

Landscape of Art Exhibition Access & Discovery

Calley Morrison, MLIS
calley.morrison@gmail.com

The Project

- Exhibitions are ephemeral events that must be documented and archived in order to provide future access to the valuable research around artworks, artists, and subject matter of the show. Like other library materials, the exhibition-as-resource should receive the same level of access and discovery.
- One of my main goals was to better understand two of the stakeholders in exhibition-focused research: researchers who seek these resources and exhibiting organizations and institutions who provide them.

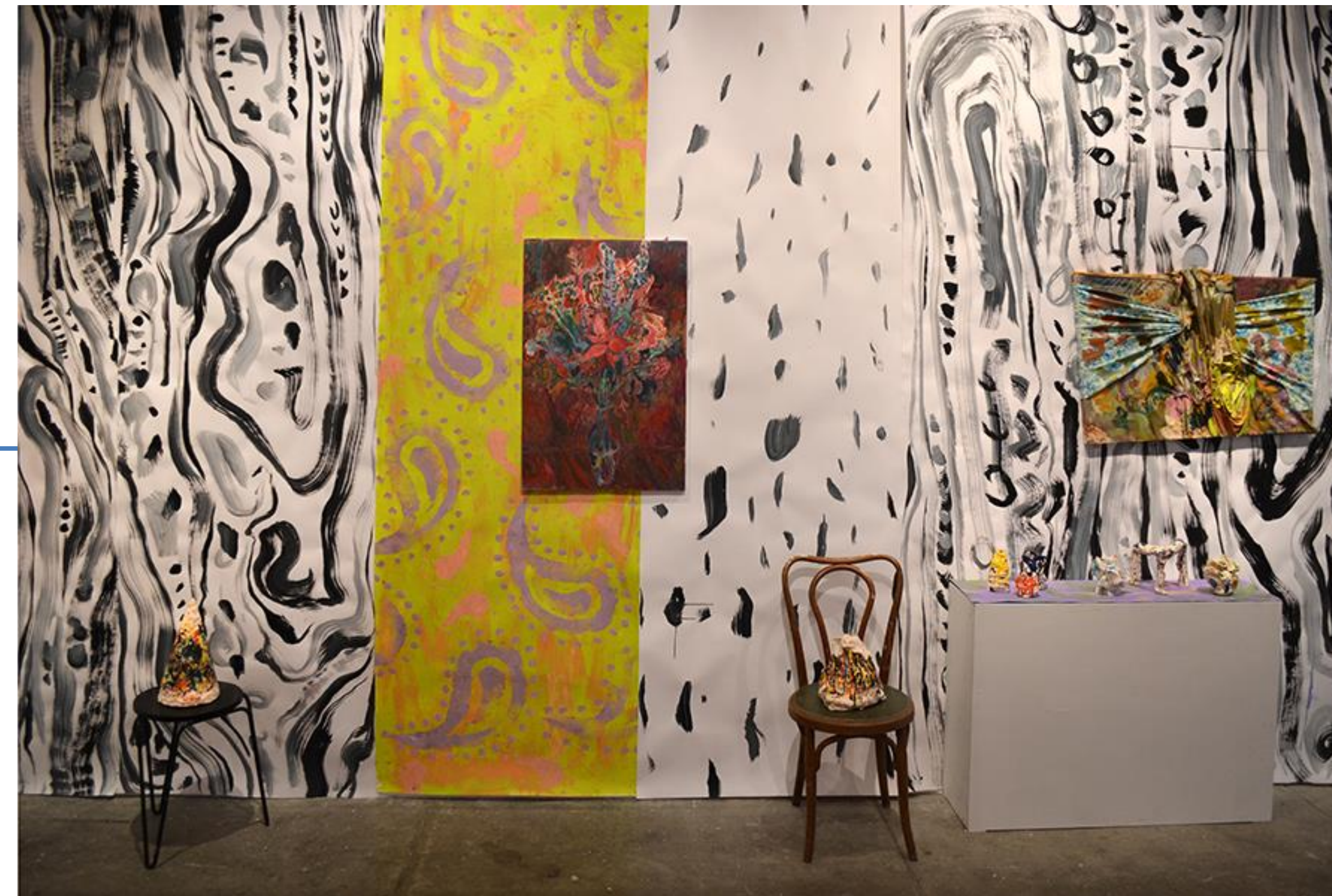
Current Model of Exhibition Access & Discovery

The Exhibition

An exhibition occurs, the documentation of its existence and any related programs become the resources that serve as the methods for present-day access.



Bed Bath & Between. (installation views). SOIL Gallery. 2015.
Artists: Julie Alexander, Katrin Bremermann, Maria Britton, Dawn Cerny, Terry Green, Margie Livingston, Nicholas Nyland, Matthew Offenbacher, Mathieu Wernert. Curated by: Julie Alexander, Nicholas Nyland

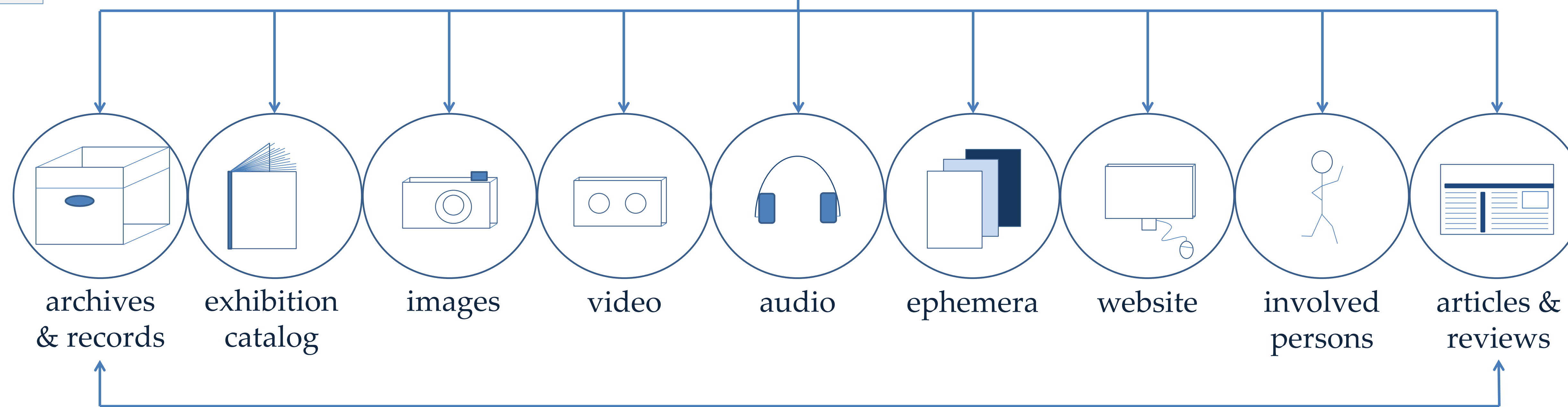


Research & Process

- Consultation of literature examining the exhibition from several perspectives -- its design, impact, publications, implications, history, and more.
- Conversations and surveys with 5 researchers and 6 librarians to understand some of the types of research questions that require an exhibition-focused approach and the resources that facilitate this line of questioning.
- Collaboration with the SOIL gallery to understand the facilitation of exhibition-focused research from an exhibiting institution's point of view, by organizing and fact-checking past exhibition information.

Access

An exhibition might have one, none, or many different methods of access. This is wholly dependent upon the exhibiting institution's decision and abilities to be able to document and organize their exhibition history.



When the exhibition is already a **known** entity, the researcher uses the available access method(s).

Discovery

Word-of-Mouth
Internet wormholes
Library catalog
Amidst other research

When the exhibition is an **unknown** entity, the researcher must first discover the exhibition before choosing an access method(s).

Researcher

Outcome & Next Steps

- There are lines of questioning within art and art historical research that would greatly benefit from having more uniform access and discovery of past exhibitions. While many exhibiting institutions have found their own solutions for providing access to their past exhibitions, the current solutions tend to fall short of some researcher's needs.

The field would greatly benefit from:

- A tool that would allow for discovery across subject matter and institutions, like a database or index.
- Updated research on the information-seeking behavior of researchers in the field of art and art history.
- A standardized method of access to past exhibitions or standards for exhibition archiving and documentation.