Exhibition of Collections of Nothing

Seeking two interns—two units each.

I am looking for assistance in creating an exhibit in the front lobby of the UCSB Davidson Library, to be drawn from my extensive “collections of nothing.” In 2008 I published a book with that title, part essay and part memoir, concerning my lifelong habit of collecting things so individually insignificant, so lacking in value, as to be an equivalent to nothing. And yet, when the practice of collecting—driven by habit, passion, obsession—goes to the limit, the “nothing” gains mass (tons) and, I think, meaning. By way of collecting we think through the world.

On April 2, 2020, I will be giving a talk at the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center in the Critical Mass series about my collecting. On the same panel will be Rebecca Falkoff, who works in Discard Studies (essentially the study of trash). That same evening the IHC will present a staged reading of my play Collections of Nothing More or Less, which is part adaptation and part sequel of my book.

In conjunction with the event, the UCSB Library will create a pop-up exhibit, probably of two weeks duration, which should connect with the IHC event. What I would like is to draw on the creativity of two Museum Studies students to conceive and craft that exhibition. It should capture something of the weirdness and wonder of the irrational yet vital practice of collecting. Let me add that I am looking for curators who have a sense of humor and can see the fun of this opportunity, as well as its deeper significance.

My name is William Davies King, and I am a long-time professor in Theater and Dance at UCSB, and this is my department webpage. Here is a link to my book, Collections of Nothing. You can also find it for free on various sites. Here is a link to my personal webpage, which also shows some of my artistic work in a form related to collecting.

Please contact me directly at king@theaterdance.ucsb.edu.

If you have questions, you can also talk to Dr. Carole Paul, Director of Museum Studies, about this opportunity.