Connexions module: m13906

## A CONSORTIUM FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY ONLINE\*

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Journals do not at present have the capability to launch a major initiative in electronic publication. Surviving on skeletal budgets, they lack the financial resources to expand their operations and the inhouse expertise to undertake the dynamic digital extensions envisioned here. To move forward, journals would require start-up funds to work through the design, editorial and preservation questions, establish a sustainable business plan, and roll out the initiative: in concrete terms, two journals, two grants, two duplicate sets of problem solvers.

Art history might learn from the collaborative approach developed in other fields. The pioneer was Project MUSE<sup>1</sup>, which provides current online editions of more than 300 journals. The aggregative approach was successfully pursued by the American Historical Association<sup>2</sup> and the Organization of American Historians<sup>3</sup> , which formed the History Cooperative<sup>4</sup> in 2000 and joined with two scholarly publishers to disseminate a group of history journals electronically. In 2005 the American Anthropological Association<sup>5</sup> launched AnthroSource<sup>6</sup>, an online portal for a variety of full-text resources, including numerous scholarly journals in anthropology. Recognizing that a bundle of online publications is more valuable than a stand-alone one in e-publishing and that efficiencies can be achieved through collaboration, the appropriate approach for art and architectural history might be a partnership to create a shared online portal for scholarly journals and other text and image resources.

The founding partners could be the two major scholarly societies, the College Art Association<sup>7</sup> and the Society of Architectural Historians<sup>8</sup>. The portal would initially provide access to their full range of publications: 1) the scholarly journals, Art Bulletin and JSAH as well as CAA's other publications, Art Journal and caa.reviews; 2) the abstracts of the society's annual conferences; and 3) the society's newsletters. (SAH also publishes a major book series, The Buildings of the United States, which optimally would be part of this program, but it has contractual obligations elsewhere.) Over time, the venture might encompass third-party publications in art and architectural history, such as American Journal of Archaeology (which publishes its print journal simultaneously in online format), Artforum, Burlington Magazine, Master

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<sup>†</sup>http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> http://muse.jhu.edu/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>http://www.historians.org/ <sup>3</sup>http://www.oah.org/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>http://www.historycooperative.org/

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>http://www.aaanet.org/

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>http://www.collegeart.org/

<sup>8</sup> http://www.sah.org/

Connexions module: m13906 2

Drawings, October, and Print Quarterly, none of which are available online. Perhaps museums would wish to participate by sharing their bulletins.

ARTstor<sup>9</sup> might play a critical role in this venture: it is the major provider of digital images; it is poised to become a rights clearinghouse; and it has technical expertise in image display which could be extended to develop a proficient text-image viewer. The consortium partners would seek a nonprofit publisher to provide production and electronic hosting services, and the bundle of publications would be available by subscription. As a collection, the publications would gain more attention and reach a wider audience than each one would struggling for recognition on its own.

To summarize, the complexity of the task exceeds the ability and resources of the individual journals and scholarly societies. A collaborative approach would create efficiencies, leverage strengths, and expand rewards not only to art and architectural history, but to allied fields with an interest in the visual world.

 $<sup>^9 \</sup>mathrm{http://www.artstor.org/info/}$