

## **Minutes to the ARLIS/NA 2017 Artist Files SIG Meeting**

Tuesday, February 7, 2017, 10:00-11:00am

Newberry Room, Hilton New Orleans Riverside, Two Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70130

*Moderator: Samantha Deutch*

*Additional 22 members attending: Anne Evenhaugen, Abby Bridge, Karen Lightner, Jenny Stone, Faith Pleasanton, Sally McKay, Christine Edmunson, Sachi Kawaiasa, Jessica Shaykett, Julian Suarez, Ivy Blackman, Alexandra Reigle, Jacqueline Protka, Erin Barsan, Emily Dunne, Sam Duncan, Tony White, Marie-Chantal L'Ecuyer Coelho, Lily Pregill, Sumitra Duncan, John Hagood, Alicia Josan*

*The meeting proceeded according to the agenda previously circulated by co-moderators Samantha Deutch and Anne Simmons.*

### **I. Introductions**

Deutch called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Minutes from 2016 were made available. Introductions were given by those in attendance. It was noted that the 2016 annual report can be found at [https://arlisna.org/images/annualreports/2016/sig\\_af.pdf](https://arlisna.org/images/annualreports/2016/sig_af.pdf)

### **II. 2016 publications**

Deutch noted the following papers related to artist files were published in 2016:

1. Samantha Deutch (Frick) and Sally McKay (Getty) published the paper presented at CAA on a panel called *Documenting artists: creating, collecting, and preserving ephemeral material*. The paper is titled "The Future of Artist Files: Here Today Gone Tomorrow" and can be found in the Spring 2016 issue of *Art Documentation*. The paper provides an overview of the activities of the Artist Files SIG, the Artist Files Online Directory, and the pilot-project currently being conducted with the Internet Archive's Archive-It service by four members of the Artist Files SIG who are Deutch (Frick), McKay (Getty), Anne Simmons (National Gallery of Art (NGA)), and Heather Slania (National Museum of Women in the Arts).
2. Anne Simmons (NGA) published "Viewpoint: FOMO Case Studies: Loss, Discovery and Inspiration among Relics" in *Art Libraries Journal* 41, no. 2 (2016).

### **III. Directory and website migration**

Sally McKay (Getty) noted that the Artist Files SIG must migrate the Artist Files Online Directory from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party hosted, fee-based website to a system that works with the SIG's existing ARLIS/NA WordPress site. The existing Directory is on Tiki Wiki, an open-source program that requires a hosting fee. It was suggested that the form which feeds the existing database could be altered (fewer fields?) or moved to different platform (Google form?) as part of the migration. The data currently exists in a CSV file and can be acquired from McKay, who currently oversees the site. Jackie Protka (Smithsonian) and Sam Duncan (Amon Carter) volunteered to work on the migration of the directory.

### **IV. Call for new moderators**

Deutch called for volunteers to replace her and Anne Simmons as co-moderators of the Artist Files SIG. Alexandra Reigle (Smithsonian), Jackie Protka (Smithsonian) and Sam Duncan (Amon Carter) all volunteered to serve in a leadership capacity over the next two years.

## **V. Round robin from attendees for ideas and other projects**

Deutch opened the floor to attendees to discuss projects or ask questions of the group. She started by reading an update sent in by Marilyn Carbonell (Nelson-Atkins), stating that the Spencer Art Reference Library's partnership with local and regional artists to build artist records has resulted in 100 files to date. Also in the works is an index for the archives, a table of contents for files from the 1980s-early 2000s and a Wiki edit-a-thon to document African American artists.

Anne Evenhaugen (Smithsonian AA/PG) noted a recent gift to her collection of ephemeral material from the Art Students League of New York.

Abby Bridge (SFMOMA) noted that she has 15,000 artist files and is looking to do more authority work and move databases spreadsheet records to Marc. She asked the group for resources detailing the criteria for use and collecting of artist files. Her question – How to be more strategic in the scope of collecting files?

Deutch suggested conducting an updated survey of Artist Files SIG members to answer the question of how professionals are managing their collections. Abby Bridge (SFMOMA) volunteered to help with this, but would like to see the survey conducted by a larger committee from within the Artist Files SIG.

A number of attendees mentioned Caroline Dechert's (Museum of Intl Folk Art) talk during the 2017 ARLIS/NA conference session "Engaging Library Users in Collection Development" (Monday, February 6 from 8:30-10:00am) on collaborative collection development. Dechert's model of using curators from the museum to supply artist names for collecting, as well as volunteers to source information, could be a resource for Artist File SIG members.

Karen Lightner (Free Lib. of Phil) noted that she has 10-12 cabinets of artist files, including many local files, managed with an Excel list and is looking to weed the collection. Lightner also noted that she had recently installed a display for Black History Month created from artist file materials. This begged the question – what are people doing with paper files?

Sachi Kawaiaea (Honolulu Museum of Art) stated that she is focused on local artists, but noted the challenge of identifying "local" in a global society. One example: Georgia O'Keefe worked in Hawaii and the museum has letters from her time there, but O'Keefe is not really a "local" artist.

At the Guggenheim artist files have been transferred from the archive to the library because of renewed interest; the files had been collected up to the 1990s then stopped and the staff are now collecting again; to date the artist files are still on the archives finding aid.

Ideas shared by a number of those present for promoting collections included the following: create exhibits; write blog post; email internal staff to highlight obscure, local artists; catalog at folder level and submit to OCLC

The question was asked as to how many libraries have loaded to OCLC? And what is the best method to do this? Deutch suggested referencing Francine Snyder's survey from 2010 (<http://artistfiles.arlisna.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/AFWG-survey-report-2010-4.pdf>)

Two additional questions posed by multiple group members:

1. Is anyone tracking how files are being used?

It was suggested that perhaps the Arcade (?) statistics being captured at the Smithsonian could be useful.

2. What are some internal mechanisms for sharing files?

Quick + dirty scans - keep or toss?

Photos on iPhone

Tumblr or blog on artist file discoveries (see example of posts on Guggenheim website)

Deutch noted that perhaps the amount of activity reported by the SIG members might warrant a session (lightening round?) at the 2018 ARLIS/NA conference in New York City. The new moderators will look into drafting a session proposal.

## **VI. Meeting adjourned**

Deutch adjourned the meeting at 11:00am.

*Recorded & submitted by Jessica Shaykett (American Craft Council)*