Public Library and University of Cincinnati seeing ‘eye to eye’ in new ‘Double Vision’ exhibit

As the world swiftly leaves behind the golden age of photo snapshots and albums—preferring digital cameras and now smartphones to capture photographs, take a step back in time and look at one of the most fascinating and innovative accomplishments in photographic history; the stereoscopic slide. Photos of conserved historic stereoscopic slides and digitally reproduced surrogates are on display at the Main Library in a new exhibit Double Vision: Seeing the World in Stereoscopic View on display through Oct. 17.

Immensely popular in the early 1990s, stereoscopic slides were often made from world travelers taking snapshots of exotic international destinations. Stereoscopic photography became known as the world’s “first visual mass media.” In this exhibit, viewers can explore the history, production, conservation and digitization of stereoscopic slides from the collection of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. A special focus on the work of the Library’s Conservation Lab and Digital Services will reveal modern preservation and digitization techniques while sharing the historic beauty of the world’s first large-scale foray into 3D visualization.

“This exhibit provides a perfect opportunity to highlight the Library’s Digital Services and the Library’s partnership with UC’s Preservation Lab,” says David Siders, Popular Library manager. “We are excited to promote access to our historic collection of stereoscopic slides—thanks to the innovative work of Digital Services along with the Preservation Lab’s work that ensures the integrity of the historic slides.”

The Preservation Lab ensures the integrity of the slides by cleaning and repairing the stereo-view photos for the display currently located in the Main Library’s Popular Library, as well as building new boxes for archival long term storage. Digitization expands the reach of collections to customers everywhere. Providing a high-resolution image of an object can also reduce potential wear on fragile materials. To see digitization in action, view the Double Vision exhibit in the Library’s Virtual Library at VirtualLibrary.CincinnatiLibrary.org.

For more information on the Double Vision: Seeing the World in Stereoscopic View exhibit, call 513-369-6919. Look for more information about the Preservation Lab in the next issue of Links, the Library’s quarterly publication.
PHOTOS: (Top) Children at the Old Main Library (Circa 1906) found stereoscopic slides, one of the earliest forms of audio visual, fascinating and one of the most popular Library materials of the day; (Bottom) University of Cincinnati Preservation Lab technician Chris Voynovich cleaning stereo-view photos.

About The Preservation Lab
Beginning in January of 2012, the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and the University of Cincinnati Libraries began a long-term collaboration to provide conservation and preservation treatments in an equally-managed, staffed, and equipped preservation lab situated on the University of Cincinnati’s Main Campus. The preservation lab performs a variety of treatments on a wide range of damaged materials in order to increase their longevity and make them usable to scholars. For more information, visit www.ThePreservationLab.org.

About University of Cincinnati Libraries
UC Libraries support the University of Cincinnati’s undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs and includes the Walter C. Langsam Library, the Archives and Rare Books Library, the Donald C. Harrison Health Sciences Library and eight college and department libraries serving applied science, architecture, art, biology, chemistry, classics, design, education, engineering, geology, health sciences, mathematics, music, physics, and planning. For more information, visit www.Libraries.UC.edu.

About Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County
The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County is one of the oldest, largest, and busiest libraries in the United States, serving a population of over 800,000 with a collection of more than 9 million items. In support of its mission of connecting people with the world of ideas and information, the Library also offers a wide variety of services and more than 20,000 free programs each year. For more information, visit www.CincinnatiLibrary.org.

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