1. Utah Artists Project: Documenting and Archiving the Lives and Works of Utah's Arts Community
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2. Utah Artists Project: Background & Context
    • Launched 2005 (image from original webpage)
    The Utah Artists Project (UAP) was launched in 2005 under the leadership of Margaret Landesman, Head of Collection Development at Marriott Library and then-Interim Head of Fine Arts.
    • Inspirations
    We were fielding frequent reference questions about Utah Artists, yet there were limited amounts of relevant resources as Utah artists are under-represented in published art history scholarship.
    • Opportunities
    In creating the UAP, she hoped to provide a central, freely accessible, scalable, and sustainable scholarly resource to showcase Utah artists and their work.
    And intended to build upon an established framework for broad-based digital collections at the Marriott Library.

Context
To give some context of what’s transpired in the years since I’ve been the Head of Fine Arts and taken a leadership role on the UAP:
Reconstruction! (during and after images)
The Marriott Library has undergone four years of reconstruction, during that time the Fine Arts offices were located three floors away from our collections and research assistance desk, we completed two office and collection moves, and survived one organizational restructuring of the entire library, staff, and departments.

3. Presentation Overview

4. Project Management

5. Challenges
    • Vision statement ≠ project plan
The original vision statement for the UAP states “The goal of the Utah Artists Project is to improve access to information about and knowledge of the work of Utah’s most prominent visual artists—beginning with a core list of around 300 artists. Artist pages will include biographical information, images of artwork, archive materials, and lists of
ephemera.”
However, this broad vision did not include a plan for how to define “Utah artist” or where to begin the process of gathering, compiling, and displaying the text and images in a digital environment. In the beginning, it was catch-as-catch-can. (Image of cluttered artist’s studio)

- **No funding**
The UAP has never had a separate budget line. All the staffing, equipment, and supplies have been donated from the Fine Arts Library budget. Our recent preparations for construction-related projects (such as weeding and moving our collections), as well as offering new services (teaching information literacy research and technology classes), expanding outreach to long-neglected Performing Arts departments, and mounting exhibitions, have often detracted from UAP work.

- **Leadership**
Originally, the interim department head was not frequently on-site as she had full-time responsibilities as the head of Collection Development for Marriott Library. A 36-year-long Fine Arts Library employee was not convinced of the value of the UAP, so did not participate. The other full-time staff member was a retired history teacher with a love of art and enough enthusiasm for two, but who had no practical project management experience or even a clear understanding of basic technology like using email, much less creating a website and a database of images.

I became the Fine Arts department head in 2006, just as these two project leads stepped down to retire.

6. **Successes**
- **Digital Collections Specialist** (Image of Erika)
My first major act as the head of Fine Arts was to get a new Digital Collection Specialist position funded, and I hired Erika Church.

- **Strategic student hiring**
I also began to hire my part-time staff based on the skill sets they could bring to the UAP. Film and Media Arts, History, English, Computer Science, and Journalism students all fit the bill. Distance MLIS graduate students also now provide support.

- **Innovation Grant**
Marriott Library has an annual funding program that will provide up to $3000 in start-up money to projects which show potential for long-term benefit to services and collections. Erika Church received one of these innovation grants on her 2nd try. It was used to fund a recent road trip to document museum murals and artists living in remote parts of Eastern Utah.

7. **Goals**
- When the budget crisis recedes, I would like to establish a separate Fine Arts Projects budget line.
- Now that we have a few years of experience, it’s clear we need to re-envision the goals and mission of the UAP. This will include defining just who is a "Utah artist". Many of the artists included in the original 300 are better-affiliated with other states, spent only their educational years in Utah, or were known for documenting Utah landscapes though were never residents themselves. The re-envision should also expand our scope beyond the visual arts.

8. **Presentation Overview**

9. **Partnerships**

10. **Challenges**
- **Prioritization**
As I mentioned earlier, Marriott Library’s Digital Technologies (DT) department has experience launching successful digital projects. Our forebears include: the Mountain West Digital Library (image), the Utah Newspapers Project (image), and the Western Waters Digital Library (image).
From the beginning of the Utah Artists Project, the DT department pledged its support: from applications development, project managers, and digital scanning and ContentDM assistance.

However, since the UAP was not a DT-sponsored project, it was not part of DT’s workflow, FA did not have representation at DT team meetings, and as a result the UAP was frequently a low priority, slowing progress and trouble-shooting.

11. Successes
   • Mentorship
   Having seen the success of the DT-sponsored projects, I wanted to capitalize on their experience in some way. So, last summer, I established a mentorship for Erika Church with a DT project manager. This has also served as a way to integrate Fine Arts with DT staff.
   • Digital Collections Development Policy
   Also, during the library reorganization, a Digital Library Council was established with representatives from all areas of the library. This council is now writing a Collection Development Policy for Digital Collections, which will quantify the intellectual value, the technical and legal feasibility, and preservation resources needed for new digital collections projects, and place those projects—no matter their origin—within the DT prioritization schema. The UAP will be one of the first in line to be evaluated.
   • Dr. Lennox Tierney
   During my first year as the head of Fine Arts, the director of Special Collections asked if I could spare a student worker to assist Dr. Lennox Tierney, a 95-year-old art history professor-emeritus, whose manuscripts and media collections were held in the Multimedia Archives. Dr. Tierney is a world traveler and a photo-documentarian of architecture, landscape architecture, cultural objects, and people from the mid-1940s onward.

   Having established this relationship with Dr. Tierney, we decided to include him in the UAP. Last year, we began the process of digitizing a portion of his 500,000+ slides, 97 half-hour art history telecourse lectures on videocassettes, and sat down with him to record 55 hours of oral history interviews.
   • Utah Arts Festival (1977 festival image)
   After meeting the Artistic Director of the Utah Arts Festival at the Mountain West Conference on the Arts, Erika Church worked with our Multimedia Archives colleagues in Special Collections to negotiate the acquisition of the Utah Arts Festival’s archives. Together, we will create a digital and physical exhibition of those archives for their 35th anniversary festival celebration in June 2011.

   These collaborations are already expanding the boundaries of what falls under the UAP umbrella.

12. Goals
   • I am working with faculty partners in Communications and College of Fine Arts to help incorporate aspects of the UAF exhibitions into course curricula and service-learning projects.
   • We also plan to submit Dr. Tierney’s images of Japan during the US occupation after World War II to ARTstor and possibly the SAHARA project.
   • We’re in the process of writing grant proposals to fund staff positions for both the Tierney and UAF projects.
   • Finally, after a successful launch of the UAF project in 2011, we’d like to connect with other Utah arts organizations to discuss new projects. These organizations include:
     o The Topaz Museum, which documents Japanese-American’s internment in Southern Utah camps during WWII.
     o 15 Bytes, which is a monthly online newsletter featuring Utah artists and their works.
     o And Ririe-Woodbury Dance, a nationally recognized modern dance company based in Salt Lake City.
13. Presentation Overview

14. Technology

15. Challenges
- **Website (Image: 2010 website)**
In 2008, we were required to convert our HTML-based website to Vignette, a content management system. In doing so, we lost our site branding as standardized University of Utah branding was required on each page. We lost the ability to track our own statistics using Google Analytics. We also lost the icons we used to indicate which artists’ profiles had artwork and video elements.
- **Beg, borrow, and steal**
And, since we’ve never had an equipment budget, we’ve had to borrow still cameras, video cameras, lighting and sound equipment, and video editing Mac stations from other library departments, and even the Theatre department.
Before I joined the UAP team, Fine Arts Library part-time desk staff were asked to conduct oral history interviews with some of the most elderly Utah artists. The students’ general inexperience in oral history interviewing and with the technical equipment led to poor quality videos, which my film studies student workers have spent years re-editing.
  - Robert Bliss, Architecture Professor Emeritus (video)

16. Successes
- **Website**
Despite the setbacks of moving to a content management-based website, it did force us to simplify our overall structure. We learned that we could create animated GIFs (rather than use FLASH, which was not supported) for our homepage’s image rotation. We also designed new templates which can now be used for campus-wide Vignette webpages.
- **Beg, borrow, and buy (Image: Eastern Utah artists)**
At the end of each fiscal year, unspent supply funds are consolidated and redistributed to fund big-ticket purchases. Through this redistribution, the Fine Arts Library was able to purchase its own digital SLR camera. In addition, Erika Church’s successful grant proposal provided funds for a digital video camera with a steady-cam feature and directional shotgun mic.

17. Goals
- **Recent experiences with accidentally deleting a document with nearly over 100 metadata records, as well as having to send a malfunctioning one-terabyte, portable hard drive to a data recovery company has made it clear that we need to streamline and vigilantly enforce our protocol to back-up digital files at every step. We’ll be working with Marriott Library’s digital preservationist, a position created during last year’s reorganization.**
- I’d also like us to create a search feature that can locate resources in the UAP website and the ContentDM database simultaneously.

18. Presentation Overview

19. Collections

20. Challenges
- **Copyrights**
One of the very first steps in creating the UAP, more than a year before I came on-board, was to send copyright release forms to each of the artists and the estates of the artists to be featured. Each release form was individualized by listing the exact works to be included, among other details. For a reason that remains unknown to me still, when the signed release forms were returned, the signature pages were separated from the contract, and the contracts are nowhere to be found. As a result, we are in a precarious position of providing access to copyrighted materials with not much more than good-faith intentions.
"Do no harm to the data"

Given the inexperience of the staff originally assigned to the UAP, and no plan for “doing no harm to the data” (as my database instructor from at the University of Washington used to chant), the web pages for nearly 300 artists contained typos, formatting inconsistencies, cross-pollinated citations, broken HTML links, mislabeled images, and even works of art assigned to the wrong artist.

21. Successes
- If you build it, they will come
While none of our library patrons asked for the UAP to be created, our site gets hits every day from around the state, the country, and internationally. It is the first hit for most of our featured Utah artists when their names are searched in Google. This success has garnered leads for biographical corrections, additional bibliographic entries, offers of new visual content, and even physical artwork donations.
- University General Counsel
With the help of University of Utah General Counsel, we’ve written a new copyright release statement that is open-ended, future-focused.
- Clean-up
The biggest challenge of the UAP has also led to (what feels like) our biggest success. Over the course of three years, my English majors, history students, and budding journalists have fact-checked and reformatted every bibliography citation, edited and standardized the artist biographies, relabeled digital images, and fixed broken web links.
- Oral History Interviews with artists
Now that most of the original UAP artists’ profiles are stable, we’ve begun to think about where we’d like to continue to build the collection. Our greatest interest and success has been with the oral history interviews. New equipment, experienced staff, and eager participants are beginning to lead us to create new scholarship and document the lives of living Utah artists.
  o 22. Eastern Utah Artists (3 photos)
  o 23. Lennox Tierney (3 videos)
    ▪ Zen = 1’04”
    ▪ San Miguel = 1’53”
    ▪ Arts & Monuments: Noguchi=2’41”

24. Goals
- We are looking to have broader representation in our oral history videos, not just those I affectionately refer to as “nearing death” artists.
- I would like to explore QuickTime virtual reality 360º images, to give a better spacial sense of artists’ studios and 3-dimensional works of art.

25. Presentation Overview

26. Insights
- Money makes the world go ‘round
Digital start-ups need funding, allowing for dedicated staff and equipment. Thorough planning is required to get funded. And shared investment and shared risk beget shared responsibility.
- Big picture vs. SMART goals
While the “big picture” gives you a target to aim toward, specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound goals are required to make progress.
- Celebrate every step
We will never realize a “completed” Utah Artists Project—it’s a moving, growing target—so I want my team to be able to see that we’re making progress and celebrate each step for what it contributes to the project as a whole.
- “Yes, and…”
There are many times we could have said “no” to a new idea or partnership, because we didn’t have time, the equipment, or the know-how. And yet, some of those offers we’ve
said “yes” to led to Dr. Tierney and the Utah Arts Festival, two partnerships I’m confident will be popular successes and lead to bigger pay-offs in the future.

- Evolve

You can’t plan everything in advance. Digital projects evolve, and you must evolve with them.

27. Acknowledgements

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28. Presentation Overview