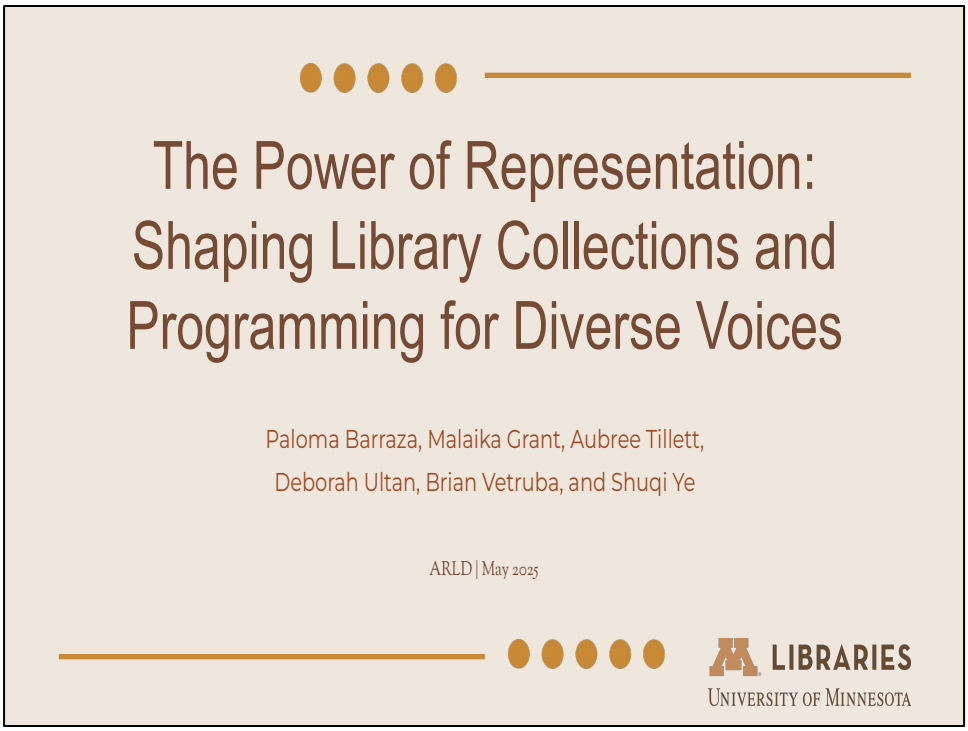

SESSION ABSTRACT: The Arts, Humanities, and Areas Studies Department of the University of Minnesota Libraries consists of eight liaison/subject librarians covering a myriad of disciplines in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. While our liaison responsibilities and academic backgrounds vary, collectively, we identify information gaps in our collections and strive to acquire materials by and about underrepresented groups and cultures. Similarly, some of us engage with marginalized communities through library programming and events. Panel members will discuss four questions: 1) how they inform themselves about underrepresented groups in their disciplines or geographic regions; 2) how they identify gaps within the collections and prioritize next steps; 3) how they source materials covering underrepresented groups via international vendors, book fairs, and other means; and 4) how they create programs and events geared toward supporting underrepresented groups. The panel will provide audience members with resources and recommendations for diversifying their own collections and library programming.

BRIAN: Thanks, Kate. There are 8 librarians in the UMN's Arts, Humanities, and Area Studies. Today, the six of us on this slide will discuss how we perform collection development and organize library programming for underrepresented communities. Our presentation is organized around four questions – we'll take turns providing details on how we have responded to the questions.

BRIAN: Before looking at the questions, I just want to show this statement from ALA about collection development. Having collections of materials covering diverse perspectives has always been a hallmark of librarianship. ALA adopted this statement in 1982 and it was last revised in 2014.

"A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences."

I

How do we inform ourselves about underrepresented groups in our areas?

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BRIAN: First, it's important to define the underrepresented groups and the terms for them in the context of the countries or regions or disciplines you cover. It's significant to realize that the groups are not necessarily analogous to those in the US. For example, the term "black" in the UK context can refer to any person of color and not just those with African heritage.

Shuqi is going to talk about some traditional sources for background information on underrepresented groups. I wanted to mention a few non-traditional ones. Scholarly organizations are also reexamining their disciplines to include perspectives from and information about marginalized groups. So, their conferences often include sessions about marginalized groups. One helpful thing librarians can do is scan or read through programs of recent conferences to get titles, authors, and identify trends related to underrepresented groups. Even if you're not able to attend the conference, programs are often freely available at the scholarly organization's website.

In addition to published books and articles, social media and websites can be helpful in informing yourself about groups – especially helpful if scholarly inquiry about a group is a more recent phenomenon. One recent example I encountered is looking for materials covering folks of African descent in the Nordic countries. Although there are some books and other published scholarship discoverable via WorldCat and other means, to get a complete overview of these groups and what they're doing, you need to look at social media and websites. On social media, I discovered initiatives and related titles and archival collections not found elsewhere.

Faculty, students, and fellow librarians can also be great sources of information. I have one fairly new faculty member in one of my departments whose research focus is Afro-German or Black German studies. Over a couple years she developed a course on Black Central & Northern Europe. We had regular conversations about the course including possible assignments. During these exchanges, she would note titles and I would note other tites. These back-and-forth discussions really informed me about what sorts of titles she and other scholars need related to Black Europe.

SHUQI: In East Asia, underrepresented groups can refer to different groups of people under different contexts. For example, in China, because 90% of the Chinese people are in the Han ethnic group, the mainstream research is all about the history and literature of Han people or telling the story from their perspective. The voices of minority ethnic groups are always unheard. Not until the recent 10 years have scholars in China begun to study the history of the minority groups and reconstruct the concept of Chinese history and literature. However, minority studies and border region studies are still sensitive topics and may need to go through severe censorship before publishing. There are some other examples, such as women's studies and LGBTQ+ studies in East Asia. These are relatively new concepts introduced to East Asia that represent the historically overlooked groups. However, It will still take years for East Asian people to understand and accept them. As more scholars begin to shift their focus to underrepresented groups in different areas, looking at newly published works by scholars and keeping up with the important book award winners, dissertations and thesis can be a good way to inform ourselves about the underrepresented groups. Here are some important awards in US on East Asian studies. In addition, I think looking at our own collections can be helpful too. Our collection, accumulated across the years, reflects what our researchers were interested in in the past as well as the mainstream in our areas. Identifying the gaps and figuring out what is missing can help find out who is underrepresented in our collection and areas. This is also our second question. I will turn it over to Aubree, Malaika, Paloma to answer it.

II

How do we identify gaps within collections and prioritize next steps?

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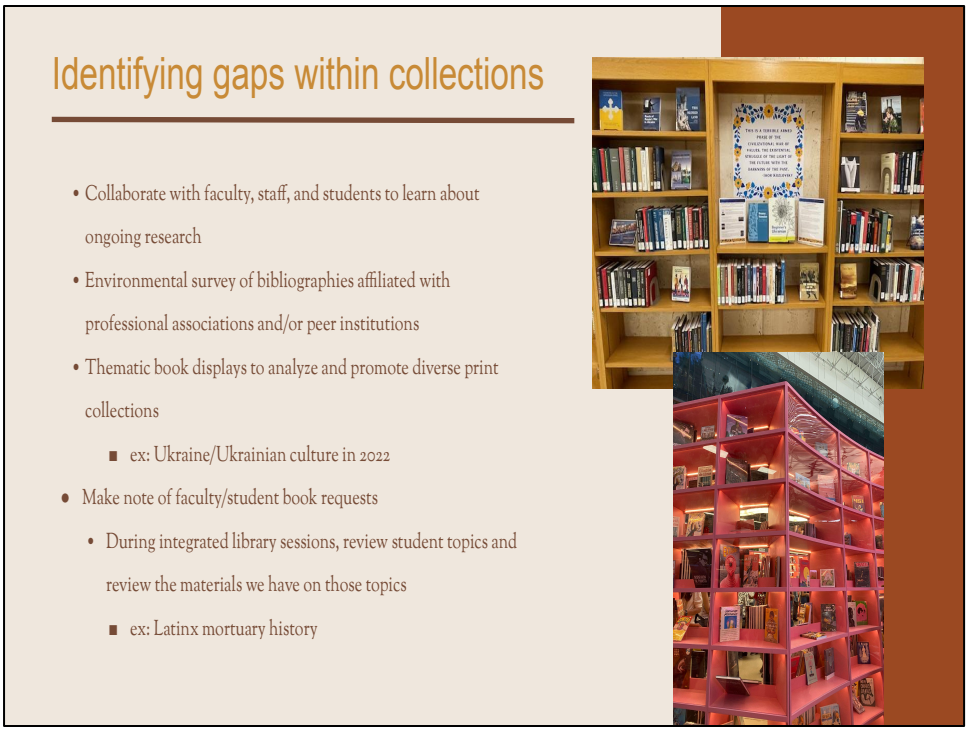

AUBREE: As a new academic librarian, I began curating monthly, themed book displays in the Architecture and Landscape Architecture Library and in conjunction with Goldstein Museum of Design exhibitions, to help me learn more about the library's print collection. By trying to locate books about specific topics in the stacks, I began to observe areas to further diversify our collections. These observations inspired me to conduct environmental surveys of materials that I could possibly purchase for our collection. My observations also inspired research projects that grew to collaborations with internal and external colleagues as methods to fill information gaps. I also collaborate and converse with faculty, staff, and students in my assigned departments, who share with me their ongoing research topics and course assignments. Connecting with my constituents is incredibly helpful to understand areas to improve my library collections to better support current courses, and research trends. These conversations also provide guidance for how my collections development work is prioritized.

MALAIKA: Course catalogs for each semester are key resources for making sure the libraries collections meet the needs of the courses offered, and they should be regularly reviewed to identify emerging or underrepresented topics. Sometimes curriculum changes are impactful enough to cause real shifts in collection priorities. Examples: new faculty hired in African Studies who has research and teaching interest in African cinema, a new class on graphic novels. Book lists on key topics are another type of resource I regularly use to identify gaps in collections; review curated

and expert-vetted resources, subject based book lists, and lists of award-winning titles. A few of the most useful lists are Choice outstanding academic titles lists and subject lists, YBP lists available within GOBI are quite specific and useful, set alerts for new reviews in journals.

PALOMA:

- Make note of the books that faculty and students request, then I search the catalog to see if we have books around those topics/themes
- During my integrated library sessions, particularly capstone courses, I ask the instructor ahead of time for a list of student topics to see if we have sources for those topics. For example, I had an undergraduate student who was majoring in Chicano/Latino Studies and Mortuary Science. Her capstone project was about the history Latinx mortuary practices in the United States

III

How do we source materials covering underrepresented groups?

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MALAIKA: One way we do this is to partner with vendors to source materials; I'll share a bit about a project we worked on with our main vendor, YBP, and their ordering system, GOBI, to increase the diversity of materials selected through our approval plans. There's often a tension between prioritizing efficiency and fostering diversity within collections, because the systems we use, like our approval plans, to automate aspects of the work are impacted by structural racism. Over the past couple of years we have worked in close collaboration with GOBI to develop methods that increase the diversity of materials coming through our approval plans. The most impactful method we found to do this is to prioritize materials that GOBI tags with interdisciplinary subject tags for diverse subject areas, so items tagged with these topics across disciplines can be purchased automatically (share examples). You can read much more about this project in the working paper linked in our bibliography.

BRIAN: If you have non-US vendors that you work with, they can be a great resource to assist you with collecting materials for marginalized communities. They have staff in the countries and have up close knowledge of the culture and publishing landscape. They definitely can provide lists of titles to get. You could also just email the reps saying you want to build up our collections covering a certain group and provide suggestions. [NEXT SLIDE]

[BACK FROM PREVIOUS SLIDE]

Attending book fairs can also be an effective way to find new materials focusing on

marginalized communities. A number of us have been able to attend the Frankfurt Book Fair in Germany and the Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico. During my visit to the Frankfurt Book Fair, I was able to focus on smaller niche publishers who specifically focus on minorities communities. Titles from niche publishers are not as readily discoverable or available from some of the main vendors so it's good to be on the ground to see these. Around the time of the Frankfurt Book Fair in October each year, a number of lists are published or online events are held. Even if you can't attend the book fair, you can still access these lists and events to discover new titles, hear author readings, etc.

DEBORAH: sourcing materials outside of the vein of mainstream publishing - from independent booksellers, independent writers, artists, alternative press and underground publications - will lead to curating diverse collections. In the arts and humanities areas, alternative press "publications" are an especially valuable route for sourcing marginalized communities. *Freedom of the Presses* is a textbook and a toolbox for how sourcing / using artists' books and creative publications will expand collections and further community engagement and attention to social justice issues. Developing relationships with vendors, booksellers, as appropriate antiquarian book dealers, and in the arts with independent artists is key… When your contacts and networks know your interests, goals, and collections, they will know to contact you when they come across content you might want. In the article I wrote with my co-author Jennifer Pepin Riestenberg, Through the Looking Glass: Reforming Art Library Collections with DEI-Centered Acquisition Practices we emphasize RELATIONSHIPS AND ACQUISITIONS and urge acquisition librarians to build on existing relationships while finding ways to form new ones.

SHUQI: East Asian studies, I think, are quite unique. They are independent but also closely connected with each other. The East Asian scholars in East Asia form their own community, and they study each other and fill in some gaps for each other. Then, there come the Western scholars who study East Asia. They bring totally different approaches and perspectives, and identify and fill in some other gaps that the East Asian community doesn't see. So, for East Asian studies, I can always look for materials from different regions to cover underrepresented groups. The materials that are banned in one region can often be found available in another region. A group or topic that is understudied in one region may be studied by scholars from another region. For example, I can source materials recording the Chinese student campaigns and protests that are not available in Mainland China from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. I can also source the research on Zainichi (Koreans in Japan) groups from China and Korea. Cross-checking different East Asian regions is a good strategy to source materials for underrepresented groups. There are also some small and independent publishers in both East Asia and the US that are dedicated to publishing materials about the underrepresented people in East Asia. There are scholars who are interested in doing research on underrepresented groups in East Asia as well. So it's good to keep an eye on their publications, go to conferences and

book fairs, talk with fellow librarians, vendors, students, and professors. They are great resources. They can tell you what is available and where to get it.

PALOMA:

- I connected with vendors at the Guadalajara book fair to see what materials we can acquire. There has been an ongoing cooperative collection development project happening at the University of Minnesota and other Big Ten Alliance Libraries to expand our foreign materials by sharing materials of more notable authors (having only one or two institutions purchase those items rather than everyone) and using those funds to purchase smaller publishers/local authors. For example, we are working with Suzanne Bach Vendor from Brazil.
- My predecessor did the same project with Books from Mexico vendor a few years ago.

BRIAN: Like what Malaika mentioned, here are some of the tags from GOBI you can use to discover materials about these marginalized groups. Some foreign vendors have also created specific categories for underrepresented groups int. Here's a sample of some of these categories from Harrassowitz, a distributor for German, Nordic, and Dutch materials. One thing worth knowing is that these categories from Harrassowtiz came about due to a suggestion from a librarian. [PREVIOUS SLIDE]

The Marshall Weber Culture Wars Zine Collection

Zine collections are culturally representative mainly stemming from a counter culture perspective.

IV

What programs and events supporting underrepresented groups have we organized?

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AUBREE: I have been supporting different initiatives in the College of Design through exhibitions and topic guides. I have also been prioritizing exhibitions that feature faculty and staff research so students can view professional examples of their affiliated disciplines. I have been mindful of the scope in which the research uplifts societal challenges related to the built environment.

DEBORAH: Working with the general research collection, and archives and special collections on a programmatic level can be impactful and valuable in ways that potentially inform and inspire collection development. Programs such as book readings, exhibitions, workshops, and panel discussions with a focus on DEIA can have multi-faceted results for acquisitions, networking, and community building on campus for scholars and the wider community.
Exhibitions can serve to inform and inspire new acquisitions. You can tap into your or another's curatorial research, check collections against artists included in the exhibitions - piggyback on exhibition artist lists, ultimately expanding your subject-knowledge base. (the impact will be for more informed collection development.)

Working with a refined thematic selection of tomes from the collection, is the reverse strategy, and can inform and inspire an idea for an exhibition. This strategy is useful to promoting the library's collection.
Faculty - Librarians : Connecting and Collaborating

    - “I love the way the librarians work at the U,” Schmid says. “You don’t have to be a hard core, text-based researcher to find something. You start down a road together and they’re really good at collaborating with you on finding what you need and for someone based in visual culture that has been amazing.”
    - Exhibitions Inform and Inspire Acquisitions!
        - Tapping into curator research
        - Piggyback on curator-artist connections
        - Expand subject-knowledge base
- Acquisitions Inform and Inspire Exhibitions!
    - Promote collections showing books and archives
    - Build context around topics
    - Celebrate perspectives
    - Foster collaboration
- With departments, students, and faculty–Campus connections, Surrounding community, Colleagues

PALOMA:

- I collaborated with the Chicano and Latino Studies Department to bring in 30 11th grade students from El Colegio high school here in the Twin Cities. Many of these students are recent US arrivals and primarily speak spanish. They spent the day at UMN to see what the university offers. They attended a CLS lecture and visited the Wilson Library where I gave them an overview of the libraries, talked about my background and how I became a librarian. I am a big proponent of bringing the human back in humanities so we did a scavenger hunt where the students had to find a book in the stacks, and we ended our library session in the map library where our Map Librarian, Ryan Mattke, showed the students maps of the Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty, maps of Latin America, and the oldest map of the Americas. this was a wonderful experience for students to see themselves in our collections.
- We also hosted an author talk with Sandra Cisneros, in collaboration with the University of St. Thomas. Our event was called “Entre Comadres,” or between friends, where the CLS faculty member Jessica Lopez-Lyman and chatted with Sandra Cisneros, and she gave a wonderful talk with our students. This was an opportunity for them to ask her questions in a more relaxed setting.

Exhibitions–*Protest Publishing and Art*; *Puerto Rican Art*

Example 2

DEBORAH: Exhibitions can serve to inform and inspire new acquisitions. You can tap into your or another's curatorial research, check collections against artists included in the exhibitions - piggyback on exhibition artist lists, ultimately expanding your subject-knowledge base. (the impact will be for more informed collection development.) Likewise, working with a refined thematic selection of tomes already in the collection can inform and inspire an idea for an exhibition and serve to promote the library's collection. Both strategies will reveal gaps in the collection and lead to new acquisitions. The exhibition framework can help establish dimension and context on a topic/collection and serve as a platform to celebrate the collection. Curating exhibitions with the collections are a great way to activate collaborations with departments, students, and faculty and the surrounding community. The community involvement will also lead to potential new acquisitions per recommendations.

Collaborating with faculty and classes on exhibitions and events related to the collections assures deeper awareness, connection, and engagement with the Libraries. The Protest Publishing in Art was an exhibit where a partnership with three faculty and three classes resulted in a co-curatorial exercise by the students, faculty, and arts librarian.The exhibition highlighted topics on social movements, electoral politics, environmentalism, identity, gender, and race.This experience led to new zines and alternative press acquisitions. Over the past few years, I have been collaborating with one of the curators at the Nash Gallery on her exhibition of Puerto Rican Art. Pledging to support her research, I have since been working on acquiring and forming a distinctive collection of artists' books and various publications of 50 Puerto Rican artists.

Exhibition – *Music on Hennepin,* Minnesota Underground Music Archive

DEBORAH: Working outside of the campus community can be instructive. This past fall, I brought selections from the Minnesota Underground Music Archive to the Hennepin Arts building for the Music on Hennepin Exhibit. Featuring materials from UMN Libraries' Minnesota Underground Music Archive (MUMA) gives exposure to the diversity of the collection to the larger community. Other local archives and libraries contributed to the exhibit supporting the idea of how our libraries can have (strategically) complementary collections. As we learn more about our sister libraries in town, the more strategic we can be about collecting with respect to each of our collections.

References and Readings

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Thank you all for being here and we now welcome your questions!