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Metadata and Liaison Librarian Collaboration: Using Outreach and Metadata to Enhance Access to a Local Art Collection

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Metadata and Liaison Librarian Collaboration: Using Outreach and Metadata to Enhance Access to a Local Art Collection

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Why Art in the Library?
- The collection is both a physical and digital collection that showcases artists’ work.
- The site promotes open access.
- Art exhibits serve as learning prompts.
- Art is important to the aesthetics in the building.

Funding and Acquisition
- The Art in the Library project received ongoing annual funding allocated by the library dean.
- Student Artwork: 1-3 pieces are purchased yearly from the juried show.
- Commissions: Funds were provided via the library dean’s office for multiple commissions.
- Art Invitational: Funds were provided via the library dean’s office, which resulted in multiple purchases and a reception for participating local professional artists.
- New Construction Art Fund: This fund made the commission for James Surls’ Rolling Flower possible.
- Donations: Individuals donated 6 pieces to the collection.

Project Timeline
- 2003: University of Wyoming Libraries begins purchasing artwork by student artists at the annual juried show. The arts liaison librarian.
- 2003-2013: The arts liaison librarian maintains an online presence of physical art on a WordPress site.
- 2011-2012: An art invitational is hosted with works by local professional artists. A reception for participating artists featured one of the artists as keynote speaker.
- 2013: The art in the library site is migrated from WordPress to Islandora for increased functionality and additional display features.
- 2015: The arts liaison and metadata librarian interviewed artists and enhanced descriptive metadata for the digital art collection.
- 2015: The metadata librarian enhances system generated descriptive metadata for the images and includes artists’ interviews with the record. Images are linked in the OPAC and a regional consortium catalog.

Workflow and Descriptive Metadata
- Artists are contacted and, if possible, interviewed about their work. If appropriate, interviews are conducted with the subject of the work.
- High resolution images are uploaded into Islandora.
- Currently, the process for creating descriptive metadata is twofold. Records are created in Islandora using an inter-departmentally developed form, and original WARC records are created in OCLC’s Connexion that point to the object’s permanent link. This allows for greater discoverability through both digital collections and the library’s catalog.
- Artwork is discoverable via the Prospector union catalog, which includes over 40 libraries from Colorado and Wyoming.

Challenges and Successes
- Challenges:
  - Tracking number of views
  - Assessing the impact of the art collection on the physical space and student learning
  - Occasional instability of Islandora and system wide changes
  - Coordination of metadata efforts across departments and platforms
- Successes:
  - Highly visible and discoverable
  - Ties to campus and local community
  - Temporary exhibits are permanently documented
  - Collaborating across departments made the project stronger

Next Steps
- Add descriptive metadata for all artwork
- Continue artist interviews and provide audio with digital art images
- Collaborate with faculty to incorporate art into visual literacy and critical thinking assignments
- Continue to build a parallel digital art collection of images containing all student artwork accepted into the annual juried student art show

Artist Interviews
- Interviews were conducted via social media, email, or face-to-face.
- Questions we asked:
  - Explanation of process and technique
  - Inspiration or intent behind the piece
  - Content of piece
- Interviews preserve information about the artists for future generations.

Workflow Diagram

Artist Interview Workflow

Interviews
- Conducted via social media, email, or face-to-face.
- Questions asked:
  - Process and technique
  - Inspiration or intent behind the piece
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Artists
- Contacted and interviewed about their work.
- If possible, interviews conducted with subject of the work.

High Resolution Images
- Uploaded into Islandora.

Reflecting on the Project
- The project has enhanced access to a local art collection through digital means.
- Collaboration with faculty and artists has been beneficial.
- Challenges have been addressed through system-wide changes and coordination across departments.
- The project has received recognition and acclaim.

The Word Gay by Katie Giroux

Light Technician by Rebekah Merlino

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