

Archivists discuss the value of preserving history

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A panel of Tulane archivists discuss the challenges that collections face and the significant role that material objects and digital recordings play in the narratives that scholars forge. (Photo by Katie Sikora)

Archivists from the 10 collections that loaned objects to Newcomb Art Museum's current exhibit, EMPIRE, recently met to discuss the role of archives on campus and the provocative museum installation created by Fallen Fruit artists Austin Young and David Burns.

During the panel, the archivists discussed challenges that collections face and the significant role that material objects and digital recordings play in the narratives that scholars and other storytellers forge.

“Most debated was the Fallen Fruit artists’ choice to display objects without wall labels,” said Rebecca Snedeker, Clark Executive Director of the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South and the evening’s moderator. “It was a decision to omit contextual information for singular objects in service of the more general experiment to create an assembled reflection of the histories of Tulane, New Orleans, and our colonial and racist past and changing ecology.”

The discussion was hosted by Newcomb Art Museum and the New Orleans Center for the Gulf South. Panelists included Kara Oridge ([Amistad Research Center](#)), Alaina Hébert ([Hogan Jazz Archive](#)), Christine Hernández (Special Collections, [The Latin American Library](#)), Leon Miller ([Louisiana Research Collection](#)), Caroline Parris ([Middle American Research Institute](#)), Sierra Polisar ([Newcomb Art Museum](#)), Chloe Raub ([Newcomb Archives and Vorhoff Library Special Collections](#), Newcomb College Institute), Justin Mann ([Royal D. Suttkus Fish Collection](#), Tulane Biodiversity Research Institute), Kevin Williams ([Southeastern Architectural Archive](#)), and Ann Case ([Tulane University Archives](#)).

EMPIRE, organized by A Studio in the Woods, Pelican Bomb, and Newcomb Art Museum, is comprised of hundreds of objects ranging from an oil painting of an imagined conquering of Native peoples to jars of extinct fish species. Museum walls are adorned with original wallpaper created with images from the archives and photos of non-native flora that are associated with New Orleans but have been imported here.

Visitors can view EMPIRE during normal viewing hours now through July 7, 2018.

[Read more about the exhibit here.](#)