



35 th Annual Conference
Sheraton Colony Square, Atlanta, Georgia, April 26 – May 1

Artist Files Working Group Meeting

ARLIS/NA Conference, Atlanta, GA

Saturday April 28, 2007

Welcome & Introductions:

Jon Evans, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, welcomed approximately 35 ARLIS/NA members to the meeting. He noted that the goal of this working group is to provide better access to artist files housed at various institutions. Attendees were encouraged to add their names to a list for inclusion on the group's listserv for future updates and discussion.

Update of Progress since 2006 Meeting in Banff:

Mr. Evans distributed three documents that have been finalized during the past year.

The first document, the *Statement of Purpose*, summarizes the value of artist files, recognizing that most collections have limited visibility. The statement is intended to be very broad in definition.

The second document, *The Online Directory* explains that the directory will act as a centralized tool to promote collections of artist files. The directory will not be a means to locate individual artist files, rather a place for institutions to create a profile for their collection. The idea is to provide an overview of the collection and create a link to the institution from the directory profile. In response to a question, Mr. Evans stated that the directory will not replace the necessity for OCLC bibliographic records in any way.

The third document, *Project Definition, Scope and Material Types That Commonly Constitute Artists Files*, gives the definition of what an artist file is for this project. It states: "*Collections of small or ephemeral documents relating to the visual arts that are collected and arranged for the purposes of research. Or otherwise stated, materials that are not normally cataloged or would potentially end up in the garbage.*" The scope of artist files ranges from individuals to non-profit institutions to for-profit institutions. The material itself may be comprised of announcements, artist catalogs, artists' statements, brochures, checklists, clippings, mail art, press releases, scripts, slides, etc.

Template for MARC Records:

Andrea Goldstein, Temple University, worked extensively with Mr. Evans on establishing a MARC record proposal that could be used as a template for those institutions looking to create or enhance existing bibliographic records representing artist files. In addition to this, a proposed MARC record for collection level cataloging will be worked on by Pam Eyerdam (Cleveland Public Library) and Linda McKee

(Ringling Museum). A finding aid could be attached in the 856 field (either to a pdf document or an Encoded Archival Document).

Deborah Kempe, Frick Art Reference Library, suggested that the group attempt to establish "artist files" as an authorized AAT term.

Update on Directory Software & Structure:

Sally McKay, Getty Research Institute, and Barbara Rominski, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, provided a report concerning the directory software. Ms. Rominski stated that the online directory will provide a profile for each artist file collection. A glossary of input terms will be created to provide consistency for terminology.

A special project funding proposal was submitted to the Society last year for support of the directory software, *FileMaker Pro8*. Unfortunately, this was not approved. The Board determined that it did not want to establish a precedent for funding specific software.

Since the software funding was denied, Ms. McKay and Ms. Rominski have proposed the use of wiki software as a more appropriate approach for the project. A wiki will allow contributors to add, remove, edit and change content easily. Further, it will be dynamic and provide web linking. Security devices can be installed to safeguard the integrity of information. *MediaWiki* was proposed as the potential software. Issues relating to hosting and maintenance were raised, although no clear answers were immediately present. Ms. McKay and Ms. Rominski are prepared to create a beta directory using a wiki.

Terrie Wilson, Michigan State University, Alba Fernandez-Keys, Indianapolis Museum of Art, and Barbara Rominski each recommitted to promoting the directory when that phase is reached.

Connecting with Other Similar Projects:

There was significant discussion about involving Canadian and European institutions in the directory. It was made clear that this site and directory are intended for international contributors and users.

Goals for the Coming Year:

Mr. Evans recommended that the beta wiki website be created. If successful, perhaps it can be presented at the 2008 ARLIS/NA Conference in Denver. Several members volunteered to work on the proposed 2008 presentation.

Greta Earnest, Fashion Institute of Technology, and Linda Seckelson, Metropolitan Museum of Art, offered to propose a session related to artist files for the forthcoming ARLIS/NA conference in Denver.

Pamela J. Eyerdam, Recorder