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Pandemic? No Problem: Using the IR to Support Visual Arts Programming

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Pandemic? No Problem: Using the IR to Support Visual Arts Programming

Introduction

The 2020 pandemic created opportunities for partnership between the UNC Libraries and College of Performing and Visual Arts to host virtual creative arts programming in the institutional repository, Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. This stretched the boundaries of the IR beyond its main focus on faculty and graduate student publications and provided space for the campus community to virtually "gather."

2020 Annual Student Exhibition



The annual student exhibition is a juried show of undergraduate painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, and digital media. In lieu of a physical show, the pieces were photographed and the resulting images were exhibited in the IR, Scholarship & Creative Works @ Digital UNC. Students provided artist statements, biographies, and audio or video clips of themselves discussing their work.

Teapot and Cup

Dallas Shields

Exhibit Images



Successes

- Met goals to collect more undergraduate output and creative works in the IR.
- Strengthened relationships with campus partners and planted seeds for future collaboration.
- Demonstrated value to university community by filling a need during an uncertain time.



Past Roadblocks

- Difficulty obtaining artist permissions.
- Problems getting photos taken of student work.
- Lack of awareness of options in Digital Commons for organizing/displaying virtual exhibits.



Student-Curated Gallery Show & Reception



The digital initiatives librarian, art liaison librarian, and UNC Galleries director collaborated to mount both physical and virtual versions of a show curated by a museum studies student, who also participated in the planning process. The digital exhibit in the IR consists of three parts: images of artwork by nine participating artists, video of a virtual gallery reception, and images of the installation and final views of the physical exhibit. Taken together, they allow users to simulate the full experience of visiting the gallery exhibit and meeting the artists.

Challenges

- Grouping individual image records using book galleries in DC must be done manually and requires tedious HTML editing.
- Partner turnover requires re-establishing relationships and workflows.



Creating Exhibits

Image galleries and book galleries were used together in Digital Commons to organize groups of images. Subcollections of an individual artist's works were grouped together within shows featuring multiple artists, creating a coherent display that reflects the organization of the actual physical gallery installation.

UNC Galleries Visiting Artist Program

The Visiting Artist Program brings artists from around the country to UNC for one-day campus visits or week-long "micro-residencies." Visiting artists deliver public lectures and conduct classroom workshops. During the pandemic, these events were conducted virtually and videos were collected and preserved in the IR. UNC Libraries plan to continue capturing and archiving videos of future talks in the IR.



Lessons Learned

- The IR can be a great platform for showcasing image-based content. It's not just for text documents!
- Work permissions-gathering early into the content collection workflow.
- Collaborate with liaison librarians to foster relationships with campus partners.