After a frenetic summer of construction, a new maker space at the Fine Arts Library — conceived and created through a collaboration between the Libraries and the College of Fine Arts at The University of Texas at Austin — opened to fanfare this September.

“The Foundry” provides tools for pursuing creative impulses and ideas within a space where students can gather to create independently or collaboratively and where users will have immediate access to traditional library resources and services to augment their work. It’s designed to be a teaching and learning space where students work both independently and with the support of library staff to build knowledge through hands-on experience.

More than 300 attendees were welcomed to the renovated area on the main floor.
of FAL with a flourish of horns by the FivE Euphoni-um Quartet — as well as other performances by Butler School of Music students and director Jerry Junkin — and remarks by Provost Maurie McInnis, Vice Provost Lorraine Haricombe and College of Fine Arts dean Douglas Dempster.

Precipitated in part by the launch of the new undergraduate degree program in the Center for Arts and Entertainment Technologies (CAET), the Libraries and College of Fine Arts announced in February a partnership to develop a new kind of creative space in FAL to support the specialized needs of students in the new program. The Foundry is located on the library’s main level and consists of a series of interconnected studios designed to support audio recording, video production, fabrication, 3D printing, animatronics, game design and fiber arts.

The space redevelopment was designed to provide advanced technological systems for all aspects of performance, game development, music production, digital visual arts and other forms of digital entertainment. The project was funded by the Office of the Provost, the Libraries, the College of Fine Arts and by a generous grant from the Hearst Foundations, as well as individual donations from Mack and Margery Lindsey, and contributors a crowdfunding effort to fund the recording studio. While it was developed primarily to support CAET, The Foundry is open to every student at the university.

“The Foundry gives students the tools, technology and creative space needed to to compose, research, record, design, print, program and create the next masterpiece or million-dollar invention,” said Dempster. “This new makerspace is a game-changer for Fine Arts students and all UT students, enabling them collaborate across disciplines to test new creative concepts and projects. Come to the Fine Arts Library and make cool stuff!”

Libraries are in the business of early adoption for technological innovations, since technology has a profound effect on how library resources are shared and preserved, and even consumed. To augment how the knowledge and information they provide can be transformed — either at the point of inspiration or in the presence of the resources that make transformation possible — libraries have sought to offer users the tools to communicate new ideas through the creative process.

Take for instance the first cuneiform tablets, which may
not seem terribly innovative given our immersion in modern digital technologies, but they represented a leap forward in how to document the knowledge of human existence. And they were collected in the precursors to libraries discovered in Sumeria — some dated as early as 2600 BC — which initially served to house government and religious records, but later incorporated information regarding history, mathematics and sciences.

Clay eventually made way for papyrus and then paper, and later the printing press provided for large-scale duplication and dissemination. In their early stages, these techniques and what they produced weren’t available to common people so the library, in time, filled the demand for access. Following a historical timeline forward, libraries have continued this trend, introducing the public to initially expensive and difficult to access post-industrial technologies like typewriters, copiers, PCs, printers and the internet — and to varying degrees, have made freely available tools for manipulating information of all types.

In recent years, the Libraries have been working with campus partners and administrators to reimage spaces to meet the needs of 21st-century users. In the last year, the Libraries opened the Learning Commons in the Perry-Castañeda Library, partnering with the University Writing Center to provide on-site support for written communications. The Libraries also worked with Student Success Initiatives, the College of Natural Sciences and the School of Engineering to develop dedicated academic support spaces for STEM students. This year also saw the opening of the Scholars Commons in PCL with the support of the Graduate School and the Office of the Vice President for Research — a space designed to enhance graduate student success.

“No longer solely a place where people go to consume information, libraries are increasingly a destination for synthesizing knowledge and creating new knowledge products,” says Vice Provost and Director of the UT Libraries Lorraine Haricombe. “With The Foundry, we are configuring services and tools to help students, faculty and researchers conceptualize and use our resources in different ways with new technologies, and in the process gain experience and skills that will provide them an advantage in their post-academic careers.”

A 3D printer in The Foundry producing a model of the Tower at UT.
Eight Years After Google Books, Benson Materials Join HathiTrust

More than 500,000 books from the stacks of the Benson Latin American Collection, a trove of treasures related to Latin America, have been digitized and are now accessible online. The project is part of the University of Texas Libraries partnership with Google to digitize books and other literature to create a massive digital repository.

The HathiTrust Digital Library was established in 2008, built upon digital content from research libraries culled from the original Google Books project — in which the UT Libraries was a partner — and the Internet Archive initiative, along with content digitized through partner projects.

The volumes related to Latin American culture and history have been added to the HathiTrust Digital Library to be fully searchable online.

UT Libraries became a partner member of HathiTrust in 2014, and in doing so, provided to the university community access to the project’s repository of more than 14 million volumes gathered from more than 100 partner institutions.

To date, UT Libraries has gained access to more than 3.5 million digital public domain items contained in
the digital library, allowing the university community to perform full-text searches of the complete HathiTrust catalog, download content that is in the public domain and create personal virtual libraries of digital titles.

It also provides users with visual impairments at member institutions full access to the entire digital library for use with assistive technology.

Lorraine Haricombe, Vice Provost and Director of UT Libraries, said she sees the addition of the Benson materials as more evidence that the Libraries are delivering global impact.

One volume from the Benson collection — “Los animales domésticos de la América precolombiana,” first published in Santiago, Chile, in 1922 — was digitized as part of the Google Books project, and once uploaded, became accessible to anyone with access to the internet. Previously, the modest book printed on fragile newsprint may rarely have been touched during its nearly 100 years on the library shelves in Austin.

“The Libraries was informed by Google staff in one measured week that Ricardo Latcham’s little book — now fully searchable online — was accessed 3,421 times around the world,” Haricombe said. “This is the power of creating, preserving and making information freely accessible. Knowledge is able to reach the far corners of the globe and have a transformational effect on research and learning.”

The initial Google Books project was stymied by a series of lawsuits related to copyright that effectively embargoed much of the materials that were subject to the litigation, including about 600,000 volumes that had been selected and scanned from the Benson Collection to be included in the project.

HathiTrust was founded in October 2008 by the 13 universities of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation and the University of California to establish a repository to archive and share digitized collections. In light of the ongoing court proceedings, HathiTrust worked with partner institutions to secure access to the files digitized by the search giant for inclusion into the digital repository.

HathiTrust itself eventually became the target of a lawsuit by the Authors Guild, but an appellate decision by the Second Circuit Court in 2014 effectively settled all claims of fair use and secured the opportunity to add the Latin American materials that had been digitally preserved from the Benson collection.
The Libraries continued its implementation of an “Open Agenda” with an extension of its “Year of Open” outreach efforts and the development of new policy to begin the process of formalizing open access on the Forty Acres.

In September, information policy expert Clifford Lynch presented a talk — “Evolving Scholarly Practice and the New Challenges for Scholarly Communications” — that examined strategies for managing transformations of scholarly communications, and how libraries and other institutions support the evolution of research.

The landscape of the research life-cycle is experiencing a fundamental shift as technological developments change the ways in which research is prepared, conducted and disseminated. Lynch — who has led the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI) since 1997 — addressed the challenges of the current environment for faculty, researchers and library professionals, and offered some potential options to place libraries in a central role for promoting and providing open access solutions in higher education.

The University of Texas Libraries is presenting events and workshops as part of a “Year of Open” to raise the profile of open content on the campus of The University of Texas at Austin, in the city of Austin and in the surrounding area.

Lynch’s visit was preceded by a few weeks with news
This past May, Professor Virginia Garrard-Burnett was chosen as the new director of LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections. A faculty member at The University of Texas at Austin since 1990, she is a professor in the departments of History and Religious Studies, and a faculty affiliate of the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS).

Garrard-Burnett has carved out a distinguished career as a professor, researcher, scholar, and author. Her research interests include historic memory and human rights during the Cold War in Latin America, archives and history, and contemporary Central American history. She is equally interested in religious movements and ethnic identity in Latin America, and the intersection of religion and politics in the region.

Her many years of involvement with LLILAS include having served as undergraduate faculty adviser at the institute from 1997 through 2006. She has relied on the Benson Latin American Collection extensively for both research and teaching. In spring 2016 she taught History of Modern Central America Through Digital Archives at the collection, a course using newly developed digital archives for original student research. Garrard-Burnett was co-organizer of the 2014 Lozano Long Conference, “Archiving the Central American Revolutions,” a ground-breaking gathering sponsored by LLILAS Benson that brought together scholars, students, and activists with firsthand knowledge of the revolutionary period.
Grant Supports Web Project for the (Historical) Ages

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) recently named the Periods, Organized (PeriodO) web project as a finalist for its grant awards in the first cycle of the National Leadership Grants for Libraries Program and the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program.

The $237,000 grant provides additional funding for the continued development of the PeriodO online resource created through a collaboration between project directors Adam Rabinowitz (College of Liberal Arts, Department of Classics) of The University of Texas at Austin and Ryan Shaw (School of Information and Library Science) of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Initial funding for the project came in the form of a $54,000 Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant to the UT College of Liberal Arts from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2014.

Scholarship on the ancient world, in particular, uses conceptual rather than quantitative language to refer to time. Instead of referring to dates, it refers to periods—but different scholars can use the same period terms.
to mean widely different things. PeriodO is an online gazetteer of historical, archaeological and art-historical period definitions that utilizes linked data to solve the problem of multiple categorizations of historical periods by cross-referencing the definitions of such periods by authoritative sources, rather than by relying solely on globally-accepted period concepts.

In this second phase of the project being supported by the IMLS grant, the University of Texas Libraries will join Rabinowitz, Shaw and existing collaborators to expand the dataset, functionality and services offered by the PeriodO platform. The integration of the project with the Libraries, which will include the migration of the dataset and web client to the Libraries server, the archiving of the dataset in the Texas ScholarWorks digital repository and the hosting of an international workshop will ensure the gazetteer’s long-term sustainability and broader adoption within the library and museum community. It will also make the Libraries an important node in the emerging web of linked data.

Vice Provost and Director of the Libraries Lorraine Haricombe — who will serve as project co-director in this phase — is gratified by the award and the opportunity it presents.

“The Libraries are fortunate to enter a project which has already been so thoughtfully developed by its creators,” says Haricombe. “Through our participation with current and future collaborators, we hope to expand and enhance the accessibility and awareness of this excellent tool for the benefit of scholars and researchers everywhere.”
The Benson Latin American Collection has established itself as a leader in the area of post-custodial archives — a systematic approach to preservation that places emphasis on providing for original materials to remain in the possession of its creators or cultural parentage. Such notable examples of the practice by the Benson are the projects that make up the Human Rights Documentation Initiative — including the Genocide Archive of Rwanda and the Guatemalan National Police Historical Archive — and Primeros Libros, a project to digitize the first books printed in the New World.

Most recently, staff from LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections and the Libraries have been building upon a project — initially funded from a 2014 Mellon grant award — that takes a more comprehensive approach to preserving the culture and history of Latin America.

The Latin American Digital Initiatives (LADI) repository currently represents the collaborative efforts of LLILAS Benson with three Central American organizations on four distinctive projects:
The Archivo de Inforpress Centroamericana at El Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica (CIRMA) in Guatemala, which features news clippings and documents compiled by the journal Inforpress Centroamericana on the topic of violence in Guatemala.

Colección Conflicto Armado del Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen at Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen in El Salvador, highlights Political propaganda produced during the Salvadoran armed conflict by clandestine groups and non-governmental organizations as well as the military.

Hemeroteca del Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen, also based at the Museo de la Palabra y la Imagen, documenting clandestine publications from the period of the Salvadoran armed conflict.

La Información at Centro de Investigación y Documentación de la Costa Atlántica, documenting the historical newspaper’s coverage of social, political and economic life of Bluefields, Nicaragua.

Initial work was completed and the website for LADI was launched last November, and the site (and the team that built it) was awarded the Excellence in Digital Libraries Award from the Texas Digital Library in May.

Theresa Polk, post-custodial archivist at the Benson and one of the project’s leads, is gratified by the success of the project, and looks forward to its future potential.

“It was tremendously exciting to see how the metadata facilitated these disparate collections talking to one another and to other Benson digital collections,” says Polk. “As the site continues to evolve, new collections are added, and researchers begin to actively engage it, we hope it will facilitate new insights into human rights scholarship in the region.”

Garrard-Burnett’s deep knowledge of the Benson as well as LLILAS stands her in good stead as the future leader of the partnership. “We’re privileged to welcome a scholar with a deep appreciation for the value of libraries to lead this partnership forward — especially with one who brings direct and extensive research and teaching experience with the exceptional resources of the Benson Latin American Collection,” said Lorraine Haricombe, Vice Provost and Director of University of Texas Libraries. “We look forward to the benefits that her perspective and leadership will bring to LLILAS Benson.”

“Professor Garrard-Burnett has proven herself to be both an innovative scholar and leader for the college,” said Randy Diehl, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. “She is a good example of why we are ranked first in Latin American History, and she will continue to build on the strong national reputation of LLILAS Benson.”

LLILAS Benson is a partnership between the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies and the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection that was established in 2011 under the directorship of Professor Charles R. Hale. August 31, 2016, marked the end of Hale’s term as director.
Benson Provides Home for Archive of Poet, Revolutionary

By Susanna Sharpe

The archive of Nicaraguan poet, priest and political activist Ernesto Cardenal opened in November at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at The University of Texas at Austin.

Admired and controversial, Cardenal is a towering figure in Central American culture and politics. He is a multifaceted poet who incorporates history and science in his verse, and a priest who defied the Catholic hierarchy by engaging in a revolutionary armed conflict and in the ensuing left-wing government.

The archive features rare editions of Cardenal’s writings, translations of his poetry, interviews, photographs, videos, newspaper clippings, documentaries about his life and work, and hundreds of letters to and from key protagonists of Nicaraguan culture and politics.

Files relating to Cardenal’s activities as minister of culture during the 1980s Sandinista government are currently being digitized. The originals will be given to the Historical Institute of Nicaragua and Central America,
Among the archive’s treasures are letters to Cardenal from Trappist monk Thomas Merton, an influential figure in Cardenal’s life. Merton’s reflections on literature, spirituality and politics reveal deep anxiety about the nuclear threats of the 1960s along with distrust for the two superpowers that vied for supremacy in the world.

Cardenal has been called one of the last of a visionary generation of activist/artist priests that at one time included Gustavo Gutiérrez, Paulo Freire and Jon Sobrino.

“Ernesto Cardenal is one of Latin America’s foremost public intellectuals,” states Virginia Garrard-Burnett, professor of history and director of LLILAS Benson Latin American Studies and Collections. “A renowned poet and political activist, Cardenal has spoken out tirelessly and eloquently on behalf of the poor, the marginalized and the forgotten for well more than half a century. It is our great privilege that he has decided to safeguard the corpus of his writings to LLILAS Benson, where they can be studied and appreciated by future generations.”

The Ernesto Cardenal archive complements and enriches numerous historical and literary collections already housed at The University of Texas at Austin. These include the ongoing Archiving the Central American Revolutions Initiative; Revolution and Counterrevolution in Guatemala, 1944–1963; the José Revueltas Papers; and the Magda Portal Papers (all at the Benson Collection), as well as the Gabriel García Márquez archive and El Corno Emplumado Collection (both at the Harry Ransom Center).

“The opening of the Ernesto Cardenal papers will offer tremendous opportunities for researchers from all over the world to make new discoveries and advance scholarship about this extraordinary man and his lasting contributions to Nicaraguan history and culture,” said Julianne Gilland, director of the Benson Latin American Collection.

The Benson Latin American Collection celebrated the opening of the Ernesto Cardenal Papers on Tuesday, Nov. 15, with a roundtable of scholars and a poetry reading by Cardenal himself.
Harvesting Hardboiled Literature

UT Librarians have been busy working on their role in national collaborations for deepening and diversifying South Asian collections while simultaneously making them more accessible. One of these efforts exemplifies this multi-pronged approach, namely the growing — albeit idiosyncratic — niche collection in popular and pulp fiction in regional South Asian languages. The various projects associated with this collection have harmoniously united to form a synergy of resources for scholars of South India.

On a brief acquisitions trip to South India last year, Mary Rader, Assistant Director of Research, obtained a treasure trove of popular and pulp fiction novels to jumpstart our efforts. These novels were primarily in Telugu, the chief language of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, and third most spoken language in India.

Popular and pulp fiction literature gained popularity across India during the 1950s and 1960s — a time of tremendous social activism in the subcontinent. For example, after India gained independence in 1947, many social reformists and their movements sought to encourage women to learn to read and write. As a result of these efforts, women writers across the socioeconomic spectrum took advantage of the medium of popular and pulp fiction to address contemporary societal dilemmas. The issues these women wrote about included problems they faced personally as well as those issues that permeated throughout Indian culture. Thanks to these movements, the 1960s were dominated by female writers who wrote fiction that subtly critiqued social issues while piquing the interest of the common reader with imaginative storylines and exuberant characters. In this vein, pulp and popular fiction presented a very raw and realistic take on life, which allowed the middle class to see elements of their lived experiences within the confines of these beautifully illustrated books.

These popular and pulp fiction authors also had close connections with the movie industry, aside from writing for popular cinema magazines. Another one of the authors whose works that has been acquired — Yaddanapudi Sulochanarani — wrote sought-after fiction that was frequently used as the plot of many successful Telugu movies. Her love stories and dramas were popular for younger generations and directors such as K. Viswanath adapted her stories into extremely popular films that address a wide array of social issues.

Another set of contemporaneous novelists echoes detective novel literature that was popular in the U.S. during the 1930s and 1940s. Prolific authors like Sambasivaravu Kommu, Madhubabu, and Ram Mohanaravu Suryadvara produced dozens of novels providing quick entertainment while still addressing contemporary social issues in a more informal context.

As efforts continue to develop this distinctive niche collection, librarians are also working to make the Telugu materials more accessible. As part of the South Asian
Language Journals Cooperative Table of Contents Project (SALT oC), Telugu journals within the Libraries collection are being annotated, revealing unique parallels within the contemporary pulp and popular fiction holdings. The Libraries’ first contribution to SALT oC was the creation of a table of contents for Āndhrasacitra vārapatrika, a 200+ issue weekly cinema magazine that included short stories by amateur authors. In the early 1960s, weekly and monthly journals like Āndhrasacitra vārapatrika flooded the market with editors who eagerly encouraged women to write. Many of the short stories written by these women gained critical acclaim. In particular, a short story called “Sampenga Podalu” or Tuberose Vines, written by C. Ananda Ramam in Āndhrasacitra vārapatrika, jumpstarted her career as a successful popular fiction novelist. Similarly, another of the authors whose works we have acquired – Dvivēdula Viśālāksi – had the beginning of her career founded in a short story she wrote for another one of these popular journals.

There is much more annotating, researching and acquiring to do and work has begun in other regional languages like Tamil and Malayalam. In the meantime, check out the amazing resources the Libraries are compiling.

Written by Sricharan Natukuri
— South Asia Library Assistant working with Assistant Director of Research Mary Rader.
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