Penn Libraries Announces 2015 Seltzer Family Digital Media Awards

PHILADELPHIA, PA, July 8th, 2015 – Thanks to the generosity of alumnus Jeff Seltzer (W'78) and his wife Annie, the University of Pennsylvania Libraries is proud to announce the eight winners of the 2015 Seltzer Family Digital Media Awards: Alicia Chon (W '16), DeDe DeDe (LPS '16), Carolina English (C '16), Taylor Evensen (C '16), Antoni Gierczak (C '16), Justin Kagotho (HISB, C '18, W '18), Christopher Kao (ENG '18), and Eileen Wang (C '16). The annual Seltzer Awards recognize and support creative use of new media technologies by Penn undergraduate students for academic research projects. Each student will have exclusive use of approximately $1,000 of technology for one year to purchase equipment such as video cameras, still cameras, and audio recorders. This is the eighth year that the Seltzer Family Digital Media Awards have supported student projects. The awards are managed by the Penn Libraries in collaboration with the Center for Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (CURF).

Below are details about this year's eight funded projects:

- **Alicia Chon** (W'16) will further the exploration of beauty she started building on her website, *The Raw Book* in the context of her Korean heritage. She plans to explore a project featuring portraits of people she encounters and their answer to the simple question: "What is beauty?" Alicia will use a digital camera to capture these portraits as she travels to at least five countries in the coming year.

- Under the guidance of Assistant Professor of History, Dr. Tamara Walker, **DeDe DeDe** (C'16) will conduct research for his honors history thesis on the invention of the steel drum. DeDe will use audio and visual sources in the form of oral history and tradition, musical recordings, and videos of Trinidad and Tobago's world famous carnival. DeDe explains his decision to present his research as a documentary, saying "a multimedia format…seems to be the most appropriate method of presenting research on the steel drum which is about movement and sound and the active creation of culture."

- **Carolina English** (C'16), with the assistance of Dr. Gary Hatfield, Seybert Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Visual Studies department, will be experimenting with an installation that recreates the experiences of a woman named Dee Fletcher chronicled in Melvin Goodale and David Milner's award-winning book, *Sight Unseen*. After an unfortunate accident, Dee Fletcher suffered damage to her brain's ventral stream. She was unable to identify obstacles in front of her, but was still able to move out of the obstacle's way without intervention. Carolina will attempt to recreate this experience by installing an "imaginary" obstacle course that the brain perceives as real. This installation would amplify the ventral stream's action of identification, making the viewer more aware of its processing and more empathetic to people without it. She will create a short documentary that will highlight her procedures, shortcomings, and ultimate outcome with the hope that it will produce a more tangible and relatable project.

- Working under the direction of Walter H. Annenberg Professor of History, Dr. Walter Licht, **Taylor Evensen** (C '16) will use an audio recorder and video camera to interview Cuban exiles in Miami for her

thesis research. This project will provide clarity to the history of American-Cuban relations by analyzing the property expropriations of the United Fruit Company, Francisco Sugar Company, and Manatí Sugar Company. Through her work, Evensen aims to provide a more inclusive picture of the 1959 Cuban Revolution and its far-reaching effects.

- **Antoni Gierczak** (C'16), under the guidance of Richard Wesley, Undergraduate Chair and Adjunct Professor of Architecture in PennDesign, will create an interactive media installation in a corridor on campus. A server will check Facebook and Twitter for a user's particular hashtag and interpret the bundled information using infrared sensors and the server. This information will then be processed by an Arduino system, which will produce color blocking and images pulled from Google within the installation. Gierczak's goal is to revitalize the corridor by offering an attractive circulatory alternative and allowing the user to interact with, decipher, and create content within the system in a way that blurs the strict spatial divisions between human and architecture.

- **Justin Kagotho** (HISB, C'18, W'18) will be working under the direction of Dr. Sara Byala, Senior Lecturer at the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing, in conducting research about Coca-Cola's influence in Africa. To conduct this research, Kathogo will visit Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Cameroon. This research will entail such activities as conducting oral interviews with locals, officials working in the Coca-Cola factories, as well as the retailers selling the product. During his time in Africa, Kathogo will visit Coca-Cola bottling factories, clean water facilities, and explore other Coca-Cola initiatives.

- As an undergraduate fellow of Penn CAMRA (a new student organization promoting the use of new media for documenting research results) and working with advisor Mariam Durrani, **Christopher Kao** (ENG'18) will continue to explore new ways of conveying information through autostereographic video software he has created using Xbox Kinect. Autostereographic video is a breakthrough technology that allows viewers to see 3D images on a normal screen, without the need of any special glasses.

- Under the guidance of Edmund J. and Louise W. Kahn, Term Professor in Anthropology, Dr. Adriana Petryna, **Eileen Wang** (C'16) will be studying the sociocultural context of cesarean deliveries on maternal request for them in Shanghai, China. As part of the ethnographic research for her Health and Societies thesis, she will be using a Zoom audio recorder to capture interviews with doctors, nurses, pregnant women, new mothers, and family members at a district hospital on the topic of birth and delivery. With this data, she hopes to understand how these various factors interact in shaping how Chinese mothers give birth and how they fit into the larger picture of the rising rates of cesarean sections in the country.

Jeff Seltzer (W'78) serves on the Libraries' Board of Overseers, the Advisory Board of the Huntsman Program in International Studies and Business, and the Alumni Advisory Committee for the Wharton Sports Business Initiative. The Seltzer Family Digital Media Awards Committee consists of Dr. David Barnes (Associate Professor, History and Sociology of Science), Inge Herman (Executive Director, Huntsman Program in International Studies & Business), John MacDermott (Director for Instructional Technology, SAS Computing), Ian Seltzer (C'09), and Dr. Anu Vedantham (Director, Penn Libraries' Weigle Information Commons). Award details are available at http://commons.library.upenn.edu/seltzer-family-digital-media-awards.

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About the Penn Libraries
The Penn Libraries serve the world-class faculty and students of Penn's 12 schools. The Libraries' collections comprise more than 7 million volumes, over 100,000 journals, some 2 million digitized images, and extraordinary rare and unique materials that document the intellectual and cultural experience of ancient and modern civilizations. Through our collaborative relationships, we supplement Penn's great local collections with physical access to the Center for Research Libraries (approximately 5 million items), the combined holdings of the Ivies (more than 70 million volumes), and exclusive electronic access to some 2 million public domain titles in the HathiTrust. Today,

the Libraries play an instrumental role in developing new technologies for information discovery and dissemination and are noted for groundbreaking work in digital library design. To learn more about the Penn Libraries, visithttp://www.library.upenn.edu.