Session/Meeting Name: Photography Librarians Special Interest Group
Date, Time: April 25, 2010, 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Moderators: Jon Evans, Laura Harris
Recorder:

This group recently became an official ARLIS/NA Special Interest Group.

Introductions:

Jon Evans, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Houston, TX), says that 1/3 of his museum’s collection is photographic, primarily post-1950, and its eminent curator Anne Tucker is a great advocate of the Library and photography books. When the museum acquired Manfred Heiting’s photography collection, they also acquired a collection of books, which reside in the library.

Bob Lobe, School of Visual Arts (New York, NY), is a photographer and his library supports an art school with a great number of degree programs and classes in photography.

Kim Wishart, Princeton Marquand Library (Princeton, New Jersey), is part of the new guard that is developing the library’s photographic holdings.

Jenny Strickland, Ithaca College (Ithaca, New York), interested in photography repositories.

Susette Newberry, Cornell University (Ithaca, NY), wrote her dissertation on photography, and has taught a History of Photography survey.

Laura Harris, Menschel Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY), says her holdings support the work of the curators and study of their collections, as well as support Watson Library’s photography collections.

Nicole Fabricand-Person, Japanese Specialist, Marquand Library, Princeton University (Princeton, New Jersey) is building photographic holdings.

Isotta Poggi, Getty Research Institute (Los Angeles, CA), is an archaeological specialist, and the Getty has a photo study collection consisting of 19th and 20th century source images.

Peter Blank, Stanford University (Palo Alto, California), is interested in “animating the archive” by shifting focus to cultural materials, creating a sense of an archive in the context of the larger collection in order to gain greater understanding.

C. Alexandria Caster, University of Arizona Library (Tuscon, AZ) Science student, hoping to work with photography collections like Center for Creative Photography

Theresa Slobuski, Archives Student at Rutgers University (New Brunswick, New Jersey), likewise, is interested in working with photography.
Carla Ellard, Texas State University Alkek Library (San Marcos), circulated an exhibition announcement for “Viva Mexico! Celebrating the Country in Photographs” at the Wittliff Collections through July 31, 2010.

Sue Kriete, New York Historical Society (New York, NY), stated that her institution has a large collection, primarily pre-1950, focus on New York City history and architecture.

Deirdre Donohue, International Center of Photography (New York), stated that their hybrid library serves both the museum and the school of the center, with subject strengths including documentary photography, as well as international exhibition catalogs post-1950.

Laura Harris asked the groups what concerns and interests they are hoping a group of this kind will address.

Isotta Poggi wants to learn what is in other collections.

Laura is interested in developing holdings on postcards, Castiglioni, Walker Evans and trying to be comprehensive on spirit photography.

Jon Evans is interested in artist-driven or published works and the impact of print-on-demand on collection development.

Nicole Fabricand-Person is interested in capturing the past of print-on-demand.

Peter asks a cataloging question: what is the genre tag for self-published books?

Jon said a colleague at Amon Carter told him ”Photobook” is now a subject heading.

Both Bob Lobe and Deirdre Donohue capture the self-published output of faculty and students. Deirdre has definite concerns about the collection development impacts and is circumspect about the proliferation of this kind of material.

Although the format for ARLIS/NA 2011 is yet unknown, there is enthusiasm about the fact that it is a merged conference with VRA, particularly due to our shared interests.

Jon asks the group for suggestions about likely photo-interested presentations for Minneapolis.

Peter suggests involving Christian A. Peterson at the Minneapolis Center for the Arts, and Laura suggests something related to Szarkowski.

Peter notes that Szarowski is not taught to Stanford grad students. The pendulum swing has rendered art history towards the theory-based version of Mary Warren, which is less authorial.

Teresa Sloboski from Rutgers thinks that this is the case, given the relative youth of photography.

Laura thinks that the evolving historiography of photography is interesting now.

Peter agrees that it is an interesting moment for re-assessment of Szarkowski.
Susette Newberry suggests that we might address the fact that museum practice is still informed by “Tsar”kowski, while pedagogical practice has moved on, and possible ways that librarians can address that.

Laura mentioned liking Indiana University’s Claude Cookman’s love letter to librarians the previous year, about what to collect, and thinks that collection development questions are always intriguing.

Susette says a pressing issue is that she cannot afford artist videos, but her audience wants that kind of material, as it is often the only documentation of video and performance art for them to study.

Jon, Peter and Laura really liked the session that Bob Lobe did on photography in the south for Atlanta ARLIS, and wonder about doing something of that kind: with broad perspectives and a great speaker.

Jon says that the classification in LC is ill-defined and the cutter numbers are getting overly long, particularly in TR140 and TR647. Deirdre says this is also a problem at ICP, and causing consternation to the catalogers.

Susette is interested in buying comics on EBay, wondering if there is something in that, asks who else buys on EBay. Jon says that the lack of institutional credit card thwarts that, although there were materials needed for a history of war photography project that had to be acquired that way.

Some regional suggestions: Szarkowski, Midwest/Chicago school, Wisconsin Death Trip, Hebrew Springs?, Nancy Rexroth Iowa, FSA in the Midwest, Midwestern photography books, how to support scholarship in that area, Christian A. Peterson input, Tom Arndt?

Possible topic working title: “Is There a Midwestern Photography?”

Jon suggests continuing the dialog online, and Susette and Bob volunteered to steer programming for the next conference.

Laura asks if any of the represented libraries employ LC classification NH.

Meeting adjourned.