



**37<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
**Indianapolis, Indiana, April 16-21, 2009**

**Session/Meeting Name: Artists Files Special Interest Group**  
**Date, Time: April 18, 2009, 5:30-6:30pm**

**Moderators: Jon Evans**  
**Recorder: Pam Eyerdam**

Jon Evans

- Greeted everyone, announced that the Committee will be soliciting feedback pertaining to the demonstration (of the Artists Files wiki) and its documentation.
- Introduction to Barbara Rominski and Sally McKay, Directory Coordinators who have been developing the wiki Directory. The idea to create some kind of artists files database began in 2004, since then the committee has been meeting annually at ARLIS/NA conferences.
- The wiki Directory and documentation is meant to be utilized on an international level.
- There was mention to attend the Monday April 20<sup>th</sup> (10:15 am) session *Where Libraries and Archives Converge: Artists Files*. The session will reveal why artists' files are maintained and its importance to facilitate research.
- Acknowledgement to Greta Earnst (Fashion Institute of Technology NY), Beth Hylan (Corning Museum of Glass), and Francine Snyder (Guggenheim) for their contributions in coordinating sessions devoted to artist files at the year's conference.
- The committee has developed the document **Artists Files Revealed: Documentation & Access** that is posted on the ARLIS/ NA web site <http://www.arlisna.org/pubs/onlinepubs/index.html> under the category of *All Online Publications*. It includes "best practices" and recommendations to create a MARC record for an artist entry. Also includes a *Statement of Purpose and Project Parameters*. It would be useful to eventually create a Table of Contents for the documentation, as well as a list of contributors has been produced, which will make their way to the online version as well. It was noted that the documentation recommendations of how to establish, manage, and maintain an artist files is still lacking. At this point, the Committee is looking for participants to develop this aspect of the documentation.
- There was an attempt to request that the AAT (Getty's Art & Architecture Thesaurus) consider establishing the term "Artist File" but currently not successful due to the inconsistent term used in the literature.
- Institutions and individuals have notified the Committee that the **Artists Files Revealed: Documentation & Access** documentation has been helpful.

Francine Snyder (Guggenheim)

- There was mention to attend the Monday April 20<sup>th</sup> (10:15 am) session *Where Libraries and Archives Converge: Artists Files*. The session will reveal why artists' files are maintained and its importance to facilitate research.

Kraig Binkowski:

- Mr. Binkowski addressed the marketing plans for the wiki Directory project.
- A press release will be prepared and initially announced on the ARLIS-L listserv

- The announcement will also be posted on the ARLIS/NA website
- The next issue of Art Documentation will have an half-page advertisement
- Press releases will be sent to affiliated associations such as VRA, SAA, etc.
- The announcement will also be sent to relevant publications
- Mr. Binkowski would also appreciate any other avenues that the group can suggest that would be interested
- It was recommended that the wiki Directory can be highly promoted on the ARLIS Chapter level

#### Barbara Rominski (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) & Sally McKay (Getty)

- Ms. Rominski & Ms. McKay began to demonstrate the Artists Files wiki Directory.
- The site solicited a core group of 8 libraries for the beta demonstration (St. Louis Public Library, Fashion Institute of Technology in NY, the Getty, Michigan State University, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Cleveland Public Library, Yale Center for British Art)
- Plans for creating a database evolved from proprietary software. An attempt to use MediaWiki (used by Wikipedia) had its limitations. The product would only read one form at a time whereas something more interactive would be more helpful.
- A colleague suggested using TikiWiki which was open source and easier to manage. At first, it did not do any type of Boolean searching and so created an advanced type of search function. Acknowledgement went to Allan, a database consultant from the Getty who gave *pro bono* assistance to develop the wiki.
- To enter data for an institutions profile, one would log in as an ADMINISTRATOR. On the far right hand side of the HOME page screen is a LOGIN with USER name & password to enter.
- A GLOSSARY is available to assist in filling out the profile. The question was called about including the full definition in the online document (which would make the form longer). It was recommended not to worry about it at this time; the software may eventually develop some kind of roll-over access or a hot link (in the meantime, just print out a hard copy for reference) or open the document as a PDF which launches in a separate window.
- There will be several items that need to be cleaned up on the wiki (creating a "Contact Us", moving the location of some items (Submission button, LOGIN button, move Search Box button)
- An FAQ link is available
- There will be an attempt to use language that is more intuitive as the software is developed (example: the word "Tracker" at this time refers to the name of the Institution).
- The wiki Directory is searchable by the NAME of the ARTIST if the Administrator enters such names. The idea is to give a PROFILE about the Institution's files, not necessarily a name by name listing of each artist (but possible).
- A blog could be created for researchers and for feedback on the wiki Directory.
- There was a suggestion to add to the form a category for REGIONAL strengths (something like the LANGUAGE field box).

#### Jon Evans

- Introduced the next phase of examination by the Committee which would be aspects of digitization
- Institutions would highlight their unique collections
- Issues to examine: Copyright; Technical issues; Collaborations; Funding
- Mr. Günter Waibel informed the group that Decapod, a Mellon funded project for easy scanning of documents may be a possibility.

Barbara Rominski

- Proposed that an item be digitally scanned to see if there is an overlap, then prioritize (perhaps select five artists and assess)
- Scanning procedures can then be refined
- Francine Snyder suggested that scanning can be done at low resolution to abide with "fair use" and to possibly consider scanning only the title page
- Kraig Binkowski recommended that a template be created and use a small group of institutions to test scanning an artist file to secure funding

Jon Evans

- Commented about "born digital" items (such as gallery invites, online auction catalogs, and other examples of ephemera) and how these items are being archived. Perhaps a group of volunteers can begin to investigate "born digital" material (Francine Snyder volunteered to work on this with Linda Psomas from CA). Mr. Waibel volunteered to investigate the Decapod Project.