

## **The Black Queer Studies Collection Exhibit**

*Perry-Castañeda Library, Scholars Commons Exhibit Space  
On display April 18-July 28, 2017*

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The creation of the Black Queer Studies Collection (BQSC) by former UT Humanities Librarians Kristen Hogan and Lindsay Shell in collaboration with faculty member Dr. Matt Richardson responds to the need to make content that is marginalized within classification systems more accessible for scholarship.

One of the first special collections of its kind in the U.S. South, the BQSC is a designated virtual collection that seeks to address discoverability issues surrounding holdings in the area of African and African Diasporic Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies. Since standard Library of Congress subject headings are limited in addressing gender and sexual identity, adding a local note to items in the catalog allows materials addressing black queer content to become accessible through a keyword search. The creation of the collection to meet a research need of students and faculty exemplifies the vision of the library as a research ecosystem created through user-focused innovation, collaboration, and expertise.

Over 750 items exist in the collection that spans multiple branches of the library system from the Perry-Castañeda Library, the Benson Latin American Collection, and the Fine Arts Library as well as digital materials like the steaming film *Miss Major!* (a documentary about Miss Major Griffin-Gracy, a formerly incarcerated Black transgender elder and activist who has been fighting for the rights of trans women of color for over 40 years). The content in the collection spans fiction, science fiction, memoir and biography, critical theory, fine art, music, poetry, theater, and film.

This document includes the text from the exhibit plaques that corresponded to books, DVDs, CDs, and VHS tapes in the UT Libraries' collection.

## **What is the BQSC and how do you find it?**

The Black Queer Studies Collection (BQSC), which is designated digitally through notes in library catalog records, is meant to feature, promote and increase the discoverability of the UT Libraries' unique holdings in the area of African and African Diasporic Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Studies. The Black Queer Studies Collection is a groundbreaking project in that it addresses standard posed by the Library of Congress Subject Headings and information retrieval systems to locating materials by and about Black Diasporic LGBTQ people.

Titles designated for the collection carry this note, which is searchable in the UT Libraries Catalog: "[Black Queer Studies Collection](#)."

## **Carry the Word**

The BQSC began by adding titles from *Carry The Word: Bibliography of Black LGBTQ Books*, compiled by Steven G. Fullwood, Reginald Harris, and Lisa C. Moore. The collection focuses on works of scholarship, fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, and film by black queer authors and engaged in Black Queer Studies. The Black Queer Studies Collection is added to every year, continuing to add a range of materials created by a diverse group of writers, poets, scholars, and artists.

## **Ana Lara**

Ana-Maurine Lara is a Dominican American lesbian poet, novelist, and black feminist scholar. The BCSQ includes her novel, *Erzulie's Skirt*, as well as several books of poetry, including *Cantos*, a selection of poems self-published by Lara.

## **Dark Reflections**

Samuel Delaney is a professor, literary critic and author of fiction (especially science fiction), memoir, and short stories. His work also includes criticism—especially pertaining to issues of gender, sexuality, mythology, language, and culture.

## **Tiny & Ruby**

*Tiny & Ruby: Hell Divinin Women* chronicles the life of Jazz trumpeter Tiny Davis and her partner of over 40 years, Ruby Lucas. Intimate and humorous interviews with Tiny are accompanied by the poetry of Cheryl Clarke, jazz recordings, vintage photographs, and live performances.

## **Cheryl Dunye**

Cheryl Dunye's *The Watermelon Woman* is a landmark in black queer cinema for its status as the first being the first feature film by a black lesbian. Dunye wrote, directed and starred in narrative following a young lesbian filmmaker who finds an archive of photographs of a 1930s film star said to have had relationships with women. *The Watermelon Woman* is available for streaming through the UT Libraries!

## **Looking for Langston**

Directed by Isaac Julien, this film connects black-and-white archival footage from the Harlem Renaissance and scripted scenes celebrating black gay identity and desire. Brief excerpts are used from the writings of Langston Hughes, Richard Bruce Nugent, James Baldwin, and Essex Hemphill.

## **James Baldwin**

One of the most influential writers of the 20th century, James Baldwin's prolific career spans theater, critical essays, novels, and poetry, much of which is featured in the BQSC, alongside the range contemporary analysis and writing done about his work.

## **Nick Cave**

Nick Cave is an artist, educator, and activist whose work bridges sculpture, installation, performance, fashion, and dance. The exhibition catalog for his show, *Meet me at the Center of the Earth*, highlights his soundsuits – sculptural costumes composed of beads, sequins, twigs, buttons, old toys, and various found objects obscuring the body through a second skin of cultural significations.

## **Legendary**

Gerard H. Gaskin, an attendee of the house ballroom scene for over 20 years, uses photography to document and celebrate the vibrant culture in the mostly African American and Latinx underground events in New York, Philadelphia, Richmond, and Washington, D.C. The resulting photographs are a collaboration between Gaskin and the performers and members of the community who feature in the text.

## **So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction & Fantasy**

This anthology of speculative fiction highlighting work of African, Asian, South Asian and Aboriginal authors, as well as North American and British writers of color. Nalo Hopkinson, one of the editors seeks to amend the canon of science fiction which “speaks so much about the experience of being alienated but contains so little writing by alienated people themselves.”

## **Sharon Bridgeforth**

Sharon Bridgeforth’s *The Bull-Jean Stories* uses storytelling and non-traditional verse to chronicle the life of bull-dog jean, a woman-loving-woman in the rural south between 1920-1940. The BQSC features a recording of Bridgeforth reading the text alongside vocal and instrumental accompaniments.

### **Trans: Transgender Life Stories from South Africa**

This anthology features over 20 photograph and life stories from trans South Africans. Transgender issues are a taboo subject for discussion, which are either ignored by the media, or covered in an invasive, insensitive and sensationalist way. The stories stress the need to provide accurate information, counter negative stereotypes, reduce discrimination, provide transgender people with honest representations of their lives, and offer visible, positive role models.

### **Zami: A New Spelling of My Name by Audre Lorde**

*Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* is a biomythography written by Audre Lorde, bridging together myth, personal memories, and social and cultural history in a narrative form. Lorde's influential work also spans critical essays relating to her career as an activist and poetry that explores the creative as a methodology of resistance.

### **Collected Bayard Rustin Writings**

*Time on Two Crosses* is a collection of essays by famed civil rights activist Bayard Rustin who worked on the Montgomery Bus Boycott and as an organizer for the 1963 March on Washington. The anthology spans 25 years of his career as an openly-gay civil rights activist as well as photographs from his estate.

## **Rinaldo Walcott**

Spanning over a decade, Walcott's work in his words has sought to "bring blackness into conversation demonstrating how black people's contributions to global life first in Canada and then beyond, might animate new ways of being in the world." The collected essays explore diaspora, multiculturalism, sexuality, nation, and citizenship.

## **Bessie Smith**

Nicknamed "The Empress of the Blues," Bessie Smith was one of the most popular Jazz singers of the '20s and '30s. Smith's music focused on the female perspective of African American life, recording songs about abuse, lost lovers, female rivalry and jealousy, voodoo, and race relations. She also spoke openly about her desire for women in songs like "Tain't nobody's Buisness If I Do," "It's Dirty But Good," and many others.

## **Blakkboy Blue(s)**

Tim'm West is a Cincinnati born, Arkansas raised author, poet, and hip hop-activist who has been artistically nurtured in North Carolina, New York City, the Bay Area, and most recently Washington, D.C. In *Blakkboy Blue(s)*, West moves from memories of finding hip hop down south to a sound that beautifully blends his gospel and blues roots with the sounds that largely define his movement through various urban settings.