Topic Talk: Crafting a Thesaurus: an Update on the Artists’ Books Thesaurus from the Book Art SIG and Book Art SIG Notes
Date, Time: Friday, April 26, 2013, 4:45pm - 5:45pm

Coordinator: Teresa Burk

Topic Talk: Crafting a Thesaurus: an Update on the Artists’ Books Thesaurus by Heather Slania, Library and Research Center at the National Museum of Women in the Arts (Washington D.C.) and Suzanne Rackover, Banff Centre Library and Archives, (Alberta Canada). Moderator/note taker: Teresa Burk, Head Librarian SCAD Atlanta and SIG Coordinator

Heather and Suzanne gave some background about the project, referencing some previous work done by librarians Yuki Hibben and Mary Anne Dwyer at VCU to build a genre index to enhance description of their artists’ book collection. See: http://www.arlisna.org/news/conferences/2011/pos_dyer_hibben.pdf

There was continued discussion about cataloging and controlled vocabulary for artists’ books at the Toronto Book Art SIG including a discussion about the descriptive terms used by 23 Sandy Gallery owner Laura Russell in the service of more effectively describing her Gallery’s online work. See: http://23sandy.com/works/

An ad-hoc group of librarians volunteered to investigate the possibilities of building a thesaurus of book art terms to serve our community and improve description, preservation, discovery and access to these complex materials during the Toronto conference. Initial discussions have revolved around the holes in other tools such as AAT, LCSH and, RBMS. Are we talking about a whole new tool or building on an existing thesaurus? How specific will the terms be? Balance the wants and needs and think practically about what will serve the greatest population. Less printmaking and fine press, more structure and binding? Where does the book object fit in?

The goal of the project is an illustrated, online hosted tool with scope notes for the terms. We need input from the membership about their requirements and ideas. Need to survey the membership to see what they want. Also makes sense to check in with MFA book art programs to see what students and faculty are teaching and learning.

Additional discussion from the floor of the SIG included investigating previous work done in 2009 at the Indianapolis conference by Sylvia Turchyn- “They Never Covered This in Library School: Cataloging Artists Books” (not available online) and investigating the recent work going on at AAT with the addition of conservation terms and other institutions local practices.
such as MCAD (MN). It was also suggested we look to ARLIS UK and the work they have done related to documenting book art structures (Nicholas Pickford?).

The thesaurus work here will support another separate goal of the SIG which is to have a standardized online, printable form (perhaps hosted on the ARLIS website) that can be used by book artists, dealers and the like to describe artists’ books at the point of acquisition. This form would travel with the book to aid in the cataloging.

All that are interested in working on this topic were encouraged to share their email with Teresa Burk, outgoing coordinator of the Book Art SIG and she will pass it on to the ad-hoc group. The group is currently working on a formal project plan which will circulate among the SIG members in the near future.

SIG Business Meeting Notes:
Teresa Burk has been coordinating the SIG for the past 3 years and will turn over coordinator duties to Amanda Meeks, University of Chicago Library and Michelle Strizever, curation specialist, Washington D.C. They will take over the blog and coordinate the DC SIG meeting.

Annual report for the SIG has been submitted and is posted on the ARLIS website. Plug for the upcoming ARLIS session: “Artists’ Books: Turning the Page to the Future” Stay tuned for an upcoming webinar in June: “Using Book Art to Cultivate and Engage Library Supporters”, sponsored by the ARLIS Education Sub-Committee and the Book Art SIG.

Submitted by outgoing Book Art SIG Coordinator Teresa Burk, tburk@scad.edu