Enhancing Educational Access to Art

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School of Information

Blanton Museum of Art
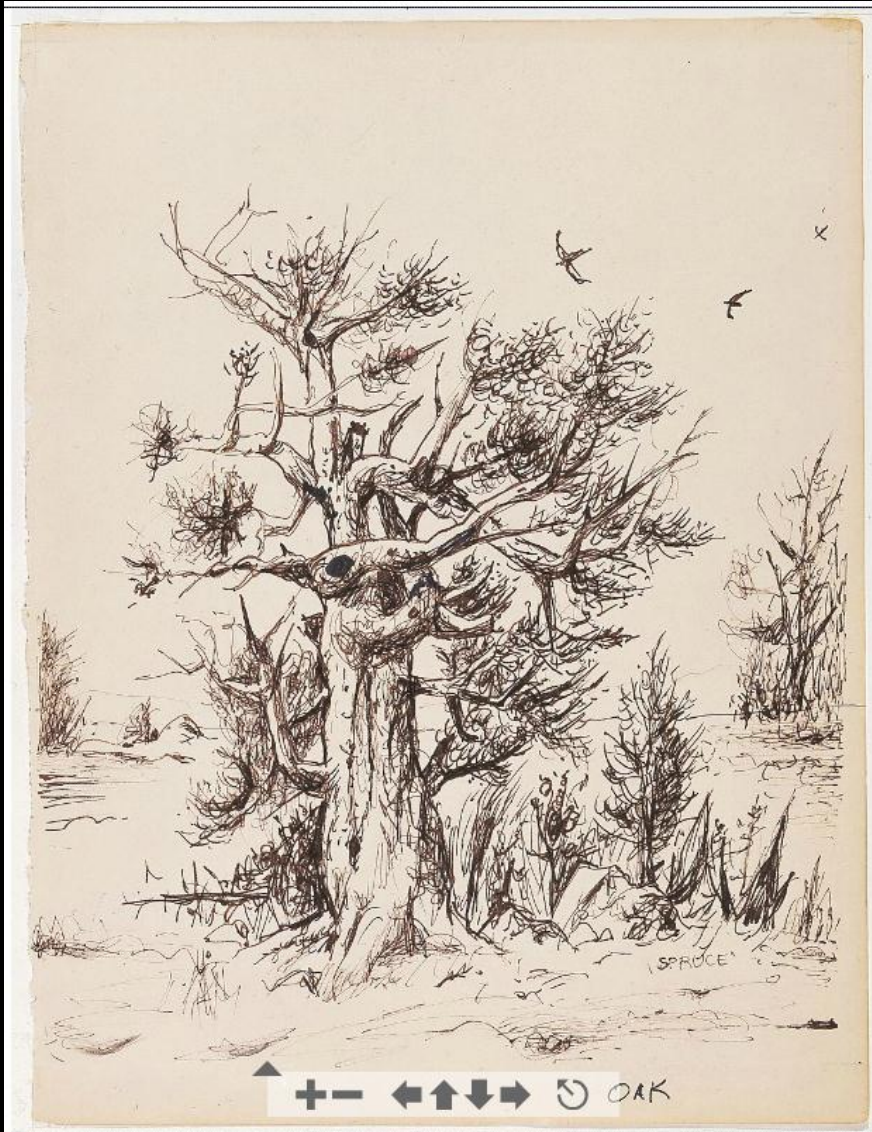
The University of Texas at Austin

Blanton Museum

… enriches and transforms the lives of learners of all ages by providing inspiring and relevant experiences with original works of art …

Prints and Drawings

- Nationally recognized
- ~13,000
- Wide use on campus

Collection Management

- Extensive metadata
- Inconsistencies introduced over time
- Created by museum professionals
- Proprietary schema
- For museum staff and patrons
- Available within the museum

Web Interface

- Emb[...]
- Impr[...]
- Limit[...]d se[...]

Problems

- Low visibility
- Access through history or social memory
- Burden on Blanton staff
- Disassociated description
  - Museum professionals
  - Instructional goals
- Underutilization of collection

Approach

- Interview instructors to identify needs and challenges
- Use a standards-based, open-source infrastructure
  - Schema
  - Software
- Improve user access
  - Software
  - Relevance of metadata content

Instructor Interviews - Design

- Excellent record-keeping
  - Instructors, courses, prints
- Four instructors
- Different disciplines
  - Studio art
  - French
  - Architecture
- Use the collection regularly
- Semi-structured interviews

Interview Topics

- Courses
- Topics covered
- Significance of the collection in context of the topic
- Selection of prints
- Desired criteria for selection
- Other sources used
- Description of sample prints

Instructor Responses

- Courses
  - Roman Paris
- Topics covered
  - Artists in Cities
  - Printmaking as a form of protest
- Collection significance in context
  - Connection to history
  - Dialog with curators
- Selection of prints
  - Ask a curator
  - Past exhibits
  - Prints used in prior courses

Instructor Responses

- Desired criteria for selection
  - Content (columns, Christ, prison)
  - Time period
  - Style period (Mannerist, Early Renaissance, Baroque)
  - Materials
  - State
  - Artist
- Other sources used
  - NGA, MoMA, Google Images, ArtStor

Description of Sample Prints

- Description
  - historical layering, sculpture, rondelles, tondos, tension between landscape & architecture in Rome
- Tags
  - ruin, antique, pastoral, forum, columns, Corinthian fluted columns
- Tag categories
  - sculptural elements, architectural elements

Description of Sample Prints

- Description
  - line quality, unique approach to printing, "painting with the ink", drama, narrative, light, effortlessness

- Tags
  - figurative work, multi-figurative, Christ, religious, narrative, narration, action, activity, light, representational, drama

- Tag categories
  - genres of art; symbols; geography

Search for a Descriptive Schema

- Dublin Core
  - Open standard
  - Wide support
  - Too generic
- Custom Schema
  - Perfect fit
  - Lack of interoperability (silo)
- CDWA
  - Open standard (Getty)
  - Designed for artworks
  - Balance between flexibility and interoperability

Infrastructure

- DSpace, FEDORA
  - Wide adoption
  - Bare bones presentation
  - Sharp learning curve
- CollectiveAccess
  - Easy installation
  - Decent look-and-feel
  - Script-based customization
  - Built-in support for social media

Prototype

CollectiveAccess

Artwork Detail

Next Steps

- Feedback from Blanton Staff and instructors
- Populate the collection to serve one course
- Enable instructors to add metadata
  - Not just tags
- Investigate social metadata issues
  - Authority of museum curators
  - Value addition in education
- Iterate and reiterate…
- Multi-use, multi-audience artwork repository

Come see our poster!

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