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From Art on the Wall to Something for All: How an Academic Library Turned Its Art Collection into a Campus Attraction

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From Art on the Wall to Something for All:
How an Academic Library Turned Its Art Collection Into a Campus Attraction

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Abstract

An important feature of the Brooklyn College Library is its art collection, the college’s only permanent art collection. In this article, we explain how the library came to have an art collection; how we supplemented the collection with museum-style wall labels, an online catalog, and an audio tour; and how we promoted the collection and sparked student creativity with an annual art contest. We pay particular attention to the decisions and details that might help other libraries working on similar projects.
The Brooklyn College Library, built in 1937, has always been a place to research, study, and store and access knowledge. From 1999 to 2002, the library was expanded, renovated, and completely rethought, allowing it to become so much more: a place for teaching and learning; for contemplation and computing; for individual exploration and group collaboration; and for meetings, lectures, and performances. The new library is a beautiful building brimming with resources and events, making it both a campus showcase and a cultural center. An important part of its beauty and richness is its art collection, the college’s only permanent art collection. In this article, we explain how the library came to have an art collection; how we supplemented the collection with museum-style wall labels, an online catalog, and an audio tour; and how we promoted the collection and sparked student creativity with an annual art contest. We pay particular attention to the decisions and details that might help other libraries working on similar projects.

Art in Academic Libraries: Literature Review

The inclusion of art in libraries is a natural idea and a common practice. Many libraries display amateur or professional art, and some integrate it into their educational or outreach activities. It is also an established topic in the library literature, discussed in Library Journal at least as far back as 1881, when H. A. Homes advocated housing museums “of any and every kind attainable,” including art museums, inside libraries. He saw two arguments for combining them: “One is that museums of science and art have an intrinsic value in themselves for the education of any community. The other is, that the association of the Free Public Library with Free Museums, in the same building and under the same trustees, increases the utility of and the interest in both, with the least of expenditure” (p. 81). Homes was the New York State Librarian, so it is natural that his focus was public libraries, but his arguments can be extended to college and university libraries. In this section, we look at reasons why academic libraries display art and ways in which they embrace the art they display.

Some academic libraries own or manage permanent art collections. Reasons for such collections include, according to Kemp (1994), “longstanding, purposeful design; assignment by default, growing out of recognition that an unplanned but enlarging art collection needed care; and recent transfer resulting from the cutback or closure of campus art museums and galleries” (p. 162). As we discuss in the next section, the Brooklyn College Library had a different impetus: requirement by law.

Other art-enhanced academic libraries do not manage the art they display but instead have a mutually beneficial relationship with a campus museum. For example, Jinbo and Mehrens (2007) described how works from Indiana State University’s art collection rotate among campus buildings, including the library. Similarly, Rettig (2004) reported that a library renovation project at the University of Richmond included funds for purchasing art; these funds were entrusted to the director of the university’s museums with the condition that the museums hang art in the library and rotate the works every six months. Rettig described the arrangement between the library and museums as “more
than a win-win deal; it was win-win-win” (p. 5), good for the museums, the library, and the college community.

Also, some academic libraries run galleries that display temporary exhibitions of works not owned by any campus entity. One relevant example is Queens College, which, like Brooklyn College, is a unit of the City University of New York. The Queens College Art Library contains the Queens College Art Center, an art gallery that presents several contemporary art exhibitions per year. In two articles, two different curators described the considerable work and rewards of running the Art Center (Avens, 1987; Simor, 1991). Simor summarized the gallery’s many benefits thus: “When the right balance of ingredients is achieved, a program of art exhibitions in the library of an academic institution becomes a valuable asset to the school. Exhibitions become a library’s new, powerful resource that educates, enriches, stretches the mind and the senses, inspires, delights, renews, and refreshes” (p. 139).

The most obvious spaces for library galleries may be art libraries, but galleries can flourish in any kind of academic library. For example, in 2007, a gallery was created in Cornell University’s library for life sciences, agriculture, and human ecology (Raskin, 2009). The gallery features “innovative class projects” and works by local artists who “communicate science through visual imagery” (p. 226). The exhibitions have been so popular and prompted so many requests to exhibit that the library has begun mounting exhibitions in several library spaces, not just the gallery.

Another science library that engages with art is the University of Florida’s science library, which began hosting an annual “Elegance of Science” art contest in 2008 (Buhler & Davis, 2010). The primary goal of the contest is to promote the university’s libraries as “places for contemplation and discovery” (p. 248), but it may become a fundraising tool as well. The library has developed a plan to sell one printed copy of each contest entry, with the proceeds going to the science library.

Art contests in academic libraries are somewhat common, both because libraries and art are a natural combination and because academic libraries look for ways to spark students’ curiosity and creativity. Academic libraries with recurring art contests include the University of Tennessee Libraries (Beals, 2007, 2011), Dowling College Library (Robbins, 2010), and Michigan State University Libraries (2010). The University of Florida’s “Elegance of Science” contest is unusual in that it welcomes submissions from students, faculty, staff, and alumni (Marston Science Library, 2011); most library art contests are for students only. The most common prizes seem to be money and/or temporary or permanent display in the library.

Many academic libraries display and celebrate art, but only a few catalog the art they feature. The rarity of cataloging art in libraries is probably due to both the temporary nature of many exhibitions and the extra work required for such cataloging. However, some libraries do document the art they exhibit. For example, both the Columbia College Chicago Library and the Queens College Art Center maintain online archives of their temporary exhibitions (Cates, 2003; Queens College Art Center, 2011). Another
example is the library of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, where librarians created full-level MARC records for many of the works in its art collection (Benedetti, Wu, & Hayes, 2004). This kind of cataloging requires the time and expertise of professional catalogers but “can give [the artworks] a new life by making them intellectually accessible” (p. 151).

The Brooklyn College Library’s art collection, contest, and catalog have much in common with the collections, contests, and catalogs described above, but we also have a unique story to tell. In the sections that follow, we describe our processes and products, focusing on our unique innovations and providing the details necessary for other libraries to undertake similar projects.

Acquiring the Art

Most of the Brooklyn College Library’s art collection was acquired thanks to New York City’s “Percent for Art” law, which “makes art accessible and visible throughout our city” and provides a way “to appreciate artwork outside the traditional museum or gallery setting” (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, n.d., para. 1). The law stipulates that 1% of the budget of certain city-funded construction projects must be spent on art for the public spaces of those facilities. Brooklyn College is a public institution, and when it renovated and expanded its library, an enormous endeavor that lasted from 1999 to 2002, the project was publicly funded and therefore subject to the “Percent for Art” law. In our case, $390,000 was earmarked for art.

To ensure that the money was spent appropriately on interesting art by important artists, the Brooklyn College president created an art acquisition committee to select works for the library. The committee was chaired by Miriam Deutch, art librarian and co-author of this article, and also included art professors and the college archivist. Together, they spent months identifying artists and visiting galleries in search of exceptional art for the new library’s large and prominent spaces. Eager to create a collection that reflects Brooklyn College’s students, who mostly live in Brooklyn but hail from over 100 countries and speak 95 languages (Brooklyn College, 2010), the committee paid special attention to Brooklyn artists and artists from diverse backgrounds. The committee ultimately purchased 23 paintings, sculptures, photographs, and prints ranging in price from $4,000 to $80,000. To ensure the quality and value of the art acquired with “Percent for Art” funds, the committee had all works over $5,000 appraised by a professional art appraiser. The committee also used some of the money to reframe art the college already owned. By the time the renovated library opened in 2002, the committee had spent most of its budget and amassed an impressive collection of works by internationally recognized artists from many backgrounds, including several from Brooklyn.

Fortunately, the end of the “Percent for Art” money did not mean the end of the library’s art acquisition. Once the “Percent for Art” works were displayed, the library became seen as a place for art, and as Davis and Bridges wrote, “[o]nce a library gains a reputation for supporting art, opportunities seem to come out of the woodwork” (2001, p. 19). Artists and alumni soon began to donate works, and donations begot more donations,
which continue to this day. The collection now includes over 100 artworks, which enhance almost every space in the library.

**Not Just a Collection of Art, An Art Collection**

After acquiring the art, Deutch realized that the library had much more than an assortment of adornments. Rather, it had a cohesive collection of world-class art. Furthermore, because Brooklyn College does not have an art museum, the library art collection could perform some of the educational functions of a campus museum. Of course, the art collection does not magically transform the library into a museum, but it does make it a better, richer library.

In other words, she did not see the collection as a decorative destination. Rather, she saw it as an educational starting point, something that would stimulate curiosity, encourage careful looking, promote visual literacy, and supplement classroom learning. Also, for students who have been to few or no museums, it could serve as an introduction to the pleasures, challenges, and rewards of looking at and learning about art, including art that is not “pretty” or is in some way provocative. As Fitchett explained in her article about controversial art in libraries, art can “educate and enrich, as well as provoke and enrage,” and creating “a little stir” can be a sign of success (2002, pp. 10-11).

**Describing and Labeling the Art**

To encourage exploration of the art collection and understanding of the individual works, Deutch decided to write museum-style wall labels for the artworks. For this project, she teamed up with co-author Jill Cirasella, a science librarian with an interest in art. However, before we could write the wall labels, we had to make a lot of decisions: What to write? In how many words? On what kind of wall plaque? In what font?

Neither of us had experience writing wall labels, so we consulted Philip Yenawine’s *Writing for Adult Museum Visitors*, a guide to writing effective museum wall labels (2001). Yenawine offered excellent advice, including encouragements to keep the audience in mind, write short sentences in the active voice, and direct readers’ attention back to the art. He also recommended providing some basic facts, such as cultural or historical context, biographical information, quotations from the artist, or information about technique, but he warned against overwhelming readers with details, jargon, or theory.

We did not want to start writing without a template for the descriptions. First, we shopped for frames for the wall labels. We selected simple brushed aluminum frames that measure 6” x 6” and have clear covers that can be slid in and out, allowing the text to be easily replaced. We also purchased some matching frames in a smaller size, 4” x 6”, to use for works with very short descriptions.

Next, we agreed that in addition to descriptive text we would include these eight elements, considered essential by most museums: artist’s name, artist’s nationality, artist’s
birth year (and, if deceased, death year), title of work, year work was created, media, dimensions, and provenance. We then experimented with formatting and fonts, trying to strike a good balance between length of description and readability from a distance. Once we had a template we liked, we knew the descriptions could be approximately 100 words. Yenawine suggested keeping descriptions “well below” 100 words (p. 10), so the 100-word limit imposed by the template was perfect.

Yenawine’s guide gave us the confidence to start writing, and the knowledge that we could easily slide new descriptions into the frames prevented us from obsessing over each description. Once we started writing, we generated several dozen descriptions in just a couple of months. All the descriptions were written by the co-authors of this article, with Deutch tackling the more abstract and challenging pieces, as she has a master’s degree in art history. We wanted the descriptions to be as clear and readable as possible, so we agreed that each description should be seen by multiple sets of eyes. We edited each other’s writing, and a third librarian, known for her writing skills, did a final edit on all descriptions. Figure 1 shows a representative wall label.

John Walker
British, b. 1939

Clammer’s Marks, North Branch, 2003
Oil and mixed media on linen
96” x 84”
The Brooklyn College Library Collection. Purchased with Dormitory Authority of New York Art Acquisition Funds.

John Walker captures the ebb, flow, and changing light of a muddy cove near his home in Maine. His expressive brush strokes, dynamic composition, and freedom of execution evoke the feeling of a swirling tidal pool. Walker’s combination of materials, including mud, sand, and oil, creates gritty yet luminous textures. Explaining his use of these organic materials, Walker states: “It seemed obvious to get a bucket of [mud] and mix it in with the paint, to get the feel for how the tide comes in and out and the patterns that are caused by that constant changing tide on that particular cove where I work.”

Figure 1. Wall Label for Clammer’s Marks, North Branch by John Walker
After writing and mounting the wall labels, were we finished with the art? Had we done all we could to bring art to the college community and the college community to art? No, we agreed that we were not finished, that we could and should do more. Specifically, we wanted to supplement the collection with an online catalog and audio tour.

First, we had to decide whether we would create the online art catalog and audio tour entirely in-house, squeezing the work into our busy schedules, or hire contractors to make them for us. We met with the college’s grants officers and discussed funding possibilities, including applying for grants and asking local businesses for financial support. We then talked to two companies that create audio tours for museums, Acoustiguide and Antenna Audio. We knew that these companies would create more professional audio tours than we could by ourselves, but we would need a sizable grant in order to afford their services.

We did not want the creation of the online art catalog and audio tour to hinge on funding, and we did not want to put the projects on hold while applying for grants, itself a time-intensive activity. We decided that the surest way to complete these projects in a timely fashion was to tackle them ourselves. The Brooklyn College Library includes the college’s academic technology unit, Academic Information Technologies, which employs a Web developer and other technology staff. They could make the online art catalog and take care of the technological aspects of the audio tour. We also persuaded a friendly speech professor with an engaging, resonant voice to do the readings for the audio tour.

Next, we had to decide on the content of the online catalog and audio tour. Would we reuse the descriptions from the wall labels or create additional text, as Acoustiguide or Antenna Audio would have done? Both because we had many job responsibilities in addition to the art projects and because we believed that very few people would choose to experience the art in more than one way, we agreed to reuse the wall label descriptions in the online catalog and audio tour. Instead of offering three sets of content, we would offer three delivery methods, which viewers could choose from based on their preferences and learning styles. With these important decisions made, we could get started. We created the online catalog first and began work on the audio tour as the catalog neared completion.

Creating the Online Art Catalog

We decided that we wanted our online art catalog to look, feel, and function much like the Museum of Modern Art’s online catalog, which was simply designed and easy to navigate. MoMA’s online catalog has since changed, but the version we admired can be seen at http://replay.waybackmachine.org/20051230082412/http://www.moma.org/collection/. We communicated our wishes to the Web developer, and in just a few months he and his staff created the Library Art Collection Management System (LACMS), a Web-based
system to store and display information about the works in the art collection. They were able to create the LACMS so quickly because it was a spin-off of another system they had made, the Subject Resource Management System (SRMS). The SRMS (which has now evolved into the more powerful, more multipurpose Web Information Management System (WIMS)) managed and generated the content for the library’s “resources by subject” Web pages.

The LACMS consists of a user interface and an administrative module. The user interface is the publicly browsable online art catalog (see Figures 2 and 3), accessible at http://dewey.brooklyn.cuny.edu/library/art/. The administrative module allows library faculty and staff to add and edit information about the artworks (see Figure 4). These updates, which can be done from any computer and require only the slightest knowledge of HTML, are immediately reflected in the user interface.

Figure 2. “List View” in the User Interface of the LACMS.
Figure 3. “Single Work View” in the User Interface of the LACMS
The core technologies behind the LACMS are Microsoft SQL Server 2005, which serves as a relational database management system, and the PHP scripting language, which is used to retrieve and manipulate data and generate HTML for catalog pages. Microsoft SQL Server 2005 was already being used successfully for other library projects, including the SRMS. It had originally been selected for those projects because it provides reliable data storage and offers an excellent assortment of analysis, reporting, and management tools. Although the Java programming language had been used in other library database projects, the Web developer chose PHP for this project because it is easy to learn and use, which allowed him to bring part-time staff into the project.

Once the LACMS was created, we had to populate it with information about the art. For the most part, we used the information from the wall labels, but for each work we added an indication of the work’s location and an image. It was easy to add a location field, but it was quite tricky to get good digital images of the works.

We had high-quality reproductions of some of the works—slides or photographs we had received with the works—but most of the pieces needed to be photographed. Many of these works are behind glass, and although photographing through glass is very challenging, we did not want to remove items from their frames. We asked the library’s resident photography expert to do her best to take in-focus photographs that replicate the colors and capture the textures of the works. She took many shots of each work and
succeeded in producing many clear photographs, but in some cases the glass caused reflections or diminished sharpness.

Of course, unless a work of art is in the public domain, the artist or artist's estate retains copyright of the work. However, whenever we purchased a work or received a deed of gift for a donated work, we secured permission to create images of the work for educational purposes. Therefore, we were free to add images to the catalog as long as we gave appropriate copyright attributions.

Once we had populated the LACMS with descriptions and images, we asked an intern to search the library catalog for books about artists represented in the art collection. She also searched the Web for artists’ Web pages, information about current and past exhibitions, and other relevant sites. To make the art catalog as educational and rich as possible, we added links in the LACMS to those books and sites. We continue to add links as we identify relevant books and websites.

Just as we keep the content current, the Web developer maintains the LACMS technically—backing up code and data, etc. However, because the LACMS is one of several related homegrown systems, its maintenance is an indistinguishable part of the maintenance of the cluster of systems. Aside from occasionally fixing a bug and periodically running a script that creates a static version of the art catalog that can be viewed when the server is down, the developer spends little time specifically on the LACMS.

Creating the Audio Tour

Next, with the assistance of two staff members from Academic Information Technologies, we created the audio tour. They visited the office of the speech professor who had agreed to be the voice of the collection and recorded him reading the descriptions of 20 significant works. They then cleaned up the recording and separated it into clips, one per artwork. Finally, they uploaded the clips to the online art catalog, where they play seamlessly in an embedded Flash MP3 player.

We also wanted to make the audio clips available on a portable device that would allow patrons to listen while looking at the original works, not just digital reproductions. Our first thought for a device was an iPod, which has an intuitive interface familiar to many people, but we worried about theft. We agreed that we needed to use a less popular MP3 player, something less likely to be stolen. We identified an inexpensive MP3 player that suited our needs, loaded it with the audio clips, and made it available, in exchange for an ID card, at the circulation desk. We also made a brochure with instructions for operating the MP3 player and maps indicating artwork locations.

We have not kept circulation statistics for the MP3 player or assessed users’ reactions to it, but we know it has not been heavily used. Perhaps those who prefer to learn by listening do their listening in the online art catalog; perhaps there is not much interest in the audio versions of the descriptions; or perhaps we have not sufficiently informed patrons of the player's availability. No matter the reason, we still want to offer a way to lis-
ten to the descriptions while looking at the works themselves, and we will continue to make the MP3 player available. We will also better advertise its availability.

Encouraging Students to “Discover the Museum Inside the Library”

In 2008, we had completed the wall labels, online art catalog, and audio tour, and we wanted to make the college community aware of them. We also wanted to attract fresh attention to the artworks themselves, which had been adorning the library’s walls for several years but had never been celebrated with an official unveiling or gallery-style opening.

We decided to publicize the art collection and its associated projects by sponsoring a student art contest. We invited students to submit artistic responses to works of art in the library. Submissions could be paintings, drawings, sculptures, poems, musical compositions, films, or any other form of art. Welcoming all media made the contest accessible to many students, not just visual artists, which broadened the appeal of the contest and thus the impact of the art collection. We also wanted to increase the allure of the contest by offering a significant prize. Thanks to the generosity of two art professors, we were able to offer two $500 prizes, one to an undergraduate student and one to a graduate student.

We advertised the contest with posters and mass emails inviting students to “Discover the Museum Inside the Library” (see Figure 5). Even though we do not aspire to be a museum, we liked the tagline for its clarity, conciseness, and catchiness. Also, we hoped the tagline would speak not only to potential contest entrants but also to anyone who would appreciate being made aware of the art collection.
Figure 5. Posters Advertising the Library Art Contest

Our advertising strategy proved effective: we received 90 submissions, including paintings, photographs, sculptures, essays, poems, and musical compositions. A panel of judges, consisting of Deutch, an art professor, a music professor, and an English professor, spent the better part of a day considering the submissions. In the end, the panel selected one undergraduate winner, one graduate winner, and four honorable mentions. The winning undergraduate submission was an inventive collection of short imagined dialogues inspired by Alberto Giacometti’s Awaiting, an etching of two human figures. The winning graduate submission was a structurally complex musical response to Chakaia Booker’s Echoing Factors, an energetically looping sculpture made of rubber tires.

The 2008 contest engaged and inspired so many students that we decided to make the contest an annual event—an annual opportunity to call attention to the art collection, encourage student creativity, and strengthen relationships with faculty from other departments. In 2009, 2010, and 2011, we repeated the contest, again offering $500 prizes, again assembling panels of faculty judges, and again marveling at the submissions. (After the inaugural contest in 2008, the library assumed responsibility for funding the prizes.) The winning entries and honorable mentions for all four contests are viewable in the online art catalog, and future honorees will be featured there as well.
We solicited feedback from the contest entrants, and they were clearly as delighted with the contest as we in the library were. One student responded, “I found the Library Art Award contest stimulating because it had both healthy limitations (the art available in the Brooklyn College Library), and completely encouraged participants to explore a specific site more deeply. I think it's important for art to do both, in general, and it's good when art prizes reflect those values.” Another student called the contest “fantastic,” adding: “To consider a completed work in this way served as a great chance to deconstruct the art work and to reimagine it without the constraint of the chosen medium by the original artist.” A third student commented on the high quality of the submissions, saying that the contest elicited “amazing response pieces.”

The contest has presented some challenges, too. For example, some students have submitted works that they happened to have on hand and clearly did not create for the contest. Some of these students have attempted to relate their pre-existing creations to works in the art collection, but these after-the-fact explanations tend to be transparent. In the contest instructions and rules, which were available on the library's website and at all public service desks in the library, we specified that submissions must be responses to works in the library art collection. In the future, we need to find a way of communicating this requirement even more clearly. (See Appendix for full contest instructions.)

Also, in 2008 and 2009, we held receptions at which we announced and celebrated the winning works and honorable mentions. The receptions, which attracted many of the entrants, were bustling and buzzing with anticipation. However, very few honorees attended in either year, even though we contacted them and urged them to attend. Therefore, we decided to discontinue the receptions.

Around the time we launched the first contest, a librarian who wanted to make the library’s website friendlier and more interactive suggested that we add commenting capabilities to the online art catalog. We liked the idea of offering an online comment book, similar to the physical comment books many art galleries make available to their visitors. Our Web programmer quickly added commenting capabilities, both for commenting on individual works and for commenting on the collection as a whole. To prevent comment spam, we require commenters to complete a CAPTCHA (http://www.captcha.net/), and we moderate comments as well.

We unveiled the comment book when we announced the 2008 contest winners. We sent an all-campus email congratulating the winners and encouraging the college community to note in the comment book how the collection inspires them. Over time, students, alumni, and others have left comments, most of them admiring and appreciative of the art. However, the comment book has not become the vibrant feature we hoped it would be—as of May 25, 2011, there are only 30 comments. Aware that it may be better not to have a comment book than to have a stagnant one, we may remove the feature from the catalog.
Lessons Learned and Future Plans

As we step back and take stock, we are pleased not only with the outcome of the art-related projects but also with the process. Originally our motive for doing the work in-house was to keep costs down. Now we see that doing so was also beneficial to the projects. For example, if we had hired a contractor to make the online art catalog, our access to that person would have been limited, and we probably would not have had much ability to change the catalog after the end of the contract. But because it was made entirely in-house, we can and do make changes, revisit decisions, etc.

Of course, we face some challenges as well. As mentioned above, some of our offerings, namely the MP3 player and online comment book, have not been especially popular, and we are considering what to do about the lack of interest, leaning toward giving the MP3 player a promotional push and discontinuing the online comment book. Also, we are grappling with how to communicate more clearly that contest entrants must respond to a work of art in the library art collection, not just submit any work of art.

One issue is both very exciting and very sensitive: donations. We greatly appreciate donations, but in order to maintain the overall quality of the collection, we must review every potential donation to determine if it harmonizes with the rest of the collection. Deutch reviews the works, often soliciting input from the original art acquisition committee and others. Occasionally, she refuses an offer, which requires finesse and diplomacy, especially when the donor is a Brooklyn College alumnus/a or staff member. Also, we neither allow donors to dictate where we install their donations nor promise that a work will remain in a particular location. This policy gives us flexibility now and in the future regarding how prominently we display different works.

The library’s art offerings have been enhanced not only by donations but also by the creation of a gallery for temporary exhibitions. After completing most of our work on the projects based on the permanent art collection, we cleared and repainted the walls of a first-floor computer area, allowing it to do double duty as computer lab and art gallery. The space has large expanses of wall that are conducive to displaying art and, thanks to the computers, many visitors. We use the gallery to showcase accomplished local and alumni artists, displaying an individual artist’s works for several months at a time. As with the donations, Deutch coordinates the gallery shows.

The art collection has inspired a rich assortment of projects, and we are not finished: there are two more projects we hope to undertake. First, we would like to interview artists about their works and add clips from these interviews to the online art catalog and audio tour. Because some of the artists are based in Brooklyn, we can ask some of them to visit us for an interview or perhaps a public talk. Second, we would like to add a MARC record for each artwork to the library catalog. Doing so would allow students to discover our artworks without having to visit the online art catalog. For example, it is quite conceivable that a student could be researching Georges Braque or William Kentridge without knowing that the artist is represented in our art collection. Discover-
ing the artist’s work in the library catalog and looking at the work in person would undoubtedly enrich such a research project.

Over the past decade, many people have poured their time and talents into the art collection and its associated projects. Our goal was first to create a wonderful collection and then to enrich the collection to maximize its visibility, appeal, and impact. We feel that we have succeeded on both counts, though there is more we want to do. One sign of our success is the fact that the collection is being used in ways that we did not orchestrate—it has transcended us and now has a life of its own. For example, many faculty now incorporate the art into their assignments or bring their classes to the library to study and discuss the art. Also, the Early Childhood Center, the laboratory school for Brooklyn College’s School of Education, brings its young students to view the art. Just as we had hoped, the collection has become not just an adornment but an attraction.
Appendix: Rules for 2011 Art Award

1. The prize is open to all Brooklyn College undergraduate and graduate students who possess a valid ID. The prize is $500 for the undergraduate student winner and $500 for the graduate student winner.

2. Your name, telephone number, address, e-mail, and the artist and the title of the work of art in the library you are responding to must be attached to your submission. Joint submissions should include this information for each person. If a joint entry is awarded, the prize money will be divided equally among the persons listed on the information sheet attached to the submitted entry.

3. Each person may submit only one entry.

4. Submissions may be presented in any medium: essays, poems, short stories, musical compositions, photography, and artwork (still or moving) are welcome.

5. The submission should be sent electronically to Prof. Miriam Deutch, miriamd@brooklyn.cuny.edu. Works on canvas/paper, sculptures, or other media should be brought to Library Room 412 between 9am and 5pm on Mondays through Thursdays or between 9am and 1pm on Fridays.

6. All entries must be received by January 31, 2011.

7. Works will be judged by a panel of judges, including two faculty members from the Library as well as faculty members from the departments of Art, Music, and English.

8. The judges’ decision is final.

9. The awards will be announced in March 2011.
References


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