

Ancestral Futures

Speculative Imaginings from the Archive

Winter 2024



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**Speculative Imaginings
from the Archive**

An arts & literary magazine curated by the
UCR Special Collections & University Archives department.

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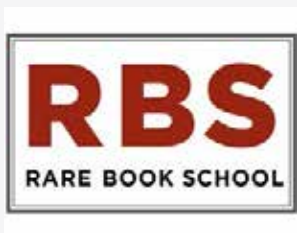
Out of respect to the artists and writers who contributed to this project, “Ancestral Futures” cannot be remixed, transformed, or built upon and then distributed.

Artistic and archival works remain under the copyright of their original creators. The archival images used here are reproduced under the fair use doctrine. Ancestral Futures is a not-for-profit, educational project that promotes the use of archives in creative arts, resulting in transformative artistic works. Archival images are included at the minimum needed to give context to the elements of research and scholarship that contributed to the artistic creation.

Acknowledgements

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- Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship for Diversity, Inclusion & Cultural Heritage
- Rare Book School
- UCR Library
- Native American Student Programs at UCR
- California Center for Native Nations at UCR



With gratitude

We want to thank the following people who contributed their time and expertise to the success of this project:

Dr. Wallace Cleaves

- Instructor for “Little Big Stories: Indigenous Micro Fiction and Futurism” workshop

Chelle Barbour

- Instructor for “Navigating the Archive: Reimagining Visual Narratives & Portraits” workshop

The 2023 Selection Committee:

- **Dr. Phoenix Alexander**
- **Adrian Dizon**
- **Mariah Green**
- **Andrew Lippert**

Krystal Boehlert

- Co-creator of the digital Ancestral Futures space

And everyone who sent in a submission!

Without their support and participation, Ancestral Futures would have remained a dream on the shelf.

Journey

What stories can we find in the archives about Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC)? Whose stories are missing, and what new creations can these archives (or the gaps in them) inspire?

The Ancestral Futures Call for Submissions went live in September 2023. We invited everyone, including members of the general public, artists, writers, poets, and creatives, to visit the archives and speculate how these materials could be reimagined, and metaphorically remixed, to tell new stories.

We asked that submissions draw from Afrofuturism, Latinx/Chicanx Futurisms, Indigenous Futurisms, Asian Futurity, and related fields to explore how the intersection of art and archives can inspire new ideas, interpretations, and engagement with the past. We required that each submission cite at least one archival item as the original inspiration behind the piece.

As the project grew, we expanded the call to be more inclusive. We welcomed submissions using archival images from outside UCR's holdings, and submissions that focused more on local history and the experiences of BIPOC communities in the Inland Empire. As this was an experimental project, we wanted to test the waters and see what interest/needs the community had, and respond to it.

In October 2023, we organized two hands-on workshops that combined creative practice with archival exploration: "Little Big Stories" and "Navigating the Archive." Our goal was to help introduce/demystify the archive while also cultivating spaces where we

could create in community. Many of the submissions received were born from these workshops.

In an effort to promote sustainable artistic practice, all accepted finalists were compensated with a \$50 Visa gift card and a print copy of Ancestral Futures. We received many fantastic submissions, and we regret that we could not accept them all.

Ancestral Futures was always intended to be accessible and shared freely. It is available online for viewing, as well as downloading and printing in a zine format. To visit the Ancestral Futures digital site and download/print your own zine copy, scan the following QR code:



Introduction

As a librarian and a woman of color working in the archives, I have often felt like a conundrum. I work to protect this history, and help make it accessible, but at the same time, the stories of my own ancestors and communities are so often missing from these spaces. This is the reality for many BIPOC communities. “Ancestral Futures” was created as a way to combat this erasure, to reconnect these materials to their communities, and to inspire new ways of thinking about the archive, all through a means more accessible than traditional research: art. By welcoming artists, writers, and other creatives to the archive, we open the doors to new beginnings, interpretations, and pathways to engaging with these materials and histories.

I hope that the art shared here inspires and moves you, as it has me. I will always remember these narratives and stories anytime I see the archival materials that inspired them. That connection is powerful. For that reason, we have chosen to include images (and if applicable, institutional descriptions) of the archival materials cited by each submission in this magazine.

With appreciation,

Sandy Enriquez
Organizer for Ancestral Futures

Ancestral Futures



Lesser Evil

by Christophe Katrib



Archival inspiration:



Citation: William Mitchell, a portrait. 1999. Gary Leonard Collection, Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection, Los Angeles Public Library.

Description: Portrait of William Mitchell, standing outside Union Station. Mitchell holds up his driver's license, which has the same wide-eyed look he gives the camera.

Christophe Katrib is an artist/filmmaker and educator from Beirut, Lebanon. His work spans video, photography, 16mm film, and sound. He has been part of several collective exhibitions, artist workshops, residencies, and film screenings both in Lebanon and abroad.

instagram: cristobalez



The Shoes and the Sedan Chair

by Yilun Fan

“One, two, three, four... one, two, three, four...” Bess counted Lai Suk’s steps, observing his bare feet moving up and down on the scorching pavement at over 40 degrees. Could human skin endure such temperatures?

The sedan chair swayed along with their strides. By the count of the 1997th round, they would arrive at “Starry Silk Salon,” where she underwent monthly hair trimming. Along the way, they passed through Victoria Harbour, taking a brief rest beneath the Clock Tower. The sedan chair bearers needed to wipe their feet with a towel soaked in whale oil before proceeding. Then they traversed Kowloon Park, finally turning into the narrow alley at the entrance of St. Andrew’s Church, reaching the Mira Place.

Starry Silk Salon was on the eighth floor of the plaza. But today, she needed to visit the eleventh floor first.

Her feet were sweating. She glanced down at her shoes, a pair originating from a distant Western land. They were spoils brought back by her father from the Riverside Battle. Crafted from lizard skin, adorned with intricate patterns, the orange four-petal flower symbolized the local human tribes. It was said to represent the color of their blood.

Since arriving in Hong Kong, her mother had insisted that she must wear shoes, despite their calloused and furry feet. “Wearing shoes is what sets us apart from the barbarians,” her mother had said the first time she put shoes on her.

Yet she longed for the feeling of unbounded from her childhood, running barefoot under the starlight on her home planet. Blue fireflies brushed against her fur, clinging to her ankles and tail, cool as early spring dew.

In Hong Kong, there was no spring, only an eternal summer.

“Miss, we’ve arrived,” Lai Suk halted, turning back to her.

Sliding out of the sedan chair, she surprised the bearers by taking off her shoes and holding them in her hands.

“Let’s go to the shoe shop together.”

Archival inspiration:



Citation: Hong Kong Street, China. November 1, 1933. Keystone-Mast Collection, UCR/California Museum of Photography, University of California at Riverside.

Description: Hong Kong Street, China.

Archival inspiration:



Citation: Item 085. Box 084-085. Rupert and Jeannette Costo papers (MS 170). Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

“The discovery of old Hong Kong photos in our digital collection, showing my second hometown nearly a century ago, is a surprise. The images of barefoot bearers, representing a bygone occupation, evoked mixed feelings. Shoes, symbolizing humanity’s journey from barbarism to civilization, also witness persistent hierarchy. This reminds me of the shoes I saw in our Native American collection. In an attempt to bridge these two worlds, I embark on writing this story.”

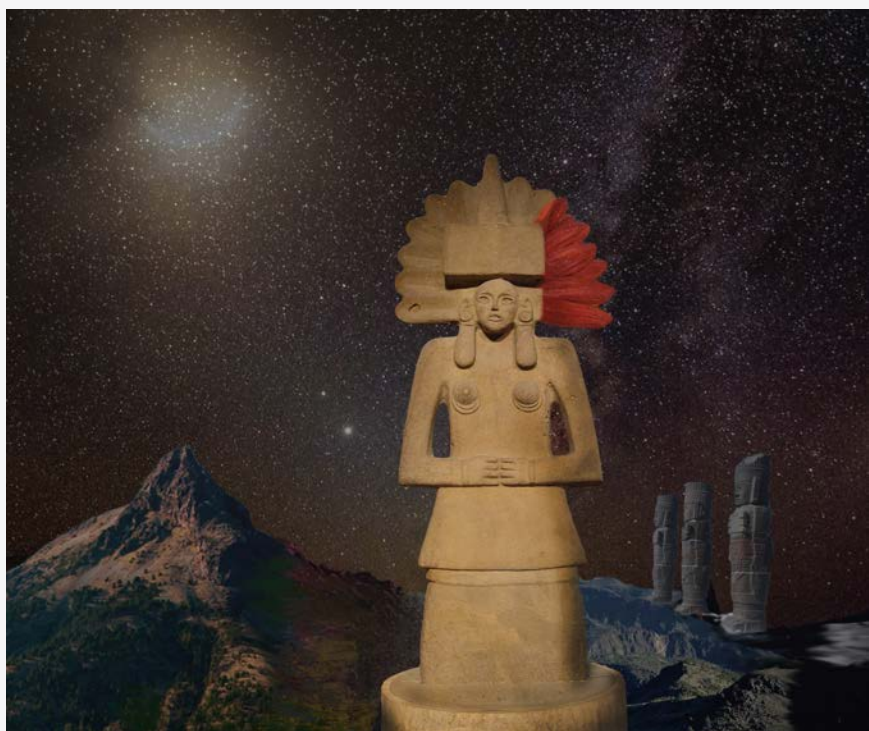
Yilun Fan is a Ph.D. Candidate in comparative literature at UCR. Her research interests include science fiction, the culture industry, and creative writing. She is the awardee of the “Support a New Scholar” grant (2023-2024) sponsored by Science Fiction Research Association (SFRA). Her stories have appeared in Science Fiction World and Apex, among others.

facebook: Rafaela Yilun Fan

instagram: rafaelayilunfan

Toci Moon

by Cynthia Curiel Raygoza



Archival inspiration:



Citation: Marjorie and Edna R. Webster papers (MS 147). Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Description: The collection contains photographs, notes, articles, and other materials from explorer Edna R. Webster and her daughter Marjorie Webster. The majority of materials in the collection relate to Edna's exploration and study of Mayan ruins on the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico, and Marjorie's interest in Atlantis and its possible connection to Mexico.

@defendmesoamericanculture



theories of xikan(X)aos

by Fred Garcia

xromosomed coding

scraping filth

rascuache::::ras

[what]ever works : sparks

transcribing i(~~legal~~) in(2) legibility

over centuries stained

wet mount of earth

back to the sun

splintered

after Joshua Whitehead

candy painted

4 fire

cuaxe::::raskwaxe

line bright with [[question mark][s]]

secondary languid acquisition

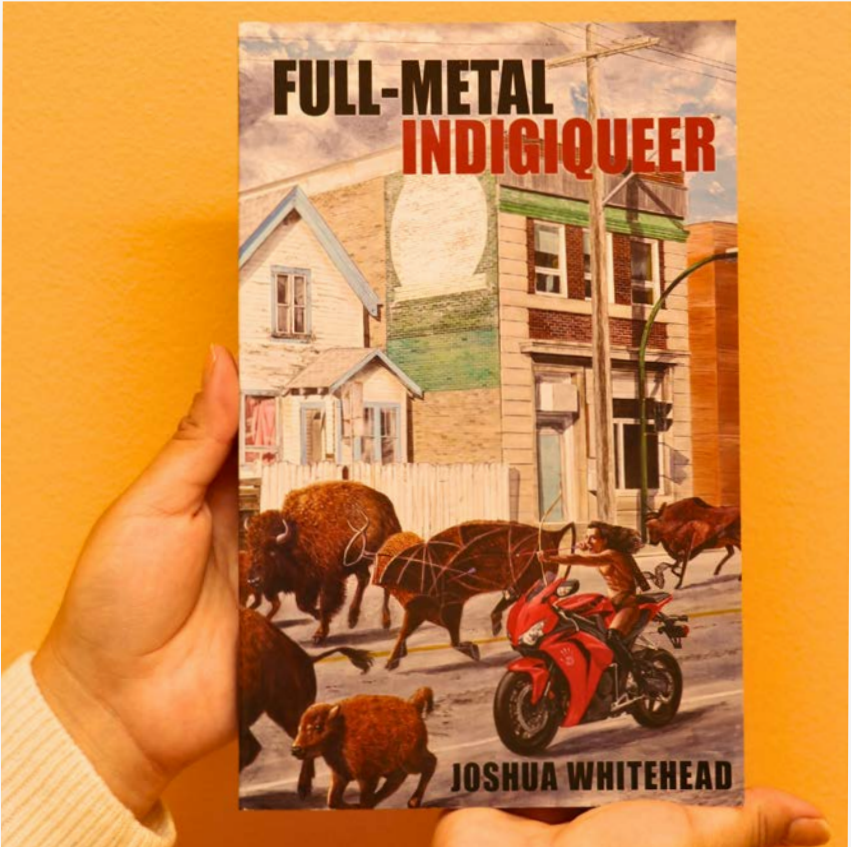
under the microscope

a Brown spec

face a fist

cruc:if:i(X)

Archival inspiration:



Citation: Whitehead, Joshua. *Full-Metal Indigiqueer: Poems*. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Talonbooks, 2017. Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

“This piece, inspired by Joshua Whitehead’s *Full-metal Indigiqueer*, borrows from the collection’s futurist aesthetics and use of punctuation to disrupt and distort language in an effort to re-create meaning. The poem centers the elasticity of the letter “X” as a cultural signifier and symbol of inclusive imaginings in its linguistic applications, and uses the field of the page to reflect the predicament of Xikanx consciousness.”

Fred Garcia is a Xikanx poet and writer from Southern California. They studied creative writing at UC Riverside, and center identity and ancestral thoughtways in their work.

ig: @fred.w0rd



The Emergence of Thunderbirds From a Nootka Basket World

by Selene Hofstetter

For the beginning nine years of my life, our lidded Nootka basket - passed from grandfather to granddaughter, mother to son - has lived in the sky, beneath our roof, on a shelf.

“Inside resides the miracles of the world.” My mother would whisper in my ear each night, hugging me from behind, my back against her legs. “It holds the stories and myths our people have now forgotten. Songs, culture, language, tradition all reside within this small basket.” Her voice never lifted above a whisper, to not disturb the the basket’s frozen peace. “Never remove the lid. It will disturb the rest of the world. Man is not ready for our nativeness. Neither is our people.”

For the beginning nine years of my life, I have watched two chestnut-colored figures reside in canoes in this mini-basket world. Floating along an everflowing berry-stained river - the wings of a red bird flew around in a perpetual circle, joining the figures in this continual journey.

They went nowhere except forward, always beginning backward beneath a sealed, tight sun sitting above this plain basket world. My eyes gazed at the stained designs of this world - waiting for a ripple to run across the surface and disturb the motionless red river encircling the maroon sun. Waiting for river droplets to spill from the edges, onto the wood of the shelf, leaving a watermark behind as evidence of brimming life. Waiting for the red bird to break free from the constraining weaves of grass and willow bark - to suddenly emerge from their world and into ours, its great wings beating against the stale air of our living room, begging to be released from another lid and into the great sky. Waiting for the faceless figures to rest their canoe against the side of our couch and

take their first step onto land - to share stories of their infinite journey where the sun stood still in the sky, and the ocean was too wide for land to coexist - I waited for the day when they would be released from this dormant world.

From the floor, to a chair, to the shelf's edge, I grabbed the world with two hands and lifted it from its resting place. I lifted the sun from the sky, and from the abyss came forth the coyotes and thunderbirds - the skinwalkers and wendigos - the bears and deers - the spirits and Creator. I released wonders of the world man had forgotten. With a shrilling cry and heavy beat of its wings, the thunderbird rose beyond the roof, into the great sky, thunder rumbling in its presence as the skinwalkers shaped shifted into creatures and men, the bears and deers and coyotes left for forest edges, and the Creator looked towards the shifting sun - returning the spiritual back into nature.

Archival inspiration:



Citation: Item #080. Rupert and Jeannette Costo papers (MS 170), Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Archival description: Nootka, North West Coast.

“The Thunderbird is a mythological creature that traverses the spiritual and physical world. For my family, the legend comes from my Lummi great-grandfather. He spoke of Thunderbirds throughout my dad’s life. My dad reminds me that we have descended from Thunderbirds throughout my life.

In the story, the basket world and the mother’s reluctance symbolize the disconnection from native culture and traditions. The emergence of the Thunderbird, spirits, and animals represents the future connection young natives alienated from their identity will form with the native community and themselves.”

Selene Hofstetter attends the University of California of Riverside in the United States. She is a fourth-year college student studying creative writing, focusing on poetry. She is a tribal member of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs located in Central Oregon, United States. She is currently researching graduate schools in poetry as she finishes her Bachelor’s degree in May 2024.

Instagram: [shupaa_wai_thla](#)

Facebook: Selene Hofstetter



Soy Pocho?

by Mayotl

Ni gringo ni cien por ciento Mexicano
from the eyes of those
who are born en la tierra sagrada
este nopal en la frente makes me
known to be from Mexican descent
from my parents crossing the border
hoping for a better tomorrow
and I shine vigorously and questioning
everything about me and you
like how come I get treated differently from both sides
Im a beaner here and a gringo there
Im self aware that haters are everywhere
my vocabulary is Spanglish so look alive,
get with the program since I walk around shameless
with that orphanage language

Being born in Tongva land
I then get classified as an Hispanic or a Latino
pero soy pocho?
Not Mexicano since I don't speak that colonizer language flu-
ently
Im immorally disoriented with the language Im choosing
Losing myself in this racist-self-hating ass system
I am the real image from my ancestors despite,
Being born in los angeles
And the privileged and the benefits
it comes with that little greedy card,
makes me not want to have any part of it at all
Pero soy pocho
I have to repay my parents back with their sacrifices they had
and you should know they endure and mourn for the many
moons

that they had gone away from home...
so this one's for you.

Archival inspiration:



Citation: *Pocho magazine*. Berkeley, Califas, 199??.
Special Collections & University Archives,
University of California, Riverside.

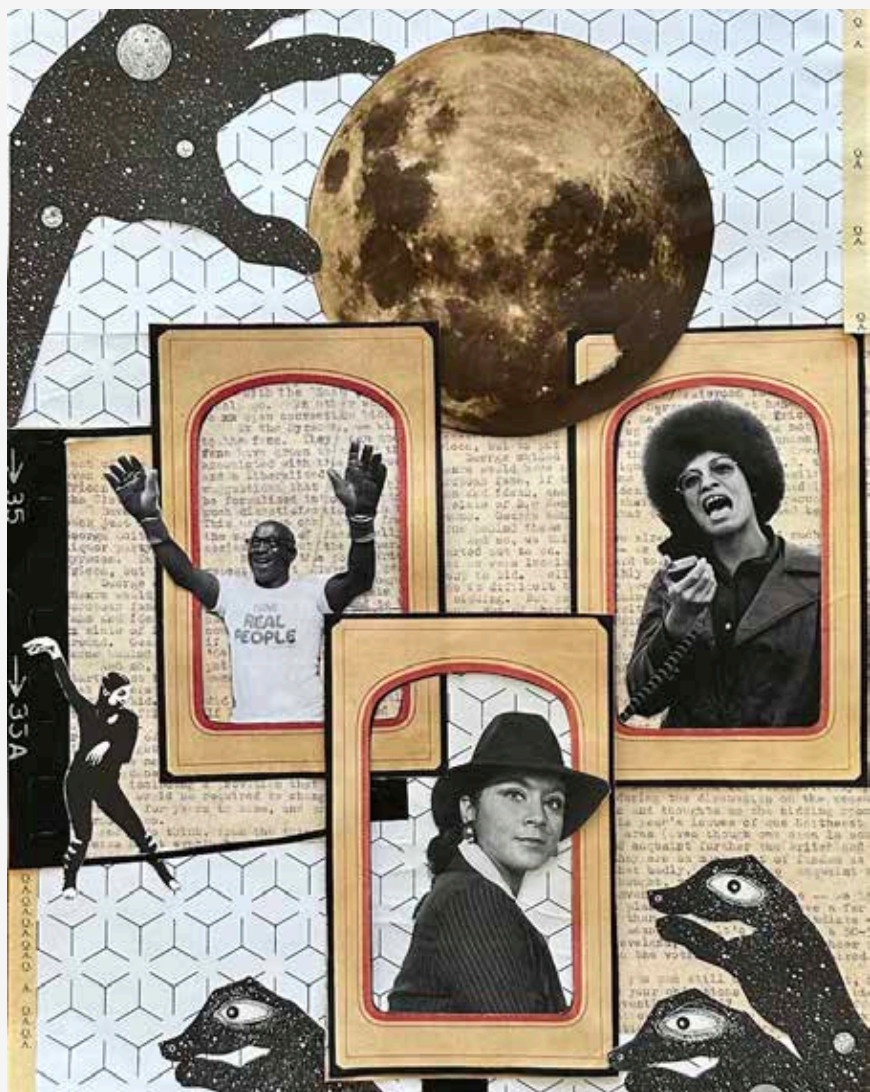
I suck at writing about myself, my life is still in progress that's why I free write/ write poetry to tell my stories in a narrative form using a lyrical voice inspired by music.

Instagram: @mayotl



“In a World...”

by Annika Speer



Archival inspiration:



Citation: Berkeley Waving Man. 1987. Berkeley History Online, Berkeley Public Library.

Archival description: Joseph Charles, the Berkeley “waving man” with his familiar gloves, smile, and two-arm wave to passing motorists at the corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Way and Oregon Street. He is wearing a t-shirt from his appearance on the television program “Real People.” For 30 years, from October 6, 1962 to October 6, 1992, Mr. Charles donned yellow construction workers’ gloves, stood in front of his house, and waved to the morning traffic.

Archival inspiration:



Citation: Shirley De Blanc Posing for a Studio Portrait, Los Angeles. 1972. Tom & Ethel Bradley Center Photographs, California State University, Northridge.

Archival description: Shirley De Blanc poses for a studio portrait.

Archival inspiration:



Citation: Angela Davis, portrait. 1970. Los Angeles Times Photographic Collection, University of California Los Angeles.

““As faculty in Theatre, Film, and Digital Production I teach public speaking, so I approached this collage considering embodied performance as a vehicle for artistry and activism. “In a World...” draws from the ubiquitous movie trailer tagline and was also inspired by those creative, outspoken individuals who use their voice to shape our world for the better (e.g., Angela Davis -- hand clutching the microphone, energy emanating off the page).”

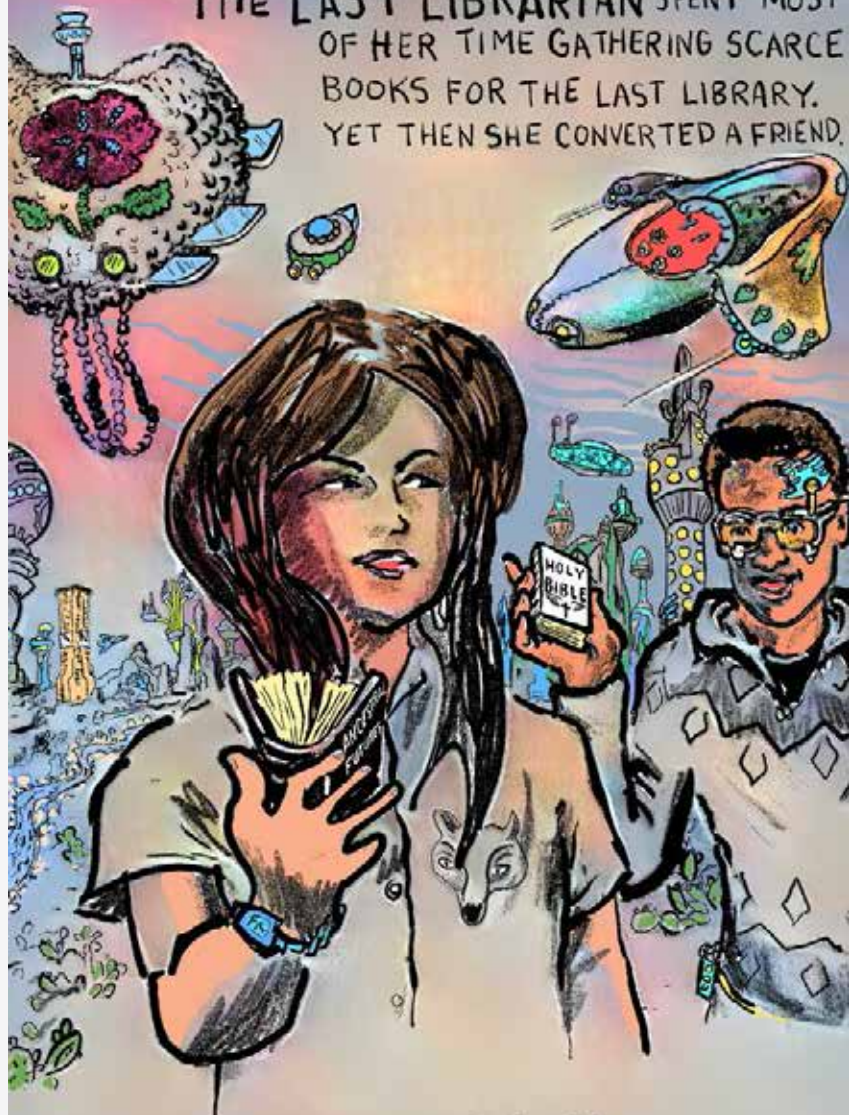
Dr. Annika Speer is a professor in the Department of Theatre, Film, and Digital Production at University of California, Riverside.



The Last Librarian

by Joe Chiapetta

THE LAST LIBRARIAN SPENT MOST
OF HER TIME GATHERING SCARCE
BOOKS FOR THE LAST LIBRARY.
YET THEN SHE CONVERTED A FRIEND.



AND THE LAST BECAME THE FIRST.

Chiappetta

Archival inspiration:



Citation: Box 1. Clifford Trafzer collection of Native American traditional clothing and objects (MS 180). Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Archival inspiration:



Citation: Item 085. Box 084-085. Rupert and Jeannette Costo papers (MS 170). Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

Archival inspiration:



Citation: The Gospel according to Luke: translated into the Cherokee Language. Park Hill Okla.: Mission Press, Edwin Archer, printer, 1850. Special Collections & University Archives, University of California, Riverside.

“While participating in an information session about the Ancestral Futures zine project at the University of California, Riverside, I started drawing one of the presenters along with objects from their special collection. These people and items quickly turned into a remixed sci-fi scene. A moccasin became a spaceship. An ancestral pendant became a space station. And a librarian became “The Last Librarian.”

Former Chicagoan and current Riverside, California resident, Joe Chiappetta is an award-winning cartoonist, best known for Silly Daddy Comics and ArtVndngMchn. As a pioneer in the arts, he has been at the forefront of the Independent Comics Publishing Movement as well as the Crypto-Art and Rare Digital Art Movement.

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Instagram: joe.chiappetta

What stories can we find in the archives about Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC)?

