Materials SIG

Submitted by:
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Leadership Update
Co-moderators Johanna Kasubowski and Teri Dowling have served for the past year, and will continue for the coming year.

SIG Activities

NOLA Conference 2017:

The Materials SIG held its annual meeting at the NOLA conference, 9 members attended.

At the meeting we presented and discussed our plan to build a directory of ARLIS/NA member materials collections, collecting information via a materials collections survey. An initial list of survey questions was presented, and the group discussed the questions, and suggested additional questions to add.

The survey will be sent out at the end of January 2018, and preliminary results will be presented at the NYC meeting. A directory of Materials Collections will then be compiled, to be uploaded to the ARLIS/NA site.

Upcoming plans for the NYC Conference 2018

For the NYC Conference, the Materials SIG also organized a panel discussion on the topic: Library Collections and Object-based Learning in the Art and Design Curriculum

Increasingly, art and design libraries are broadening the scope of their collections to include objects - material products, color samples, fashion construction samples, natural history specimens - to support their curricula. This session will present both the research and practice of object-based collections. Lareese Hall’s The Exotic Familiar: The Edna Lawrence Nature Lab and the Web of Making and Knowledge focuses on the history, development, management, and use of a natural history collection in the art and design school setting.
Rebecca Price will examine the importance of tactile literacy and how it informs design practice in her paper Tactile Literacy: Vital Skills in a Digital Age. Jen Wong, in her presentation De-Objectifying Collections will discuss the limits of tactile information in object-based collections (OBC) and the value of faculty partnership and course integration in giving objects a relevant educational context. Christopher Jones will discuss building a materials collection in Creativity & Materials Collections: Supporting Arts Based Research through Haptic Learning. Teri Dowling explores collaborative collection-building with industrial design faculty in Object Collections for the Design Curriculum. This panel was organized by the Materials SIG.

SIG Communications and Outreach

In previous years, the Materials SIG has used the material|resource blog as its primary mode of communication for the group, but it was not really actively used. To replace the blog, we have set up a Materials listserv through ARLIS/NA, and it is already seeing more activity. Upon the creation of listserv, 100 members were subscribed to the listserv.

Strategic Directions:

Organizational Advancement

The Materials SIG has pursued the strategic direction of Organizational Advancement this past year by organizing meetings at the annual conferences and improving SIG communications via the new listserv. Joining the Materials listerv has become integrated into members’ renewal process, instead of subscribing to a separate blog feed. SIG members can now more easily post their own announcements to the group and initiate conversations, as has already been shown with usage of the listserv compared to the blog.

Compilation of the Materials Directory in the coming year will be another valuable resource for group networking and information.

Both of these projects were made possible by the resources available through ARLIS/NA.

Collections and Access

Our work to create the Materials Directory, and organizing the panel discussion for the 2018 conference supports the strategic direction of Collections and Access. Both these projects have given members opportunities to learn about the work of others in the group. Considering the unique issues which arise in creating and maintaining materials collections, sharing our experiences and projects seems especially valuable.