One library’s quick response to QR technology for the arts

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Abstract

The University of Guelph McLLaughlin Library has its own art collection and also displays over 100 works on permanent loan from the campus MacDonald Stewart Art Centre. In recent years the library has created a large public space on the main floor utilized as a Town Square, a place of interaction between the community and the academic and scholarly endeavours of the university. Among many public activities this space has been used to host various art exhibits which often include tours of the library art collection. Librarians at the University of Guelph are committed to promoting our collection to support academic programs and provide access to original art to community users. We are presently engaged in a project to use QR labelling technology to increase the visibility of and accessibility of our art collection. This enhanced labelling links viewers to online artists' biographical information and will open the collection to faculty for teaching purposes and provide enriched learning opportunities for students to engage with both historical and contemporary art. Access for local artists and community visitors will also benefit from this approach to experiencing our art collection. This poster addresses the practical considerations of QR labelling a collection, the technology, expertise, and resources required and cost in materials and time. Information is provided to illustrate collection promotion opportunities with the use of QR codes for enhanced self guided tours of and examples are given of ways to incorporate QR collection information into academic art history and appreciation courses.
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• **ART AS EXPERIENCE**: Promoting art as a learning experience for students and campus visitors through exposure to both historical and contemporary original works with QR code enhanced self guided tours.

• **TECHNOLOGY FOR LEARNING**: Using new and innovative QR code technology with targeted web information to support learning opportunities in the arts for students and increasing visibility and access to the art collection for use in coursework.

• **COMMUNITY BUILDING**: Providing connections to community-based resources supported by working artists in the Guelph region who can benefit from our resources.

• **LIBRARY AS PLACE**: Web presence enhances access and increases discoverability of our physical art and book collections for all online visitors.

• **EVENTS**: Showcasing creative endeavours in the library Town Square – providing a local forum for discussion – connecting creators with audiences through exhibits and interactive labelling.

**BENEFITS:**
The University of Guelph Library has its own art collection and also displays over 100 works on permanent loan from the campus Macdonald Stewart Art Centre. Librarians at the University of Guelph are committed to promoting this collection to support academic programs and to providing opportunities for the public to interact with original art and artists via community engagement activities and technology enabled access.

We are presently completing a project to use QR labelling technology to increase the visibility of and accessibility of our art collection. This enhanced labelling with the accompanying website of artists biographical information will open the collection to use by faculty for teaching, to students for learning, offer enrichment and exposure to both historical and contemporary art, and provide better access to local artists and community visitors.

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS:**
• Use QR technology to integrate original art with other pieces found in Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, the Library’s Archives collections as well as book and electronic research resources
• Enriching the catalogue record with pictures of the art collection.
• Web pages to serve as a portal to promote campus events and initiatives relevant to Fine Arts researchers, faculty and local working artists.

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