HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY?
These days, we find ourselves navigating an uncharted terrain of complicated feelings. At the UC Berkeley Library, we channel our energy into a great purpose: to help our community find, evaluate, use, and create knowledge to better the world, now and into the future. This shared mission brings us together, sharpens our focus, and connects us to a community of students, scholars, and knowledge-seekers far and wide. But even the loftiest of missions can’t distract us from the kaleidoscope of emotions experienced during an unrelenting pandemic and during a time of grave global uncertainty.

Instead of pushing these feelings away, we decided to take a different tack. In this issue of Fiat Lux, we hope to capture and share some of the emotions that infuse our collections, inspire eye-opening research, and course through our hearts and minds in the face of continued challenges.

We hope that this exploration of emotions — from anguish to awe, sadness to serenity — will make you pause for an extra beat of reflection the next time someone asks you: “How are you feeling today?”
Walking among giant, centuries-old redwoods. Savoring the smoky sfumato of an original Leonardo. Giving birth to your first child. These experiences, and others like them, can be literally awe-inspiring, enough to slack your jaw and make the tiny hairs on the back of your neck stand stick-straight.

While that sense of awe might seem all too familiar, it turns out that the feeling is not as universal as you might think.

For her 2020 Library Prize-winning project, “Cultural Variations in the Appraisals of Awe,” Enna Chen ’20 examined the awe experiences of people from 26 countries around the world. Analyzing a multiplicity of narratives — and relying on help and resources from the UC Berkeley Library along the way — Chen casts light on the powerful tie between culture and emotion.
In her research, Chen found that people from individualistic cultures, like many in the Western world, were more likely than those from collectivistic cultures to attribute the awe they experienced to themselves. People from collectivistic cultures, on the other hand, tended to attribute their awe to other people, or situational influences — from a higher power to a complicated mathematical concept.

Chen’s project, which she started as a freshman at Berkeley, grew out of a genuine curiosity and a deep fascination with cultures and emotion, shaped by her experience as an international student over the years in Russia, Canada, the United Kingdom, South Korea, China, and the United States. “I constantly felt like an outsider when I was studying in all these different countries, and I tried so hard to assimilate,” says Chen, who graduated from Berkeley with a major in psychology and a minor in education. “Because of that, I am probably much more observant than someone who feels like they belong to the community. I’m really observant of people’s emotional experiences and how they evaluate the emotions they want or don’t want to feel.”

At the heart of Chen’s project is a massive dataset comprising 2,604 real-world awe experiences, which she worked with as a member of the Berkeley Social Interaction Laboratory. The narratives reflected upon everything from the national pride stirred by the Olympics to the feelings of a college graduate who became the first in their family to earn a degree.

To start the project, Chen enlisted a small army of volunteers — nearly 60 people from all over the world — who helped translate awe narratives from 21 non-English-speaking countries. Research assistants, who couldn’t see the demographics of the participants and were blind to Chen’s hypothesis, helped evaluate the appraised agency of these narratives — in other words, whether the respondents attributed the awe experience to themselves, the situation, or to others. The research assistants also evaluated the narratives along other dimensions, including arousal, dominance, powerfulness, commitment, and identity.

The main finding in Chen’s paper can be encapsulated by the varying appraisals of a common human experience: childbirth. In collectivistic cultures, a new parent might reflect on the experience by relishing the awe of their family becoming whole, or the depth of their devotion to the new baby. Someone from an individualistic culture, on the other hand, might focus on how great they will be as a parent, or the power inherent in creating life.

While working on her project, the Library, and librarians, proved invaluable. “It was difficult to find publications online to help me interpret my results,” Chen says. “I was struggling to find the perfect articles because, honestly, in my undergraduate curriculum, I was never taught how to use online libraries, which is so important for research.”

Margaret Phillips, Berkeley’s librarian for education, gender and women’s studies, and psychology, visited Chen’s honors seminar for a session introducing students to library research. Phillips also helped Chen narrow down the focus of her project and mine the
existing literature, including teaching her how to conduct detailed searches on PsycInfo, the massive database of psychology literature from around the world. But the literature Chen consulted for her project wasn’t confined to just psychology. Because a lot of early accounts and theories around awe come from other disciplines, Chen consulted papers in fields such as religious studies, history, and anthropology.

To support undergraduate research at Berkeley, contact the Library Development Office at 510-642-9377 or give@library.berkeley.edu.

“Enna’s project was complicated both conceptually and empirically,” says Professor Serena Chen, chair of the Psychology Department, who taught the honors seminar class Enna Chen was in and wrote a statement in support of the paper’s consideration for the Library Prize. “What was most exciting about Enna’s progress was the step-by-step, continual sharpening and improvement of her thinking and writing about her project.”

**Enna Chen is grateful for the inclusivity of the Charlene Conrad Liebau Library Prize for Undergraduate Research, honoring students who have demonstrated excellence in Library research. For international students, and students in the social sciences, opportunities for awards can be few and far between. So for Chen, the Library Prize, open to all Berkeley undergraduates, was a breath of fresh air.**

“As a Berkeley alumna, I am filled with awe by the curiosity and excitement for learning Enna demonstrates through her research,” says Charlene Conrad Liebau ’60, a Rosston Society member of the Library Board, whose endowment makes the Library Prize possible. “I am especially pleased the research prize recognizes her, along with other students, as they access the vast resources found in the University Library.”

For Chen, a quiet jaunt in nature or listening to the lush harmonies of a symphony orchestra can elicit a deep sense of awe. But when it comes to emotions, it’s important to be as inclusive and mindful as possible, Chen says, and don’t assume people are feeling the same way you would. “There are so many different ways people can feel even one single emotion,” she says.
STIRRING EMOTIONS

It goes without saying: The UC Berkeley Library is absolutely flush with information, tucked in vaults, databases, and rows and rows of towering stacks. But the Library is also bursting with emotion, layered into artworks, pulsing through manuscripts and diaries, and overflowing from video and audio recordings from years gone by. We asked four people — three librarians and one instructor — about materials in the Library’s collections and the emotions they can evoke. Each story proves that the Library, and the treasures it holds, can not only make us think, but also make us feel.

Main (Gardner) Stacks
Selected by Claude Potts, librarian for Romance language collections

You never quite know what you’ll find in Main Stacks. Descend the spiral stairs into the sprawling underground structure, and you’ll encounter a seemingly endless trove of knowledge — 2.6 million volumes’ worth, in fact. On the shelves, contemporary works sit alongside precious volumes from the 19th and early 20th centuries. “Even though I’ve worked here for nearly 15 years, I’m continually in awe when looking for a specific book and I become sidetracked by how the old and the new coexist,” says Claude Potts, Berkeley’s librarian for Romance language collections. Treasures include a custom-bound first edition of Tempeste, a collection of poems by the Italian feminist poet Ada Negri, published in 1896, and a first edition of playwright Luigi Pirandello’s Uno, Nessuno e Centomila (One, No One and One Hundred Thousand), from 1926. Potts says you can often spot the older volumes in Main Stacks by their telltale worn leather bindings and by the publication date inscribed as the last part of their call numbers. “Like shimmering stones in a creek bed, you never know if they’re worth picking up until you reach for one and hold it in your hands,” he says.

Ansei Fūbunshū (Collection of Ansei-Era Anecdotes) by Kanagaki Robun
Selected by Toshie Marra, librarian for the Japanese collection, C. V. Starr East Asian Library

For her pick, Toshie Marra, librarian for the Japanese collection at the C. V. Starr East Asian Library, points to Ansei Fūbunshū by 19th-century author and journalist Kanagaki Robun as a reminder of historical tragedies. By the mid-18th century, the population of Edo (modern Tokyo) had reached a million, and what was once a humble fishing village had become the largest city in the world. But even as it boomed, it was plagued by calamities, including fires and floods, earthquakes and epidemics. Robun’s three-volume, richly illustrated work recounts a devastating typhoon and flood that struck Edo in 1856, claiming 10,000 lives. “Nature sometimes does horrible things to people, without any reason,” Marra notes. “And, in front of nature, human beings seem so helpless.” The work is believed to be one of the very first Japanese books that came to be acquired by a U.S. library, in 1868. Before coming to Berkeley, the East Asian Library’s copy of Ansei Fūbunshū escaped a calamitous fate of its own: The work was previously owned by Dohi Keizō, a professor of medicine at Tokyo Imperial University (and a collector of rare books), who almost lost his entire library in a blaze ensuing from the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake. “When I think about how the materials survived and eventually came to our library from Japan, crossing the Pacific, I appreciate even more that we can use and learn from these precious books,” Marra says.
**Funabashi: The Floating Bridge by Kögyo Tsukioka**

*Selected by Eva Allan, lecturer, History of Art Department*

It was the houseguest that stayed longer than expected. Around October of 2019, Eva Allan, a lecturer in Berkeley’s History of Art Department, checked out a print from the Library’s Graphic Arts Loan Collection. Then the pandemic came, extending due dates and affording Allan more time with the artwork than she could have imagined. The piece, *Funabashi: The Floating Bridge* by Kögyo Tsukioka, depicts a scene from a traditional Noh play. As the story goes, a pair of star-crossed lovers are separated by a river. Their disapproving families remove part of the bridge connecting the two, and the man, trying to cross the bridge to reach his beloved, falls in and drowns. In the print, the woman stands next to a doorway or window, the spirit of her lover standing on the other side.

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**The Power of Imitative Music by N.C. Bochsa**

*Selected by Manuel Erviti, archivist and music reference librarian, Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library*

It’s a story of lost and found. In 2004, a musician from Oakland donated a large 19th-century manuscript score by an unnamed composer to Berkeley’s Jean Gray Hargrove Music Library. Shortly after it was brought in, John Roberts, former head of the Music Library, and Manuel Erviti, archivist and music reference librarian, tracked down the name of the work and the identity of the composer, using clues from the music, along with Library resources and clever Googling. The score was *The Power of Imitative Music* by the controversial French-born harp virtuoso and composer N.C. Bochsa. *The Power of Imitative Music* — an eight-movement composition for orchestra, chorus, and speaker, based on an ode by English poet William Collins — was thought to have been lost after performances in London, Vienna, Naples, and Zurich. “In performance,” Erviti says, “a speaker recited selected lines in which the poet described the musical characteristics of what today we might call an emotion, and an instrumental movement followed depicting the impulse in musical tones — Fear, Anger, Despair, Hope, Revenge, and Melancholy, followed by a closing chorus in praise of music.” The piece, composed in 1836, likely hasn’t been performed since the 1840s, Erviti says, and has never been published. But Erviti aims to change that: He has been researching the work’s performance history and reception, and he hopes to prepare a modern edition for publication.

Over time, as the print adorned Allan’s dining room wall, the characters in the piece grew into a reminder of those who lost their loved ones during the pandemic, “separated by glass or screens, wearing masks or otherworldly ventilators and oxygen tubes, barred and blockaded from corporal human touch,” as Allan later wrote in reflection.
Today, it’s partly sunny with a chance of showers.

No, that’s not the actual weather forecast. It’s a metaphor Shannon Kealey is summoning in a Zoom interview to describe how she’s feeling at the moment.

Struck by the twin specters of the pandemic and the wave of anti-Black and anti-Asian violence, Kealey, then the head of the UC Berkeley Library’s Life & Health Sciences Division, sought to deepen her team’s understanding of how trauma can unfold in libraries. So last year, Kealey signed the group up for a workshop to provide a shared experience and a shared language, preparing the team for the inevitable challenges that would arise.

“I think our base assumption when approaching this course was: We’ve all probably been traumatized to one degree or another (because of the pandemic),” Kealey says. “And understanding that that is different for everybody is actually part of that baseline empathy.”

We caught up with Kealey, who recently left the Library to focus on her performing arts career, for a conversation about the workshop series, prioritizing mental health, and coping during the pandemic.

Can you tell me about the Trauma Informed Librarianship workshop series you and your division attended?

After all the racial violence came to a head in 2020, I started being very vocal with my team about dismantling white supremacy. I was looking for a workshop series that was open to anyone and would serve as a shared foundation of empathy and understanding. (The four-part workshop series, originally offered through the We Here Community School, was developed and led by Nisha Mody, a former UCLA health sciences librarian.)

If nothing else comes of this pandemic, it’s pretty amazing that we are talking more about how we’re feeling. We’re normalizing the discussion about emotions. And we’re also normalizing the understanding that the physical effects of our emotional state are real. Mental health is being understood as a priority and something that is not a given. It’s still quite taboo to talk about it in the workplace. But I think it’s important to normalize the fact that taking care of one’s mental health should be the same thing as going to the dentist to take care of your dental health.

Do you have any mantras, words of wisdom, or thoughts that you turn to during challenging times like these?

I want to remind myself to be gentle with myself first. Because it’s really hard to be gentle and empathetic with other people if you’re not being gentle and empathetic to yourself.

“This Q&A was edited for brevity and clarity.”
‘I loved the stacks, and walking down the center aisle of the main reading room never failed to fill me with awe.’
— Miriam D. Starc ’83, J.D. ’86

SOLACE IN THE STACKS

Feeling stressed? A walk in our libraries could lighten the load. The health benefits of meditation and mindfulness have been well-known for generations. Breathing deeply, emptying your mind, walking in the woods — these are known comforts. But what about taking a spin through some library stacks? Participants in a 2016 academic study reported feeling more relaxed and less agitated after walking a labyrinth pattern in a university library. Their blood pressure and heart rates lowered, too. So if you’re feeling overwhelmed, perhaps a stroll through our stacks, or images of the same, could offer some relief.
‘THIS IS WHY I HAVE SO MUCH HOPE’

Scholar-author-artist Alberto Ledesma on art, life, and his advice for undocumented students

STORY BY TOR HAUGAN

The distance from East Oakland to UC Berkeley is short — about 10 miles, depending on where you start.

But after listening to just a snippet of Alberto Ledesma’s emotional journey, that distance sounds like it could more accurately be measured in light-years.

Born in Jalisco, Mexico, Ledesma was brought to Oakland as an undocumented immigrant in the mid-‘70s, when he was 8 years old. Growing up, Ledesma remembers the ever-present threat of deportation casting a shadow over his family.

But Ledesma turned that long-buried family secret into a source of inspiration. Poignantly rendered in words and his own drawings, 2017’s Diary of a Reluctant Dreamer: Undocumented Vignettes from a Pre-American Life is “an amalgamation of personal essays, autoethnographic illustrations, existential confessions, nervous predictions about our nation’s future, and insecure love letters” to his family, as Ledesma describes it. (Ledesma and his family have since become U.S. citizens.)

Earlier this year at the virtual Luncheon in the Library, an annual event for Library supporters, Ledesma walked 150-plus attendees through his journey from 82nd Avenue in East Oakland to the hallowed halls of UC Berkeley, where he received his undergraduate and graduate degrees — and where he now serves as assistant dean for diversity, inclusion, and equity in UC Berkeley’s Division of Arts & Humanities.

Here are three things we learned from Ledesma’s talk.

1. Sometimes words are not enough.

Years ago, as anti-immigrant sentiments flared, Ledesma was eager to share his story. But when trying to write about his experience as an undocumented immigrant, he couldn’t find the words.

“In many ways, cartooning has allowed me to communicate these existential fears much more effectively than my writing ever could,” he said.

Janet Wilson Greig ’66 was among those attending the talk, which she called “superb.”

“I loved Alberto Ledesma’s description of how important his cartooning was to his ability to tell his story,” Greig said.

2. He was inspired by Berkeley students.

The idea for the title of Ledesma’s book
Emotional connections can be forged in the unlikeliest of places. During a recent chat reference shift, librarian Ann Glusker got an urgent question from the parent of a UC Berkeley alum, who was experiencing a family emergency. Glusker quickly leapt into action, connecting the dots and providing information to help bring a resolution, and relief. “You are an Angel!” the parent wrote in a follow-up message — a rarity in Glusker’s experience. “Librarians Rule!” Each day, UC Berkeley librarians share their expertise, wisdom, and compassion with patrons on campus — and far beyond.

Shruti Mukhtyar shared this sweet tweet on social media:

One of my favorite things about working at @BerkeleyGIF @UCBerkeley is knowing that anything I want to read I’ll probably find it at @UCBerkeleyLib

This is my favorite find to date. A copy of my grandfather’s masters thesis published almost 90 years ago!

— @mapchitra via Twitter

3. His advice: Lean into fear.
Ledesma remembers his family being “seemingly locked up” in their rental home in East Oakland out of fear of being discovered as undocumented. At Fremont High School in Oakland, he attempted to evade detection by blending in with the American-born Latinx kids.

Fear is an inexorable part of the undocumented experience, Ledesma said. His advice?

“Lean into that anxiety,” he said. “Feel the fear, but do it anyway. Think about the more aspirational side of that hope and aspiration, and lean in towards that.”

In his nationwide travels for his work, Ledesma has witnessed a wave of undocumented scholars overcoming their fears to enter universities, earn their advanced degrees, and get hired at institutions of higher learning across the country.

“This is why I have so much hope,” Ledesma said. “In spite of all these fears, that spirit that once inspired my parents, their parents, to seek a better life — that spirit is still alive and thriving.”

The Luncheon in the Library is a private, invite-only event honoring Library supporters. Past speakers include Carol Christ, Chancellor of UC Berkeley; Adam Hochschild, lecturer, historian, and journalist; and Rita Moreno, dancer, singer, and actress. To learn more, contact the Library Development Office at 510-642-9377 or give@library.berkeley.edu.

ZOOM

GOLDEN BEAR HUGS

‘SHE WAS THERE GIVING ME HELP WHEN I FELT TOTALLY HELPLESS.’
— Parent of a UC Berkeley alum

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If a jaunt outdoors feels like a salve for your sunken spirits, you’re not alone.

Studies have shown the power of nature to reduce stress, boost creativity, and increase happiness.

And while the UC Berkeley Library isn’t studded with redwoods, bubbling with streams, or teeming with wildlife, it is packed with portals into nature. Among the most stirring examples are The Bancroft Library’s mammoth plate photographs (measuring 18 inches by 22 inches) of Yosemite Valley by Carleton Watkins.

Watkins first photographed Yosemite in 1861, and the resulting photos offered Americans on the East Coast their first glimpse of the area’s pristine beauty, according to Lee Anne Titangos, instruction and information specialist at Bancroft. The images were passed along to Congress, and they were said to have helped influence President Abraham Lincoln to sign the Yosemite Grant Act in 1864, preserving the area and sowing the seeds for the national park system. The prints are delicate, and their large size makes them hard to handle carefully, so access is restricted. But through digitized versions online, anyone can behold the photographs’ beauty.

“When I get the chance to see the originals, I’m just struck with absolute wonder and awe,” says Titangos, citing the “splendor of unspoiled nature, the amount of detail captured, the intricate shadows across the rock faces.”

Oversized photographs of Yosemite Valley by Carleton Watkins are among the many gems in Bancroft’s collections.
2021 CHARLENE CONRAD LIEBAU LIBRARY PRIZE FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

TAKING ON SOCIETY’S THORNIEST ISSUES

Every year, a handful of Berkeley students are awarded the Charlene Conrad Liebau Library Prize for Undergraduate Research for their impressively deep dives that rely on the Library. Each project reaffirms the Library as an engine for research that challenges prevailing narratives and provides a fuller perspective on contemporary problems.

Jenny Lai Chinnapha
Lower Division winner

Saffanat Sumra
Lower Division winner
The gut-wrenching choices medical teams around the world have been forced to make during the COVID-19 pandemic can have an impact on the mental health of medical professionals. In her research project, “Narrative Medicine as an Outlet of Expression for Healthcare Workers Experiencing Moral Injury,” Saffanat Sumra analyzed dozens of narrative medicine essays to uncover themes of grief, depression, and trauma.

Janie Chen
Upper Division winner
For her senior honors thesis, “‘Know History, Know Self’: Coming Home for Formerly Incarcerated Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders,” Janie Chen dove into database research and the personal accounts of 20 people leaving prison and reentering society. Chen uncovered a need for changes in reentry services and for adjustments to be made to address cultural differences among the diverse groups considered AAPI.

Lindsey Chung
Upper Division winner
For “Accessing Gender Affirming Care from the Margins: Comparing the Strategies of Transgender People Pre-1980 and Non-Binary People Today,” Lindsey Chung conducted 18 interviews with nonbinary people and compared their experiences with historical accounts of transgender people. Their project highlights the trans community’s determination to access quality medical care in the face of continued discrimination.

Tara Madhav
Upper Division winner
In 1968, Ravenswood High School in East Palo Alto was labeled “inferior” by district officials because it was not yet desegregated. But many community members considered desegregation disruptive. In her project, “Community Control and Desegregation at Ravenswood High School in East Palo Alto, California, 1958-1976,” Tara Madhav centers the perspectives of Black students and community leaders to reframe the school’s history.

Duncan Wanless
Upper Division winner
Duncan Wanless spent almost two years researching the Mexican town of Yanga, which was founded in the 16th century by an African-born runaway slave. His project, “Becoming ‘the First Free Town in the Americas’: Claiming and Celebrating Blackness in Yanga, Veracruz,” explores how the town has embraced its African past, bucking the tendency of Mexican municipalities to erase and suppress Blackness in their culture and histories.

HONORABLE MENTION Jackie Forsyte, Upper Division “Gender, Race, the Frontier, and the Civic Body: Los Angeles in the 1890s, La Fiesta de Los Angeles of 1894 and the Anti-Masquerading”
To support the campaign, contact the Library Development Office at 510-642-9377 or give@library.berkeley.edu.

**A WINDOW INTO THE WEST**

Western Americana materials, including those on display in a 2017 exhibit, above, make up Bancroft’s most heavily used collection. The Bancroft & the West campaign has garnered support for acquiring, processing, and cataloging materials that illuminate the West.

There’s no place like the West.

And now, The Bancroft Library is opening the window into the history of this exceptional region even wider, thanks to the success of its landmark Bancroft & the West campaign. Funds raised through the campaign will help the library continue to expand and share its dazzling array of Western Americana materials.

The initiative publicly launched in 2018, with two gifts comprising $4 million of the $8 million campaign. So far, the UC Berkeley Library has raised $9.2 million, and now aims to reach $10 million.

“Thanks to a successful fundraising campaign, Bancroft has funded this collection in the manner it merits and will be able to maintain and grow the collection that elucidates the people, communities, and movements whose stories are forever entwined with the history of this remarkable region,” says Camilla Smith, a member of the Council of Friends of The Bancroft Library and co-chair, with David Lei, of the Bancroft & the West campaign.

The capstone of the campaign is the creation of the Elaine C. Tennant Endowment for The Bancroft Library’s Western Americana Collections, honoring the distinguished service of Bancroft’s recently retired director.
EXHIBIT SHINES LIGHT ON PAINFUL CHAPTER IN HISTORY

A cursory glance at the photograph shows families gathered on a train platform, suitcases stacked around them, as though anticipating a trip. A closer examination reveals more — anxious expressions on the faces of those who aren’t sure what the future holds.

The photo is one of the many remarkable items spotlighted in The Bancroft Library’s latest exhibit, *Uprooted: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans*, which tells the traumatic story of the forced removal of Japanese Americans from their homes on the West Coast during World War II. The exhibit captures with revelatory precision this tragic moment in American history by juxtaposing official government directives — executive orders, mandatory forms, official photographs — with the response of Japanese Americans through their drawings, diaries, letters, and reminiscences.

“When we view items made by those incarcerated, we get a glimpse into their lives,” says Julie Musson, Bancroft’s digital collections archivist, “seeing the creativity that persisted — and even blossomed from behind the barbed wire.”

The exhibit marks the 80th anniversary of Executive Order 9066 (Feb. 19, 1942), which mandated the forced removal and incarcerations.

“I am honestly surprised by how many people I’ve talked to who had no idea that this mass incarceration took place during WWII,” says Christine Hult-Lewis, Bancroft’s interim pictorial curator. “It makes our decision to mount this exhibition that much more important.”

*The Uprooted exhibit is open most weekdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through June at The Bancroft Library.*

DOROTHEA LANGE, THE BANCROFT LIBRARY’S WAR RELOCATION AUTHORITY COLLECTION, WRA NO. C-492