

“Librarians need to explore their individual creativity. Creative thinking is an underutilized problem-solving skill that can be learned and applied to any situation.”

—John A. Olson,

Government and Geo-Information Librarian at Syracuse University Libraries (and Photographer) in “What Academic Librarians Should Know about Creative Thinking”

# ARTISTS in the Libraries

**Syracuse University Libraries has no shortage of individuals with creative skills and talents. Not only does their creative thinking support problem solving skills, but many Libraries’ employees contribute to the organization beyond their defined responsibilities because of their creative pursuits.**



**Courtney Asztalos G'17,**

Plastics and Historical Artifacts Curator,  
Artist

Courtney Asztalos G'17 is an accomplished artist in various processes—photography, sound, installation, video, drawing, artist books, and collage. This past December, Courtney participated in a month-long artist in residency program at the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, NY, offering her an opportunity to access the artist book library and film archives. She is currently working on an experimental publication where she blends elements of 20th-century visual culture and cinema—such as camp and horror films, and fashion advertisements—in the creation and staging of her images. In creating the pictures in this experimental publication, she takes cues from the legacy of camp through costuming, set building, casting, and re-staging the raw material of everyday life to create imaginary pasts. She recently had a collaborative project with **Michael W. Hicks** published by Kris Graves Projects called *The Glittering Eye*—one of eight monographs within the LOST III series.

Courtney’s work has been exhibited at the Photographic Center Northwest in Seattle, in Picture Berlin’s “Interiors to Being,” at the Atlanta Photography Group Gallery, and in the Fort Wayne Museum of Art. Her work is collected nationally in institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary Photography, UCLA’s Arts Library, Duke University, and the University of Miami. She has photographed for the *New York Times*, and her work has been featured in the *New Yorker’s* Photo Booth Blog, *Paper Journal*, *Der Greif*, *Dear Dave*, and

more. She recently received an honorable mention from Syracuse's Light Work Grants in Photography.

Courtney's creative talents have benefitted the Libraries. She is co-curating a new interactive exhibit—Survival Seat: Provisions for your Research Journey—which will be on display in the Plastics Pioneers Reading Room on the 6th floor of Bird Library. The exhibition is a lively journey through archival research, using a creative selection of artifacts, documents, and photographs from the **Edwin F. Bushman Papers**, a mid-century plastics engineer, and the Plastics Artifacts Collection. Visitors are guided through how a research project can develop from the discovery of materials to the unfolding of their analysis.

“As an artist, I've learned the importance and transformative nature of collaboration and creativity. In my role at the Libraries, it is such a joy to encourage and imagine new spaces when working with students, staff, librarians, and faculty in instruction, curation, and fostering research with our collections. Art is a tool to envision greater and more equitable futures, and I bring this aspiration and lens to all that I do with my work as curator.”



**Fred Wellner '17,**  
SU Press Senior Designer,  
Sculptor

Fred Wellner '17 is a talented metalwork artist whose work has shown at the Everson Museum of Art through the On My Own Time contest. Fred began sculpting using graphite, and worked in soapstone before moving on to metal. He is also a talented oil and acrylic painter. He often collaborates with his wife, also an SU alumni and employee. Together they have displayed work at the Gallery in Beacon [New York], Launchpad in Brooklyn, and in Syracuse at the Contemporary Art Gallery, the Redhouse, The Tech Garden, and the Delavan Art Center.

Fred applies his creative talent daily in his role at SU Press, where he has

worked for 30 years, spending much of his time designing pages and covers for some of the published SU Press titles.

## Patrick Williams,

### I'm Not The Cosmos

Never pick a fight with anyone  
who still buys blank media in bulk.

Remember the bliss of auto-reverse,  
the occult trope of tape hiss in mega-bass.

Underpass, BB gun, something with flame  
& acid. Breath or wind rides bodies to the ground.

Some of us only live in cleanses  
or rebirths via the jaws of life.

Do me a favor and draw me  
your skull real quick. Rewild it.

Every school bus on Long Island sits empty today,  
their single seatbelts for drivers only.

As someone old shopvacs the empty houses,  
a teen lawnmows trash into scraps for sparkle.



Humanities Librarian,  
Poet

Patrick Williams is a published poet, author, and editor. His work appears in *Nine Mile Magazine*, *Posit*, and *Bennington Review*, among others. His chapbook *Hygiene in Reading* (Publishing Genius, 2016) was awarded the 2015 **Chris Toll** Memorial Prize and his poem “Surface/Deep” took second prize at the 2019 New York State Fair. He edits *Really System*, a journal of poetry and extensible poetics and is the hands behind chapbook micro press typewriter.city. Patrick contributed a chapter to the 2018 volume *Poet-Librarians* in the Library of Babel, a compendium of experimental essays, creative meditations, non-fiction accounts, and lyrical explorations that challenge, redefine, and/or widen perspectives on subjects related to libraries and librarianship. Additionally, he was featured in **Erin Dorney's** 2014 article “Librarian as Poet / Poet as Librarian” in the journal *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*.

Patrick's doctoral research was on how creative writers interact in online writing environments. His creative work strengthens his connections to humanities researchers, writers, and artists at Syracuse University. He has brought his creative experiences to campus with humanities workshops on electronic literature, using primary sources for creative projects, exploring creative works with text mining, and do-it-yourself publishing. He has also organized a collaboration with Colgate University for a Small Press Reading, and