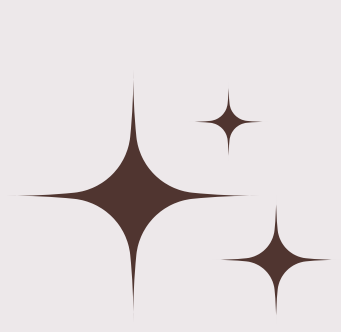
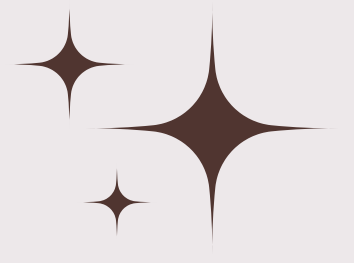


SPRING 2024  
WWW.UWYO.EDU/AMS

COOPER HOUSE,  
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING



AMERICAN STUDIES



# *Porchlight*



"New West," watercolor, by John Keeling.





# Letter from Our Program Director: Dr. Ulrich Adelt!

It has been a busy semester at the Cooper House, and I'm happy to report the University of Wyoming American Studies program continues to thrive. We recently admitted eight new Master's students and will have an MA cohort of 17 in the Fall. We continue to be very international with new MA students from Nigeria, Uzbekistan, and the UK. Two wonderful MA students just received their MA degrees, congratulations, Maya Tsogo-Onana and Boone Schieffer!

As part of academic restructuring, our undergraduate major, which has over 50 students, will be renamed American Cultural Studies and will merge with African American and Diaspora Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, and Latina/o Studies. There will be no changes to the MA program and our funding. I'm very much looking forward to working within what will then be called the School of American Cultural Studies (formerly known as the School of Culture, Gender and Social Justice) with its director Dr. Stephen Dillon.

The highlight this semester for us was the exhibit "Diversity Unveiled: An American Mosaic," which was curated by our MA student Gerald Lovato, and, with the help of my American Studies colleague Dr. Trisha Martínez and grant funds, transformed the Cooper House into an art gallery (more about this in the following pages). We managed to purchase two artworks for permanent display in the Cooper, John Keeling's watercolor "The New West", which graces the cover of this Porchlight, and Gerald Lovato's own oil painting Self Portrait / American Rebel, which is our alternative version of the "bucking bronco." If you haven't seen them, stop by the Cooper some time to check them out! Lovato also just won the A&S Dean's Graduate Scholar's Award, congratulations!

Have a wonderful summer!

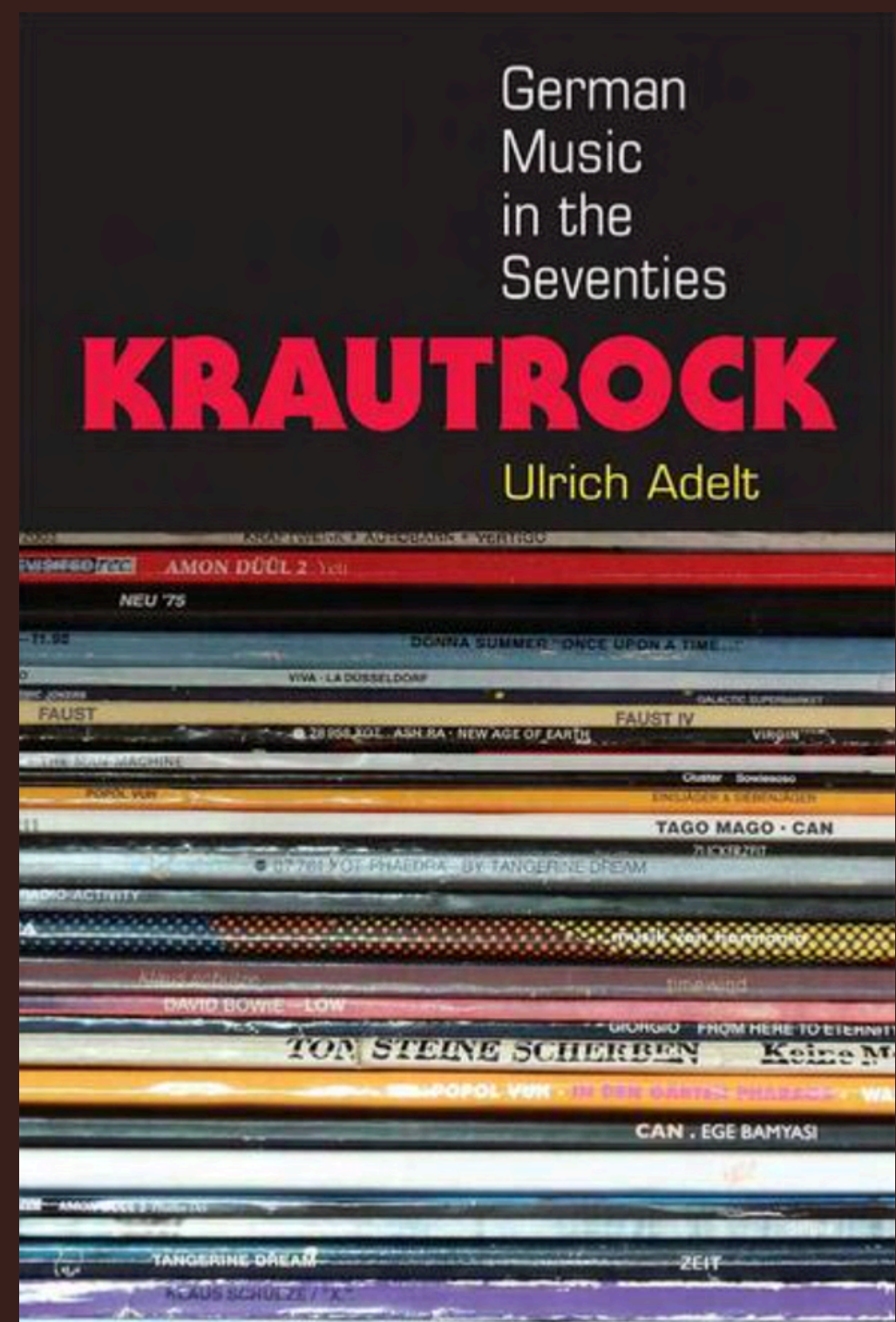
Ulli Adelt





# The wonderful accomplishments of our American Studies faculty!

Ulli Adelt presented at the European Association of American Studies (EAAS) meeting in Munich, Germany. He published a book review in the Journal of American History. And he just found out that his book *Krautrock: German Music in the Seventies* has sold over 1,000 copies since it was published by the University of Michigan Press in 2016, which, for an academic book, is quite impressive.



Rachel Sailor has finished up her final semester as a UW Presidential Fellow, she has won the Seibold Award from the College of Arts and Sciences, and will be a Harlow Summer Series speaker at the UW-NPS Research Station in the Tetons.



Congratulations also to former American Studies Faculty, Dr. Lilia Soto, who served as Chair Elect for the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS). She organized a successful annual conference, titled 'Chicana and Chicano Studies in the 21st C: The Continuities and Ruptures within the Field'.  
(Pictured here with Dr. Trisha Martínez)





# Hear from Trisha Martinez on her first year in the American Studies program in the Cooper House!

Reflecting on the Spring semester brings to light my passions and investments in academia. I remain inspired and motivated by the research, scholarship, and programmatic efforts of my colleagues and friends. Special thanks and appreciation for my colleagues in this year's Wyoming Institute for Humanities Faculty Research cohort!

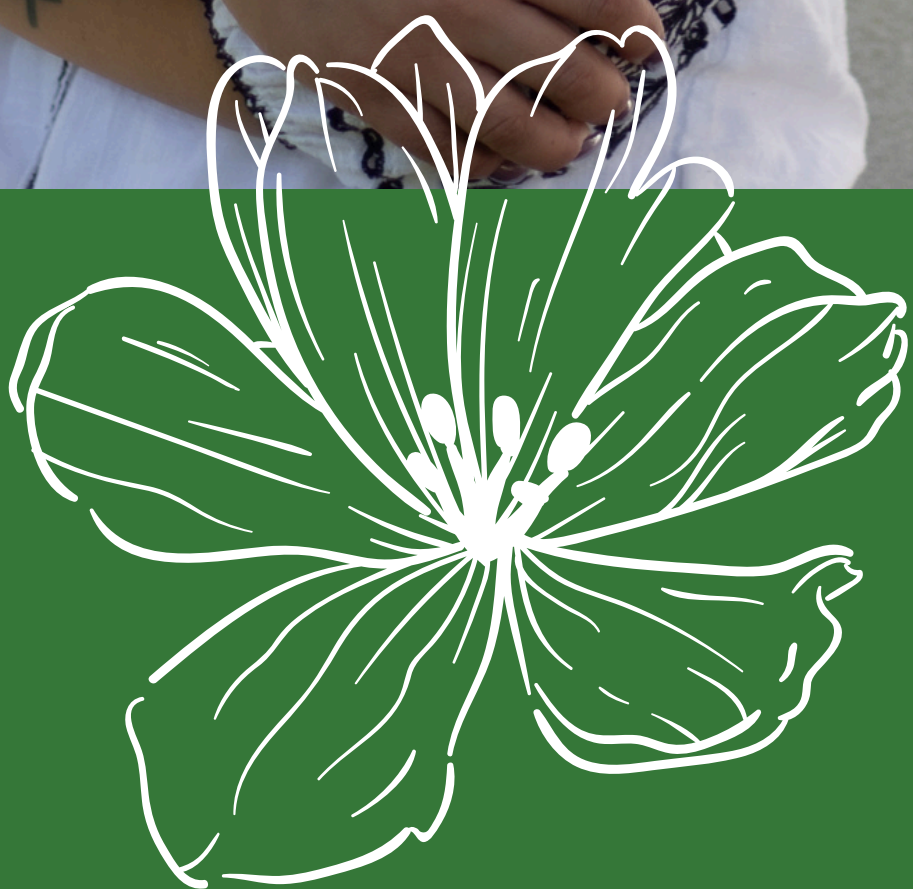


The fullness of my academic experience is one I am always eager to share and build upon. Faculty, staff and student support remain integral to our successes and experiences on campus. This support varies from advising/mentorship, academic/research opportunities, funding and creating spaces of belonging. I remain thankful for the work and advocacy of those who came before us and created such spaces and programming, that not only made my academic achievements feasible but memorable! The roots and sentiment of Wyoming's Anti-DEI bill is a reality we are not unfamiliar with. I applaud our community for speaking up and I acknowledge the work of our colleagues, staff and students who have to be on the front lines to ensure the fallout from such extreme measures is not detrimental to the success of our students and faculty work efforts.

This spring, diverse and unique art created by artists from across the nation adorned the walls of the Cooper House. "Diversity Unveiled: An American Mosaic," was a student led juried art exhibition that afforded us a timely opportunity to engage in interdisciplinary conversations related to DEI trends, research and shortfalls. Through the arts we were moved by an array of life experiences that generated community and stronger campus connections.

My students expand my insight and inspire my passion for teaching! I am blessed to extend my faculty role beyond prison walls through the Wyoming Pathways from Prison initiative. This has been an eye-opening experience to the transformative power of education and the positive rippling effects it extends to individuals, families and community. This summer, I will be teaching at the Wyoming Women's Center, and Wyoming Medium Correction Institution (WMCI).

My work for WPPF Program also serves as an inspiration for my new research related to the creativity of confinement and the fullness of humanity expressed through life stories and artistic expressions of American prisoners. This semester, I attended "Creativity, Art, and Leadership in Prison and Beyond" at Harvard University, I supported the curation and programming for a prison art exhibition at the National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC), titled, "Paño Connections: Corazón Knows No Bounds," and I was recently accepted to present as part of the prison caucus at this year's American Studies Association annual meeting. Across these various spaces, I recognize the breadth of the US carceral state, the many lives impacted, and the valuable influence we have as educators, leaders, researchers, and artists. It is with great excitement I begin planning and outreach for the University of Wyoming's Prison Art Symposium scheduled for fall of 2025. Please contact me for further information and/or if interested in collaborating/contributing.





# Undergraduate student Abigail Graham on her journey in American Studies at UW and what's next!



As an American Studies undergraduate, I was often asked why the discipline was important and what it would get me.

The field of American Studies was a discipline for my creativity—a framework to channel my thoughts, research, opinion, and potential. The branch of American Studies does not confine the learner to specifics, rather, it lets them reach beyond. The program takes in literary analysis, cultural behaviors, and environmental thought, all with historical frameworks and stories to teach students how to utilize all of them collectively. I learned that in the field of American Studies, we read things to discover, write things to communicate, and discuss things to connect. This is why I would define American Studies as an interdisciplinary-looking glass. Not to constrict ideas, cultures, or stories into a box, but to chart their journey and analyze their impacts.

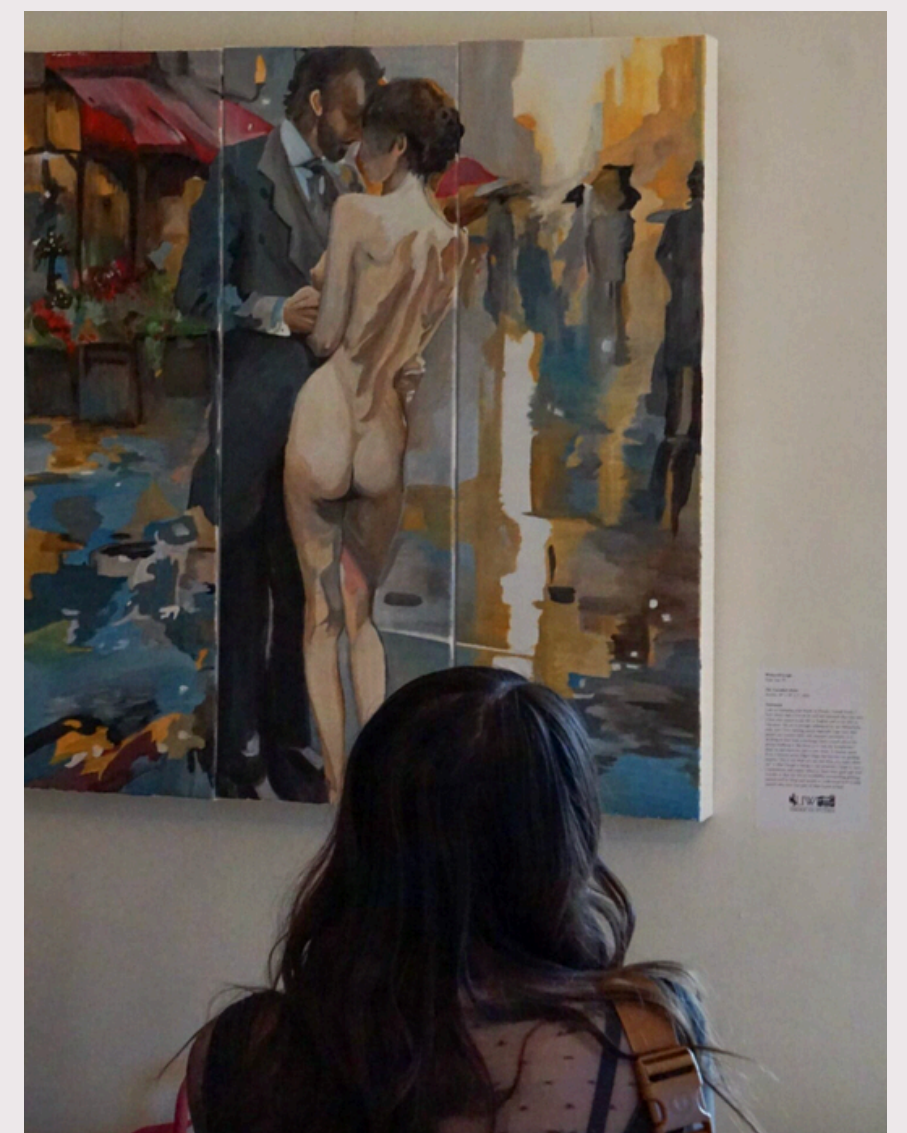
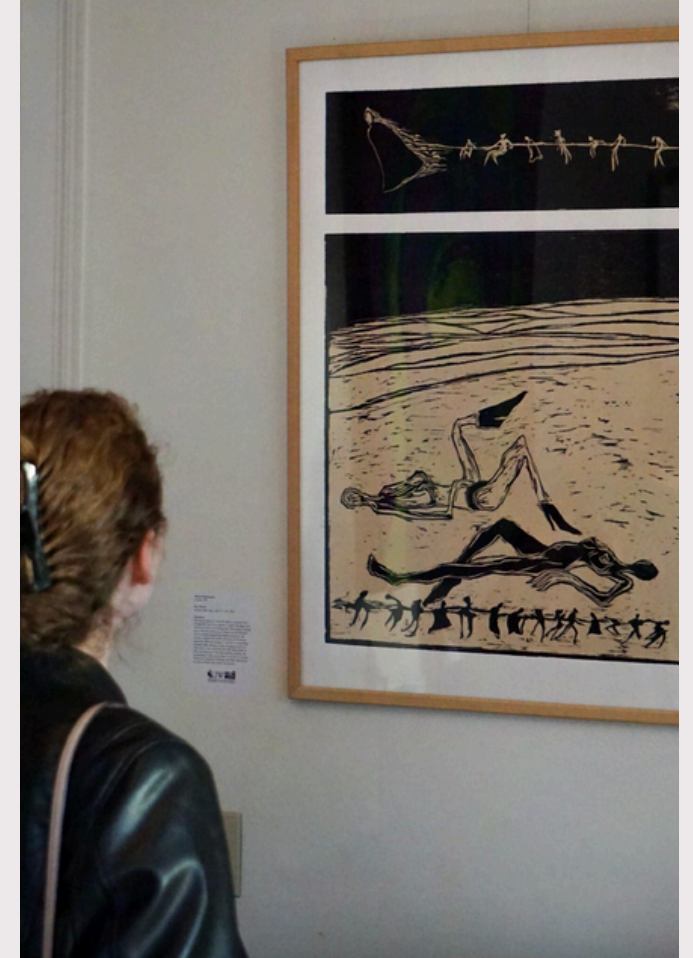
Because of its interdisciplinary approach, I was able to dive into studying the natural environment throughout my undergraduate degree, which gave way to my next step. In the fall, I will start graduate school at the University of Utah in the Department of Environmental Humanities.

American Studies, and specifically the program at UW, shaped my outlook on academia and future career paths. With exceptional mentors who truly cared for my success as an individual, I was thoughtfully guided through the program and encouraged always to bring my creativity and passion to any project. I hope that I can carry that lesson throughout my life and career.



# The Opening of 'Diversity Unveiled: An American Mosaic'

(5 April)





# A note from MA student Gerald Lovato - Curator and organiser of 'Diversity Unveiled'

My journey in American Studies began with the theoretical framework of researcher Dr. Megan Arney Johnston's "Slow Curating" and the call to action from George Lipsitz's "American Studies as Accompaniment." These concepts resonated deeply with my artistic mission and scholarly objectives igniting a desire to bridge academic inquiry with theory in action. By employing activism as a methodology, I aimed to curate an exhibition that transcended mere display, becoming a vibrant "living laboratory" for my research in exploring and amplifying diverse perspectives on DEI within the University of Wyoming community.

The "Diversity Unveiled: An American Mosaic" exhibition served as a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and critical reflection. By showcasing artwork from artists across the nation, fostering engagement through a presentation, a dinner, discussions, and utilizing the historic Cooper House Mansion as a dynamic space, the exhibition aimed to spark conversations that challenge existing narratives and foster a more inclusive campus environment.

## Outcomes

- 100 national artist submissions
- selected 26 artworks
- artists across 20 states
- keynote presentation about 40 attendees
- opening reception and dinner, with 60+ guests from multiple university departments

While the exhibition itself has concluded, its impact continues to resonate. The experience solidified my belief in the power of activism to bridge our communities. As I move forward, I am inspired to continue utilizing art as a tool for social transformation, not only within academic settings but within the broader social landscape. My thesis research aims to showcase the powerful potential of activism by employing this framework to address Wyoming's concerning suicide epidemic. Anticipate my thesis exhibition titled "Wyoming Unite: An Artistic Intervention for Suicide Awareness in Wyoming," scheduled to debut at the University of Wyoming Art Museum in Spring 2025. Stay tuned for an impactful community event that merges art, activism, and community healing.

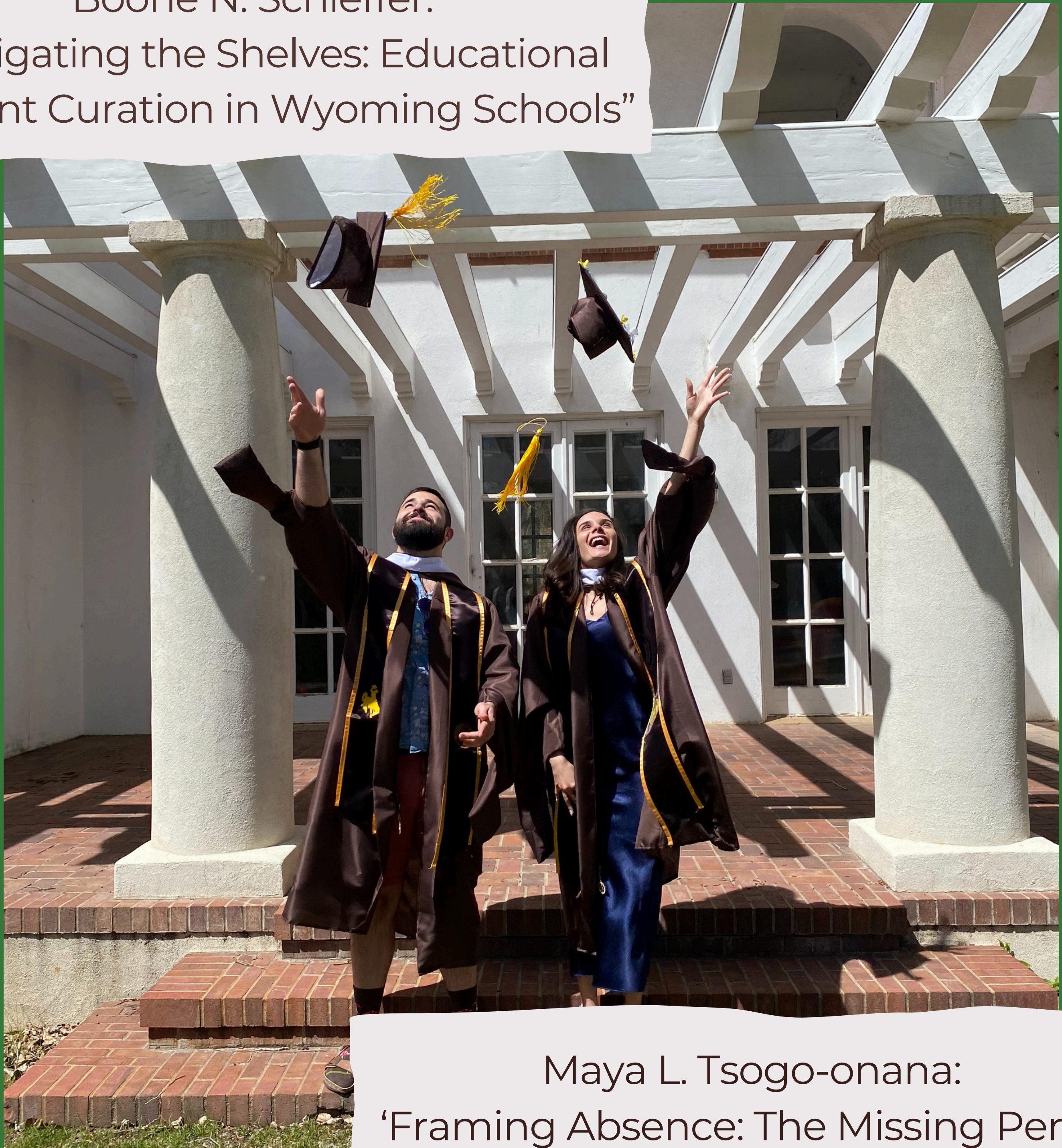




# Our Spring 2024 MA Graduates: Boone Schieffer & Maya Tsogo- onana!

Boone N. Schieffer:

“Navigating the Shelves: Educational  
Content Curation in Wyoming Schools”



Maya L. Tsogo-onana:

‘Framing Absence: The Missing Person  
Poster as an American Cultural Artifact’



# Commencement Day!



## happy graduation





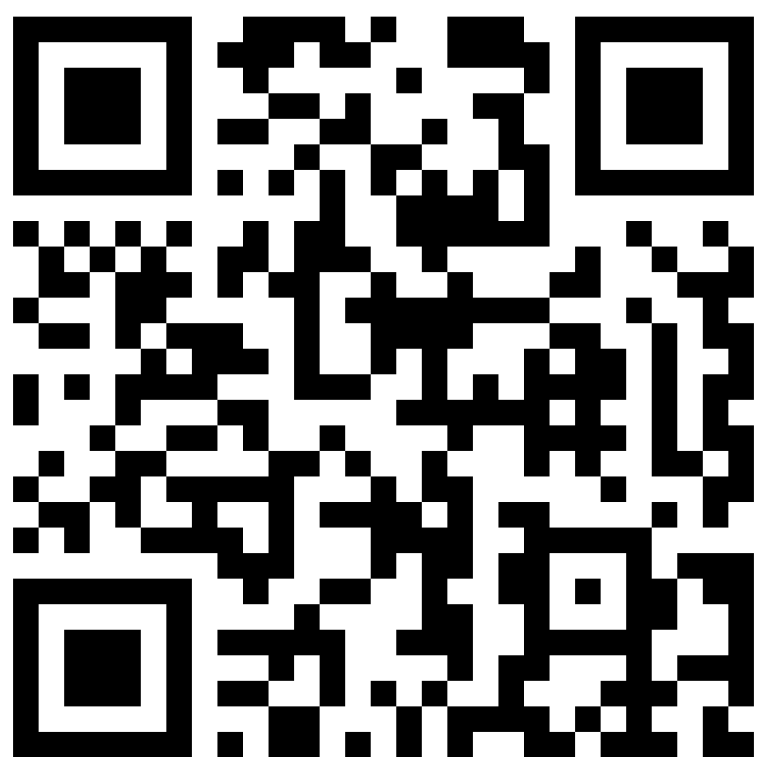
# Keep in touch!



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