

Proteus Gowanus

A year-long Interdisciplinary Library Exhibit at *Proteus Gowanus*

“Who are we, if not a combinatorial of experiences, information, books we have read, things imagined? Each life is an encyclopedia, a library, an inventory of objects, a series of styles, and everything can be constantly reshuffled and reordered in every conceivable way.”

Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millenium*

“In the colossal labor, which exhausts both body and soul, of making into a alphabetized catalog a multitude of books gathered from every corner of the earth there are many intricate and difficult problems that torture the mind.”

Sir Thomas Hyde, 1676

“Everything is intertwined”

Theodore Nelson

Proteus Gowanus is an amalgam of moving parts; its exhibits and programs are fed by seven non-profit partners, and by an expanding community of artists and individuals from many disciplines. Art, objects, artifacts and books, are exhibited, organized around an annual theme. Sub-themes inevitably occur and are explored. Last year’s “Travel” theme spawned mini-exhibits on the culture of bees, and the Gowanus Canal.

Visitors are integral to the process, often making observations and suggestions by association. It was out of my conversations with one such visitor, Andrew Beccone, a recent graduate of The Pratt Institute School of Information and Library Science, that the idea for a year-long “Library” theme grew. The topic is captivating the minds of many people today, from the history of libraries and their elaborate cataloging systems, to the challenges that are facing libraries as they confront the web. The visual, conceptual, and metaphorical implications of the theme have inspired work in the arts, and a flowering of small alternative libraries has appeared around the country as the role of library, and the book itself, is questioned.

We invite you to visit Proteus Gowanus as we explore this theme over the course of the coming year. Join our email list for updates on library-related events and workshops scheduled throughout the year, and visit our website for links to interesting libraries around the world. We welcome your ideas on the subject.

Sasha Chavchavadze
Founder, Proteus Gowanus

Highlights from this year's

Interdisciplinary Library Exhibit and Programs:

Library-related work by artists, **Jenny Bevill, Nick Defriez, Harrell Fletcher, Leslie Fry, David Gatten, Nina Katchadourian, Jeanne Liotta, Margaret Neill, Anna Poor, Tracy Priest, Jeffrey Schiff, Temporary Services, Robert The, Mary Ting,** and others.

A slide show and presentation by **Rick Prelinger and Megan Shaw Prelinger of the Prelinger Library**, an experimental research library in San Francisco (September 5)

An installation by the **Brooklyn Museum Library** focusing on three 19th century collectors, and a related lecture by **Deirdre Lawrence**, Principal Librarian at the Brooklyn Museum (October 27). An additional lecture in June by Deirdre Lawrence will focus on the upcoming exhibit at the Brooklyn Museum of work by artist **David Bunn** who works with library card catalogs.

A four ton 1900 safe containing a library and store of **Cabinet Magazine's** current and back issues, with a revolving mini-exhibit.

Andrew Beccone's **Reanimation Library**, a small, independent library serving artists, writers, and other cultural archeologists.

A curated shelf from the **Brooklyn Historical Society** focusing on historical libraries of Brooklyn, and a guided tour of the Brooklyn Historical Society's library, currently closed to the public, with rare and beautiful books highlighted by director, **Deborah Schwartz**.

The Artistsbook Library and Store curated by **Maddy Rosenberg**, a selection of artistsbooks by thirty artists, from pamphlets to sculptural works.

A curated shelf of encyclopedias by **The Encyclopedia Project**, an encyclopedia of fiction and fictional forms.

A monthly series of library-related screenings from the archive of the **Donnell Media Center at the New York Public Library**, curated by artist and filmmaker **Jeanne Liotta**. (consult [workshops/events](#) page for next screening)

A library of contemporary "chained books" created by **Wendy Walker**, displayed with books and images of the 17th century chained libraries that still exist in England today. Novelists and **Proteus Gowanus Library Correspondents, Tom LaFarge and Wendy Walker**, will conduct a talking tour and slide show of burned, bombed, chained, rejected, and rotting libraries around the world (December 3), and workshops on the French-based OuLiPo, the first literary movement to apply mathematical constraints to verbal composition. (January 7, February 25)

An archive and store of current and back issues of **Bomb Magazine**.

Numerous new and rare books related to library, and collections of books for sale by **Ugly Duckling Presse, J&L Books, Purgatory Pie Press, Place in History, The Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club,** and **The Empty Vessel Project**.

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A collection of crocheted models of hyperbolic space, and related mathematical books from **The Institute For Figuring**.

Screenings of films by filmmakers **David Gatten** about the historic **William Byrd Library** (November 12), and **Jeanne Liotta** from her **Celestial Library** (October 29), both recently included in the Whitney Biennial.

A library of rare and new travel books, including travel books recommended by **Philip Lopate**, **Vijay Seshadri**, **Jonathan Ames** and other Brooklyn-based writers.

An archive of contemporary prints from the **Kentler International Drawing Space Satellite Flatfile**, and a collection of paintings by artist, **Ted Chafee of Vision Quest**.

An original card catalog from a 1930's private library, complete with Dewey Decimal System shelf markers, provided by artist, **Alexandra Walcott**.

An archive of Cold War books from the **Museum of Matches Project**, a one-room Cold War Museum at Proteus Gowanus

A series of Sunday afternoon readings in June organized by **Suzanne Khuri of Recrossing Brooklyn Ferry**.