

Rare Book School Awards 15 Fellowships for Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Heritage

Fellowship program seeks to enhance understandings of multicultural collections among professionals, local community members, and broader publics

Charlottesville, VA, 26 April 2022—Rare Book School (RBS) at the University of Virginia has selected the third cohort of 15 fellows to join the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship for Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Heritage (RBS-Mellon CH Fellowship). Fellows will participate in a three-year program which includes an orientation, Rare Book School coursework, community symposia, and other activities relating to multicultural collections and trainings.

“We are especially excited this year to bring the new fellows together in person so that they may begin to build valuable peer networks through face-to-face interactions,” said Danielle Culpepper, RBS Director of Budget & Finance and one of the authors of this initiative. “The pandemic in 2020 and 2021 forced RBS to move activities for the first two cohorts of fellows online so, this year, we’re grateful that they will finally be able to participate in activities together in person, as we had originally planned and envisioned.”

This program builds on the success of earlier RBS fellowship initiatives, including the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship for Scholars in Critical Bibliography, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)-RBS Fellowships for Early-Career Librarians, and the RBS-RBMS Diversity Fellowship Program. The RBS-Mellon CH Fellowship has been formed to: develop skills for documenting and interpreting visual and textual materials in special collections and archives; raise awareness within professional communities about the significance of inclusive, multicultural collections, including their promotion, development, and stewardship; build connections with diverse communities and publics through strategic programming, outreach, and advocacy; and advance careers by establishing new pathways and skills for professional growth.

The 15 RBS-Mellon CH Fellows were chosen from a highly competitive field of applicants by a selection committee comprising leading cultural heritage professionals. The fellows selected from across the country work closely with a broad spectrum of multicultural collections and communities. This year’s awardees have a wealth of experience working with reparative archival practices; community archives; Latin American, Latinx, and Iberian collections; African American and African diaspora history and collections; Indigenous visual literacy and common law; Japanese art and Japanese American collections; digital archives, literacy, and preservation; tactile printed materials for low-vision persons; and medieval manuscripts and paleography. Geographically, the fellows represent states across the country from coast to coast. “This new cohort of fellows brings to RBS significant experience and expertise in areas that are vital to the future growth of libraries, archives, and museums,” remarked Barbara Heritage, RBS’s Associate Director and Curator of Collections, who also serves as a co-author of the grant. “This year’s fellows are particularly interested in working with material artifacts that call attention to cultural histories that have been silenced, elided, or overlooked. We continue to see this fellowship as an important opportunity for RBS and other institutions to increase their engagement with multicultural communities in a responsible and ethical fashion, to help ensure that community voices and collections are valued and preserved in keeping with the vision of those various and diverse groups.”

“We very much look forward to welcoming our third group of Cultural Heritage Fellows to Rare Book School, where we hope they will find much to learn and much to contribute,” said RBS

Executive Director Michael F. Suarez, S.J. “We remain profoundly grateful to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their ongoing support of this key diversity initiative at Rare Book School.”

More information about the Andrew W. Mellon Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Heritage is available at: <https://rarebookschool.org/admissions-awards/fellowships/mellon-diversity/>.

About Rare Book School (RBS)

Rare Book School provides continuing-education opportunities for students from all disciplines and skill levels to study the history of written, printed, and digital materials with leading scholars and professionals in the fields of bibliography, librarianship, book history, manuscript studies, and the digital humanities. Founded at Columbia University in 1983, RBS moved to its present home at the University of Virginia in 1992. RBS is a not-for-profit educational organization associated with the University of Virginia.

More information about RBS is available on its website: <http://www.rarebookschool.org>.

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