Session/Meeting Name: Book Arts Special Interest Group
Date: March 24, 2011

Organizer: Teresa Burk

Teresa Burk, Head Librarian, SCAD-Atlanta, Organizer
33 people in attendance

-Suggestion in the 2010 meeting: creating a submission form for artists to fill out when books are sent out with descriptive information, conservation information, possibly digitization permissions. Downloadable?
  • Richard Minsky is interested in participating
  • Can a subcommittee be formed? – Yes, Teresa Burk will follow up with the folks that expressed interest in working on this.

-Attendees introduced themselves, briefly stated what kinds of collections they worked with and issues of particular concern.

-Concerns that were prevalent:
  • Handling issues (wear and tear) were of particular concern to those with teaching collections supporting programs in the book arts and fine art. How to deal with this?
  • Many were interested in how to enrich catalog records to provide better description and access.
  • Conservation best practices for high-use items?
  • Creating regional collaborative collection development policies?
  • Donor cultivation strategies?
  • How best to show works in digital format?
  • Creation of a genre index as a cataloging tool?

-Discussion of handling issues and solutions offered:
  • Decreasing class size so that more careful handling by the students and observation by the instructor was possible.
  • Asking students to wash their hands increased awareness of the delicate nature of some of the materials.
  • For students who were interested in specific formats, a book artist was hired to make blank mock-ups of specific specimens so students could explore their construction without damaging an artists’ book.
  • Occasionally, two copies of a book are purchased: one for handling and another for special collections, or as a replacement when the other one is “used up.”
  • Many with high use collections hope that a museum library has a copy of a given title that is being preserved somewhere... this brought up the interest in having a better sense of institutional collection development policies across
the board (only 4 people in attendance had collection development policies specifically written for artists’ books).

- Some suggest collecting items of a similar format or medium so that some can be preserved while others are handled more often; or, they are all handled less frequently, spreading out and thereby, lessening the stress on the item.
- Providing print and online bookmaking resources for students to deter them from dissecting a book to understand its construction.
- Some skilled instructors actually demonstrate bookmaking techniques rather exhibiting static, finished materials.
- When conservation is necessary, several attendees expressed positive experiences when contacting the artist to do the repair.

-Teresa brought up that the SIG has a listserv, blog and Delicious account:
http://www.arlisnabookartsig.blogspot.com/
http://delicious.com/arisbookart

-Poster Session Preview by Yuki Hibben and Mary Anne Dyer, Virginia Commonwealth University
  - Catalog enhancement project.
  - They developed a glossary of roughly 40 descriptive terms.
  - Organized by genre, hierarchically (similar to a headings index).
  - Includes structures, materials, bindings, formats.
  - Loaded the tables into their catalog and created authority records with see also.
  - Records were then connected to other records.
  - They also developed a genre checklist that accompanies new material.
  - They then did retrospective cataloging using 3-4 people working on the project.
  - Now users can browse by genre in the OPAC.

-Yuki and Mary Ann’s presentation led to a request that genre forms be compiled and placed somewhere for use of the community in general.

-Could it be something that was authored within the SIG? Possibly made an ARLIS-NA online publication like the cataloging best practices guides?

-There was great encouragement by a longtime ARLIS member to pursue authoring a genre index for artists’ books, she said this was put forward ten years ago at a conference and it is still something the community greatly needs.

-Teresa asked how to explore and develop this discussion:
  - Literature review
  - It was suggested that the Cataloging Advisory Committee might be willing to do this, but probably not any time soon, as they are busy with the probable adoption of RDA
  - Would a shared wiki be productive? Teresa will investigate and report back to the group.