Project Title

Mina Loy's Avant-Garde Migrations: Futurism, Dada, Surrealism

Team Information

- **Suzanne Churchill**, Davidson College, Prof. of English, co-author/editor (will attend)
- **Susan Rosenbaum**, UGA, Assoc. Prof. of English, co-author/editor (will not attend)
- **Kristen Eshleman**, Davidson College, Dir. of Instructional Technology, technologist (will attend)
- **Anelise Shrout**, Davidson College, DH Post-Doc, mapping expert (will attend)
- **Andrew Rikard**, Davidson College, English major (class of 2017), student collaborator (will attend)
- **Sara Swanson**, Davidson College, Asst. Dir. for Information Literacy, librarian (will not attend)

At ILIADs, Suzanne's role is to serve as the Mina Loy scholar, contributing knowledge of the academic field, as well as artistic design principles. Kristen's role is to act as technical lead, providing support and guidance during the institute as we explore, customize, and integrate the various tools and platforms involved this project. Anelise will provide expertise in scholarly adaptation of digital mapping tools and theoretical perspectives on historiography. Andrew provides skills in programming, coding, data mining, and textual analysis, which will help us customize tools and platforms, as well as prototype UX design.

Beyond ILIADs, Susan serves as co-author and editor, shaping the content and design of the project, as well as project leader at UGA. Sara helps us navigate copyright rules for digital publication of texts and images.

Project Description

The archives, maps, textual analyses, and visualizations produced in recent DH projects have modeled important new ways of thinking, knowing, and analyzing history and literature. Because digital environments typically demand drastic reductions in text in favor of graphic, nonverbal ways of presenting information, much of the interpretive work lies in the organization and infrastructure of DH projects. Is there a place for longform scholarly interpretation and argumentation in DH, beyond PDFs that merely mimic print forms? CommentPress has enabled collaborative, interactive authorship with immediate, non-hierarchical peer review, but is limited in terms of multimedia and structural design.

Scalar offers more flexibility for multimedia, nonlinear narratives, but a shared set of academic conventions and standards for UX design has yet to emerge. WordPress provides standardized design structures (or "themes") for presenting multimedia information, but is geared toward personal blogging and commerce, and lacks the powerful archival and data storage affordances provided by Omeka.

Our project is a case study in how new digital tools and platforms can transform scholarly longform argumentation from the traditional model of lone scholar researching and writing a print *monograph* on a single subject, to a group of faculty, staff, and students collaborating to produce what might be called a digital *multigraph*—an interactive, multi-authored, multimedia, multiuser scholarly narrative. We thus join a broader effort to decentralize authority in both the production and consumption of humanities scholarship. As with Comment Press, we aim to transform peer review into a interactive, immediate, nonhierarchical process by inviting users to comment and and contribute to our scholarly inquiry as it unfolds. In this way, we also join public humanities efforts to embrace a broad audience and reverse the elite specialization that has evolved in academic scholarship.

Our project involves creating a digital scholarly resource on Mina Loy (1882-1966), a modernist poet, artist, and entrepreneur who defies containment in linear narratives, national borders, avant-garde circles, genre conventions, media types, and archival boundaries (much of her work is scattered, out of print, in private collections, or lost). The project will chart her social movements through avant-garde circles, including Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism; her artistic experiments in various genres, including poetry, plays, prose, and visual art; and her geographic migrations among metropolitan centers, including Paris, Florence, Rome, New York, London, and Berlin, from the 1910s to the 1950s. We will visually map her movements in time, space, and artistic production, adding a narrative dimension of scholarly analysis and interpretation. Rather than offering a comprehensive digital archive of Loy's work, this site aims to present a digital-born, media-rich, collaborative scholarly exploration of the relations between creative production, geographic location, and artistic community in Loy's career.

The project will have two main parts:

1. an **interpretive scholarly narrative** that unfolds across multiple pathways navigated by users (constructed on WordPress or Scalar).

2. a **layered, interactive timeline/map** of Loy's geographic and genre migrations, showing work she produced in particular times and places (built on Neatline/Omeka).

The interpretive narrative will initially be composed by Suzanne and Susan (with the potential for additional authors) and revised in response to user's comments and queries. The timeline/map will be layered with facsimiles of Loy's work, metadata, and scholarly annotations, drawing upon maps from historical baedekers from the 1910s and '20s and from digitized collections of the little magazines in which she published (e.g., Modernist Journals

Project, Blue Mountain Project). Although we have not yet determined how to integrate the two parts structurally, we envision a complementary relationship between them. For example, the narrative might scroll vertically or horizontally through a series of frames or pages that correspond to locations in an adjacent, unfolding map/timeline. Ultimately, we hope to combine the lucid, minimalist aesthetics of Snowfall with the academic functionality of MediaCommons.

The audience for this project includes a substantial, transatlantic community of Loy scholars and enthusiasts. We will discuss the project at a Mina Loy symposium in New York in April (see timeline), using the forum to recruit participants from this growing community. Loy's experimental work appeals strongly to undergraduates and graduate students, and Susan and I plan to invite students at UGA and Davidson to participate in the development of the project via assignments scaled to their educational levels. Whereas undergraduates may be capable of locating texts and adding metadata to the existing timeline/map, graduate students may be better equipped to mine data in digital magazine archives, create visualizations of their findings, and add chapters to the interpretive narrative. We plan to begin with a small community of scholars and students, and then explore possibilities for expanding the project for broader participation from other academic institutions and the general public. Our current vision has precise, manageable, and flexible parameters with significant growth potential.

This project aims to provide a free, open-access, peer-reviewed academic resource on Mina Loy that enables students, scholars, and enthusiasts to study, analyze, and interact with her work in a well-designed, accessible, media-rich digital environment. In addition to its contribution to Loy scholarship and modernist studies, this project has three main goals with regard to undergraduate developments and the DH at large:

1. Involve undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and staff at Davidson and the University of Georgia in a DH project that combines the resources of a small, private, liberal arts college and a large, public university in order to establish best practices for multi-leveled, cross-institutional collaboration in DH. We hope to provide a **blueprint for collaboration** among other public and private institutions.

2. Create a lucid, legible model of DH scholarly publication that contributes to the development of UX design standards for digital-born, media-rich, multi-authored longform scholarship. We hope to spur the establishment of a shared set of **academic conventions and standards for UX design** that can assist in the creation of future DH projects.

3. The development of UX design standards will address the problem of assessment that inhibits faculty from involving students in DH projects: they simply don't know how to evaluate them. Our project aims to contribute to **digital pedagogy** by providing rubrics and guidelines for assessment of digital projects.

This project would combine traditional scholarly practices with the use of new tools and platforms, joining the effort to reimagine scholarly and pedagogical practices in a digital era.

The Role of Iliads

We would like to collaborate with others at the Institute to select appropriate tools, integrate them, customize UX design, and enable reader interactivity. For the interpretive narrative, we are leaning toward WordPress or Scalar, but are open to other platforms, and we seek to enable interactive user commentary, as in CommentPress. For the layered timeline/map, we aim to customize the Omeka/Neatline platform, finding effective ways to present literary and artistic artifacts along with metadata and scholarly annotations. We want to explore ways to allow users to contribute data points and investigate means to integrate the timeline/map with the interpretive narrative. Finally, we hope to engage in conversations about digital humanities projects as digital pedagogy, especially in regard to the development of UX design principles, conventions, and standards for academic projects.

Project Timeline

Because of the value we are placing on UX design for scholarly communication, we will employ "design-thinking" methodology, which is geared toward collaborative problem-solving to meet users' needs. The timeline reflects the steps inherent in the design-thinking framework:
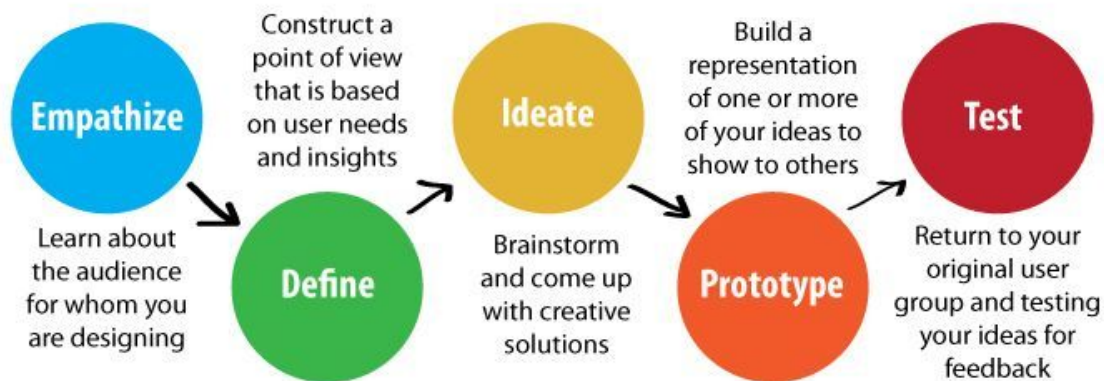
Spring 2015 (empathize & define): Members of our team have formed a Digital Mapping Learning Community at Davidson, which meets biweekly for workshops, discussions, and talks. Suzanne and Andrew have formed a small-group "triad" dedicated to exploring

audience, UX and Neatline. This project is also the central focus of Suzanne's sabbatical this semester.

March 2015 (empathize & define): Suzanne has been invited to Maine to meet with Roger Conover, the executor of Loy's estate. She will interview him about the project to gather information about resources and end-user needs. She will also seek his approval/permission for the project and learn about another project already underway (possibly a digital archive of Loy's artwork, which would be tremendously useful for defining the goals of our own project).

April 9-10, 2015 (empathize & define): Suzanne will present the project at a Mina Loy symposium in New York, co-sponsored by NYU and the Centre for Modernist Studies at the University of Sussex. Reactions and feedback will be incorporated into this phase of the project.

April 16-17, 2014 (empathize, define & ideate): Suzanne and Susan will participate in a Digital Humanities Workshop jointly sponsored by the Interdisciplinary Modernism(s) and Digital Humanities research clusters at UGA's new Willson Center Lab for Digital Humanities (scheduled to open in April). The workshop will be facilitated by [Stephen Ross](), Associate Professor of English and Cultural, Social, and Political Thought at at the University of Victoria, and [William Thomas](), professor in the Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, University of Nebraska (awaiting confirmation). This workshop extends the empathize and define phases to the cross-institutional collaboration and begins the ideate phase.

April 23-24 (ideate): Neatline workshop at Davidson College led by David McClure, independent developer and consultant who was the lead developer of Neatline when he worked with the Scholars Lab at UVA. This workshop will be critical to the creative solutions for scholarly communication.

Summer 2015 (prototype): Andrew has applied for a Davidson Research Initiative (DRI) fellowship that would allow him to live and work at Davidson for the summer, collaborating with Suzanne on a mapping project that involves situating Loy's little magazine publications in a broader network of modernist activity. Andrew will develop the prototype for this project. It will be ready by the start of the fall semester and tested in classroom applications, where it will remain open to development, refinement, and expansion.

Fall 2015 (test): Suzanne will teach an upper-level undergraduate seminar, "Modernism, Magazines, and Media," which will include a unit on the Digital Loy project. Students will use the Loy project site for research and to contribute scholarly interpretations.

Spring 2016 (test): Susan will teach a graduate seminar, also open to advanced undergraduates working on thesis projects, "Women Poets and the Avant-Garde," which will include a unit on the Digital Loy project.

Sustainability

The project will be hosted at Davidson College, which has committed to providing support from Academic Affairs, the library and ITS for DH projects directly connected to teaching, learning, or research. Platforms and tools will be evaluated annually, with support for migrations and iterations as needed. The College has additional support for student participation, faculty development, and tool acquisition through summer research grants such as DRI. The new Willson Center Lab for Digital Humanities is the UGA source of support for this project. The Digital Humanities research cluster, led by historians Steve Barry and Claudio Saunt, are organizing a Digital Humanities Workshop in April, and the Digital Loy project will be a central focus of the workshop.