

WOMEN at the CENTER

Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library

Issue 4, Winter 2003

Recent Acquisitions:

- Several lesbian pulp novels, including *Women's Camp* by Leslie Sapho, and *Whisper Their Love* by Valerie Taylor
- *Beauty's Triumph, or the Superiority of the Fair Sex Invincibly Proved*. Rare first collected edition of Sophia's remarkable pamphlet trilogy, published in 1751
- An addition to the Sarah Dyer Collection consisting of approximately 150 women's comic books and self-published mini-comics

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Kathy Acker: A Lust for Life

"Lust for Life," a symposium held at New York University's Fales Library in November, focused on the life and work of post-modern feminist and "cyber-punk" author Kathy Acker, whose papers are held by the Bingham Center. The symposium was planned in conjunction with the publication of *Essential Acker: the Kathy Acker Reader*, edited by Amy Scholder and Dennis Cooper, which is forthcoming from Grove Press. Participants included luminaries from the literary and academic worlds, as well as musicians and performance artists whose own work had been influenced by Acker. Two days of panel discussions and round tables culminated in an evening of readings of Acker's work by Rick Moody, Diamanda Galas, Richard Foreman, Kathleen Hanna, Kim Gordon, and Sapphire.

Laura Micham, director of the Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Cul-

ture, gave introductory remarks, relating tales of the Bingham Center's acquisition and processing of the Acker Papers, and describing their connections to other Bingham Center holdings. Those attending the symposium were also treated to an exhibit featuring materials from the Acker collection including manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, and original artwork. The exhibit was curated by Fales Library project archivist Brandon Stosuy.



Photo of Kathy Acker by Marcus Leatherdale

The Kathy Acker Papers were originally acquired in 1995. Since then several additions have been made to the collection, the most recent this year. The result is a collection which spans the years 1972 to 1997, and consists of 20.7 linear feet of materials. It ranges from Acker's early works such as *The Childlike Life of the Black Tarantula* (1975) to her last novel *Pussy, King of the Pirates* (1996). Kathy Acker died from breast cancer in 1997, at the age of 53.

Mary Lily Research Grants Available

The applications are in for the 2003-2004 cycle of Mary Lily Research Grants. But if you missed the January 15 deadline, keep the grants in mind for next year. These "travel to collection" grants provide funds for researchers outside the Triangle area whose work would benefit from access to the archival and rare print collections at the

Sallie Bingham Center for Women's History and Culture.

The Bingham Center documents the public and private lives of women through a wide variety of published and unpublished sources. Collections of personal papers, and organizational records (*cont'd on p. 3*)



“Once processed and open for research, this collection will help us to understand the larger impact that changes in reproductive health policy had on women’s everyday lives.”

*- Johanna Schoen,
Assistant Professor of
Women’s Studies,
University of Iowa*

Celebrating the Takey Crist Collection

The Sallie Bingham Center for Women’s History and Culture, as part of the Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at Duke University, recently celebrated the gift of the papers of obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. Takey Crist of Jacksonville, N.C. On November 18, Special Collections staff joined Dr. Crist and a select group of his friends, family, and colleagues in the Biddle Rare Book Room to thank him for this important addition to the Bingham Center’s collections.

Crist received his medical education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of South Carolina. In 1973 he founded the Crist Clinic for Women in Jacksonville, the first outpatient surgical center and birthing center in North Carolina, in order to provide “excellent gynecological health care for women of all ages and economic levels.” The clinic has since expanded to include primary health care services for both men and women, family planning, and abortion services and counseling.

Dr. Crist has served on the faculties of the medical schools of UNC-CH and East Carolina University. Throughout his career, he has been a tireless advocate for women’s reproductive rights. He has also been a strong proponent of progressive sex education, producing the ground-breaking guide “Elephants and Butterflies” at UNC-CH in the early 1970s.

The Takey Crist Papers join other significant collections at the Bingham Center, such as the Merle Hoffman Papers, that reflect recent efforts to provide a full range of health care services to women.

The Crist collection includes materials documenting Crist’s work towards the legalization of abortion and provision of abortion services, family planning, and the integration of sex education into school curricula. The collection will be transferred to Duke in installments over the next year and will then be available for research with some restrictions on access to particularly sensitive materials.

Recent Visitors to the Bingham Center

The Bingham Center has been a very busy place in recent months. Between instruction sessions, visiting researchers, and a variety of public programs, we’ve seen lots of new faces, as well as some familiar friends.

Students in two first-year writing courses came to the Bingham Center for an introduction to the Sarah Dyer Zine Collection. Pegeen Reichert Powell’s course “The Second Sex, the Written Text: Gender and the Politics of Writing” used a textual analysis of women’s zines to illustrate the ways that gender can affect both the practice and the product of writing. And Heather Macalister’s course “Women’s Psycho-social Development” analyzed zine content to critique traditional psychological perspectives.

Recognizing the Center’s unique resources,

Nancy Daukas brought a dozen first-year students from Guilford College for a session examining issues of literacy, social class, gender, and race in the 19th century American South through women’s personal narratives. And our annual visit from Emily Chamberlain’s advanced journal writing class at the Carolina Friends’ School was as richly rewarding as ever. These middle-school students viewed a selection of women’s private writings, from a 19th century watercolor-illustrated travel diary to a pair of mother/daughter diaries written during the great depression, in order to better understand the significance their own writings may someday have in the greater historical context.

Thanks to all our visitors and researchers for giving us the opportunity to welcome them to the Bingham Center!



An image from the cover of the March 1895 issue of *The Queen of Fashion*, which was later to become *McCalls*.

Thinking Outside the Book, Inside the Bookmobile

On September 19, 2002, a vintage Airstream trailer pulled up in front of Duke Chapel and welcomed curious visitors to step inside. Founded in 2001 by a collective of emerging artists and community activists, **Projet MOBILIVRE/BOOKMOBILE** Project is a mobile book arts gallery and zine library that tours the U.S. and Canada bringing the power of independent publications to the people.

The Bookmobile's collection of over 300 artists' books, zines, and mini-comics was selected to show the variety of modes of communication that are possible when individuals stop merely consuming media and begin to produce it themselves. The Airstream's interior, by New York-based design studio Freecell, uses every inch of wall and counter space for display, eliciting a "kid in a candy store" response from a number of visitors.

Through public lectures and hands-on workshops at venues ranging from nursing homes to drop-in shelters for homeless youth, Book-

mobile tour coordinators hope to encourage voices that might not otherwise be heard, and to inspire a more democratic, grassroots media environment. Information about **Projet MOBILIVRE/BOOKMOBILE** Project can be found on their website at <http://www.mobilivre.org/>.



side the Book: New Forms by Women Artists," filled seven cases in the lobby of Perkins Library from mid-August through the end of October. "These works show us how women have engaged with traditional book arts in order to create idiosyncratic vehicles for their own creative expression," said exhibit curator Amy Leigh. Also included in the exhibit were several items from the Sarah Dyer Zine Collection which illustrate the relationship between these two important genres.

Mary Lily Research Grants (continued from page 1)

complement print sources such as books and periodicals. Particular strengths of the SBCWHC are feminism and radical feminism in the U.S., women's prescriptive literature from the 19th and 20th centuries, 20th century lesbian life and culture, girls' literature, artists' books by women, and the history and culture of women in the South. Also, a number of prominent women authors have placed their personal and professional papers at Duke.

Topics of successful grant proposals have ranged widely, from consumerism and the

emergence of the American teenager to the ways in which black women have used the military pension system in shaping social welfare policies.

Information on the Mary Lily research grants, including the grant application form, can be found on our website at <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/specoll/grants.html>. Questions about the Bingham Center's grant program should be directed to the Bingham Center's Archivist, Amy Leigh, at amy.leigh@duke.edu.

*"The focus of the **Projet MOBILIVRE-BOOKMOBILE** Project is not merely on the books as material objects, but also on an intimate understanding of the processes of independent production and circulation of such works. Our mandate is to fuse artistic and literary production with political activism and community organizing."*

From the Bookmobile's Mission Statement





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Women's History and Culture

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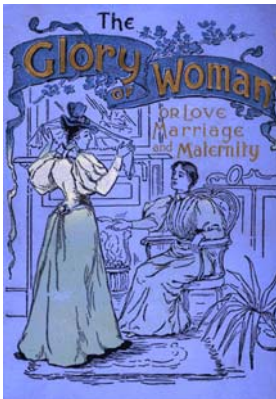
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We're On the Web!
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Bibliography on Prescriptive Literature Revised



One of our most popular resources has undergone a major overhaul. The Bingham Center's bibliography of 19th-century prescriptive literature for women has been revised and expanded and will be available on our website in the very near future. With the new bibliography, we have aimed to provide a representative selection of titles from the Center's growing collection of prescriptive literature for women.

The broad range of genres represented includes etiquettes, cookbooks, domestic manuals, children's books, periodicals, and even advertising ephemera. For centuries, prescriptive works have addressed virtually every facet of women's lives—domestic culture, education, careers, relationships, health, and social customs—and have been written from perspectives ranging from conservative to radical. Taken as a whole, pre-

scriptive literature documents the many social and cultural forces that have shaped women's everyday lives.

While most prescriptive works represent the prevailing values of their times, there are some surprises here, too. Typically Victorian in appearance, *The Glory of Woman, or Love, Marriage, and Maternity* provides an unusually frank and graphic look at women's reproductive health.

In addition to descriptions of newly acquired materials, the scope of the new bibliography has been broadened to include imprints from the 18th century to the present, and features many illustrations from the collection. Look for this resource on our website at <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/women/bib.html> in the coming weeks.