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DANOWSKI POETRY LIBRARY EXHIBITION DEBUTS AT EMORY

More Than 150 Rare and Modern First Editions on Display

The first major exhibition of items from Emory University's Raymond Danowski Poetry Library is now on display in the Schatten Gallery of the university's Robert W. Woodruff Library.

"Democratic Vistas": Exploring The Raymond Danowski Poetry Library takes its name from a volume of Walt Whitman's essays, says Kevin Young, curator of the Danowski Poetry Library and of the exhibition.

More importantly, Whitman serves as both the literal start of this show and the symbolic beginning of the Danowski Library, a collection of 75,000 volumes of rare and modern poetry.

"This exhibition highlights the democratic qualities of the collection," says Young, Emory's Atticus Haygood Professor of Creative Writing and English. "Like the Danowski Poetry Library itself, the exhibition focuses not on one particular school or kind of poetry, but rather provides a sense of the whole of poetry."

Central to the exhibition is a first edition of Whitman's "Leaves of Grass," arguably the first modern book of poetry, printed by its author and published on July 4, 1855. The pristine copy of the volume, in its original binding, starts off the collection. Behind it, the dramatic timeline of significant events and books of poetry fill a gallery wall.

"The Schatten Gallery seems to come alive with the beautiful covers, book design, poetry broadsides and poetic innovations that line the cases and the walls of the show," says Young. "'Democratic Vistas' reveals the relevance of poetry to the events of the century, from Auden's writing '1 September 1939' at the start of World War II to the poem being revived in the wake of Sept. 11.

"Poetry's long connection to our troubles and triumphs is made real, and brought to life, by the range of poems and poets in this show," he says.

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The exhibition travels through more than 150 years of history and poetry, highlighting four areas of strength in the collection: First Books (and early editions) by poets, from Whitman to Pulitzer Prize-winner (and Emory professor) Natasha Trethewey; Author Collections; a century of Isms (or movements and communities); and Small Presses (and little magazines).

Other highlights of the exhibition include:

• one of 11 known copies of William Carlos Williams' first book, *Poems* (1909), which was never reprinted;
• a first edition of T. S. Eliot's "Prufrock and Other Observations" (1917), inscribed to his close friend Emily Hale;
• limited editions by Langston Hughes, with corrections in his own hand;
• a 19th century children's book once owned by W.H. Auden;
• Anne Sexton's personal, heavily annotated copy of Sylvia Plath's "Ariel" (1965);
• a unique, handmade book with drawings and poems by Andrei Codrescu from 1966;
• one of 25 copies of Hart Crane's "The Bridge" (1930), with the first printed photographs by Walker Evans;
• featured rarities from influential schools of poetry, including modernism and Imagism, the Harlem Renaissance, the New York School and the Confessional Poets; and
• significant items from the author collections of Auden, Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), Ted Berrigan, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lucille Clifton, Langston Hughes, Ezra Pound, Muriel Rukeyser and William Carlos Williams.

The exhibition, which runs March 15 to May 26, coincides with "A Fine Excess: A Three-Day Celebration of Poetry at Emory University," April 2-4. Some of the country's finest living poets, including two former U.S. poet laureates, will gather at Emory for readings and interviews. Both the exhibition and the celebration are free and open to the public.

A gallery talk by Young and Julie Delliquanti of the Schatten Gallery is scheduled at 10 a.m. Friday, April 4, in the gallery.

A full-color, 160-page catalog of the show, with more than 150 color illustrations and 100 additional items, will be available in April. Contact the Schatten Gallery (libjhk@emory.edu, 404-727-0136 or 404-727-0955) for details.

For more information on viewing "Democratic Vistas," e-mail marbl@emory.edu or call 404-727-6887.

For more information on the "Fine Excess" celebration or to register to attend, visit http://marbl.library.emory.edu/excess_intro.html or call 404-727-6887.

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The Raymond Danowski Poetry Library (http://www.news.emory.edu/Releases/danowski1093898525.html) is a 75,000-volume collection of rare and first editions of modern and contemporary poetry. It also includes literary journals, chapbooks, little magazines, one-off journals, limited edition broadsides, audio recordings, novels by poets, unique manuscripts, and visual art from the United States, England, Ireland, Australia, India, Canada, Scotland and South Africa. Assembled by collector Raymond

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Danowski over 25 years, it is thought to have been the largest poetry library in private hands until its arrival at Emory University. Remarkable for its range and depth, the library represents Danowski's desire to gather every book of poetry published in English—a desire the collection largely achieved.

Kevin Young ([http://www.creativewriting.emory.edu/faculty/young.html](http://www.creativewriting.emory.edu/faculty/young.html)) is the author of five collections of poetry, most recently "For the Confederate Dead"; his third book, "Jelly Roll," won the Paterson Poetry Prize and was a finalist for the National Book Award. He has also edited four other volumes, most recently the Everyman Pocket Poets' "Jazz Poems" and "John Berryman: Selected Poems." Young is Atticus Haygood Professor and curator of the Danowski Poetry Library at Emory University.

The Emory University Libraries ([http://web.library.emory.edu/](http://web.library.emory.edu/)) in Atlanta and Oxford, Ga., are dedicated to fostering courageous inquiry among students and scholars at Emory University and around the world. The nine libraries' holdings include more than 3.1 million print and electronic volumes, 40,000-plus electronic journals, and internationally renowned special collections.

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