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Friends of the Connecticut College Library

Fall 2017

Fall Newsletter 2017

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2017 FRIENDS of the CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY Fall Newsletter

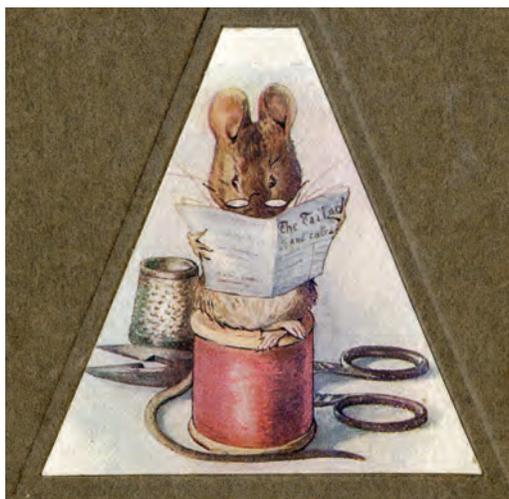
CHARLES E. SHAIN LIBRARY ☘ GREER MUSIC LIBRARY ☘ LINDA LEAR CENTER FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES

BEATRIX POTTER CELEBRATED AT CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Connecticut College hosted a symposium of the Beatrix Potter Society June 9-11, which brought scholars, collectors, and enthusiasts from across North America and the United Kingdom to New London to celebrate the beloved author and illustrator. This was the first such meeting held in the United States in five years.

The symposium, “Beatrix Potter in New London on the Thames River,” began with a reception and the opening of a major exhibition, both sponsored by the Friends of the Library. The exhibition, entitled “The Passion for Fantasy Animals in Victorian Children’s Literature and Beyond,” situated Beatrix Potter’s art within the context of illustration of animals in human form in the Victorian Era. Such depictions were relatively rare prior to 1850 but came to be a dominant theme in children’s literature by the 1890s. The exhibition utilized three floors of the Shain Library. On the main floor, exhibit cases contained works of British and American illustrators from the second half of the 19th century, including artists who were among Beatrix Potter’s greatest influences: Randolph Caldecott, Edward Lear, and the various artists who brought Joel Chandler Harris’s Brer Rabbit stories to life. The Lear Center exhibit area on the second floor contained the work of Beatrix Potter herself and grouped together her drawings of particular animals: cats, squirrels, mice, and especially rabbits. Highlights of this part of the exhibition included rarely seen early illustrations by Potter for Frederic Weatherly’s *A*

Happy Pair (1890) and the collection of rhymes *Comical Customers* (1896), both published several years before *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. There were also



Detail from the cover of the American edition of *The Tailor of Gloucester*, printed in 1903

rare photographs of Beatrix Potter and original watercolors and ink drawings, loaned from private collections. Exhibit cases on the third floor of Shain Library contained books published in the 20th century depicting anthropomorphic rabbits, from the pirated editions of *Peter Rabbit* in the early 1900s to the work of beloved authors like Maurice Sendak and Margaret Wise Brown. The exhibit provided an excellent showcase of the library’s exemplary collections in British and American children’s literature. While the exhibit ended in August, it lives on in virtual form at <http://omeka.conncoll.edu/exhibits/show/bps-fantasy-animals/introduction>.

Over the following day and a half symposium attendees heard keynote presentations from two Connecticut College alumni and Friends of the Library, Linda Lear and Mark Samuels Lasner, and from British collector and scholar Selwyn Goodacre. Linda Lear, author of the 2007 biography, *Beatrix Potter: A Life in Nature*, spoke of her fraught introduction to working in archives, as well as her subsequent delight in and mastery of the mysteries of biographical research. Mark Lasner discussed the importance of bibliographical study and the quirks of Beatrix Potter’s publication history, which has resulted in the absence of a comprehensive scholarly bibliography of this seminal author. Selwyn Goodacre provided an often humorous overview of the holdings of Beatrix Potter rarities in libraries around the world.

Panel presentations examined subjects ranging from Beatrix Potter’s American friends, to the work of researching and publishing about Potter’s life, to the many biographies of Potter. Between sessions, symposium attendees hosted a reading at the New London Public Library, shared information on collecting Potter materials, and learned about the use of Beatrix Potter in the classroom and life at Castle Cottage, Potter’s homestead in the English Lake District. Following the final session, symposium organizers and attendees agreed that Connecticut College’s campus, arboretum, and library made it an ideal location to meet and discuss Beatrix Potter’s literature and art.



The Friends of the Connecticut College
Library
<http://www.conncoll.edu/information-services/wfriends-of-the-library/>

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This and other issues of the Friends of the Library Newsletter may be viewed online at <http://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/fol/>
This newsletter was designed by Susan Lindberg.

December 2017



CONNECTICUT
COLLEGE

FEATURED ACQUISITIONS

OUT OF THE SKY

The Linda Lear Center recently acquired a significant work by one of our favorite artists, Werner Pfeiffer. Each of Pfeiffer's books is unique and challenging, per-



Werner Pfeiffer with his book *Out of the Sky* in the Charles Chu Asian Art Reading Room

haps none moreso than *Out of the Sky*. Published in 2006, it was his response to witnessing the attacks of 9/11 first hand from where he was teaching on the campus of the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, only a mile away from the World Trade Center. Pfeiffer had experienced the horror of war as a child in Germany. That such a thing could come to New York City compelled him to create an artistic response.

Out of the Sky is constructed of out sheets of cardstock, which unfold to create blocks. These blocks stack to form two structures, each nearly six feet high, in the shape of the North and South Towers. The names of the victims of the attack run vertically down the towers, mimicking the famous ribbed structure of the buildings, before disappearing into a woodcut illustration of tangled, falling bodies. In October, Pfeiffer came to campus to speak about his art, present the new acquisition, and teach students

in a studio art class. He also made a gift to the Lear Center of two sets of prints: *Liber Mobile*, a set of typographic prints exploring the use of letterforms as abstract art, and a set of serigraph and embossed prints from early in his career.

COMICAL CUSTOMERS

The Lear Center was pleased to have the opportunity to purchase a copy of *Comical Customers* from the library of noted Beatrix Potter collector Derek Ross. This collection of children's rhymes and stories was published in 1896 by Ernest Nister, a popular publisher of juvenile literature. At first



Detail from a Beatrix Potter illustration in *Comical Customers*.

it looks like any of the many such illustrated miscellanies of the time. The illustrations were produced by a collection of artists, some well known and others less so. Among the well known: William Foster, who illustrated dozens of books for children in the 1880s and 1890s and Louis Wain, whose illustrations of cats were widely beloved. Among the new and unheralded artists: Beatrix Potter, who was still six years away from publishing *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. Potter's illustrations for the poem "A Frog He Would A-Fishing Go" provide an early rendering of Jeremy Fisher, whose own tale would appear in 1906. With this acquisition the Lear Center now owns the two known illustrated books of Beatrix Potter from the 1890s, the other being the exceedingly rare *A Happy Pair*.

OPEN BOOKS | A New Dialogue 开放的书页：新的对话



CURRENT EXHIBIT THROUGH JANUARY 31, 2018:

IN THE CHARLES E. SHAIN LIBRARY EXHIBIT AREA, LINDA LEAR EXHIBIT AREA, AND CHARLES CHU ASIAN ART READING ROOM

Open Books: A New Dialogue

This major exhibition features the works of over four dozen artists from Asia, Europe, and North America working with the traditional Chinese format of the folded album. This traveling group show began as an exploration of a traditional literati format and the ways it could be adapted to other uses, both within its original cultural context and across cultures. The project was started in 2012 by the Welsh artist Mary Husted at the National Library of Wales. In 2013 it was greatly expanded at the Sanshang Contemporary Art Museum in Hongzhou, China. Over the next four years, the project toured Australia, Hong Kong, Canada, and India. Connecticut College's exhibition is the project's eighth stop and the first in the United States. A traditional feature of the Open Books project is the participation of local artists at each exhibition. In that spirit, this exhibition includes works by four Connecticut College faculty.

UPCOMING EXHIBITS

IN THE CHARLES SHAIN EXHIBIT AREA

Etchings by Bob Nugent, February 1-March 31, 2018

This year the Linda Lear Center received six portfolios of etchings by the American artist Bob Nugent. Individual plates from these collections (*Topologia do Encontro, Acima/Abaixo, Insetos, Semente, Xingu: Lost Worlds,* and *Sob a Abódogoda: Under the Canopy*) will be displayed and the artist will come to campus to speak at the opening of the exhibit and to teach a class to Connecticut College students. Nugent became interested in the Amazonian rainforest and its people in 1984 and has traveled repeatedly to South America where he has studied the natural history of the region. His art reflects this interest and the threat posed to it by man's "inhumanity to nature."



IN THE LINDA LEAR CENTER FOR SPECIAL COLLECTIONS & ARCHIVES

Fine Press Printing Between the Wars, February 1-June 20, 2018

The Arts and Crafts movement gave rise to the rebirth of book printing as a fine art, with several presses producing exquisite volumes for the luxury market. This style of printing was largely brought to an end by the onset of World War I, but fine printing rose up again in the postwar period, democratized and intended for a large middle-class market. This exhibit will look at a range of fine press printing from England and America in the 1920s and 1930s, from private presses printing less than 200 copies to the mass subscription offerings of the Limited Editions Club.

IN THE CHARLES CHU ASIAN ART READING ROOM

Zhang Hongtu: Van Gogh/Bodhidharma, February-March, 2018

This solo show features New York-based, internationally renowned Chinese artist Zhang Hongtu's new ink artworks. In the 1990s, Zhang began to examine the relationship between East and West, particularly the style of the Impressionists, in his landscape paintings done in oil on canvas. Lately he has begun to re-engage traditional Chinese ink painting on paper, which has led to his new series Van Gogh/Bodhidharma. Zhang (b. 1943), who recently had a big retrospective exhibit in 2015-2016 at the Queens Museum in New York City, will collaborate with us on putting up this new show at Connecticut College.

FROM THE SHAIN LIBRARY TO WIKIPEDIA

Although Wikipedia has long been used by students as a first stop in the research process, educators and librarians are only just starting to come around to its potential in the classroom as a democratizing platform for knowledge creation.

The #1Lib1Ref (One Librarian, One Reference) campaign was launched in 2016 as an attempt by Wikipedia to improve the quality and reliability of its content. While Wikipedia serves as a major reference source, its editing policy - open to anyone interested in contributing content - has exposed some serious deficiencies, including more than 375,000 areas in need of reliable, verifiable citations across the site. #1Lib1Ref calls on librarians to use their skills in information literacy to add or update citations and provide the public with accurate, verifiable research. Last year, Shain Library staff came together for a #1Lib1Ref coffee hour, working through the citation process and updating entries

on a half-dozen topics ranging from climate data in Tobago to Tuvan throat singing.

While the #1Lib1Ref campaign aims to address issues surrounding Wikipedia's accuracy and verifiability, the Wikimedia Foundation's Edit-a-thon initiative attempts to tackle systemic biases present in the site's platform and editing community. Edit-a-thons provide inclusive, supportive spaces for participants to learn about and participate in the editing process, filling in critical gaps in scholarship around specific themes or topics. In honor of International Women's Day, Information Services hosted its first communal Wikipedia Edit-a-thon. Over the course of the evening, 13 participants from the Connecticut College and New London communities worked to research, create, and improve articles on subjects related to women and women's history, contributing citations, revising existing entries, and developing new content.



The screenshot shows the Wikipedia article for Mary Foulke Morrisson. The article text reads: "Mary Foulke Morrisson (November 14, 1879- March 9, 1971) Morrisson was born in Richmond, Indiana on November 14, 1879. She was a pioneer in the Women's rights movement and was a prominent member of the Board of Trustees at Connecticut College for 28 years. Morrisson graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 1899, where she studied chemistry, biology, and government.^[2] In 1900, she married James William Morrisson, president of Fuller-Morrisson Co., wholesale druggists.^[2]" The article includes a table of contents with sections for Career, Career in the Suffrage Movement, Honors and awards, Legacy, References, and External links. A photograph of Mary Foulke Morrisson is shown on the right, with a caption: "Mary Foulke Morrisson Circa 1960^[1]". The page also features a sidebar with navigation links and a search bar at the top.

Wikipedia page for Mary Foulke Morrisson, edited as part of the Edit-a-thon event

FRIENDS OF THE CONNECTICUT COLLEGE LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Friends of the Connecticut College Library runs from January 1 to December 31, but it is never too late to join or renew your membership. The dues from the Friends are used to support the acquisition and preservation of materials, lectures, exhibitions, receptions, mailings, and scholarships.

If you wish to join, download a form at <http://www.conncoll.edu/information-services/friends-of-the-library/> or contact Benjamin Panciera at bpancier@conncoll.edu or by calling 860-439-2654.

Membership has the following levels, named for distinctive collections in the Linda Lear Center: Carson (\$2500), O'Neill (\$1000), Potter (\$500), Chu-Griffis (\$250), Campus History (\$100), Gildersleeve (\$50), and Meredith (\$25). For recent graduates there is also a Young Alumni level (\$10). All members receive the newsletter and invitations to lectures and other events. Those who contribute more than \$50 will also receive borrowing privileges at both the Charles E. Shain and the Greer Music Libraries. Those who contribute at or above the \$100 level will receive a set of Friends of the Connecticut College Library bookplates and for a gift of \$250 or more, we will personalize the bookplates.