

Introduction

Mary Lee Kennedy, Executive Director, Association of Research Libraries

This time of accentuated interdependence and acute awareness of a historical moment calls on galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAMs) to respond together and to lead forward. Memory institutions are unique trusted stewards of time. When humanity experiences a global event such as the current pandemic, our institutions are grounded in the moment, and in their role throughout history told and yet to come. In this issue of *Research Library Issues* we offer three articles that reflect on the value of GLAM collaborations as well as the voices of institutional leaders looking at the opportunities for even greater collaboration as we work through history in the making.

Eerily familiar today, the article by Guy Berthiaume, Librarian and Archivist of Canada Emeritus, looks back at a time of economic uncertainty when GLAM collaboration was essential to creating a new narrative for GLAM institutions, and to quantifying their economic contribution to

society. In 2014 the Canadian federal government announced a large investment in cultural institutions, which would become the largest investment in cultural institutions in Canadian history between 2015 and 2020. No funding was included for the GLAM community. In response, the Library and Archives Canada and the Canadian Museums Association held a summit and there the national collaboration began. 2020 represents the end of the first phase of collective work of the Canadian GLAM sector and a time in which the sector can build on the progress they made to change the narrative and demonstrate their economic value. Both goals seem incredibly relevant today.

“This time of accentuated interdependence and acute awareness of a historical moment calls on galleries, libraries, archives, and museums to respond together and to lead forward.”

Jill Deupi, Chuck Eckman, and Christina Larson’s article also begins in 2015, with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation’s support for identifying and addressing opportunities for deep library-museum collaboration within institutions of higher learning. Following a summit, the University of Miami responded to and received funding for CREATE,¹ an interdisciplinary initiative designed to catalyze and support innovative pedagogies, exhibitions, research, and public programs that hold the university’s library and art museum collections at their core. Their article highlights what is achievable through collaborations on paper conservation, information discovery, exhibitions that transcend object sharing, and digital initiatives. The authors provide insights on how they continue to collaborate during the current pandemic and the opportunities they are exploring to continue to develop, expand, and refine the collaborative efforts to date.

The third article reflects conversations on GLAM collaborations under COVID-19 conditions and what that might mean for the future. Mark Sweeney and Jacob Nadal of the Library of Congress, Kurt Graham of the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum, and Trevor Dawes of the University of Delaware Libraries and Museums share how the institutions they lead are building on the strength of past and existing collaborations, and how the challenges of the pandemic may accelerate strategic opportunities. This article focuses our attention on a variety of collaboration types and what they mean, and invites us to move boldly forward embracing our potential synergies.

More than ever it is essential that we share what we have experienced, open up our conversations to imagine the possibilities, and celebrate our shared mission. I hope this issue of *Research Library Issues* provides you with inspiration for what lies ahead.

Endnote

1. CREATE website, University of Miami, accessed June 3, 2020, <https://create.miami.edu/>.

© 2020 Mary Lee Kennedy



This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

To cite this article: Mary Lee Kennedy. “Introduction.” *Research Library Issues*, no. 300 (2020): 3–5. <https://doi.org/10.29242/rli.300.1>.