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.

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.

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.

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