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## SAMPLE PUBLIC PROGRAMS DEVELOPED AT THE ROSENBACH

The following public programs, which I developed for The Rosenbach, illustrate my approach to civic engagement through material texts. The programs amplify previously-overlooked voices and encourage participant contribution but are rooted in the examination of physical artifacts, which lends both authenticity and skills-building opportunities to the events. Placing books, manuscripts, and other artifacts at the center of critical conversations is the hallmark of my program-development model.

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### **Hands-on Tour: Dialogues: Native American History**

Launched July 18, 2019

American history is the history of dialogues among the many peoples who have called—and call—America home. Highlighting The Rosenbach’s remarkable collection of books, manuscripts, and printed documents that reveal how Native Americans engaged with European and Euro-American peoples, this Hands-on Tour will invite attendees to think in new ways about American culture. The tour will focus on rarely-seen items from The Rosenbach’s holdings and introduce attendees to people of indigenous background who dialogued with Euro-American society by publishing works of history and literature. Items to be shown on the tour span 369 years of history, dating from 1626 to 1995. Famous figures like Pocahontas, Sacagawea, and Metacomet (King Philip) will be discussed, along with lesser-known people like R.B. Lewis and William Apess, all of whom appear in the Rosenbach collections.

<https://rosenbach.org/events/hands-on-tour-encountering-native-american-history-3/>

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### **Hands-on Tour: Mexico: Race and Revolution in the Borderlands**

Launched September 19, 2019

The border between Mexico and the United States has been at the heart of trade, politics, art, and spirituality for centuries. This tour will highlight The Rosenbach’s collections from Mexico and Texas, including materials from the Spanish empire, the early years of Mexican independence, and relations with the expanding United States in the 1800s. The Spanish empire, and later, Mexico relied on ink, paper, and the flow of information to rule over thousands of miles of territory and a complex web of races and ethnicities. On this tour, you will meet Indigenous peoples, mestizos (people of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry), Europeans, and African peoples, both free and enslaved.

This Hands-On Tour is being unveiled in fall 2019 to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15. Live English-to-Spanish-language interpretation will be made available for the tours during National Hispanic Heritage Month.

<https://rosenbach.org/events/mexico-race-and-revolution-in-the-borderlands/>

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## **In Bed with Ishmael: Queer Approaches to the Life, Work, and Legacy of Herman Melville**

June 18, 2020, in partnership with New Bedford, Massachusetts Pride

*In Bed with Ishmael* is presented as part of The Rosenbach's celebration of Pride Month 2020, and alongside *American Voyager: Herman Melville at 200*.

Was Herman Melville in love with Nathaniel Hawthorne? Why did Queequeg and Ishmael spend so much time snuggling in *Moby-Dick*? Readers have long detected queer elements throughout Herman Melville's writings, and even in his own life. Yet so much about Melville's biography—and the "correct" meaning of his literary works—remains shrouded in uncertainty. In this virtual program, we will use queer theory to analyze Melville's writings and, in the process, destabilize conventional understandings of gender, sexuality, family, and identity, from the nineteenth century to the present. Rather than settling on firm answers to the questions above, the program will inspire readers to embrace the ambiguity in Melville's works as an example of the importance of questioning hetero-normative assumptions about art and history.

*In Bed with Ishmael* will introduce you to The Rosenbach's rich collection of Herman Melville rare books, manuscripts, and related artifacts; reveal how queer theory and a gendered approach to culture can enrich understandings of Melville's writings, and dive into key passages of *Typee*, *Redburn*, *Moby-Dick*, *Billy-Budd*, and *Pierre*, to unlock multiple meanings from these complex texts. Special attention will be paid to the intersection of race, ethnicity, global voyage, and erotic exploration in Melville's works. In this interpretation, Ishmael and Queequeg's shared bed at the Spouter Inn becomes an ocean of exploration, a cultural contact zone, and an artifact of economic imperialism in the Age of Sail.

<https://rosenbach.org/events/in-bed-with-ishmael/>

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## **Voices of Change: A Podcast Inspired by Alice Dunbar-Nelson**

Launched October, 2020

The *Voices of Change* podcast explores themes, topics, and issues raised in The Rosenbach's digital exhibition, *"I Am an American!": The Authorship and Activism of Alice Dunbar-Nelson*. Each episode highlights voices involved in shaping the exhibition and considers how Alice Dunbar-Nelson's life, times, and work speak to pressing issues facing the United States today.

<https://anchor.fm/iamanamerican>

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## **The Long Arc of Survival: A Virtual Discussion Group on Alice Dunbar-Nelson**

February 9, 2021

Join Women In Transition and The Rosenbach for a discussion about surviving and thriving after intimate partner violence, with a focus on the Philadelphia-area author and activist Alice Dunbar-Nelson, who lived from 1875 to 1935. Monet Timmons and Jesse Erickson, curators of the digital exhibition *"I Am an American!": The Authorship and Activism of Alice Dunbar-Nelson*, will give an overview of Dunbar-Nelson's survival of intimate partner violence, and her many achievements as an activist, educator, and writer. Blanche Brown of Women In Transition will lead a discussion of some of Dunbar-Nelson's short stories.

No advance preparation is required to participate in this discussion group, but registrants are invited to read three stories by Alice Dunbar-Nelson: "Tony's Wife," "Little Miss Sophie," and "The Goodness of St. Rocque." These are all

short stories featured in Dunbar-Nelson's 1899 collection *The Goodness of St. Rocque* and deal with women's relationships with men and the self.

<https://rosenbach.org/events/long-arc/>

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### **Radical Self-care in an Era of Activism: A Virtual Salon Inspired by the Harlem Renaissance**

February 11, 2021

Join chef Jena Harris and Professor Psyche Williams-Forsen for an evening of self-care grounded in the salon-style traditions of the Harlem Renaissance. Chef Jena will use accessible ingredients in a live demonstration and welcome participants to make and enjoy sustaining food and drink using recipes shared in advance. Throughout the event, we will discuss and learn more from Professor Williams-Forsen about how the contributions of authors, artists, and activists to American art and politics have built movements which center radical self-love. This free, interactive program is a collaboration with The Rosenbach's digital exhibition "*I Am an American!*": *The Authorship and Activism of Alice Dunbar-Nelson* and the Free Library's *Making Her Mark* exhibition—both of which highlight the life and legacy of Alice Dunbar-Nelson.

Are you local to Philadelphia and interested in receiving free ingredients to make the recipes Chef Jena will present as part of the program? Check out Chef Jena's distribution schedule and receive additional updates via @bunnyhopphl on Instagram. (Please wear a mask. Supplies are limited; first come, first served.)

<https://rosenbach.org/events/self-care/>

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### **The Curator's Toolkit: Up Close and Personal with The Rosenbach's Collections**

Eight-session course offered during fall, 2021, with plans for an annual repetition

Do you love discovering fascinating stories from history? Have you ever wanted to get up close and personal with museum and library collection objects, including rare books, manuscripts, paintings, furniture, precious metals, and ceramics? If so, then this course is for you.

*The Curator's Toolkit* will equip you with knowledge and skills for handling, studying, preserving, and learning from fine art, antiques, rare books, and manuscripts at The Rosenbach and beyond, and give you hands-on, behind-the-scenes access to a world-renowned museum and library collection. You will even write an object label for a real Rosenbach museum exhibition. In this course, the historic Rosenbach house becomes your laboratory for the study and enjoyment of art, artifacts, and historic texts.

Each *Curator's Toolkit* course session will combine lectures and discussions with hands-on Artifact Labs that put real Rosenbach collection objects in students' hands, in order to apply lessons from the course readings and learn directly from original materials. By the end of the course, students will have viewed and handled more than 100 Rosenbach collection objects, including many pieces that are infrequently seen by the public. The course will also include a behind-the-scenes tour of The Rosenbach, and a panel discussion featuring a book and manuscript conservator, focused on work recently completed on a rare Rosenbach medieval manuscript. Special attention will be paid to helping students navigate the rich collections of The Rosenbach and explore their own personal areas of interest within our holdings—both during and after the course.

<https://rosenbach.org/events/in-person-course-the-curators-toolkit-up-close-and-personal-with-the-rosenbachs-collections/>

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**Hands-on Tour: Roses in the Wilderness: Religion, Culture, and Society in Early America**

Debuts January 13, 2022

Religious pluralism has defined American life since early days, and the Mid-Atlantic region in particular has a long legacy of spiritual diversity embodied in William Penn’s “holy experiment”—that is, his establishment of religious tolerance in Pennsylvania in the late 1600s. In this tour, we will consider the place of religion and spirituality in American life as encountered in rare books, manuscripts, and artifacts. Materials to be seen (and handled!) during the tour will carry you from the icy shores of New England to the warmer climes of New Spain. Highlights include world-famous Rosenbach treasures such as the Bay Psalm Book and John Eliot’s Bible in the Wôpanâak language, letters of William Penn, manuscripts and printed works related to the establishment of Germantown, Pennsylvania; artworks and documents connected to early Jewish Philadelphians, a copy of the Koran owned in colonial Pennsylvania, and records of the Spanish Inquisition that reveal details of the lives of ordinary people in the Roman Catholic Spanish empire.