

Jeremy Brett and Beth Kilmarx

RBMS 2025 Conference Update

Preparations for the 2025 RBMS Annual Conference are well underway. The conference theme this year is “A Multitude of Stories,” reflecting the limitless array of voices that speak to us through the collections and materials we manage. One of the chief goals of the conference is to give special collections librarians and archivists opportunities to critically examine colonialism’s impact on libraries and cultural heritage institutions, and to explore practices that make collections more inclusive and representative of often marginalized voices (e.g., repatriation and reparative cataloguing). In these times, especially, we hope that our profession will rise to the necessary occasion and get a better understanding of the lenses through which many of us view our collections.

The conference will run from June 24–27, 2025 in New Haven, Connecticut. Most of the activities, exhibits, and tours will take place on the campus of Yale University, the host of this year’s conference. We’re very excited about and proud of the quality and variety of presentations—panels, discussion groups, papers, posters, and lightning talks from students and newer professionals—available this year, which of course, form the heart of the conference. Informative and professionally relevant workshops and seminars will also be happening and add to the event’s intellectual richness. And Yale has thrown open its doors to tours for conference attendees that showcase many of the wonderful cultural treasures it offers, including the storied Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, the Yale University Art Gallery, the Yale Center for British Art, Sterling Memorial Library, and the Lewis Walpole Library & Hill-Stead Museum.

The conference’s opening plenary speaker will be Dr. Ricky Punzalan, of the University of Michigan School of Information, where he directs the university’s Museum Studies Program. Dr. Punzalan has been a key figure in shaping the fields of repatriation and reparative description, as well as the ongoing process of decolonizing archives. The lead speaker for the closing plenary will be Cheryl Beredo, Director of Collections and Chief Curator at Beinecke Library, who will lead a panel of Yale librarians and archivists speaking about Yale’s reparative collecting efforts.

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Information about the conference can be found at: <https://web.cvent.com/event/eec2ebfb-c5d9-47b3-8485-6c1def8b7a62/summary>. The website will be updated as developments proceed.

We look forward to seeing many of you this coming summer in Connecticut!

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