Engaging Users in Collection Development:

Reviving Artist Files

(and the library, too)

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- historically, tend to be treated as “anonymous”
- less likely to have official publications
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*This is no longer effective:
We needed a more active approach*
The Library was unstaffed and closed to the public for almost two years, 11/2011 – 9/2013
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The Library had become

- Disused, even by staff
- Marginalized
- Separated from the life of the Museum
Curatorial staff were very interested in the fate of artists files

Could engaging curators in the revitalization of artists files also revive their connection to the library?
We requested that curators select artists to follow actively

Selection was based upon:

existing relationships

work by the artist in our collections

relation to an exhibition
- Collection done by trained volunteers
- Actively search for information and add it to our files
- Add notes to the OPAC entry for the file
- Repeat search every 6 months - 1 year
- Most searching is online, but phone calls also
- Most information is printed and filed due to lack of good digital management system
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The answer has been a resounding YES
Next steps:

- Develop viable digital system

- Solicit digital material from artists who attend major local markets:
  - Spanish market (traditional Spanish colonial arts)
  - International Folk Art Market
Sometimes

*if we’re lucky*

2 problems = 1 solution