**A Figbash is Not a Fantod:** Preparing the John A. Carollo Edward Gorey Collection for Exhibit at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa

**Collection Overview:**

Donated incrementally to Hamilton Library by passionate Gorey collector John A. Carollo, beginning in 1998

Currently managed by the Special Research Collections (SRC), a new entity dedicated to making the treasures of the library available to student, faculty, and public researchers

Carollo’s gift to Hamilton constitutes the most comprehensive public collection of the prolific author/artist's work in the world

Materials include:
- Monographs
- Coffee mugs
- A fur coat
- Postcards
- Books arts materials
- Hand sewn stuffed animals
- Serials
- LPs
- Fine art prints
- Original cover art
- Calendars
- Jewelry
- An umbrella
- And more!

**The Exhibit:**

"Musings of Mystery and Alphabets of Agony: The Work of Edward Gorey" was displayed at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa Art Gallery from September 26, 2010 to December 10, 2010

Developed by an exhibit team headed by curator Lisa Yoshihara, exhibit designer Wayne Kawamoto, and historian Joseph Stanton

**Preliminary Preparation:**

Reconciling the inventory:
What do we have? Do our records reflect this?
Confirmation of inclusion of supplemental information from donor (exciting acquisition stories, noteworthy characteristics of an item from a collector’s point of view, value at time of purchase, etc.)

Condition reports
Even before the final selections were made, the Preservation Department began developing and completing outgoing condition reports for each of the items to be loaned

Controlled vocabulary
The artifacts in the collection are not cataloged and many involve characters of Gorey’s design (fantods and figbashers, for example), terms which needed to be properly defined and uniformly used

**Exhibit Preparation:**

---

**During Selection**

- Exhibit team reviews entire collection, selects items for exhibit
- Team breaks down the exhibit into sections and subsections
- Each section is given a separate book truck, facilitating easy access to materials and simplifying organization
- Every item receives a flag noting its section and any treatment it might need before being displayed
- Development of exhibit database based on Preservation Department inventory and exhibit team notes

---

**After Selection**

- Organization
  - Materials organized on book trucks by exhibit section
  - Each item placed in a box according to its case number
  - As this is done, the case number is written on the flag of each item so it can be returned after treatment
  - Determining appropriate treatment for each item
  - Used case design mock-ups provided by exhibit team
  - Treatment information changes as the exhibit design evolves
  - Necessitates consultation of multiple sources (database, flag, binder with mock-ups, item cards)

- Preparation
  - All items removed from their protective housing (polyester book covers, pamphlet bindings, custom made tuxedo boxes)
  - Call number slips removed from books, filed in envelopes by section
  - Custom vivek book supports made
    - Used to support books opened to a specific page, or to support dust jackets unfolded and displayed flat in cases
  - "Fake books" – made of vivek and mat board scraps
    - Used so a book can be held open to a desired page while simultaneously displayed adjacent to its cover
  - Matting and hinging of original artwork, posters, and ephemera
  - Sewing felt supports for unique books unfit for vivek supports
  - Mylar strips cut to hold books open to a specific page
  - Packing: items sent in boxes and folders by case number, on book trucks according to exhibit section

---

**Cooperation as Our Key to Success:**

Preparation of this collection for exhibit would have been impossible without Hamilton’s dedicated staff and willing volunteers coming together in a library-wide effort

For example, cataloging graciously rushed many items to ensure that they were properly cataloged before being loaned, and the University Archives allowed us use of their facilities for selection and treatment activities