

---

## Guest Editorial: Embedded Libraries and Archives in Museums

We tend to think of libraries, archives, and museums as separate types of collections-based or cultural heritage institutions—but what happens to a library or archive when it is established or incorporated *into* a museum? This special issue explores some of the challenges and opportunities of work in a museum library or archive, with an eye to what makes work from within the context of museums different from working within other types of libraries and archives, and to communicating our work more effectively to our many publics and administrators.

We include essays that address outreach and exhibitions, archival description in museums, linked open data, artist-in-residence programs, film collections, labor practices, and working within indigenous communities, as overviewed below, drawing from professional experiences in the United States, Canada, Iran, and Germany. All are written with a focus on what makes a library or archive in a museum unique:

### How Museums Shape Film Archives

In *The Founding of Film in Museums*, Peyton Moriarty explores how the philosophical underpinnings of museum work have shaped the development of film archives and libraries within museums, with a focus on the MoMA Film Library in New York City. Moriarty highlights how a museum's focus on public access and education can be in tension with the niche interests of a film archive or library, and yet how essential these library and archival collections are for the public impact of museums—and as a record of the museum's own history.

### Outreach as a Museum Library

In *Once Again, from the Beginning: Reinventing the Museum Library*, Deborah E. Brown Stewart considers how a library embedded within a university museum can conduct outreach to museum staff and to a wider campus community. In pointing to issues of colonialism and complicated collections, Brown Stewart nods to how museum libraries and archives find themselves entangled in the questions of the current political moment, balancing the desire for a positive social impact with the need to serve as an enduring record of a museum's complicated collecting and exhibiting pasts.

### Archival Description in a Museum World

In *Bridging the Gap: Integrating Archival Descriptive Best Practices in an Item-Level Dominated Museum Culture*, Kelli Bogan explores the challenges of communicating how and why archival collections are managed at a collection level to museums who organize collections at an item level. Bogan teases out differences in best practices between archives and museums, and ways that these collections could be reconnected via technical systems, cross-references, and controlled

vocabularies. Her article aims to document these challenges in a way that a museum administrator can understand, making this a useful tool for librarians and archivists seeking to communicate the value of their approach to a museum audience.

### **Linked Data in Museum Libraries and Archives**

In the article *Museum Libraries in Germany: Building Bridges between Archives, Libraries and Museums by Using Standardized Data and Authority Files*, Bettina Gierke and Margret Schild describe the efforts to improve linked data in museum, libraries and archives in Germany, using the skills of museum librarians to bridge museum object collections and standardized data and data services. With the example of a German arts consortium, the authors show how standards and authority files have made it easier to link varied data types and to discover new aspects, connections and to fill gaps. Through this work, they've established a community of practice to exchange ideas on issues such as mapping vocabularies, software for collection management, barriers to use by the museum and collections community, the requirements of consulting services for museums, and the need for additional further training for qualified staff.

### **The Squaxin Island Museum Library and Research Center: A Report from the Field of Tribal Libraries and Museums**

Sandy Littletree and Charlene Krise's article on an indigenous library in a tribal museum offers a case study of an indigenous community working to replace the settler narrative of their tribal history with indigenous perspectives and knowledge. With well-curated library collections, an in-house publishing program, and an intentional building design that highlights the library's presence within the museum, the Squaxin Island Museum Library and Research Center, mirrors tribal practices and priorities, and offers a model for museum libraries to strive for teaching and learning that is holistic and relational.

### **Artists in Residence at Museum Libraries**

Amy Furness and Paola Poletto contribute an article on the genesis of an artists-in-residence program within a Canadian art museum, and how the museum's library was able to engage deeply with the program to guide the artists in their work. The authors take an interdisciplinary approach, weaving together library and archival science, museum studies, and fine arts practice. They offer new perspectives on how artist residencies can enrich both libraries and museums through innovative uses of space and resources in support of artistic creation.

### **Exhibiting Library Manuscripts in Museums**

In *Manuscripts from Library to Museum*, Mahsa Fardhosseini and Marzieh Morshedi consider the links between the library and museum sides of the Malek National Library and Museum Institution (MNLMI) in Tehran, Iran, with an eye to how archival manuscripts are used in museum exhibitions, and to the challenges of managing a library and a museum side by side within one institution.

### **Highlighting the Labor of Museum Librarians and Archivists**

In *Organizers of Museum History*, Mary Margaret Lea and Celia Emmelhainz emphasize the important work of librarians and archivists, and particularly the work of women, in organizing the anthropological materials in the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnology. Lea and Emmelhainz argue that librarians and archivists often serve as the hidden 'glass shoulders' on which museum curators and administrators build their careers, and highlight the ways in which both women and men have worked to continually advocate for the value of libraries and archives—and librarians and archivists—within the museum context.

As editors, we have appreciated working with these authors to explore the range of ways that archives and libraries can operate within museums of all kinds, illuminating diverse collections, spotlighting museum history, and embodying the core principles of access and discoverability. We hope with continued research and reporting on the work in these important areas, museum libraries and archives will continue to preserve the legacy of their institutions, foster collaboration, and allow research in our cultural landscape to thrive.

Anne Evenhaugen and Celia Emmelhainz,  
Guest Editors  
June 2024