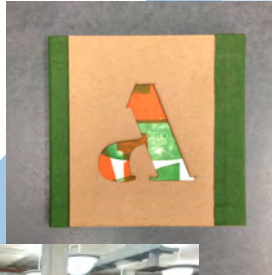


PRESERVATION OUTREACH THROUGH NON-TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION AND ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

Library preservation is imperative to ensure continued access to our collections and materials, but often preservation takes place behind the scenes. One of the first lines of defense in protecting library materials is the library patron. With a basic awareness of preservation issues, patrons can be a mitigating factor in the preservation of library materials through proper handling and use. Unfortunately, most patrons are not regularly exposed to the idea of library preservation, let alone given the knowledge they need to keep materials in good condition.

The Preservation Department at Miami University Libraries decided to create targeted outreach initiatives with the goal of exposing undergraduate student patrons to the basic concept - or at the very least the simple existence - of library preservation and how, with very little effort, students can help ensure that the libraries' collections are usable and accessible for generations to come.



The Preservation Department was invited to teach a joint class session with Special Collections staff on artist books for a papermaking studio class. While the students were exposed to a variety of artist books from Special Collections, it was the job of the Preservation Department to show students different types of contemporary bindings as well as the various parts of a book. The department chose to meet the learning objective from the perspective of library preservation. Showing students damaged books and demonstrating the various repairs performed when fixing damaged materials had the effect of demonstrating how various bindings can fail. Students were also able to see the different parts of a book, which were exposed during the repair process. In addition, students participated in a hands-on exercise creating custom phase boxes, and learning the purpose of such housing in the process.

The result of this combined teaching effort is a regular schedule of class visits to Special Collections and Preservation throughout the year, which has grown to include several sections of papermaking studio classes and letterpress studio classes.

Library Instruction

Book Repair Stations

Book Arts Day Event



During Preservation Week this past April the Preservation Department wanted to go beyond the normal displays and blog posts to really capture the attention of student patrons. We set up public book repair stations in several well-populated areas of the main library and the science library. Preservation staff working at these stations performed basic repairs on library materials throughout the day. The goal of these public stations was to raise awareness of library preservation and the time and work that goes into repairing library materials for continued access and use.

We found the most successful station was the “King Cafe” station, which was set up in the library cafe adjacent to where students wait for their food orders. This created a “captive audience” and many of the students wandered over to engage preservation staff in conversation or simply watch the repair process until their coffee was ready.

The Book Arts Day event, held at Miami University’s Wertz Art and Architecture Library was a joint effort between the Art and Architecture Library, Special Collections staff, and the Preservation Department. The goal of the event was to draw attention to bookbinding, book repair, and library preservation as well as to promote the Art and Architecture Library as a space for outreach events. The event included book repair demonstrations, artist book examples from Special Collections, and a simple pamphlet binding demonstration and hands-on activity.

The event was well attended and received good feedback from attendees. Because of this, a regular series of events is being planned with collaboration from art faculty, the art library, and the Preservation Department.

Conclusion

The targeted outreach events were well received by students and faculty, leading to the scheduling of future events and an expansion of the preservation outreach programming. While much of the success is anecdotal and based on spoken and written feedback from students, the Preservation Department feels that through these events a number of students were newly exposed to the idea of library preservation, and how they can play a part.

