights scholars witness within collections, and introduce The Northwest Ohio Independent Culture Archive. The day ends with a performance from Justin Payne.

Our first Saturday panel examines the collector—and the practice of collecting—as a site of resistance, bricolage, and play. Next, Dr. Matthew Donahue returns to present our conference keynote: ***Stuff...Collecting***

and Creating With It. A generous midday lunch break gives our attendees the chance to enjoy a meal with familiar colleagues and new friends.

The first of three Saturday afternoon panels considers the professional who collects—and the profession of collection. It is followed by a look at the tensions of stigma, economics, and opportunity within popular culture—the objects we, as a community of academics, consumers, and hobbyists, collect. Our final panel of the day examines the way medium changes meaning and points to the rules, power, and commitment within curation.

As a whole our conference inquires: How do our choices as popular culture scholars—fans, collectors, agents, and participants—create the limits and lenses that will be the categories and missing of future scholarship? How does our own practice of collection define popular culture studies?

Among ***Collections, Curation, and Collectors: An Exploration of Gathering*** we hope you find the opportunity to share what you are probing with your scholarship, hear the possibilities and limitations in others choices, and further investigate about what it means to be a popular culture studies scholar.

DR. RAY BROWNE

Dr. Ray Browne--the OG BGSU popular culture studies champion--founded the Popular Culture Association, Journal of Popular Culture, Center for Popular Culture Studies, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, the Ray and Pat Browne Library for Popular Culture Studies, and the Department of Popular Culture.

The conversations, scholarship, and collections Dr. Browne encouraged continue today in the events, publications, and courses these communities assemble.

Popular culture is the voice of democracy, democracy speaking and acting, the seedbed in which democracy grows. It is the everyday world around us: the mass media, entertainments and diversions. It is our heroes, icons, rituals, everyday actions, psychology and religion – our total life picture. It is the way of living we inherit, practice, and modify as we please, and how we do it. It is the dreams we dream while asleep.

Dr. Ray Browne



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Amy Davidson
Department of Popular Culture
American Culture Studies Program

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

DAY ONE – Friday, March 6, 2020

Jerome Library Pallister Conference Room

12:30-1 p.m.

Registration/Welcome Table

Register/collect your name tag here!

1-2 p.m.

**Screening and Q & A with Dr. Matthew Donahue:
The Amsterdam T-Shirt Project**

2:15-2:45 p.m.

PANEL 1: Collection and Categories

Awesome or Obsession: Curating a Personal Film Archive

Britt Rhuart

*Browsing to Buy: The Interaction of Bookstore Culture with
Local Culture*

Cheyenne White

3-4 p.m.

PANEL 2: Probing the Archive

*Negotiating Black Identity Through Music Artists on Vibe
Magazine Covers*

Jacqueline P. Hudson

*Raiders of the Lost Art: An Obsessive Guide to Gathering and
Collecting Vintage Wacky Packages Parody Stickers*

Chris McVetta

The Prosthetics of Sex in Early Modern Broadside Ballads

Bernadette Kelly

4:15-5:15 p.m.

**PANEL 3: Introducing The Northwest Ohio Independent
Culture Archive**

John King

Dr. Phil Dickinson

With a performance from Justin Payne

DAY TWO – Saturday, March 7, 2020

Jerome Library Pallister Conference Room

10 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Registration/Welcome Table

Register/collect your name tag here!

10:30-11:30 a.m.

PANEL 4: Collection, Curation, and Self

The Rhetorical Value of Nostalgia in Star Wars LEGO Collections

Laura L. Menard

Seeing Double: Collecting Sweet Valley High

Robin Hershkowitz

Remaking Raiders: Studying a Fan Shot-For-Shot Remake

Emma Lynn

Collection as Relationship, Not Just Things

Judith Clemens-Smucker

11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

Keynote Speaker Dr. Matthew Donahue

Stuff...Collecting and Creating With It

LUNCH BREAK

2:30-3:30 p.m.

PANEL 5: Professional Collectors

Courtney Bliss

Britt Rhuart

Dr. Jeremy Wallach

Dr. Esther Clinton

3:45-4:45 p.m.

PANEL 6: Popular Fans

Community, Material Culture, and the Commercial EDM Festival Scene

Gretel Thorpe

*My Journey Into Warhammer 40K: An Exploration Into the Liminal Hobby
of Wargaming*

Tristan Leighton

Denial and Demons: Americans Against Dungeons and Dragons

Jules Patalita

Monster Hunting and Legend Tripping as Collecting

Dee Elliott

5-6 p.m.

PANEL 7: Collection, Curation, and Medium

*To Make a GIF of the Zoetrope: Shifts in Phenomenology, Ontology, and
Teleology in the Transition from Analog to Digital*

Aurora Taylor

A Public Trust at Risk: The Dark Side of America's Heritage Institutions

Dana Nemeth

*Archival Fevers: Collecting and Preserving Comic Books and Graphic
Novels in the Digital Age*

Dr. JZ Long

Reading Spaces: Meow Wolf and How Intertextuality and Spatial Affect

Drive Narrative Meaning

Riley Nisbet



Keynote Address

Stuff...Collecting and Creating With It

Dr. Matthew Donahue

Stuff...Collecting and Creating With It explores both Dr. Matthew Donahue's popular culture studies scholarship and the ways in which Dr. Donahue has used popular culture artifacts to serve as inspiration, and the basis for, creative works.

Dr. Matthew Donahue is a musician, artist, filmmaker, writer and educator in the field of popular culture. He is a Teaching Professor for the Department of Popular Culture at Bowling Green State University, where he specializes in topics related to popular culture, popular music, media and the arts. He has lectured on these topics regionally, nationally and internationally. He is an avid collector and often incorporates his collections into his visual art, films and research.

Brown Bag Lunch Screening and Q&A

The Amsterdam T-Shirt Project

A film by Dr. Matthew Donahue

The Amsterdam T-Shirt Project highlights the souvenir t-shirt phenomenon in Amsterdam, Holland, the souvenir t-shirt capital of the world, features some of the artists, creators and vendors of souvenir t-shirts, and explores the impact of the souvenir t-shirt in Amsterdam's tourism and travel scene.

Filmmaker Dr. Donahue will both introduce the documentary and treat attendees to a Q&A session after the screening.



PSCA Champion

Stephen Ammidown

PSCA would like to recognize the contribution Stephen Ammidown makes to BGSU's popular culture studies students. In Mr. Ammidown, BGSU popular culture studies scholars find the institutional knowledge and collaboration needed to better understand popular culture studies careers, conversations, and public scholarship. Mr. Ammidown's excitement, insights, and storytelling give the possibilities within the college's popular culture artifacts life.

Popular culture studies scholars--on and off the BGSU campus, established and emergent--have a champion, expert, and fellow dreamer in Mr. Ammidown. PSCA is grateful for the partner it has in Mr. Ammidown, and the Ray and Pat Browne Library for Popular Culture Studies as a whole.

Bowling Green State University Archivist Stephen Ammidown is the recent recipient of the 2019 Romance Writers of America Cathie Linz Librarian of the Year Award. Since 2016, he has worked as the manuscripts and outreach archivist for the Ray and Pat Browne Library for Popular Culture Studies at BGSU.

ABSTRACTS

PANEL 1: COLLECTION AND CATEGORIES

Awesome or Obsession: Curating a Personal Film Archive

Britt Rhuart | brhuart@bgsu.edu

Collections are in no way new to me. I have had a collection of one type or another since I was old enough to know what they were. Since the mid-2000s one of my chief collections has been that of movies, now in every major home video format, including Betamax, CED, VHS, Laserdisc, DVD, HD-DVD, Blu-Ray, and 4K. The collection surpasses the amount and diversity of the Ray Browne Popular Culture Library's film collection. My presentation will be about how I began collecting and how I have turned my collection into an archive. There will be several areas I will discuss in my presentation including organizational practices, the various formats, how I add movies to my collection/purchasing purposes, and how I decide what goes into the archive. I will detail the difficulties in housing and organizing the collection in a small apartment and how the collection has grown and changed since my move to Bowling Green. In particular, I will closely examine the horror and cult sections of my collection as this is by far the most expansive and detailed part of my personal archive. Most of all, the presentation will address my own mania in collecting film and how it can either be read as awesome or an obsession.

Browsing to Buy: The Interaction of Bookstore Curation with Local Culture

Cheyenne White | crwhite@bgsu.edu

Curation in bookstores is important not only for their continued survival and success as businesses, but as an indicator of the role such stores play in local culture and regional communities. By looking at different approaches to bookstore inventory curation (as found in independent bookstores versus Amazon's brick-and-mortar stores), it can be seen that curation involves more than simply trying to predict what books might sell best based on consumers' preferences. Rather, curation of stock, especially in independent bookstores, reveals the ability of such businesses to interact with and influence local communities and their culture. As Ryan Raffaelli found in "Reframing Collective Identity in Response to Multiple Technological Discontinuities: The Novel Resurgence of Independent Bookstores," curation is an important process that marked the "independent bookselling industry as a legitimate and distinct form of brick-and-mortar bookselling" (6). Concern over the death of independent bookstores in the digital age is unfounded as the pressures exerted on the bookselling industry by Amazon and large chains such as Barnes and Noble have driven smaller bookstores in a specific direction, focusing on their role as cultural centers for local communities—a significant and important part of the impact they have on the society around them. The continued success of independent bookstores can be found in the overall rise in sales and the 35% growth in the number of independent bookstores in the U.S. between 2009 and 2015 as documented by the American Booksellers Association.

PANEL 2: PROBING THE ARCHIVE

Negotiating Black Identity Through Music Artists on Vibe Magazine Covers

Jacqueline P. Hudson | jphudso@bgsu.edu

The question of black identity has been widely debated in the American studies field, with an array of scholars analyzing this topic through written text. However, black identity has not been addressed through magazines, more specifically ones that covers black popular culture. This project looks at different facets of black identity through five particular Vibe magazine

covers which include Fall 1992 with Treach from Naughty by Nature (the inaugural issue), February 1995 with Mary J. Blige, February 1996 with Death Row Records, May 1998 with Master P and No Limit Records artists, and November 2001 with Aaliyah. Even though Vibe covers all parts of black culture, my project will focus on music artists who were on these particular issues. I will discuss black culture, black femininity, black masculinity, black entrepreneurship, and black iconography and juxtapose them against these music artists on these covers in order to reveal how objects are important in telling stories about black identity. In conclusion, this project, by closely examining this magazine covers, sheds new light on using a new way to study blackness.

Raiders of the Lost Art: An Obsessive Guide to Gathering and Collecting Vintage Wacky Packages Parody Stickers

Chris McVetta | chrismcv2@aol.com

Wacky Packages are a series of humorous trading cards featuring parodies of consumer products that were produced by the Topps Company starting in 1967 (in a sticker format) that outsold Topps baseball cards during the early 1970s. We will examine the history of these parody cards, and well as their pop culture significance and impact on society — as well as "the art" of collecting vintage Wacky Packages through various outlets from online auctions to actual legwork at convention and comic book stores.

The Prosthetics of Sex in Early Modern Broadside Ballads

Bernadette Kelly | ga2616@wayne.edu

Scholars have been collecting and curating broadside ballads on a major scale since the early 2000s with projects such as the English Broadside Ballads Archive and Bodleian Ballads Online. The digitization of this popular street literature displays the tropes that Early Moderns found entertaining to a wider audience. Due to the common nature of the ballads, people used them as wallpaper, food wrappings, and toilet paper, so the ballads that survived were the most popular or most printed which were saved in private collections. The online collections are technologically helpful as they allow us to search more efficiently for patterns that construct identities within literature. Over the course of the semester, my class has created a database of Dianne Dugaw's Warrior Women ballads that feature women who cross dress to enlist in the military or become a sailor. By filtering the database for perceived female characteristics and warrior women's battle prowess, I identified how the ballads demonstrate the fluidity of Early Modern sex characteristics. The Early Moderns' concept of sex was more socially constructed than it even appears today (which was both constricting and ambiguous). Leveraging their beliefs about sex characteristics, we can see how material objects work as prosthetics of gender. Such an argument would have been possible without collecting the ballads in a database, but the categorization of the ballads led to more objective research practices.

PANEL 3: INTRODUCING THE NORTHWEST OHIO INDEPENDENT CULTURE ARCHIVE

John King | joking@bgsu.edu

Dr. Phil Dickinson | pdickin@bgsu.edu

NOICA (The Northwest Ohio Independent Culture Archive) is a newly created collection of Bowling Green State University's Music Library and Bill Schurk Sound Archives with a mission to collect and preserve the rich history of underground and independent music as well as related culture from the northwest Ohio region including photographs, sound recordings, video, oral histories, zines, posters, fliers, and other tangible and virtual artifacts and memorabilia.

As cultural histories related to local communities outside of national interest are often underrepresented in archives and are at risk of getting lost in time, many public and private archives are making a commitment to preserve the local culture of their communities including the DC Punk Archive at the District of Columbia Public Library, the Detroit Sound Conservancy, the Louisville Underground Music Archive at University of Louisville, and the NOLA HipHop Archive at Tulane University. With the NOICA collection, the Music Library and Bill Schurk Sound Archives aims to preserve materials relating to the Northwest Ohio geographic area and make them available to students, faculty, staff, researchers, community members, and other interested parties for historical, academic, and community benefit.

College of Arts and Sciences' Associate Dean Phil Dickinson, Ph.D., whose initial donation of several hundred digitized items serves as the foundation for the collection, and graduate student John King will officially open the collection with a panel discussion and a short presentation about NOICA and plans moving forward followed by a public performance from Justin Payne.

PANEL 4: COLLECTION, CURATION, AND SELF

The Rhetorical Value of Nostalgia in Star Wars LEGO Collections

Laura L. Menard | lmenard@bgsu.edu

Since the 1970s, Star Wars and LEGO have become ingrained in popular culture, each gaining a massive fanbase which include children and adults. In 1999, the two merged, and fans of the iconic franchises could relish in their nostalgia. "The nostalgic feeling is infused with sentiments of past beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness, love, etc." (Davis). It makes us feel young and hopeful, which is why it is a key marketing tool. Some may argue LEGO is profiting from fans' nostalgia, even creating the Ultimate Collector Series where sets can cost more than \$1,000. Collectors view it differently.

Nostalgia "is one of the means... at our disposal for the never-ending work of constructing, maintaining and reconstructing our identities" (Davis). It is "deeply implicated in our sense of who we are, what we are about" (Davis). Star Wars LEGO collectors draw on their own memories and experiences in their collecting processes. Rhetorical choices are made while determining which sets or pieces to purchase, construct, and display. These choices result in a variety of narratives; not only those of Star Wars, but narratives of the collectors themselves. This presentation highlights one such private collection. Containing 255 sets and 651 minifigs, this collection is cultivated and displayed in 7 glass front IKEA cabinets in the collector's home. This presenter examines the collector's methods of purchasing, building, and displaying his Star Wars LEGO collection, the rhetorical choices made, and how nostalgia plays a role.

Seeing Double: Collecting Sweet Valley High

Robin Hershkowitz | robinh@bgsu.edu

For women who were adolescents in the mid-1980s, the Sweet Valley High young adult series was an all-important part of their world. The fictional adventures of identical twins Jessica and Elizabeth Wakefield and their wealthy, attractive friends who lived in the idyllic upper-class beach town of Sweet Valley, California personified the quintessential high school experience that female tween and teen readers yearned for. This paper examines how the adult appeal of collecting and re-reading SVH books arises from acknowledging the chasm between the aspirational reading by our younger selves and our adult knowledge that the books contained false promises of high school life. For adult women, collecting the SVH books serves a dual purpose. First is the desire to recapture the nostalgic enjoyment of becoming reacquainted with Sweet Valley's perfect California teens. The second motivation to collect is to re-engage with the books in order to recognize the ways in which they influenced the readers' childhood, and to reassign new meanings to the text. Applying camp meaning to the books allows a collector

to view the series within a new cultural context; instead of disavowing the books for their narrow and stereotypical views of teenage life, collectors can simultaneously allow for criticism and celebration of the naiveté of their younger selves. Using my experience in creating communal digital space, concepts of feminist camp, and postfeminist theory, this paper will explore the motivations behind collecting Sweet Valley High paperbacks.

Remaking Raiders: Studying a Fan Shot-For-Shot Remake

Emma Lynn | emlynn@bgsu.edu

In a small town in Mississippi in the 1980s, a group of pre-teen boys decided to remake the film *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) shot-for-shot. This project consumed their summer vacations over the course of seven years. I argue that meaning is created through *Raiders of the Lost Ark: The Adaptation* (1989) in three ways: through the finished text, the actual process of production, and audience reception. First, the remake creates a new aura through highlighting its differences from the original film. This is demonstrated through Walter Benjamin's theories on the reproduction of art, as remakes that are not mechanically reproduced have their own unique aura. Second, through the process of recreating the film, this young group of fans reinforce their interpretation of the original film's themes in a very real way in their own lives. This differs from Henry Jenkins' theory of textual poaching, where fans attempt to change the meaning of the original text through recontextualization. Finally, this particular fan object carries the fans' interpretation of the film's themes through time through the process of dissemination. Greg Urban's theory of metaculture is useful here, as it demonstrates how culture moves through time through material. Through the text, the production, and audience reception, fan remakes mark themselves as valuable objects to better understand active fans and the meaning they can make through their creations.

Collection as Relationship, Not just Things

Judith Clemens-Smucker | clemej@bgsu.edu

The desire to accumulate specific items is often seen as enrichment for the collector, through the pleasure of gathering and enjoying amassed objects. This action, however, is not the sole satisfaction for the collector; additional value can be found in relationship to other people through communal presentation of the items. The work of Tim Dant speaks to the value of the mediating object as one that carries communications between people, Susan Stewart talks about the need for collections to move between the public and the private, as well as the past and the present, and J.J. Gibson writes of objects being looked at over and over by both the same observer and many observers. Through interaction with other people and the objects, the curator of a collection serves as both presenter and participant, sharing passion and curiosity. A collection has the ability to strengthen community and bring joy to those who view what the collector has brought together. Thus, the collection becomes something not only for the fulfillment of the collector, but as an offering to others.

PANEL 5: PROFESSIONAL COLLECTORS

Courtney Bliss | cbliss@bgsu.edu

Britt Rhuart | brhuart@bgsu.edu

Dr. Jeremy Wallach | jeremyw@bgsu.edu

Dr. Esther Clinton | estherc@bgsu.edu

In cultural studies, collecting and research seem to go hand in hand. Collections inspire and fuel research which leads to more collecting which leads to more research and so on. At this roundtable Dr. Jeremy Wallach, ethnomusicologist, Dr. Esther Clinton, folklorist, Britt Rhuart, American Culture Studies Ph.D. candidate and film scholar, and Courtney Bliss, American Culture Studies Ph.D. candidate and media scholar, share and consider their experiences as professional collectors.

PANEL 6: POPULAR FANS

Community, Material Culture, and the Commercial EDM Festival Scene

Gretel Thorpe | gthorpe@bgsu.edu

The commercial EDM (electronic dance music) festival scene is a subculture with roots in counterculture which has evolved into a multibillion-dollar industry over the past few decades. With explicit influence from previous generations such as the hippie culture of the 60s and the underground rave culture of the 90s, the EDM festival culture claims and promotes an ideology of peace, love, unity, and respect. The events and the culture surrounding them are understood to create a space of interpersonal connection away from the individualistic drives of day-to-day living in western capitalistic society, in which individuals from vastly different walks of life can come together and share a vision of community that is rarely glimpsed elsewhere. My research investigates the results of music festivals growing in scale, frequency, public visibility, popularity, and, in turn, profitability. In this presentation, I share my preliminary analysis of ideology and the artifacts of the culture and how they change with popularity and profitability; as well as, the impacts of commodification and commercialization, and how material culture facilitates connection and community.

My Journey Into Warhammer 40K: An Exploration Into The Liminal Hobby of Wargaming

Tristan Leighton | tleight@bgsu.edu

Warhammer 40,000, often shortened to Warhammer 40k or simply 40k, is a tabletop miniature wargame which allows players to assemble armies from various factions in the 40k universe and battle other players. These armies are represented through the use of plastic miniatures which are collected, assembled and painted by players. This assembly and painting of models take-up the majority of time spent on the hobby of 40K in a way which mirrors the hobby of building model cars and airplanes. This investment of time and artistic effort leads to the armies being viewed as a display piece as well as a game piece. Using autoethnographic data taken from 2019-2020, my first year of playing 40K, I intend to demonstrate that the use-value of the 40k models differentiates the act of collecting 40K figures from the similar hobby of assembling and collecting model cars and airplanes, placing the hobby of 40k in a liminal space between collector hobby and game.

Denial & Demons: Americans Against Dungeons & Dragons

Jules Patalita | jmpatal@bgsu.edu

This proposal looks to examine the 1980s Moral Panic in the United States and how this social movement targeted the board game Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) as a Satanic influence on children. The organization Bothered About Dungeons and Dragons (BADD) influenced hundreds of law enforcement and religious leaders during their time in operation, claiming the game was the reason for so much of the supposed crime and sin happening throughout the country. Framing it with literature on Reform groups with Media Effects scholarship, I intend to examine the goals and procedures of this movement. It is also my position to highlight the history of the movement, as well as critique the reasoning behind its inception and its methods afterwards. In the last 100 years, the American public has gone through several phases of blaming a new media for warping and corrupting society: the Ouija board, the radio, film and television, and D&D. But since the '90s, politicians and opinion leaders around the country have pointed toward video games as creating more violent citizens, with them being blamed for the horrors of the Columbine shooting and several others during 2019. Seeing the similarities between the two cases, it is my hope that examining the case of BADD will provide insight into the current discussion linking video games to violence. By examining one of the larger cases of public outrage toward a game, we can discover weaknesses in the arguments of those still looking to explain complex social situations with a single scapegoat.

Monster Hunting and Legend Tripping as Collecting

Dee Elliott | devinme@bgsu.edu

Legend tripping is the phenomenon in which people tour or travel to the locations in which various legends, folk tales and historical events supposedly have taken place in the past. In the last two decades, it has become more widely popular to take part in legend tripping as a pastime and hobby for many people. Instead of traveling to traditional tourist destinations for leisure, small towns like Point Pleasant, West Virginia, and the area around Roswell, New Mexico have become popular for a very particular reason: Creatures of legend and science fiction are reported to have been witnessed around these areas. So, fans of legends, monsters, and folklore travel to these places to have their own unique experiences where fantastical creatures like the humanoid creatures known as Mothman and Bigfoot once supposedly fluttered and stomped around. Many people who visit these locations do so to prove their devotion to the culture of legend tripping, thereby "collecting" experiences that all pertain to the overarching subject of monsters and folkloric creatures around the world. With these collected experiences, a better understanding of the cultures that these legends come from is attained and allows for the collector to become a more integral part of a larger community of people who all strive to understand the unknown. This presentation aims to understand the reasons behind why people strive to collect these monstrous experiences through theories based in tourism, dark tourism, legend tripping, and other folkloric studies through primarily ethnographic means.

PANEL 7: COLLECTION, CURATION, AND MEDIUM

To Make a GIF of the Zoetrope: Shifts in Phenomenology, Ontology, and Teleology in the Transition from Analog to Digital

Aurora Taylor | taurora@bgsu.edu

Zoetropes and phenakistoscopes are two pre-cinema toys that produce an illusion of looping motion when spun, meant to demonstrate the (now-debunked) theory of the persistence of vision. In the last decade, collector Richard Balzer has been digitizing his collection of zoetropes and phenakistoscopes and uploading them online as GIFs in order to preserve the looping motion. However, in the process of digitizing zoetropes and phenakistoscopes into GIFs, the relationship changes between the toys' existence and the viewers' physical interactions with the toys' exhibition. The illusion of motion produced by the toys no longer relies on the flicker effect of the toys' construction. Instead, the illusion is produced by the relationship between the computer screen and user. This online exhibition sacrifices the original embodied interactivity in place of preserving the visual illusion and reaching a larger audience. In this presentation, I evaluate the similarities and differences between the original animations and their GIF counterparts to show how the change in exhibition affects the phenomenological interactivity, ontological production, and teleological purpose of Balzer's collection.

A Public Trust at Risk: The Dark Side of America's Heritage Institutions

Dana Nemeth | danaks@bgsu.edu

In 2005, The Heritage Health Index Report on the state of America's collections was released. Conducted by the Heritage Preservation and the Institute of Museum & Library Services, the findings were gruesome in illustrating what poor stewards public heritage institutions were of our country's material culture. It was a wake-up call to libraries, archives and museums (LAMs) around the country to improve their policies and procedures in protecting and preserving the documents and artifacts placed in their care. In this paper, I will briefly review the findings of the report and then examine how my previous and current employers, the Museum of the Moving Image, the Wood County Historical Center, and the BGSU Libraries, have responded to the report's recommendations, which are: (1) every institution recommits to providing safe conditions for the collections they hold in trust, (2) every

collection institution develops an emergency plan to protect its collections, (3) every single institution assigns responsibility for caring for collections to members of its staff, and (4) individuals at all levels of government and in the private sector assume responsibility for providing the support that will allow these collections to survive.

Finally, I will end with suggestions on how other cultural institutions can improve their collection stewardship through funding, education and collaboration with other LAMs.

Archival Fevers: Collecting and Preserving Comic Books and Graphic Novels in the Digital Age

Dr. JZ Long | jz.long@wilson.edu

Just as the new millennium has resulted in an explosion of comic books and graphic novels into mainstream social consciousness, so too have the number of ways in which to collect and catalogue them. Using theories from both Cultural Studies and Internet Studies, this paper examines how comics and graphic novels are, to borrow from the cult television show *The Prisoner*, “filed, stamped, indexed, briefed, debriefed, [and] numbered.” For in the digital age, new changes in the field of media communications – such as the materialization of these types of texts in digital formats, the exponential growth of external storage devices and other digital hardware, and the new styles of digital software and consumption – have emerged as catalysts in changing the ways in which comic books and graphic novels are collected and curated. In the depths of the digital archives, it becomes evident that a world of virtual communities and cultures have dedicated their immense skills and talents to ensuring that comics and graphic novels will be preserved for years to come.

Reading Spaces: Meow Wolf and How Intertextuality and Spatial Affect Drive Narrative Meaning

Riley Nisbet | rileynisbet@wayne.edu

Meow Wolf: House of Eternal Return is an art collective that spans a 20,000 square foot former bowling alley in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Beneath its surface concept of interactive art exhibit lies an immersive narrative experience that allows visitors to parse through innumerable artifacts (newspaper clippings, letters, books, scribbled notes, film clips) and meander through multiple, overlapping settings within the exhibit’s boundaries, and piece the narrative together. The shift from interactive art exhibit to immersive text shifts the visitor’s role from observer to reader, as Meow Wolf relies on space, and the reader’s immersion within and movement through, for developing its narrative meaning. Meow Wolf creates a world in which the visitor/reader can bring meaning to that space.

Through the use of critical texts that engage with spatial theory, narrative theory, and museum studies (with an attention to how narrative operates in museums through their spatial organization) I argue that, because of the multiple-spatial arrangement of Meow Wolf, Meow Wolf-as-text is one with non-linear narration. The exhibit’s space is not limited in its function to a setting or narrative element that is reliant on the reader to produce meaning-- Meow Wolf becomes itself a driving force for its own narration. The text’s multiple spaces provide multiple entrance points to its narrative, which affects the affect the reader uses to frame that narrative. As well, not only would it be nearly impossible to sift through every narrative-relevant artifact, but the artifacts can be picked up, moved, reordered, even stolen by other visitors, ultimately affecting how a visitor/reader engages with narrative within the text and reinforcing the space’s structuring of its narrative (or, possibly, multiple narratives).

The Ray Browne Conference for Popular Culture Studies is an annual graduate student organized conference that invites participants to consider the study of popular culture as an approach, proposal, and practice.

The Ray Browne Conference for Popular Culture Studies is presented by the Bowling Green State University graduate student organization the Popular Culture Scholars Association.

The Popular Culture Scholars Association (PCSA) encourages the study of popular culture among the greater BGSU community; supports the professional development of BGSU POPC MA students; and links undergraduates, graduates, educators, and outside scholars in conversation.