**Art Libraries Society of North America, 34th Annual Conference
Fairmont Banff Springs, Banff, Alberta, May 5-9, 2006**

**Session 9: Online Access to Exhibition Histories: The Role of the Art
Museum Library
Sunday, May 7, 2006, 10:30 am -12:00 pm**

Moderator: Maria Oldal, Head of Cataloging and Database Maintenance,
Morgan Library & Museum

Speakers:
Cyndie Campbell, Head Archives, Documentation, Visual Resources,
National Gallery of Canada

Deirdre E. Lawrence, Principal Librarian/Coordinator of Research
Services, Brooklyn Museum

Elizabeth O'Keefe, Director of Collection Information Systems, Morgan
Library & Museum

Recorder: Elizabeth Lilker, New York University

Sponsor: Duncan Systems Specialists Inc.

Summary:

The moderator, Maria Oldal, introduced the speakers and the focus of the panel,
providing access to exhibition histories. She spoke briefly about both public
information, such as press releases, sponsors, etc., and private information, such as
financial information.

**Cyndie Campbell, "The Show Must Go Online, Documenting Exhibitions at
the National Gallery of Canada"**

Cyndie Campbell began by saying the National Gallery of Canada has produced more
than 2000 exhibitions since 1880. She spoke of the commitment of the National
Gallery of Canada and its role in promoting Canadian art and artists. The Gallery's
first efforts in documenting exhibitions resulted in an exhibition list and index,
produced in the early 1980's. Campbell showed examples from the list and
explained how to interpret the entries. In 1991, the responsibility of recording the
Gallery's exhibitions was given to the Libraries & Archives staff. Exhibition catalogs
were being cataloged and added to the OPAC, but they wished to broaden access to
the exhibition histories, including such things as correspondence, labels, text,
interviews with artists, and realia such as posters, banner, and associated gift items.
Funding in the 1990's allowed the staff to begin a project to increase access to this
information through the Library & Archives' OPAC. A record was created in the OPAC
for each exhibition providing basic information about the exhibition and a description

of the Library & Archives' holdings for the exhibition. She reported that the increased visibility of this material led to increased use by both Gallery staff and outside researchers.   A second grant in 2003 allowed the Library & Archives to digitize exhibition catalogs, checklists, installation photographs, and slides from the period of 1880-1930. The digital files are accessible through the 856 field in the bibliographic record. In 2006 the list of exhibitions was added to the Gallery's website and Campbell spoke of their plan to use icons on this list to alert users to the depth of information available in the Library & Archives for a particular exhibition. Campbell also described a soon to be published index to the works of art in the 49 exhibition catalogues and 65 checklists produced by the Gallery between 1880-1930. She concluded that the Library & Archives work in this has heightened its visibility within the Gallery and led to better collaboration with curatorial colleagues. Detailed records also have allowed outside researchers to work independently.

Deirdre E. Lawrence, "From Card Catalogs to Computers: the Transformation of Access to Exhibition and Object Documentation"

Deirdre Lawrence began by showing an image of the former card catalog at the Brooklyn Museum, saying that for many years this catalog served as access to exhibition information.   Online access to this information began in 2004, with the launching of the Library OPAC, using Endeavor's Voyager system. She said it was chosen due to its flexibility in allowing for links to digital images and finding aids. Lawrence said they wanted to provide greater online resources for Museum staff and outside researchers, highlighting the strengths of the Museum's collections. She said the Museum produces approximately ten exhibitions a year, and receives frequent inquiries about the exhibition programs. She described the documentation collected by the Library over the years, including catalogs, brochures, pamphlets, and in the Archives, correspondence, unpublished checklists, labels, press releases, installation photos, etc. Lawrence said that it is often the case that there is an inherent link between the Museum and the Library and Archive collection with many items in the Library collection included in exhibitions both at the Museum and at other institutions.   She showed an image of the Brooklyn Museum resource page and the Exhibition Index that provides dates and titles for more than 2400 exhibitions, dating from 1844 to the present. This resource was developed by combining data from archival records, the Library's exhibition card index, and Museum publications. Lawrence then showed several exhibition installation views that are available through the Library Online Catalog. As part of an Andrew W. Mellon foundation grant, approximately 9,000 views of exhibition installations from the Museum Archives have been digitized and added to the Library's online catalog. She also showed several examples of documentary photographs from the Library collection that have been digitized. As a pilot project, the Museum is also mounting on its website a virtual reconstruction of an exhibition of African art held in 1923 that is of great interest to a large group of researchers. The virtual exhibition will showcase documentation held in the Library and Archives and several other departments within the Museum including letters, brochures, object information and photographs, installation views, departmental records, the exhibition catalog; and press coverage.

Elizabeth O'Keefe, "One-Stop Shopping for Exhibition Documentation through the Pierpont Morgan Library"

Elizabeth O'Keefe started her presentation by showing screenshots of the Morgan's

main website, which lists current and past exhibitions, organized by year and searchable by keywords. The presentation of information has been fairly consistent since the implementation of the website in 1999. Because the information presented on the website is quite brief, and because the library's OPAC, CORSAIR, lists all collection items, it seemed logical to offer enhanced exhibition information through the OPAC. The Morgan Library's renovation (May 2003 - April 2006) was the impetus for creating a list of collection items on exhibit, utilizing Voyager-specific software for a new books list developed by Michael Doran of the University of Texas at Arlington. This option appears as an additional tab on the CORSAIR search screen and leads to a brief display of exhibited items, with hyperlinks to the OPAC record for each. The Morgan uses both the Voyager database and Registrar's database to generate the information that appears on this list. She noted several positive aspects of this approach. The On Exhibit feature provides a complete exhibition list; it was not complicated to implement; it builds on information already in the catalog, and it complements the exhibition section of the Morgan's website. She also mentioned a few drawbacks. The list is limited to items currently on view, and the information provided is from the catalog, not written for the general public.

A different approach is used for retrospective exhibition information. Sources include exhibition checklists, press releases, annual reports, and installation photographs. For a pilot project, a MARC record for the Medieval Bestseller exhibition was created; this record was linked to records for individual items in the exhibition using the Voyager Bibliographic Record Linking feature. In addition, an 856 on the exhibition record leads to the checklist for the exhibition. She then went from screen to screen, showing the depth of information available, including dates, venues, curator name, summary, images, label copy, installation photos, press releases, etc.

Questions:

Questions:
For Cyndie Campbell: are there 856 links to the PDF, files, yes   Can the PDF files be searched? no

General: what about articles concerning exhibitions in popular publications? These are a wonderful resource for researchers. Cyndie Campbell: they plan to digitize, but need to settle copyright issues

General: Are these exhibition histories freely available for downloading? (like E-books?) Cyndie Campbell, yes

Are related items under archival control? Liz O'Keefe: curators retain these items in their own object files; Maria Oldal: there are many types of materials in many different formats, e.g. huge banners from the Getty exhibit; these are at different locations throughout the library. No system is in place to keep track of them.

Has there been any systematic study of how exhibition histories are being used? Deirdre Lawrence: not systematic, but it is known that scholars and staff are consulting this material. She gave an example of how an installation photo proved a disputed object had been in the United States during a particular time.

Comment that the website itself is a source. Is it archived? Cyndie Campbell: the Gallery is not archiving its website.

Comment from Gunter Waibel (RLG): exhibit pages need to be archived.

Question on whether certain decisions on exhibition planning, such as the choice of material, design decisions, are to be made available to the public. Cyndie Campbell: Gallery records are available to researchers with the exception of those records, such as loan forms, containing personal information.

Question -- Is it possible to pull curatorial and registrar material into one place? Deirdre Lawrence: the Archives is part of the library; they are slowly getting curatorial staff to give documentation, papers, etc. Liz OKeefe: documentation needs to be sorted, not all of it should be made available to the public, some is confidential Comment from Patricia Barnett (Frick Art Reference Library): The Frick has had success in convincing curatorial staff that this material is fragile and can be better protected within archives/library than in a curator's office.