

Summary Report on “The Future of art bibliography in the 21st century” meetings

April 20th and 21st, 2010, New York City

A discussion supported by a grant from the Kress Foundation and organized by the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles with the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence

and the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich

Report submitted by Kathleen Salomon (May 18, 2010)

1. Executive Summary

Impetus for meetings

Recent events in the art historical community, including discussions of art library closures, scant funding resources for ongoing support of art libraries and projects internationally, and the cessation of the Getty's support for the continuation of BHA provided the catalyst to apply for a Kress grant to convene a 1.5 day meeting in New York of an international task force of art librarians, art historians, and information specialists (Appendix A.) Our goal was to review current practices, take stock of changes, and seriously consider developing more sustainable and collaborative ways of supporting the bibliography of art history in the future. April 20th was an open meeting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, (Agenda, Appendix B.) April 21st was a full day meeting of the task force (Agenda, Appendix C.)

Conclusions, Outcomes, and next steps

After intensive discussion, the group did not come to consensus on an immediate plan of action. Instead, it was agreed by the majority that we need to look for new ways of facilitating art historical research and scholarship collaboratively and that we need to gather more evidence in order to do so by doing the following:

- **Conduct an environmental scan**
 - Within the next 6 months, have an international working group develop scope and charge to write grant proposal for a scan to be done by an expert consultant.
- **Conduct a stakeholder study**
 - Within the next 6 months, have an international working group develop scope and charge to write grant proposal for a study to be done by an expert consultant.
 - This group will try to synthesize what exists; will conduct focus groups with scholars at various venues, and decide what needs to be done and by whom.
- **Explore Business models**
 - Review results of scan and stakeholder study to figure out what it is we want.
 - Possibly explore models with immediate potential, such as artilibraries.net.
- **Communication and outreach**
 - Communication and outreach to the community is necessary at all stages of this project.
 - A wiki or other interactive tool can help with this.
 - Meetings at ARLIS (April 25th, 2010), IFLA (August 2010), CAA (February 2011), and other places will help with this.

It was agreed that Kathleen Salomon would reconstitute the task force, in collaboration with Jan Simane and Rüdiger Hoyer, taking into consideration new demographics in terms of region and age to make the task force more representative of the field.

2. In-depth summary of discussions:

Impetus for meetings

Countless conversations among colleagues over the past year led to the meetings held in New York on April 20-21, 2010, to the follow-up discussion at ARLIS/NA in Boston on April 25, 2010, and to the future discussions that will be planned for the next year in different venues.

Recent events in the art historical community, including discussions of art library closures, scant funding resources for ongoing support of art libraries and projects internationally, and the cessation of the Getty's support for the continuation of BHA provided the catalyst to apply for a Kress grant to convene an international group of art librarians, art historians, and information specialists. Our goal was to review current practices, take stock of changes, and seriously consider developing more sustainable and collaborative ways of supporting the bibliography of art history in the future.

An initial "task force" (Appendix A) was designed by the primary collaborators for the meeting (Kathleen Salomon, Getty Research Institute; Jan Simane, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence; and Rüdiger Hoyer, Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich). It included art librarians, art historians, representatives from ARLIS/NA, IFLA, and CAA, and was meant to provide broad representation of the field. Unfortunately most of the international group, including some scholars, was unable to arrive due to the volcanic ash from Iceland. However Martine Poulain from the INHA and Andreas Thielemann from the Biblioteca Hertziana in Rome were in attendance.

New York Meetings, April 20 and 21, 2010

April 20: Open meeting, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Study Center, 1:00-5:30 pm.

Agenda: Appendix B

The first day at the Met was an "open session" where, in addition to the the core "task force" members supported by the grant, there were additional colleagues from the following institutions: the Art Institute of Chicago, the College Art Association, OCLC, Oxford University Press, the Avery Library and Index, H.W. Wilson, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (INHA), Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Hofstra, CUNY, NYU, Bard Graduate Center, Brooklyn Museum, International Museum of Photography, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Biblioteca Hertziana, IFLA (the International Federation of Library Associations), International Foundation for Art Research (IFAR), ARTstor, the Kress Foundation, and the Wall Street Journal.

To set the scene **Kathleen Salomon** (Getty Research Institute), provided the reasons for the meetings at this time, a history of the origins of the BHA over forty years ago, and an acknowledgement that the future of our collective art bibliography is at a similar turning point as it was forty years ago, but with a very different set of tools at hand. It was noted that the international art historical community is experiencing major changes in the way we conduct bibliographic research, particularly because the digitization and online availability of an increasing number of journals, images, and primary resources has and will continue to revolutionize our research processes in all fields of art history, those traditionally covered by the BHA as well as those not covered in the past by an art historical index. Recent efforts in Germany supported by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG) created important collaboration among art libraries internationally with *artlibraries.net*, essentially a single search portal

for major art library catalogs with the potential to become more. Promising research tools such as those found in *arthistoricum.net* are thriving examples of converging bibliographic and social tools which beg the question of what the future of art bibliography might be.

The questions to be addressed in the next two days included:

- What do we want and what do we need in terms of a collective bibliographic tool for art history in this century?
- Do we still require the authority of the bibliography, or the comprehensiveness?
- How can we build upon existing resources in art bibliography to create more of a collaborative and international effort?
- And what are the intellectual, technical, and fiscal challenges involved?

Thoughts from the field: Conducting art historical research (Peter Schneemann was absent)

The day began with a panel of art historians (Thomas da Costa Kaufmann, Princeton University; Elizabeth Mansfield, New York University; and Tom Cummins, Harvard University) offering their various viewpoints to answer questions about conducting art historical bibliographic research in the 21st century. Their informal talks ranged from a “testimonial” to the importance of art bibliography to the needs of undergraduates in this regard, to the acknowledgement that “a large part of what is going on in the art world today would not be covered by BHA.”

Questions of scope, the necessity vs. (im)possibility of creating a comprehensive, authoritative bibliography in today’s global and increasingly digital environment, and the importance of “facts” in art history vs. a lack of interest in preexisting information and knowledge among some scholars, particularly for those whose training is more recent, were raised and discussed in all three talks and then commented upon by the audience afterwards.

Thomas da Costa Kaufmann felt that the rescue of the bibliography is essential because with the internet, plagiarism is on the rise, yet careers depend on originality. How can we know what is original without an authoritative bibliography? Bibliography forms the basis of historiography.

Elizabeth Mansfield, in describing undergraduate research and teaching, expressed concern that without a tool to facilitate discovery of art historical material (facts, information, knowledge) there could be a resurgence of elitism in the field, as some will have the information and others will not. She noted the weaknesses of the internet, where popularity trumps reliability and facts, yet acknowledged the limited scope of the BHA, particularly where Asia and Africa were concerned. She emphasized the crucial role of CAA in the discussion which is a part of the continuing trend toward devaluation of the humanities.

Tom Cummins has written on colonialism in Latin America and also on Latin America—of the two groups of publications, the former were indexed by BHA while the latter were not. He suggested that the issue of bibliography may be central to the value given to libraries and books in today’s world. He felt that a comprehensive, authoritative bibliography is an illusion. Regarding the future, Cummins commented that with greater access to more online publications every day we have the ability to link to such resources to create new publications and bibliographies.

Thoughts from the field: facilitating art historical research

Following the talks about conducting art historical research, a few librarians shared their thoughts on facilitating art historical research.

Michael Rinehart, the founding editor of RILA and BHA, noted that the issues from the beginning of RILA were always of scope. The original objective was to create a bibliography of record for the field of art history. Interestingly, he noted that RILA was first conceived to be collaborative, and it wasn't until the Getty came along that the model of a single source of support came into being. He asked why we are discussing the future of art bibliography—has the technical environment changed the objective or simply the means of achieving it?

Jan Simane's paper on "Bibliography today and into the future" was read by Joseph Shubitowski (Getty Research Institute). Simane explained the work Theodore Besterman, a bibliographer and translator who wrote on the "Beginnings of systematic bibliography" in the 1930s and 1940s. Besterman analyzed "systematic," or "enumerative" bibliographies based on a "principle of permanence", and concluded that specialized library catalogs can fulfill similar functions as bibliographies for their field, especially when put together as a union catalog. Simane demonstrated how he believes that a research tool such as artlibraries.net, which provides a simple metasearch front-end for an increasingly international selection of online art library catalogs, has great potential for further technical capabilities, including linking and tagging, and could therefore be the basis for providing a high quality art historical bibliography.

Carole Ann Fabian (Avery Library and Avery Index, Columbia University) talked about the various phases of support for the Avery Index in its history, and how the relationship among the scholarly endeavor, the collections, and the indexers creates a symbiosis between the University, the library at Columbia, and the Index that allows it to remain sustainable. She noted that her major ongoing concerns for the Avery Index include ongoing sustainability (the Index is currently supported by Columbia University and would be difficult otherwise; volunteers would not produce the same product), the cost of producing and buying (it is a mix of funding that makes it possible, a partnership with vendors), and the selectivity inherent in it (currently Avery handles about 300 journals, all Eurocentric and North American only, but it is the selectivity that allows added services, and hence added value). She called for the field to leverage better metadata from authors and publishers that is harvestable and could be aggregated through technical access.

An abridged version of **Rüdiger Hoyer's** paper "kubikat and the international network" was read by Kathleen Salomon. Hoyer suggested that the kubikat databases should be broadened and made more multilingual (they are currently German language only and represent only a few institutes). He suggested that the current member partners in the artlibraries.net group have great potential for more coordination and expansion, and indexing cooperatively. In sum, he asked if we should work on cooperative products based on data sharing, as a kind of "Google Art History" or "artlibraries.net 2.0" or "Worldcat Art," and finally strive to develop a common electronic search index as a "power-plant for information research in art history."

Open Discussion

Günter Waibel (OCLC Research) moderated the discussion sessions that followed.

Some of the comments, which were listed on flip charts to be incorporated into the Day 2 deliberations, included:

- Artlibraries.net model is not representative of enough major US libraries. There are whole areas of art not represented in artlibraries.net-- the focus is primarily German. A truly international union catalog would be good, but there is still a need for a critical bibliography.
- We are overly attached to a word and a form: bibliography. We are beyond BHA, beyond old models; single systems of support. We need vendors as partners.
- We are looking for the completeness and scope of Google, but with a scholarly, authoritative organization. We need to look at how to organize vast quantities of information and how to harvest.
- The world of art history is “messy” and not easily contained. It is increasingly multidisciplinary and multilingual and we must rely on authorities. There is a need for consistent metadata.
- We need to look at publications earlier in the process to obtain necessary metadata pre-publication.
- We need to engage scholars as partners for research and experiment in the semantic web.
- Can we leverage GAIA and the Getty authority files?
- Too much pie-in-the-sky talk where we have an immediate and practical problem that needs to be solved now, the loss of critical information with the cessation of BHA.
- Are we or are we not concerned about the loss of the scholarly record?
- What would scope and format criteria be for the material to be covered in a new project? (e.g. born digital files, auction catalogs, ephemeral files)
- BHA model is no longer possible, need professional cooperation among libraries and scholars.
- We must consider the cost of hosting; there is a need for partnerships, for a trusted repository.

At one point in the conversation Günter summarized our current opportunities:

- We have resources that are being created and not being shared, including national bibliographies, abstracts, journal articles, etc.
- There is an enormous need to coordinate and collaborate.
- What kinds of activities do we want to task the “task force” to be doing?
- Look at what has been done? (Environmental scan. Kubikat? ARCADE)
- What is the business model for how you sustain what you build? (Partner with vendors?).
- Look at the future of scholarly publishing, particularly the works by Mariet Westermann and Hilary Bellums (?)
- Right now we have an absence of a framework to go forward internationally (CIHA not set up to do this; IFLA deals only with libraries and not in all fields; RILA’s model was RILM.)
- We should address the immediate and practical problem of what is being missed first and very soon.

Then Günter suggested taking the pulse of the group with a show of hands regarding the following:

- 1) Should we continue BHA?
- 2) Seek a middle ground?
- 3) Think entirely outside the box?

This led to further discussion and people were not willing to vote. Instead, they voiced a variety of concerns:

- We are losing the bibliographic record.
- We must face it that we have lost the bibliographic record.
- What is the value of the bibliographic record?
- (from INHA) BHA is finished, dead economically. We must have a professional cooperation internationally with little effort (libraries and scholars).
- CAA would be interested in continuing the conversation, but what went wrong with earlier negotiations? CAA could not host alone.

In conclusion, it was noted that the “task force” meeting to be held the next day would consider the comments from this meeting and develop a plan for next steps. These outcomes will be shared with the community.

It was stressed that it is likely that we will need to follow up with a European meeting where our colleagues who missed this meeting may attend.

April 21: Meeting of the task force: ARTstor/Mellon Foundation, 10:00-5:30 p.m.

Agenda: Appendix C

Attendees: Members of task force as noted in Appendix 1; in addition, Doug Dodds (Victoria & Albert Museum, London), Rüdiger Hoyer, and Jan Simane were conferenced in by phone for the first hour.

Kathleen Salomon opened the meeting by saying that we hope to find a way to satisfy both short-term interests and long-term visions for the future of art bibliography, and again stated that more of the European colleagues needed to participate in the discussion.

Günter Waibel facilitated the wide-ranging discussions by presenting some lists of ideas garnered from the previous day’s open meeting, newly reorganized into three categories What/Attributes/How:

What is needed for the future:

- International union catalog of art bibliography
- An aggregation of art resources with mediation and authority that is expanded beyond a union catalog
- A bibliography of record to capture the shape of the field
- A trusted subject-specific repository for art content
- Use cases
- A discovery environment

- A pilot project where librarians, authors, and publishers create a bibliography entry collaboratively

Attributes that are necessary in whatever tool/resource is designed:

- Better coverage (than BHA) in terms of content and format
- It must be authoritative
- It must be multilingual (subject headings)
- Semantic web enabled
- Does it need abstracts? Or just subject headings?
- Should acknowledge/include born digital

How to achieve it:

- It needs an organizational home
- Not a single institution
- Should be done cooperatively with libraries, scholars, and publishers
- Need to build in sustainability
- Could leverage GAIA
- Need a technological infrastructure

Discussion points included:

- Regarding the “future of art bibliography,” is it not more about how we **facilitate art historical research** in this world where materials are discoverable and available in so many ways? Can a bibliography still be the answer?
- It was acknowledged by many that a BHA model is no longer possible; we **MUST HAVE** professional cooperation/collaboration among scholars, librarians, and publishers.
- Is there a role for societies such as CAA and ARLIS to play in building a new model for facilitating art historical research?
- What about the scholarly record? What is being lost since BHA ceased? What about the gaps in coverage as we decide what to do next?
- We need to make discovery of resources easier. That is the point.
- We need to take advantage of what already exists digitally, in publishers’ catalogs, in websites, in native digital information that is available prepublication
- We need to identify the gaps in what does not exist or is already discoverable.

After this initial discussion it was noted that the group seemed to be divided into two camps:

- 1) Those saying we need to break with tradition (begin anew; break with BHA model)
- 2) Those saying we need to find ways to continue what has been created (continue BHA-like model)

The group undertook an examination of “waning” and “waxing” trends in the facilitation of art research in an attempt to gain clarity on past and present priorities:

Waning		Waxing
Selectivity	<->	Aggregation
On-site research	<->	Online research
Pointers	<->	Assets (via online delivery)
Physical library/stacks	<->	Discoverability
Single Institution	<->	Shared responsibility (distributed model)
Think as librarians	<->	Think as users
Single point of failure	<->	Redundancy (backup) in collaboration
The “greater good”	<->	Enlightened self-interest
Individual library catalog	<->	Discovery environment
	->	Sustainability
	->	Scalable and economic
	->	Participatory
	->	Internationalization / globalization

3. Conclusions

The group did not come to complete consensus for a plan with which to move forward immediately.

In the minority there remained those whose desire was to continue the BHA as it was, and who were dedicated to continuing in a similar vein immediately so as not to perpetuate the “loss” of information. There were many more wishing to break with the old model and move forward with a new one. No one seemed to dispute the value of what is in BHA or that it is necessary to broaden the coverage by making more art historical resources from more regions and fields discoverable and available, particularly Latin America, Asia, and Africa.

Some advocated a pilot project for inputting metadata into opacs, much as kubikat does, or to explore how to leverage the contributor instance in GAIA for this purpose. The goal of this would be to create a possibly practical way to avoid a loss of important information in the field.

4. Outcomes and next steps

Instead it was agreed that we need to look for new ways of facilitating art historical research collaboratively and that we need to gather more evidence in order to do so.

The following next steps were agreed upon by the majority of those present:

- **Conduct an environmental scan**
 - Within the next 6 months, have an international working group develop scope and charge to write grant proposal for a scan to be done by an expert consultant.
 - It may be necessary to do two studies, one in U.S. and one internationally.

- **Conduct a stakeholder study**
 - Within the next 6 months, have an international working group develop scope and charge to write grant proposal to be done by an expert consultant.
 - It may be necessary to do two studies, one in U.S. and one internationally.
 - This group will try to synthesize what exists; will conduct focus groups with scholars at various venues, and decide what needs to be done and by whom.
- **Explore Business models**
 - Review results of scan and stakeholder study to figure out what it is we want.
 - Possibly explore models with immediate potential, such as artlibraries.net.
- **Communication and outreach**
 - Communication and outreach to the community is necessary at all stages of this project.
 - A wiki or other interactive tool can help with this.
 - Meetings at ARLIS (April 25th, 2010), IFLA (August 2010), CAA (February 2011), and other places will help with this.

It was agreed that Kathleen Salomon would reconstitute the task force, in collaboration with Jan Simane and Rüdiger Hoyer, taking into consideration new demographics in terms of region and age to make the task force more representative of the field.

5. Postscript:

April 25, 2010: ARLIS/NA discussion meeting on “The Future of Art Bibliography”

Kathleen Salomon invited Carole Ann Fabian and Jan Simane to join her in this discussion at the ARLIS/NA conference, which had over 60 participants. Kathleen provided another summary of the BHA’s history followed by a brief recap of the two days in New York. Carole Ann summed up next steps, and Jan provided his vision for expanding artlibraries.net into an international resource for the 21st century. Discussion, consisting primarily of clarification and next steps questions, followed. It was stressed that a report of the New York meetings and any follow-up would be distributed to the community in a timely manner.

6. Future plans:

June 22-23, 2010 (tentative): GRI “Future of Art Bibliography” meeting for those unable to attend in April: At this time we are planning a 2-day meeting at the end of June for the European task force members who were unable to attend the New York meetings, and just a few other key participants.

August 10-15, 2010: IFLA Arts Section meeting on art bibliography. A number of the key participants from the earlier meetings will be present at IFLA. In addition, Kathleen will present a paper on the topic at the Art Libraries panel.

October 27-28, 2010 (tentative): A meeting of the artlibraries.net membership will take place in Lisbon. Jan Simane has taken the lead to add a day to this meeting for discussing the international project.

Appendix A: Future of Art Bibliography in the 21st Century Task Force
April 20-21, 2010

Mary Clare Altenhofen

Associate Librarian of the Fine Arts Library for Public and Research Services, Harvard Fine Arts Library,
Boston, MA

Sandra Brooke

Librarian, Marquand Library, Princeton University, New Jersey

Tom Cummins

Dumbarton Oaks Professor of Pre-Columbian and Colonial Art, Dept. of History of Art and
Architecture, Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Boston

Linda Downs,

Executive Director, College Art Association, New York

Carole Ann Fabian

Director, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, New York

Milan Hughston

Chief of Library and Museum Archives, MOMA, New York

Thomas Da Costa Kaufmann

Frederick Marquand Professor of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, New Jersey

Christine Kuan

Director of Collection Development, Interim Director of Communications, ARTstor, New York

Amy Lucker

President, ARLIS/NA

Head Librarian, Institute of Fine Arts, New York

Max Marmor

President, Kress Foundation, New York

Martine Poulain

Chief Librarian of the INHA, Paris, France

Inge Reist

Chief of Research Collections and Programs
Frick Collection, New York

Michael Rinehart

Founding editor, RILA & BHA, New York

Kathleen Salomon
Head, Library Services & Bibliography, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Joseph Shubitowski
Head, Information Systems, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Kenneth Soehner
Chief Librarian, Watson, Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Andreas Thielemann
Head Librarian, Biblioteca Hertziana, Rome, Italy

Cameron Trowbridge
Manager, Research Services, Information Center, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles

Not present:

Stephen Bury,
Chief Librarian, Frick Collection, New York

Douglas Dodds
Senior Curator, Word and Image Department, Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Rüdiger Hoyer
Chief Librarian of the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich, Germany

Roman Koot
Head of Public Services, Chief Curator Library and Foreign Art at RKD / Netherlands
Institute for Art History, The Hague, NL

Jan Simane
Chair of the Art Libraries Section of the IFLA, Chief Librarian of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz

Peter Schneemann
Professor of Contemporary Art History and Director of the Contemporary Art Department, University
of Bern, Switzerland

Appendix B: *THE FUTURE OF ART BIBLIOGRAPHY IN THE 21ST CENTURY*

Open Meeting, April 20th, 2010
Art Study Room, Uris Center, Metropolitan Museum of Art

*A discussion supported by a grant from the Kress Foundation and
organized by the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles with
the Kunsthistorisches Institut , Florence
and the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich*

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1:00-1:15 p.m. | Arrival |
| 1:15 p.m. | Welcome <i>Kathleen Salomon, Getty Research Institute</i> |
| 1:30 p.m. | Thoughts from the field: conducting bibliographic research in art history

<i>Thomas da Costa Kaufmann, Princeton University
Peter Schneemann, University of Bern, Switzerland
Elizabeth Mansfield, New York University
Tom Cummins, Harvard University</i> |
| 2:15 | <i>Comments from the floor</i> |
| 2:30 p.m. | Break |
| 2:45 p.m. | Thoughts from the field: facilitating bibliographic research in art history

<i>Michael Rinehart, New York
Jan Simane, Kunsthistorisches Institut , Florence
Carole Ann Fabian, Avery Architecture & Fine Arts Library
Rüdiger Hoyer, Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich</i> |
| 3:30 p.m. | Open discussion, part 1
<i>Moderator: Günter Waibel, OCLC Research</i> |
| 4:00 p.m. | Break |
| 4:15 p.m. | Open discussion, part 2
<i>Moderator: Günter Waibel, OCLC Research</i> |
| 5:00 p.m. | Outcomes and next steps
<i>Günter Waibel and Kathleen Salomon</i> |
| 5:30 p.m. | Reception in the Watson Library |

The organizers wish to thank the Watson Library for their generosity in providing the venue and for their assistance in planning today's meeting and reception.

Appendix C: THE FUTURE OF ART BIBLIOGRAPHY IN THE 21ST CENTURY
Day 2: April 21st, 2010

Meeting of the task force

ARTstor/Mellon Foundation

- 9:30** *Arrival*
- 10:00** *Welcome, Kathleen Salomon, Getty Research Institute*
- *****
- Discussion Facilitator: Günter Waibel, OCLC Research*
- 10:15** *Revisiting yesterday's meeting: outcomes*
- Revisiting the list of ideas collected by end of the day*
- Observations about the day*
- 11:00** *Break*
- 11:15** *Adding on: Additional ideas for consideration*
- 12:00** *Prioritizing ideas*
- (The top three ideas will be discussed in greater depth in the afternoon)*
- 12:30** *Lunch*
- 1:30** *In-depth: Topic 1*
- 2:30** *Break*
- 2:45** *In-depth: Topic 2*
- 3:45** *Break*
- 4:00** *In-depth: Topic 3*
- 5:00** *Wrap-up*
- Getting a sense of commitment to taking work forward (Günter)*
Next steps (Kathleen)
- 5:30** *End of Day*