Visual Resources at the Fashion Institute of Technology

ARLIS/NA session Scope Drift: Blending and Rebranding in Visual Resources

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Background

• Visual Resources is part of the History of Art department
• My title is Visual Resources Curator, but my predecessor’s title was Slide Classifier. There was no “Visual Resources” office by name.
• Staff consists of myself and a technologist, who has a split appointment with the School of Liberal Arts.
Issues

• Lack of distinct office space
  – I share an office with two professors in a different department
  – Technologist’s office is down the hall

• (Most) faculty already adept at finding their own images

• No physical collections to maintain
  – Apart from a few cabinets of 35mm slides
The Question

• How do we stay viable and visible within our department and on campus?
Answers

• Expand services
• Brand ourselves
• Seek collaborations
• Raise awareness
• Advocate for department
Expanding Services

• We went from merely digitizing and cataloging images to...
  – Scanning high-quality PDFs
  – Basic video editing
  – Classroom presentations on image research
  – Copyright / fair use advising
  – Obtaining permissions for publishing
  – Digital projects consulting
  – Advocating for IT upgrades
Branding

• Made a website
  – Added link to our email signatures
• Created a logo
  – Used on our office doors, our website, and presentations / handouts
• Made promotional calendars
  – Each month has a different image from our digital collections
Website

- Lists services provided in detail
- Links to our online image collection
- Limited by FIT website templates, but we made it as visually appealing as we could.
Visual Resources

The Visual Resources (VF) division of the History of Art Department assists HA faculty with their research and teaching needs. VF staff also update the Art History Collection on FITDL, FIT's Digital Image Library. The Art History Collection is the largest collection within FITDL, with 60,000 images ranging from ancient to contemporary art.

Services

VR services available to History of Art faculty are outlined below.

**Digital Media**

- Digitization of printed or film images
- Image cataloging
- Book chapter scanning in high-quality PDF format
- PDF split & merge creation
- Image processing
- Film clip creation

**Research**

- Finding images
- Identifying unknown images
- Identifying sources for further research
- Creation of LibGuides based on a given subject or class curriculum
- Copyright / fair use advising
Seeking Collaborations

• Library
  – Hosts our online image collection, FITDIL (FIT Digital Image Library)
  – Partner in developing the FIT Bannerstone Project, an Omeka image database of archaic bannerstones
  – Collaborate on one-shot sessions
Seeking Collaborations

• Writing Studio
  – Explain image finding / research strategies to tutors
  – Coauthor book chapter on citing multimedia resources with Associate Director
Raising Awareness

• We want to keep faculty informed of what we do.
  – Email update letters at the beginning of the semester
  – Handouts & forms in a folder mounted to door
  – Announcements on the flat screen in our Department’s display case
Advocating for the Department

• Attending meetings
  – IT meetings and town halls to raise tech issues specific to the History of Art department
    • Ex: IT wanted to replace projection screens with large TVs; we demonstrated why this wouldn’t work for teaching History of Art

• Publishing & presenting

• Updating department signage and website to look current
Plans for the Future

• Create video tutorials
• Collaborate with Museum at FIT
• Digitize materials from Special Collections
• Start a blog outlining new resources available in the digital humanities
Thank you!

Contact:
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Image credits

• 1- *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature*, 1895, p.322. Digital image via Internet Archive Book Images. [https://flic.kr/p/ot8igC](https://flic.kr/p/ot8igC) Accessed February 26, 2018

• 4- “Question Mark IDK gif.” US National Archives. [https://gph.is/2bCkEjR](https://gph.is/2bCkEjR) Accessed February 26, 2018


• 9- Custom gif made with the Giphy app

• 11- Reel Type Bannerstone. Native American. Ca 6000-1000 BCE. Banded slate, 12.2 x 10.1 cm. Metropolitan Museum, New York.


• 16- “Funny cat gif” [https://gph.is/1LjlEFE](https://gph.is/1LjlEFE) Accessed February 26, 2018.