

## ***The New Art Museum Library - Introduction***

The *New Art Museum Library* addresses the issues facing today's art museum libraries through a series of scholarly essays written by top librarians in the field. In 2007, the publication, *Art Museum Libraries and Librarianship*, edited by Joan Benedetti, was the first of its kind to solely focus on the field of art museum librarianship. In the decade since then, many changes have occurred in the field--both technological and ideological--prompting the need for a follow-up publication. In addition to representing current thinking and practice, this new publication also addresses the need to clearly articulate and define the art museum library's value within its institution.

As the essays in this volume illustrate, libraries continue along a path of radical exploration, experimentation and self-examination in the face of a rapidly changing information landscape. Traditional functions of the library including stewardship and providing access are now facets of ever-expanding library work. Embracing changes in technology, research and the information landscape, many libraries have positioned themselves at the nexus of digital preservation, access and research within their communities. For academic libraries this transition is often undertaken as part of larger institutional initiatives in support of digital humanities and new media curriculums. While art museum libraries are as passionate and aware of the need to remain relevant and vibrant contributors to their institutions, as their academic counter-parts, a wave a closures and downsizing over the last decade have made this pivot more complicated. This publication is needed to document the broad changes in the environment that art museum libraries now function within and to celebrate the many innovative initiatives that are flourishing in this new landscape.

Building on the foundation of the 2007 publication *Art Museum Libraries and Librarianship*, this new volume examines how the dramatic technological transformations and ideological shifts in art museums has impacted art museum libraries. Taken in total this publication provides an inspiring look into the work of today's art museum librarians with essays exploring innovative digital initiatives, creative programing, capacity building within the profession and successful collaborations that librarians have developed in order to tackle projects beyond their individual means. Contributors to this publication explored individual projects and were asked to expand beyond the boundaries of their institutions and also examine similar projects and initiatives across the country and even globally. The most innovative and forward looking projects explored in this volume are collaborative – either with other art museum libraries or partners outside of our professions. Art museum libraries, like the museum's they support, are thinking broadly about their audiences, object-based learning and about the needs of researchers in the age of Digital Art History. Essays in this volume explore proactive initiatives designed to keep art libraries relevant with a focus on art museum libraries that are taking risks to anticipate what researchers will need in the future.

*The New Art Museum Library* is divided into several sections, each including multiple essays: Collections, Collections Access, Archives, Technical Services, Visual Resources, Personnel Management, Marketing, Collaboration, Recent Developments, and a concluding section which addresses the future of art museum libraries, decolonization work that integrates racial equity and social justice work into library practice, skills for the next generation, training, and continuing education.

This text will be used by graduate Library and Information Science programs in teaching art librarianship, humanities reference, and special libraries courses, among others. It will also be a useful tool for new practitioners--many of whom may be solo librarians and not have other librarian colleagues on site--covering subjects that address the depth and breadth of many art museum libraries' services and collection management topics. It will further be useful to those practitioners whose positions have been expanded or changed and are looking for guidance.

Art museum librarianship is an exciting and rewarding field. The art museum library continues to expand its traditional boundaries and transform the institution which it serves. *The New Art Museum Library* aims to expose the vitality in the field, for those considering the profession and for those who have made art museum librarianship their career.

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This edited volume has been contributed to and supported by many individuals in this critical development phase, in addition to the writers who have contributed essays we would like to thank Lauren Gottlieb-Miller, Judy Dyki, Douglas Litts and Caroline Dechert who have provided essential guidance and advice in this initial phase.