

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BARD GRADUATE CENTER RECEIVES MAJOR GRANT FROM NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

New York, April 16, 2018— Bard Graduate Center is proud to announce that it has received National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) funding totaling \$291,000 to support the digitization of primary source materials relating to the Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl), a Pacific Northwest Coast Indigenous people, compiled by anthropologist Franz Boas and ethnologist George Hunt during the years 1886-1939.

The funding advances a 2014 NEH Scholarly Editions and Translations grant supporting the preparation of an annotated print edition of *The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* (1897). Produced by Boas collaboratively with his Indigenous collector and translator, Hunt, this monograph is considered the first systematic attempt to document all sociocultural, spiritual, and aesthetic aspects of an Indigenous North American ceremonial system. The current project has compiled unprecedented documentation of the total Boas-Hunt corpus, especially of the cultural relationships among ethnographic materials in different media (texts, photos, material culture, and sound recordings) now held by diverse institutions. Guided by the print version, to be published by the University of British Columbia Press, the larger project will ultimately culminate in a digital version of the annotated 1897 work—an interactive, open-access website synthesizing and providing structured access to the various media (bgc.bard.edu/research/projects-and-collaborations/projects/the-distributed.html).

Initiated in 2012 with an NEH Digital Humanities startup grant, the project is directed by Professor Aaron Glass of Bard Graduate Center, New York City, and Judith Berman of the University of Victoria, Canada.

“NEH funding,” said Glass, “has enabled the restoration and critical re-evaluation of a vital piece of work by two key figures of anthropological and Indigenous history. This new grant will support the production of a digital repository that can serve as a model for other dispersed collections and be of invaluable use to scholars, students, and others interested in the cultural history of Native North America.”

Bard Graduate Center Dean Peter N. Miller said, “Franz Boas’s seminal project stands at a crossroads of art history and anthropology. Understanding it as deeply as possible, which is what Aaron’s project is about, will help us understand better what opportunities still remain unexplored in the study of material culture—which is where Aaron’s work contributes to the furtherance of our larger institutional project.”

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About the NEH

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at: www.neh.gov.



About the BGC

Bard Graduate Center is devoted to the study of decorative arts, design history, and material culture through research, advanced degrees, exhibitions, publications, and public programs. Our community encourages creative investigation of objects, from the everyday to the esoteric. For more information about the Gallery, MA, and PhD degree programs, public programs, publications, and more, visit bgc.bard.edu.

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