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**BEYOND THE DISPLAY CASE:
THE CURRENT STATE OF EXHIBITIONS IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

A Thesis

Presented to

**The Faculty of the School of Library and Information Science
San Jose State University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Library and Information Science**

by

Kate Connell

May 1996

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ABSTRACT

BEYOND THE DISPLAY CASE: THE CURRENT STATE OF EXHIBITIONS IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

by Kate Connell

In the last 20 years the number of library exhibition programs has increased dramatically due in part to significant funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Library exhibitions have evolved from book displays to theme based educational exhibitions that are immensely varied in scope, style and presentation.

Specifically, the thesis explores these issues: the definition of public library exhibitions, recent exhibition controversies and their resolutions, the importance of exhibition policies, critical aspects of exhibition policies, a comparison of research and academic library exhibition practice to public library exhibition practice, and communication between public library exhibition programs.

Research indicates that in order to face future challenges library exhibition programs will need to devise mechanisms for sharing and exchanging information.

Thank you, Family

Thank you, Friends

Dr. Fisher and Dr. Tessier offered invaluable guidance through the thesis process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Introduction

In October of 1995, President Bill Clinton planned to host a reception for visiting world leaders at the New York Public Library (NYPL) in honor of the United Nation's 50th anniversary. However, the UN representative from China, President Jiang Zemin, refused to attend because the library's exhibition, "What Price Freedom?," included a hand-mimeographed flier made by Chinese students of the 1989 Tiannamen Square democracy movement. "Suddenly the Chinese document is the hot document of the library's collection of fifty million items," said Paul LeClerc, President and Chief Executive of the library (Sciolino, 1995, p. A12). In the end, President Clinton agreed to meet with Jiang Zemin elsewhere.

This dramatic response to the exhibition's content signaled the arrival of library exhibitions as political beasts. Throughout the country, as libraries have tried to expand their exhibitions beyond book displays behind glass, they've waded into controversial waters with few guides to help them navigate and limited resources to call upon. Libraries want to be relevant and to provoke reading and thought, but they are strapped for resources, limited by their own perspectives, and ambivalent about how to respond to the public's input about exhibitions. In the case of NYPL's exhibition, the President responded by agreeing to meet the Chinese official elsewhere and leaving the exhibit intact; yet around the country, libraries have had a myriad of responses to public feedback, from canceling exhibits to opening up the library for alternative exhibitions.

This paper will describe a few of the problems facing library exhibitions around the country and give suggestions on how libraries can make the most of the experiences of other libraries, the guidelines set by library associations, and resources in the libraries' own communities.

In the decades preceding the 1970s, library displays featured books or book jackets on bulletin boards or in display cases. Three dimensional objects and poster graphics pulled these displays together. What now constitutes a library exhibition varies greatly, from small exhibitions developed by librarians to huge blockbuster exhibitions employing seven curators and a large exhibition team such as "Rome Reborn: the Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture" at the Library of Congress (L.C.). Library exhibitions cover a broad range of subjects and are presented in many different forms and styles. In some cases, libraries have borrowed techniques from commercial displays and museum exhibitions.

Over the past 20 years, library exhibitions have grown rapidly, helped by significant funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and support from the American Library Association's (ALA's) Department of Public Programs. Library exhibitions will play a greater role in libraries during the next decade. Many new public library buildings such as those in Denver, Los Angeles, Miami, and Chicago have been built with significant exhibition spaces, and the original exhibition spaces in older library facilities such as the L.C., NYPL, and Boston Public Library have been remodeled in the last 10 to 15 years.

The rationale for the increase of library exhibitions is that an interesting exhibition can act as a magnet for old and new users; it can also serve library visitors with a broad range of reading skills. A 1990 report from the Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee of the Public Library Association (PLA) of the ALA underscored the need for exhibitions in public libraries, emphasizing their importance as a tool for drawing new users into the library and “steering regular users into new byways” (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990, p. 1).¹

But exhibitions are by no means ubiquitous in libraries around the country. In 1992 the ALA’s Department of Public Programs conducted a survey to determine the exhibition needs of public libraries. Results of the survey revealed that 64% of respondent libraries had current exhibition or display programs (ALA, Department of Public Programs, 1992).² Limiting the full development of library exhibitions are challenges facing all libraries in general. Libraries are struggling with how to increase access to library collections for new and regular users, how to compete with other pastimes for the discretionary time of users, how to integrate new information resources and technologies, and most importantly, how to meet the ever present challenge of funding. In many library systems, budgets have been cut, and even the NEH, a significant supporter of libraries, has recently had its funding dramatically cut. Libraries and by extension, exhibition programs, are courting and contending for new sources of support.

¹ This document will be referred to as the “PLA report.”

² This document will be referred to as the “ALA survey.”

Statement of the Problem

The current state of public library exhibitions is not adequately documented. Two journal articles (Saidenberg, 1991; Schull, 1985), the PLA report, and the ALA survey, are the only comprehensive sources on the subject. The lack of documentation inhibits the development of library exhibitions. There are not many ways for librarians to share information about exhibition programs for mutual development. The PLA report made four recommendations, two of which underscored the lack of available information and the need for sharing information about public library exhibition programs. Those two recommendations were: (1) the expansion of the ALA exhibitions database to include information about the availability of a variety of traveling exhibitions (not limited to ALA exhibitions) including a quarterly printout of information in the database and (2) an "exhibits clearinghouse" to share exhibition resources, materials and personnel information (ALA, PLA Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990, pp. 7-8).

Thesis Statement

The thesis of this paper is that library exhibitions can serve their institutions well. Effective library exhibitions are immensely varied. Exhibition programs need to share information for mutual development in order to survive and to serve as a vital tool for the library. To examine this thesis, this project will investigate the following questions:

- 1) What is a library exhibition?
- 2) What questions have exhibitions raised and how have they been resolved?

- 3) Can exhibition policies be useful? How? What are critical aspects of an exhibition policy?
- 4) What do public library exhibition programs look like?
- 5) What information about research and academic libraries can be of use to public library exhibition programs?
- 6) What challenges might public library exhibition programs face in the future?
- 7) What information about museum exhibitions can contribute to developing library exhibitions?
- 8) What does information about merchandising in the library offer library exhibition programs?

Definitions of Working Terms

Consulting ALA's 1984 glossary, the most recent edition, only "exhibition cases" and "display cases" are defined, indicating how much programs have developed from a time when these two terms defined the scope of library exhibits (Young, 1984, pp. 76, 88). These definitions are inadequate for this project. No single source provides a complete and accurate definition of library exhibitions or library displays. The following working definitions have been culled from those in the PLA report which were synthesized from the opinions of Thomas Phelps of the NEH and Diantha Dow Schull of Libraries for the Future, formerly of NYPL and the L.C. (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990, p. 1). **Library exhibitions** are educational. They are organized

around ideas and are intended to serve as a catalyst for further thought and they may seek to increase the use of the library and its resources. This project will adopt the use of the term exhibition rather than exhibits, following the examples of the ALA Office of Public Programs and the Smithsonian's Traveling Exhibition Program (SITES) which seek to distinguish library exhibitions from conference exhibits. Library exhibitions are distinct from **library displays**, which are a "visually pleasing array of books and related materials on a given theme or topic"; displays are not necessarily educational (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990, p. 1). Schull differentiates library exhibitions from museum exhibitions which are often the conclusion of an institutional effort. According to Schull, library exhibitions aim to be the initiation of an effort that is continued by the viewer. Museum exhibitions are organized around objects rather than ideas (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990). In the literature and in library documents, the terms exhibition, exhibit and display may be used interchangeably.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The focus of the literature review is to compile published information documenting the current state of public library exhibitions. Information about academic, museum and research libraries was examined for the purpose of comparing these exhibition programs to those of public libraries. To a lesser extent, this review investigated museum literature to determine what information from that discipline can be applied to the development of library exhibitions. This review also investigated other uses of visual devices in the library to draw in library users, to make the library's collection accessible, and to present information. The literature reviewed included journal articles which formed the bulk of the review, and a few monographs and essays. The types of literature covered were: library literature, including art library literature and academic library literature, archival literature, museum literature, art and art historical literature, and a few daily newspapers.

For the category of general library literature, 13 titles were reviewed; among them American Libraries, the publication of the American Library Association, was most useful. This publication is the source of the broadest coverage of library exhibitions. With a few exceptions, the articles are generally brief, unsigned, occasionally include a color photograph and do not point to other literature. The articles cover current issues, events and developments in exhibition programs, funding, censorship, and controversy. Wilson Library Bulletin, Bulletin ABO/OLA Bulletin (Canada), and Library Journal were also useful. Art Documentation was the most useful art library journal; its articles on library exhibitions are written with the art librarian and exhibition coordinator in

mind. In Art Documentation articles on library exhibitions occur on an annual basis and are sometimes abstracts of workshops held at the annual Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS) conference. Some articles include citations. Useful academic library literature included The Systems and Procedures Exchange Center's Exhibits in ARL Libraries (1987)³ and College and Research Library News. Most archival literature reviewed was published by the American Archivist Society. Museum News was the source of most museum literature. Museum literature includes many valuable guides to exhibition planning and installation and more recent literature examining the underpinnings of exhibition practice. Some museum education guides were reviewed. Articles in art journals generally consisted of reviews of library exhibitions.

Comprehensive Sources

Together, seven sources provide comprehensive information on library exhibition programs. With the exception of the article on a L.C. exhibition, all the materials are generated by sources in the business of producing library exhibitions. Diantha Dow Schull's "Shhh...owtime at the Library, Exhibitions Lend New Life to Old Institutions" (1985) and Susan F. Saidenberg's "Displaying our Wealth: Exhibitions Make an Auspicious Comeback" (1991) are two articles written at the respective times when each author managed the NYPL's Exhibitions Program. Schull and Saidenberg give the most comprehensive overviews of library exhibitions and the process of developing one kind of exhibition. Both survey current exhibition programs and report the perspectives of

³ This document will be referred to as the "ARL Spec Kit."

exhibition coordinators in different programs in public and research libraries, emphasizing public libraries. The recent expansion of library exhibitions is described as both physical and conceptual. Many new metropolitan libraries have exhibition spaces. Older libraries such as NYPL's central library, the L.C., and Boston Public Library have been renovated and their original exhibition spaces restored. The older buildings had been built with exhibition programs in mind; in fact, NYPL was conceived as a lyceum or cultural center. Schull (1985) notes that the development of library exhibitions in the last 20 years has not been adequately documented.

In discussing the purposes of library exhibitions, both Schull (1985) and Saidenberg (1991) emphasize the role of library exhibitions in making the library's collection accessible and making the library a stimulating place to learn. Both are of the opinion that library exhibitions serve to educate the public and also to stimulate reading because exhibition viewers become library users. Schull notes practical ways that exhibitions can encourage reading by including call numbers in exhibition labels and by creating bibliographies to accompany exhibitions. She describes the power of a library exhibition to stimulate a sense of community, giving the example of "Write on Chicago" at the Chicago Public Library that emphasized a sense of literary community in that city. Saidenberg sees exhibitions as illustrating links between different disciplines and providing viewers with "the tools to be lifelong learners" (Saidenberg, p. 129). She describes exhibitions as forums for presenting new scholarship. Saidenberg comments on

the importance of exhibitions that communicate information visually, "...with a generation of Americans now accustomed to receiving information visually, exhibitions can provide the necessary point of entry..." (Saidenberg, p. 132).

Schull (1985) and Saidenberg (1991) give an account of the advent of thematic, interpretive exhibitions which have replaced traditional permanent exhibitions of libraries' treasures and new acquisitions. Some of those permanent exhibitions have been transformed into temporary or semi-permanent exhibitions. Thematic exhibitions interpret the library's holdings and can include a variety of media such as books, photographs, journals, manuscripts and three-dimensional objects. Examples given are the Boston Public Library's companion exhibitions on Anne Frank and the Adolf Eichmann trial; Enoch Pratt Free Library's "Generations: Five Families" on the history and genealogy of Baltimore families; and "Revolution in Print: France 1789" which featured the confluent histories of popular printing and the French Revolution at NYPL.

The authors describe exhibitions as one aspect of libraries' public programming. Schull (1985) quotes Houston Public Library Director David Henning, "Public programming should be a unified package: exhibition, related programs, publication, reading guides" (p. 38). Saidenberg (1991) emphasizes that "a variety of interpretive materials is needed to reach a broad audience" (p. 130). Examples of programming are films, slideshows, tours, videos, and publications such as catalogs, brochures, bibliographies, and curriculum guides. She points out that often an exhibition can only

display a portion of a work, only a single page of a book for example, and that other kinds of interpretive programming can compensate for this limitation.

Schull (1985) says that books associated with exhibitions show higher circulation rates. Saidenberg (1991) reports that in a poll taken at NYPL in 1989, 22% of library visitors had come to see the library's exhibition.

Schull gives an overview of some significant early traveling exhibitions, and Saidenberg describes planning an exhibition at NYPL and a panel version of the same exhibition to travel to other libraries.

Both articles were written at a time when the funding picture was fairly optimistic. Susan Saidenberg says that by their obvious visibility, library exhibitions emphasize the relevance of the library as a public institution. She attributes an increased public awareness of libraries' importance to library exhibitions, crediting them with stimulating donations and funding. For these reasons, the NYPL exhibition program supports the library's mission "to collect, organize, preserve, and provide access to the records of human knowledge" (Saidenberg, 1991, p. 129). In terms of funders, Diantha Dow Schull (1985) gives Security Pacific National Bank as an example of a corporate library exhibition sponsor, Utah Endowment of the Humanities as a supportive state humanities council, and the Field Foundation of Illinois as a private foundation committed to library exhibitions.

In her library exhibition overview, Schull (1985) addresses other issues related to library exhibitions. Broaching the subject of conservation, she proposes that temporary

exhibitions improve the conservation of library collections that were not adequately preserved in permanent exhibitions. The benefits of presenting exhibitions of artwork are enumerated: art exhibitions integrate library resources with cultural programming, bring in new audiences, satisfy community needs for exhibition space for artists, and are an appropriate companion to the library's permanent art. Collaborations between libraries and museums are noted as beneficial to both, attracting new audiences to each institution. These collaborations have taken the forms of shared exhibitions, joint programming, and branch museums in library facilities in Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Houston and Cleveland. Saidenberg (1991) describes a piece of sculpture commissioned for a library exhibition.

Susan Saidenberg (1991) identifies nine types of library exhibitions: "(1) exhibitions of institutional treasures; (2) loan exhibitions; (3) historical themes; often in conjunction with anniversaries of major events; (4) the work of a single artist or writer; (5) a literary genre; (6) books as repositories for the art of illustration; (7) enduring ideas and issues; (8) literary movements; (9) community interest and leisure activities, including the works of local artists" (p. 129). Saidenberg describes NYPL's seven person staff, who work with a curator or curators from other library departments or other institutions. She enumerates the steps taken to develop the scholarly exhibition "Revolution in Print: France, 1789." First, the concept was developed and research on funding options began. Next, the curator and research curator were chosen, and they created the object list. Loans were arranged, publications were developed (in this case a scholarly catalog and a

brochure) and finally, programming was developed as was educational materials for schoolchildren.

“Revolution in Print” was well received by the public despite the fact that the exhibition materials were all in French. Saldenberg (1991) recounts an alternative way to approach the exhibition of non-English materials. As a way of understanding the Japanese characters in the exhibited literature for “Tales of Genji,” the NYPL staff developed a video that sought to help the viewer develop “visual literacy” (p. 132).

Eumie Imm’s “On the Wall, Off the Wall: Librarian as Exhibition Curator” (1990) is the report on a workshop by the same name, held at the 1990 ARLIS conference. For the workshop a panel of five exhibition specialists from two public, one academic, and two museum library exhibition programs spoke on a range of subjects pertinent to exhibition development. Panelists reiterated the need for qualified exhibition staff, the idea of the library as a rich exhibition resource, and the role of the exhibition as an educational tool. Suzanna Simor, head of the Art Library and Director of the Art Center at the City University of New York, spoke about the importance of adequate space, equipment and support for library exhibition programs. She said that streamlined exhibition goals, policies, procedures and artists’ kits are essential for running an effective exhibition program. She stressed the importance of institutional support for the program. William J. Dane, supervising librarian of the Art and Music Division at Newark Public Library (New Jersey), spoke about the importance of “lively, educational and well-designed labels, posters, checklists and catalogs” (Imm, 1990, p. 71). Dane reviewed the wealth of

resources in library art department collections from which to create rich and stimulating exhibitions. He also discussed exhibition censorship. Susan F. Saidenberg covered exhibition planning, the increased workload that occurs prior to the opening of an exhibition, and the importance of well-written exhibition text that is accessible to “the varied intellectual range of visitors at the public library” (Imm, 1990, p. 71). Krystyna Wasserman, director of the Library and Research Center at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, introduced another exhibition type, that of the artist’s personal library, using the example of Irene Rice Pereira’s collection, the subject of an exhibition at her institution. Mindell Dubansky, preservation librarian at the Thomas J. Watson Library of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, stressed the issue of object conservation and environment. Dubansky elucidated approaches to the installation of books in exhibitions. For example, she explained that a document’s construction, composition, structural characteristics, and condition must be assessed to determine the method of installation, including the kind of book cradle selected (Imm, 1990).

The ARL Spec Kit (Systems and Procedures Center, 1986) is a collection of materials solicited from academic library exhibition programs. The publication includes a two page summary of issues. Academic library exhibition programs are usually administered by a single staff person who is most often a special collections librarian, but may be a reference librarian, an exhibition designer, public relations, or development staff person, or a volunteer. The ARL Spec Kit summary notes that in addition to the staff functions outlined by Saidenberg, installation requires personnel with a knowledge of carpentry.

Goals and purposes of library exhibitions are to highlight library programs and university concerns, and to have an educational function. Most exhibition programs will not exhibit commercially oriented materials. Most academic libraries whose policies are included in the ARL Spec Kit have a grievance procedure for objections to exhibitions. Several of the policies specify that the name of the exhibition presenter be included in the display. The summary describes the benefits of academic library exhibitions as enabling librarians to learn more about the library's collection, collaborate with faculty, publish catalogs and seek new approaches to teaching. The summary also suggests another type of exhibition, that of highlighting a library preservation project. The ARL Spec Kit includes 20 exhibition policies, six job descriptions for exhibition coordinator, three procedures checklists, four exhibition schedules, five loan agreements, five examples of publicity materials and a very short bibliography on exhibition theory, planning, and educational outreach programs.

In "Rare Show" Phillip B. Meggs (1993) describes the development of the blockbuster exhibition "Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture" at the L.C. This exhibition was developed by one of the largest library exhibition planning teams to date. The 30 member team included 7 curators as well as experts in conservation, security, communication, multimedia, graphic design, traffic flow, scheduling, budgeting, and production development. In this article, the chief curator revealed that as an art historian, he was not trained to appreciate book illustration or illumination as part of his discipline. Staff at the L.C. were concerned that the public

might have objections to the exhibition of a religious library collection in a secular state environment and sought to de-emphasize the religious aspects of the material displayed. In designing the exhibition, the exhibition designer and the architect who designed the exhibition furniture opted for neutrally-designed mobile cases which could be reconfigured for different exhibitions.

The PLA report summarized the two year research project undertaken by the Public Libraries Association of the ALA to study the issues of greatest concern to public library exhibition programs (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990). The PLA report first defined library exhibitions, quoting from Thomas Phelps and from Diantha Dow Schull. The report opens with a discussion of traveling exhibitions in public libraries, their selection, the need for educational materials to accompany traveling exhibitions and the advantages of co-sponsorship of traveling exhibitions. The report addresses the role of marketing and publicity in making a library exhibition successful and concludes with an overview of exhibition policies. In total, the report makes four recommendations: (1) that libraries adopt an action plan to seek or create exhibits; (2) that smaller traveling exhibitions be created to serve the needs of small and medium-sized libraries; (3) that an exhibits database be created from which a quarterly report would be generated; (4) that a "Clearinghouse" for sharing information between libraries be established. The report's two appendices are a "Suggested Exhibits Policy Statement"⁴ and a "Sample Advertisement for Posting in Exhibits Trade Magazines."

⁴ The "Suggested Exhibits Policy Statement" will be referred to as the "PLA's model policy."

For the ALA survey, 831 questionnaires were mailed and 287 responses were returned. Of those responding, 187 libraries (64% of respondents) had exhibition programs. While most of the respondents who did not have exhibition programs wanted them, 37 (36%) did not. The survey questions covered exhibition space, equipment, exhibition format preferences, security, exhibition themes, budgets, sources of exhibitions, educational materials accompanying exhibitions, and factors preventing exhibitions. Responses were divided into three categories based on the size of the population served by the library.

Exhibition Program Issues Covered by Other Literature

LIBRARY LITERATURE

The History of Library Exhibitions: Library Display

Kate Coplan created Enoch Pratt Free Library's (Baltimore, Maryland) window displays for decades, beginning in 1924. Coplan (1993) describes early library window displays vividly. One early window advertised the library's collection of literature on the Presidents of the United States and included portrait cakes of Washington and of Lincoln. Her two books include photographs of posters from displays of the 1930s and 1940s (Coplan, 1974, 1981). While Coplan's displays aroused some of the same controversies that contemporary library exhibitions do—she received complaints about nude sculpture included in one window display—her descriptions and photographs demonstrate the difference between displays and exhibitions. These displays served as advertisements for the library's collections but did not attempt to educate viewers or to explore ideas.

Exhibition Purposes

As already indicated, library exhibitions serve many purposes. Nancy Yip (1979) addresses library displays, and like Schull and Saidenberg, states that library displays encourage reading. Yip states that to encourage reading, displays should be bilingual in bilingual communities, and that library displays should be interactive. S. A. Dada (1979) writing about the National Nigerian Library System, emphasizes the role of libraries in presenting exhibitions on current events, linking them to the libraries' collections. Sonja Eder (1983) observes that library exhibitions serve the important function of uniting community and library staff. Eder advocates that libraries serve businesses that are members of the community by including their products in exhibitions where appropriate, with information on purchasing the products. Gerald Holmes (1994) describes how academic libraries can participate in cultural education through their exhibition programs. Holmes discusses the educational value of public observances of Black History Month, Cinco de Mayo, Native American Pow Wow, Chinese New Year, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day. He reviews six Black History Month library exhibitions and accompanying programming and offers sources for materials on Black History. Allen Townsend (1995) reports on an ARLIS conference session that, according to moderator Milan Hughston, focused on the need to preserve funding by promoting library services, collections, and staff through library exhibitions. Many sources discuss the importance of library exhibitions as public relations tools.

William J. Dane (1987) describes the ways in which art exhibitions can serve to link the library to its community and can fortify the library's role as a cultural institution.

Exhibition Policies

The ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom publishes "Exhibit Spaces and Bulletin Boards, An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights" (n.d.). This "Interpretation" serves as the ALA's model exhibition policy.⁵ It quotes three articles of the "Library Bill of Rights": Article I. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation"; Article II. "Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval"; Article VI. Space for exhibits should be provided "on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use." The ALA's model policy states that "staff members should endeavor to present a broad spectrum of opinion and a variety of viewpoints" and that libraries should not "shrink from developing exhibits because of controversial content" (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1995, p. 1). It goes on to say that library exhibitions, like library collections, do not represent the opinion of the library. The ALA model policy offers the library the option of limiting the exhibit space to library concerns, or, if a space is made available to the public, of limiting use to members of the library's community. Finally, the ALA model policy discourages the removal of an exhibition due to objections and suggests that those objecting to an exhibition be offered the chance to create their own exhibition. The

⁵ This document will be referred to as the "ALA's model policy."

ALA's Intellectual Freedom Manual (1992) describes several exhibition controversies during the 1970s as leading to the creation of ALA's model policy. The controversies revolved around exhibitions that were considered by community members to exclude multiple viewpoints.

American Libraries reports on incidences involving library exhibition policies. A judge in Anchorage, Alaska ordered one photograph returned to an exhibition at the public library, directing the library to follow its own exhibition policy and review the work before accepting it (Flagg, 1991). In Salt Lake City, two lawsuits were brought against the public library when some community members objected to the exhibition of nude paintings ("Nude Paintings Change Procedures," 1995). The suits were settled out of court when the Salt Lake City Library Commission reviewed the exhibition policies and procedures and voted to post information about the content and media of exhibitions at the entrance to the library's gallery.

Exhibition Presentation

In her provocatively-titled article "There's Nothing Duller Than a Book Display," Charlene Ezell (1980) describes the ideal library exhibition, "A good exhibit should be three-dimensional...create a surrounding, a maze of intimacy from the sound, smells and feelings of its subject...create a world which wraps the audience" (p. 29). Ezell is one of the few sources that attempts to describe how a library exhibition should impact on a viewer's senses.

Karen Hinson's article "Exhibitions in Libraries: A Practical Guide" (1985) is the only source that describes the creation and presentation of a library exhibition. Hinson has written a two page guide that covers the creation of an exhibition from conception through presentation. She explains how to select objects and how to display them, while keeping conservation concerns in mind. Hinson emphasizes gearing the exhibition to the library's audience.

Other information about library exhibition presentation is available in pieces from different sources. Advertising library exhibitions with in-house resources is described by Victoria Steele in "Pictures from our exhibition: publishing publicity posters utilizing technology" (1995). Steele describes how the Department of Special Collections at the University of Southern California collaborated with the library's Electronic Publishing Center to create posters advertising the library's exhibition program. The Electronic Publishing Center digitized images from the library's collection to create inexpensive posters.

New technologies have served library exhibition programs in other ways. The traveling exhibition "Libraries Change Lives" co-sponsored by the ALA and by Microsoft Corporation included the company's CD-ROM encyclopedia ("Libraries Change Lives," 1993). The Huntington Library incorporated the collection of Archivo General de Indias via the internet into its Quincentenary exhibition (Flanders, 1992). "Spain in the Americas, 1492-1600, What is the Legacy?" included computer workstations, attended by Spanish language translators, where viewers could access the

digitized collection of documents housed in a Spanish Archive located in Seville. The Quincentenary increased interest in the Archive's collection. Digitizing fragile documents that were much in demand served to make them widely available and to protect them from handling. From the Huntington Library visitors were able to access over 9 million pages of scanned maps and documents.

Traveling Exhibitions

As the PLA report indicates, traveling exhibitions are an important resource for public libraries. The exhibition "Seeds of Change" was created by the Smithsonian Institution and circulated by the ALA with the help of the NEH and the private corporation, Beneficial ("Beneficial donates \$50,000," 1991). One of the most widely seen traveling library exhibitions ever, it was hosted by libraries in 60 cities in the US, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands from 1992 through 1993. Private corporations have supported a number of traveling library exhibitions.

Exhibition Controversies and Solutions

The Native American community in Minneapolis, Minnesota voiced strong objections to the Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center's hosting the traveling exhibition "Seeds of Change" (Goldberg, 1993). Native American advocate and Minneapolis Mayor's liaison to the Native American community, Pat Amo, stated that the exhibition's omission of the genocide of Native Americans by Europeans was offensive to Native Americans. When offered the opportunity to develop an exhibition

for the library presenting their perspective, the Native Americans in Minneapolis declined saying that they were of “tired of unteaching the untruth” (Goldberg, 1993, p. 468). The Native American community sought to create an exhibition that would replace “Seeds of Change” rather than challenge it; that request was denied by the library. Prior to the exhibition’s arrival in Minneapolis, the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) had issued a statement critiquing the exhibition for the same reasons voiced by Amo. Native Americans in other communities had also been critical of the exhibition. Librarians at Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center had requested that the exhibition be canceled, but the director of the library refused, declaring that such an action would be a violation of free speech. The library planned to offer bibliographies and book displays that presented alternative perspectives to those represented in the exhibition (Goldberg, 1993).

African American students occupied the library at Johns Hopkins University to protest the library’s Black History Month exhibition which featured texts by a White abolitionist and former slave owner (Flagg, 1993). The students objected to the exhibition for not celebrating the achievements of African Americans and for not featuring the work of African Americans. The director of the university apologized and the exhibition was changed the next day to one on the life of Frederick Douglass.

The Smithsonian Institution radically altered its exhibition on the Enola Gay for the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in response to pressure from World War II veterans groups. As a critique of the Smithsonian’s actions, the ALA’s

SRRT moved to exhibit one of the texts deleted from the exhibition. Stating that the scaled down exhibition will exclude “the essential substantive record of what really occurred,” the SRRT planned to include the text at an ALA conference exhibit (“SRRT Drops the Bomb,” 1995, p. 16).

A library worker of the University of California, Santa Cruz destroyed borrowed archival photographs by cutting and reshaping them for the library’s Black History Month exhibition on jazz (“Jazz Mementos Ruined,” 1995). The library director criticized the media for blowing the incident out of proportion and apologized to the owner of the ruined collection.

The Monterey Park Library Board (California) refused an exhibition and a donation of three hundred Tibetan language books offered by the Chinese government (Flagg, 1995). The Library Board rejected the exhibition as political propaganda with Board Member Joe Rubin stating that “Presentation of the culture of an oppressed people by the oppressor is particularly distasteful” (p. 391).

Marketing the Library: Merchandising the Library’s Collection

Libraries have increasingly used visual devices such as logos (R. Kent, 1993), banners (Flagg, 1990), installation art (“Black Books Bound in Cord,” 1992) and parade floats (Gaughan, 1993) to advertise anything from their services to their financial plight. Exhibitions and display techniques are two ways that the library employs visual techniques to access its collection.

Libraries have borrowed techniques from commercial display and visual merchandising to attract users to their collections. Articles on merchandising the library's collection direct libraries to create displays that are visually compelling. They give clear, direct suggestions for designing signage and displays and for the strategic placement of displays. Many of these suggestions can be applied to library exhibitions also. One article describes the importance of visually compelling library displays in attracting the attention of the two generations of users born after 1960 (Jones, 1989). These users, who are accustomed to watching television are particularly responsive to visual information.

ARCHIVAL LITERATURE

Exhibition Planning

Closely akin to library literature, archival literature on exhibitions offers some planning guides. Gail Farr Casterline's Archives and Manuscripts: Exhibits (1980) is comprehensive and reveals that the observation of the U.S. Bicentennial galvanized a number of archivists to get involved in exhibitions of archival materials.

Conservation

Sandra Powers' "Why Exhibit?" (1978) weighs the pros and cons of exhibiting, emphasizing conservation concerns. Powers states that archivists may choose to exhibit their collection because exhibits increase public support for an archive, and support may yield public funding.

OTHER RELATED LITERATURE

Exhibition Reviews

Some of the most insightful evaluations of library exhibitions have appeared in periodicals devoted to the same subject as the exhibition reviewed. In general, library exhibition reviews rarely focus on the concepts and ideas on which library exhibitions are based. The following reviews are exceptions because they deal directly with the ideas at the heart of the exhibitions.

Claudia L. Bushman (1993) reviewed two NYPL exhibitions presented for the Quincentennary. She describes “New Worlds, Ancient Texts” as using “books as evidence to repudiate book knowledge” and as employing “a contemporary framework—the replacement of the canon of literature” to describe the way in which Europe’s knowledge base was challenged and altered by new information from the Americas (p. 188). She says the exhibition describes the replacement of one canon by another, implicitly predicting the replacement of our own canon. Bushman explains that while the exhibition, which displays 200 NYPL treasures, has the same appearance as a permanent treasures exhibition, it is the extensive descriptive labels that carry the innovative ideas of the exhibition and link the objects to each other and to the exhibition’s basic ideas. As the reviewer remarks, there is a lot to read as well as to see in this exhibition which she

calls the “collaboration of a historian, Anthony Grafton, the curator, and a museum”

(Bushman, p. 191). Bushman notes that “although esoteric, this exhibition is nevertheless aimed at the general public” (p. 192). She comments on the fact that free admission encourages attendance and describes the library’s exhibition related products: a video, a catalog, a brochure and an educator’s guide, as well as T-shirts and other items suited to a variety of tastes.

Bushman (1993) analyzes the subjective nature of maps as the underlying theme of “Mapping the New World,” the second NYPL Quincentenary exhibition. This was an exhibition of maps by Europeans of North, Central and South America created from the 16th to the 19th centuries. “Based on greed and power,” the exhibition illustrates changing European knowledge and misconceptions of the Americas (p. 192).

A review of a third Quincentenary exhibition, “400 Years of Native American Portraits in Prints and Photographs from the Collections of the New York Public Library” is titled “Beaten Men” (1993). This review reports that the exhibition is not well attended, and that the portraits represent an “intractable social problem” rather than the record of a “vanishing race” as they were originally interpreted when displayed at the library in 1912 (p. 86).

Neal Salisbury (1992) reviewed “America in 1492: American Civilization on the Eve of the Columbus Voyages” the Newberry Library’s Quincentenary exhibition. Salisbury writes that the exhibition is “unique in relying primarily, though by no means

exclusively, on literary and visual media originating with the European conquerors” (Salisbury, p. 710). Lacking adequate texts to represent Native American culture in its collection, the Newberry borrowed 54 artifacts from the Field Museum, commissioned a drum from Steve Herrera of Cochiti Pueblo, and compiled an audio track of Native American music. Salisbury implies that the exhibition has trouble representing the Native American experience of the “encounter.” He analyzes the organization of the exhibition as based on “the European dichotomy of mind and body” (p. 711). He praises the scholarly exhibition labels. While there is no indication that Native Americans participated in the creation of the exhibition, Salisbury labels the exhibition as yet another form of “joint project between Europeans and Native Americans” (p. 712). Finally, Salisbury sums up the exhibition as the best effort possible with the materials—the library’s collections and the pieces borrowed or commissioned for the exhibition—available.

Cheryl Kent (1992) reviewed “The Art of Architecture” while it was on display at the Harold Washington Library Center. The exhibition was organized by the Pritzker Prize, an Architecture Award. Kent observes that contrary to the intention of the Pritzker Prize group, the exhibition which was developed as a public outreach project, actually addresses an audience well educated on the subject of architecture. Kent analyzes the photographs and the text as failing to work together to reach the exhibition’s goal. She states that library exhibition viewers will remember the stunning photographs but will leave with little information about architecture or the Pritzker Prize.

Edward J. Valauskas (1994) reviewed the online version of “Rome Reborn: the Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture” at the L.C. He makes comparisons between the illuminations in manuscripts of the exhibition and digital images noting that the online presentation of the exhibition complements the material offered. Valauskas describes the online exhibition as much richer than the artifactual one (and presumably the catalog which he mentions) because additional objects and information are made available online.

Three critical reviews of exhibitions at the L.C. express opinions on the responsibilities of that institution’s exhibitions. Robert W. Thurston (1992) reviews the exhibition “Revelations from the Russian Archives.” Thurston points out that the “endorsement and exposure” given L.C. exhibitions by civic leaders gives pronouncements from the L.C. an almost “semi-official character” (p. A36). He criticizes the exhibition for presenting a single interpretation of the Russian material, an interpretation that he feels is actually “contradicted by the materials on display” (p. A36). Thurston states that the exhibition, by presenting a single, condemning perspective, has “damaged American debate and public understanding of some of the most important issues of this century” (p. A36). He suggests that in light of the exhibition’s limitations the L.C. is not fulfilling its responsibility to the U.S. public.

Jon Wiener (1995) reviewing “Against Hitler: German Resistance to National Socialism, 1933-1945,” an exhibition funded by the German government, asks how this “exercise in public relations” came to be offered at the Madison Gallery of the L.C.? If

the L.C. wanted to present an exhibition on German resistance to Hitler, Wiener questions why it didn't create such an exhibition itself, with its own materials, as it customarily does? Wiener reports that the L.C. first refused this exhibition which was also offered to the Holocaust Museum. Eventually, however, another long-slated exhibition was abbreviated and moved from a gallery to a corridor to make room for the German exhibition. Stating that few scholars support the premise of "Against Hitler," Wiener criticizes the authenticity of the exhibition and the L.C.'s motivation in presenting it.

"Fissures at an Exhibition" describes the complex politics involved in the L.C.'s scheduled exhibition on Sigmund Freud scheduled for 1998 (Zalewski, 1995). Detractors of the exhibition are once again critical of the L.C.'s motivation in presenting an exhibition, stating "Sigmund Freud: Conflict and Culture" will serve as propaganda for traditional Freudian psychiatry. Daniel Zalewski raises two important and as yet unresolved issues. First, how many different or opposing perspectives can an exhibition effectively represent? Second, what course should an institution take when the public wants to see opinions other than those represented? Efforts between the exhibition curator and exhibition critics to compromise on exhibition content have not been successful. Dr. James Billington, Director of the Library, has resorted to postponing the exhibition in lieu of resolving issues over content.

Exhibition Assessment

A singular study sought to determine what makes a traveling exhibition effective and the impact of the host environment on an exhibition (Rubenstein, Paradis & Munro, 1993). The National Library of Canada commissioned this study in order to develop future exhibitions. The study reaffirmed earlier findings from less thorough research and presented guidelines for exhibition development.

NEWSPAPERS

Daily newspapers cover big library exhibition controversies. Recently those have included the incident at NYPL involving Chinese government objection to the exhibition "What Price Freedom?," as well as several exhibition controversies at the L.C. In December of 1995, the L.C. closed down the exhibition "Back of the Big House: The Cultural Landscape of the Plantation." The exhibition closed two hours after it was installed because African American staff of the L.C. found it offensive (Mulligan, 1996). When "Back of the Big House" closed, a number of articles objecting to censorship of exhibitions at government institutions appeared in daily newspapers. Several articles compared the L.C. incident to censorship of the Smithsonian Institution's Enola Gay exhibition by World War II veterans groups.

In "Historical Shows on Trial, Who Judges?," Paul Goldberger (1996) reports that exhibitions in many institutions are being revised in response to community objections. Saying "when debate dies, so do ideas" (p. 1), he criticizes a political climate that produces exhibitions whose chief goal is not to offend. Goldberger says that presenting

one interpretation of an object implies that there are others. He points out that objections from many quarters, from the public, the institution staff and exhibition lenders can halt exhibitions.

Like Goldberger, Ted Gup (1996) criticizes the political climate that allows exhibitions to be closed down when viewers feel that their perspective isn't or won't be represented. Gup charges that the far right and advocates of political correctness together form a "new orthodoxy" (p. M2) that censors exhibitions. He says that exhibition closures defeat intellectual debate and cause institutions to practice self-censorship.

A few newspapers publish library exhibition reviews. See Exhibition Reviews below.

ART AND ART HISTORY LITERATURE

Exhibition Reviews

Reviews of library art exhibitions appear in art periodicals. They are most useful as a description of the contents of an exhibition. These reviews, which are noted in the bibliography, rarely critique or review exhibitions by library standards rather than museum or gallery standards. There are three exceptions. The first is a review of NYPL's photographic exhibition "Homeless in America." The review notes that the exhibition "does not take a stand" on the complex issue of homelessness (Hagen, 1989, p. 14).

A second exception is a review of the Los Angeles Central Library exhibition "Shades of LA." Reviewer Jorge Daniel Veneciano (1994) states that this exhibition challenges notions about photographic representation in several ways. The Los Angeles Central

Library, realizing that its large photographic collection on Los Angeles did not include adequate representation of Los Angelinos of Latino, African American, Native American and Asian American heritage, solicited photographs from those communities. This exhibition, the first of three on the history of Los Angeles, displayed those photographs. Veneciano questions the idea, which he maintains is implicit in the exhibition, that "photography can act as an equalizer in communities of people" (p. 17). The second issue he raises is the change in a photograph's meaning once it becomes part of a collection. Veneciano gives the example that a photograph of two young Latinas, that may have originally represented friendship, once part of this collection might be interpreted as "(auto-) ethnographic representation" (p. 17).

A third exception is the review in the New York Times "Art and Entertainment Section" of the NYPL exhibition "Revolution in Print: France, 1789." Reviewer John Russell (1989) focuses on the fact that this library exhibition is based on ideas rather than objects. He evaluates the success of the exhibition by examining the ways it describes and explores the ideas at the core of the exhibition.

Two exhibition reviews address library exhibitions of artists' books. Joyce Hansson (1988) observes that artists' books challenge viewers to explore the meaning of books, of language and of words. Ann Wilson Lloyd (1994) says that the exhibition "Why Artists' Books?" at the Houghton Library at Harvard investigated the process of revealing information in sequence (page by page) and the intimate relationship between a reader/viewer and a book.

Exhibition Concerns

“Do We Really Need More Exhibitions?” (Elam, 1988), a scathing editorial from the Burlington Magazine, criticized the use of museum resources to produce temporary blockbuster exhibitions rather than to conserve and care for museum collections. The editor questioned the conservation safety of items loaned for exhibition. Citing political agendas as the motivation for creating many exhibitions, Editor Carol Elam blamed the cementing of political alliances and the advancement of museum directors’ careers for the unmitigated proliferation of temporary museum exhibitions.

MUSEUM LITERATURE

Museum Exhibitions

Several articles on library exhibitions have appeared in Museum News, which also offers other articles that can be useful to library exhibition programs. Examples of the latter are Anne Mintz’ “That’s Edutainment” (1994) and Danielle Rice’s “Examining Exhibits” (1989). Rice records the popularity of theme exhibitions, noting that they are organized in the easily accessible format of beginning, middle, and end. They are more like “spectacles” (p. 47) because they are temporary. Mintz describes the ways in which museum exhibitions can learn from theme parks. She says that theme parks have successfully geared presentations to groups of viewers, like families. She also discusses corporate funding of exhibitions, reporting that older corporations are more committed to supporting conceptually challenging exhibitions, whereas younger corporations may be

interested in funding “safer” exhibitions. Mintz cites traveling exhibitions as particularly attractive to corporate funders because of the large audience reached.

Museology, an emerging field of academic study, has produced numerous anthologies of essays that explore museums as institutions and museum exhibition practice. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Levine’s Exhibiting Cultures (1991) is one that is especially useful. Karp and Levine address exhibition biases; they write “Every museum exhibition, whatever its overt subject, inevitably draws on the cultural assumptions and resources of the people who make it. Decisions are made to emphasize one element and to downplay others, to assert some truths and to ignore others” (p. 7). In the same introduction, Karp and Levine state the need for more exhibitions on non-western subjects and materials and for “experiments in which artwork is organized according to the aesthetic categories of the cultures from which it derives” (p. 7). They underscore the need for museums to share authority with “cultural groups that have a special interest in a given exhibition” (p. 7). In the same volume, Susan Vogel’s essay “Always True to the Object in Our Fashion” (1991) investigates the way exhibition display techniques play a role in interpreting the meaning of the displayed objects. Exhibitions at the Museum of African Art in New York City, where Vogel is Director, have explored this theme.

In Civilizing Rituals, Carol Duncan (1995) offers a valuable analysis of the ways in which the conditions of donor bequests impact on the agendas and appearances of public art museums.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Many of the questions posed in the statement of the problem could not be answered by the literature. The Schull and Saldenberg articles, the contributions of Edward J. Dane in Eumie Imm's article, the PLA report and the ALA survey were the comprehensive literature that spoke directly about issues in public libraries. From these sources, two very different kinds of public library exhibitions, one scholarly and one art-based, are discussed. The ALA survey provided data, while the PLA report provided information about public library exhibition programs, although not enough descriptive material, for instance, to understand how Chicago's program might be different from that of Los Angeles'. Therefore, the question "What is a library exhibition?" was only partially answered by the literature. In general, the literature only partially answered the questions posed by this paper.

It was necessary to speak directly to library exhibition program coordinators and experts and to read material developed by the libraries themselves. Traveling Exhibition Coordinator at the ALA's Department of Public Programming, Susan Brandehoff (personal communication, May 28, 1995), provided the names of active public library exhibition programs. Libraries that provided information in the form of interviews and/or written material are:

Public Libraries

Boston Public Library (Massachusetts)

Charleston Public Library (South Carolina)

Dallas Public Library (Texas)
Denver Central Library (Colorado)
Enoch Pratt Free Library (Baltimore, Maryland)
Fairfax Public Library (Virginia)
Harold Washington Library Center (Chicago, Illinois)
Houston Public Library (Texas)
Los Angeles Public Library (California)
Martin Luther King Memorial Library (Washington, DC)
Miami-Dade Public Library (Florida)
Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center (Minnesota)
New York Public Library: The Central Library,

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

(All New York, New York)

Philadelphia Free Library (Pennsylvania)

Salt Lake City Public Library (Utah)

San Diego Public Library (California)

San Francisco Public Library (California)

Winston-Salem Public Library (North Carolina)

Research Libraries

The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin

The Huntington Library (San Marino, California)

The Library of Congress (Washington, DC)

The Newberry Library (Chicago, Illinois)

Pierpont Morgan Library (New York City)

The following experts in the field of library exhibitions were chosen from the literature and interviewed: Susan Saidenberg, Exhibition Consultant, Diantha Dow Schull, Director of Libraries for the Future, and Thomas Phelps of the National Endowment for the Humanities. For information on traveling exhibitions, those interviewed were Susan Brandehoff at the ALA Department of Public Programs, Frances Leonard at the Texas Humanities Council Traveling Exhibition Program, and Crisley McCarson at the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES).

Interviews were uneven in length and response because interviewees had different amounts of time to devote to interviews and because some of the major concerns became clearer as the research developed. Originally, the method of organizing this paper was by individual programs, but it became necessary to organize by topic to more accurately reflect the variety of exhibition programs.

The L.C. offers the greatest selection of online library exhibitions, easily accessed at L.C.'s World Wide Web site. The L.C.'s exhibitions were compared to a number of online museum exhibitions in order to learn more about the specifics of online library exhibitions.

Some online communication between library exhibition program coordinators occurs on Libex-L, established by exhibition staff in academic libraries, and on ARLIS-L, the art librarians' listserv. Both listservs were monitored to learn more about library exhibition programs and exhibitions on the World Wide Web.

Chapter 4: Discussion

What is the current state of the library exhibition today? Depending on the size of the library, an exhibition can range widely from hanging art to a few books on a podium to large interdisciplinary multimedia exhibitions. For a composite picture of exhibition programs around the country, the ALA survey is an excellent source. The ALA survey looked at exhibition programs in three different sized libraries. Public libraries were with a few exceptions the respondents to the ALA survey. In public library systems, most exhibitions are offered at the central library; consequently, most of the libraries included in this project serve populations that number over 100,000.

A Composite Picture of Exhibition Programs in Large Libraries.

Data from the ALA survey results showed that large libraries prefer freestanding, three dimensional displays or freestanding, flat panel displays. The exhibitions are valuable enough that 34% of large libraries responding had security guards to protect them. Preferred subjects for exhibitions are history, literature, and fine arts. Large library exhibition programs present anywhere from one to over 12 exhibitions per year, with most offering 6 to 12. These libraries most often display exhibitions of artwork, as do medium and small libraries. Large libraries' exhibitions originate equally both in-house and from outside sources. A small portion of the exhibitions result from collaborations with community organizations or humanities councils. Humanities councils, which were judged the most helpful source, are the primary source of traveling exhibitions. School tours and lecture/discussions are the most successful exhibition

related programs. In terms of educational materials, the most successful ones developed in-house are flyers. Library funding usually pays for these materials. Most large libraries said that the schools were involved in their program, with many offering art exhibits by school children and inviting schools to exhibitions.

The ALA survey showed that library programs of all sizes generally have access to equipment that includes a 16mm film projector, a half-inch video cassette player, and a television. Most primary exhibition spaces are wall spaces, although one third of respondents had over 1,000 feet of exhibition space. Most primary exhibition spaces had a few display cases and one to five tables or shelves. Second and third exhibition spaces are usually wall spaces or display cases. The primary security is a general building alarm system. Most exhibition programs have storage. Exhibitions ordinarily run for four weeks, with staff time devoted to library exhibitions ranging from zero to 5% per month. Most annual exhibition budgets are under \$500, with the average cost to library patrons being free. Most libraries of all sizes would like to present more exhibitions, but are prevented by lack of appropriate budget, staff time, and space.

The ALA survey provides a valuable composite picture. Statistically, it answers the question "What do public library exhibition programs look like?" But there are unanswered questions. Large library exhibition programs vary widely, yet the ALA survey does not provide information on the focus of different exhibition programs; it was not conducted to determine details of exhibitions, programming, or educational materials.

These questions must be answered:

What questions have exhibitions raised and how have they been resolved?

Can exhibition policies be useful? How?

What are critical aspects of an exhibition policy?

What kind of information for or about public library exhibitions does research on exhibitions in academic and research libraries provide?

What challenges might public library exhibition programs face in the future?

What is a Library Exhibition?

The Ideal Exhibition

Lou Storey (personal communication, June 15, 1995), exhibition designer for NYPL makes the striking point that library exhibitions run counter to the library's original function; books are displayed frozen and inaccessible, with two pages revealed, those pages chosen by the exhibition curator. Books on display are taken out of circulation and exhibitions interpret the library's holdings, emphasizing particular ideas.

The staff at NYPL shape exhibitions partially in response to viewer needs. Some staff have remarked that the public, especially viewers who are not library users, are afraid of books and want exhibitions where they are required to read less. As a consequence, "What Price Freedom?," the library's big 1995 exhibition, contains 20 documents, fewer than usual for NYPL's exhibitions. These documents are presented in a dramatic boat-shaped glass display case. Storey (pers. comm., 1995) explains that the public wants to

see exhibitions that use new technology. “What Price Freedom?” was designed by a media company and employs four giant video screens which show the same material simultaneously. Another exhibition incorporated a music audio track. Storey points out that exhibitions can be interactive without employing technology, using as an example “Books of the Century” which included a space for people to list books that they would add to the exhibition’s selection.

Thomas Phelps (personal communication, November 7, 1995) describes library exhibitions as containing equal parts of text and material objects. Phelps emphasizes that libraries are good at interpretive exhibitions and that exhibitions help the library fulfill its functions as both the people’s university and as a community information center. Phelps explains that library exhibitions can “become a historical thematic essay of sorts” (Phelps, pers. comm., 1995).

Phelps cites the Smithsonian’s traveling exhibition “Seeds of Change” circulated by the ALA with support from the NEH, as an example of a successful interpretive exhibition. He explains the underlying theme of the exhibition as one example of cross cultural exchange. The exhibition followed “seeds” planted by the encounter between Europe and the Americas; the seeds included foods, horses, and disease. One exhibition object was a huge neon sculpture of spaghetti. Phelps describes spaghetti as the epitome of cross cultural exchange, because Marco Polo brought pasta to Italy, while Italy also received tomatoes from Peru. Italians created what we know as spaghetti, a dish that made its way back to the Americas and of course to other parts of the world. According

to Phelp's description, the exhibition was accessible on many levels through visual information and through the text.

Diantha Dow Schull (personal communication, October 24, 1995) cites the traveling exhibition "A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the U.S. Constitution," created by SITES, as an example of an exhibition as "good social history." Schull lauds the video accompanying the exhibition as especially effective in showing all sides of the issue; the video asks many direct questions and includes statements of personal testimony. The story of the Japanese internment is told reflectively in the video and is enhanced by the exhibition which includes a broad combination of artifacts.

Susan Saidenberg (personal communication, November 20, 1995) gives NYPL's exhibition on the work of the photographer Bernice Abbot as one example of a good library exhibition. Saidenberg specifies that a successful library exhibition tells many stories. One of which may be the "library story," an exhibition theme that is unique to library exhibitions. The work of the young Abbot was collected by a founder of NYPL and consequently, the library has a large collection of the artist's work.

Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995) says that library exhibitions are unique in other ways. They may exhibit books on a wide range of disciplines, and they also contextualize objects or elements within exhibitions. Unlike exhibitions in art museums where a work can be fully experienced while exhibited, books or manuscripts are only partially viewed. Library exhibitions are organized to encourage further research, and in fact, may begin with the asking of questions.

What Questions Have Been Raised by Library Exhibitions and How Have They Been Resolved?

Although the L.C. has recently removed an exhibition to which there were staff objections, when public library exhibitions provoke community objections, the exhibitions have rarely been removed. Both the PLA report and the ALA's model policy specify that exhibitions will run for their planned duration and not be removed during that time due to community objections (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990; ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1995). Consequently, libraries must find other ways of resolving conflict over exhibitions.

Montgomery County Public Library's (Maryland) Intellectual Freedom Report (1990-1995) records community objections to material displayed in designated public forums. The library does not regulate the contents of these exhibitions, this policy is explained to those objecting. The staff is fully informed of community objections and library responses and coached on how to handle issues, including questions from newspaper reporters. After an exhibitor became the victim of a hate crime, possibly in part because of increased visibility through her library exhibition, the library placed a packet of handout materials on exhibition guidelines and policies at reference desks.

The Intellectual Freedom Report (Montgomery County Public Library, 1990) explains that when viewers objected to a 1989 Gay Pride Week exhibition at the Rockville Public Library (Montgomery County, Maryland), the library diversified its collection by adding several works that were critical of homosexuality. The same publication reported an

incident at the Alexandria Public Library, in which the library was mandated by a local judge to accept an anti-abortion exhibition. In accordance with the ALA's model exhibition policy, the library prepared a number of signs explaining that the exhibition did not represent the library's views.

Sometimes all it takes is a letter or a conversation to resolve exhibition controversy. Martin Luther King Memorial Library (Washington, DC) takes risks in presenting exhibitions. In 1991 the library offered two exhibitions on Tibet that conveyed very different views; both celebrated Tibetan culture. The first exhibition was sponsored by the Chinese government while the second, sponsored by Tibetan Refugee groups, was critical of Chinese rule of Tibet. When one viewer objected in writing to the exhibition sponsored by the Chinese Consulate, the library responded by letter, explaining that another exhibition was scheduled (H. R. Franklin, letter to a patron, October 24, 1991). The letter included a copy of the ALA's Library Bill of Rights (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1992) and ALA's model policy. Letters from both the Martin Luther King Memorial Library and the Montgomery County Library thank users for expressing their interest in the library and for expressing their views. In another instance at Martin Luther King Memorial Library, Exhibition Coordinator Elena Tscherny (personal communication, September 14, 1995) reports that a visitor objected to the representation of African Americans in an exhibition of century-old drawings of life in the southern United States. When library staff reiterated that the exhibition represented a

century-old perspective, the visitor was satisfied. Tscherny said that the incident demonstrated that contextualizing text may need to be repeated within an exhibition.

Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center was appraised of public objection to the traveling exhibition "Seeds of Change" before it arrived at the library. The director of the library chose to host the exhibition despite objections from the library staff and from the community. Questioned for this paper, staff responsible for booking exhibitions said that once the exhibition was installed at the library, the library tried to "downplay" its presence there (C. Gibson, personal communication, June 6, 1995).

At the Philadelphia Public Library, some viewers complained about exhibitions on Irish American culture. In response to these and other complaints about exhibitions focusing on single cultures, the library took a different approach. Exhibition Coordinator Lynn Washington (personal communication, August 17, 1995) says that while the exhibitions do not express a "we are the world" perspective, the library does try to present exhibitions with broad appeal, sometimes focusing on multiple cultural perspectives.

Do Library Exhibition Programs Serve the Library?

During the research for this thesis, some librarians voiced the opinion that exhibitions are not essential to library programming. These librarians said that in a period of dwindling resources, library funds were better spent on more useful projects such as literacy programs. One librarian expressed the opinion that library exhibitions only served the well educated and that exhibitions are germane to other institutions.

Can Exhibition Policies be Useful?

Recently library exhibition controversies have been well reported in daily newspapers. As the literature shows, some controversies have resulted in legal battles. Exhibition policies make clear to library staff, exhibitors and the general public, the goals and responsibilities of a library exhibition program. The PLA report showed that many libraries were operating without exhibition policies; a number of libraries had only a vague statement of guidelines for work displayed. Of those libraries with exhibition policies, many discussed insurance for exhibitions (or lack thereof), length of display, and conditions of display. But in policies and guidelines alike, there was very little attention given to “selection, content, appropriateness, freedom and community standards” (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990, p. 6).

In an effort to encourage libraries to adopt exhibition policies, the committee wrote a sample exhibition policy that emphasized library collections as the focus of library exhibitions (ALA, PLA Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990). It described an exhibition program as an “integral” part of the library’s mission, directing attention to its services and collections (p. 8). The policy stated that exhibitions should be “varied in scope and reading level” to accommodate a wide range of viewers (p. 8). It advised that materials should neither be “selected nor excluded because of the origin, background or views contributing to their creation” (p. 8). With regard to presenting multiple viewpoints, ALA’s model policy states that “staff members should endeavor to present a

broad spectrum of opinion and a variety of viewpoints" (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1995, p. 1). On the same subject, the PLA model policy states that "effort is made to present various points of view, especially on questions on which there are widely supported, differing shades of public opinion" (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990, p. 8).

Most new metropolitan public libraries have exhibition policies in place. However, surprisingly, a number of other large, metropolitan library exhibition programs are operating without exhibition policies or they are working with drafts that have yet to receive final approval. NYPL is in the process of revising its exhibition policy. According to Exhibition Manager Susan Rabbiner (personal communication, June 13, 1995) the policy has not been available to the public for the last five years. The Martin Luther King Memorial Library has drafted a policy that has yet to be approved. Los Angeles and Denver Public Libraries are working with drafts. Some large library exhibition programs do not have written policies and do not have plans to create them. In libraries that do have guidelines, policies vary a great deal in focus and content.

Speaking of exhibition policies, Susan Saidenberg says that when a new building is opened and a new library exhibition program is established, "people are drawn to the library as a place to exhibit their own work, their heritage, their family's collection and commercial enterprises are eager to capitalize on the event" (Saidenberg, pers. comm.,

1995). She says that exhibitions related to commercial enterprises could confuse the public about the library's own fundraising efforts.

What Are Critical Aspects of an Exhibition Policy?

Exhibition Policies and Their Relationship to Mission Statements

A good exhibition policy must relate to the library's founding mission, said Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995). Not all libraries have the same mission. Public and private libraries differ. All libraries do not collect universally, nor do they serve the same populations. For example, NYPL serves all ages, including children, whereas the Pierpont Morgan Library (New York) does not serve the same age range in the same way. While public libraries need to commemorate our collective history, Saidenberg said, private libraries do not share this mission. Their missions are different and so therefore, their exhibition policies should reflect that difference (Saidenberg, pers. comm., 1995).

However, very few exhibition policies refer to the library's mission statement. Most library mission statements and exhibition policies are broadly worded; thus, they are easily compatible and not remarkably different from each other, although the programs that they guide can be quite different.

The Los Angeles Public Library mission statement stresses the library's commitment to providing tools for empowerment, enrichment and lifelong learning through access to ideas and information (Los Angeles Public Library, 1991). The exhibition policy aims to

provide access to and interest in ideas (Los Angeles Public Library, 1995). The exhibition program is varied, presenting exhibitions from the library's collections, traveling exhibitions, collaborative exhibitions, and group shows of artists' work.

Miami-Dade Public Library's mission statement describes the library's mission as providing library services appropriate to the informational, educational and recreational needs of the community (Miami-Dade Public Library, n.d.). The Exhibition Handbook 1987 (Miami-Dade Public Library) describes the function of the program as presenting the library's services and free access to alternative learning, entertainment, cultural events, and information about current issues. These statements are similar in supporting the pleasure of learning and expressing a commitment to recreation and entertainment. The majority of Miami-Dade Public Library's exhibitions are exhibitions of artwork by local, national, and international artists.

The Harold Washington Library Center (Chicago) mission statement pledges the library to providing access to information, ideas and knowledge through various programs and services and to the freedom to learn (Chicago Public Library, n.d.). The exhibition policy is oriented towards stimulating the use of the library's services (Chicago Public Library, 1995). The program focuses on exhibition of the library's special collections and does host some traveling exhibitions; it balances scholarly and community oriented exhibitions.

The Denver Public Library's mission is to inform, inspire and entertain (Denver Public Library, 1992). It lists 14 values that it supports. The exhibition policy states

simply and briefly that exhibitions are to promote the library's services and events (Denver Public Library, 1995). The mission statement refers to users as "customers" (Denver Public Library, 1992, p. 1), and the staff member in charge describes the exhibition program as "marketing" the library (S. Henson, personal communication, July 11, 1995). The new Denver Central Library opened with an exhibition on the library's history. In the spring of 1996, it will co-present an exhibition on the history of the western United States using materials from its own collection.

Exhibition Policies and Intellectual Freedom

How should libraries handle requests from the public to create its own exhibitions? Questions arise on issues ranging in complexity from whether it's permissible to put a pamphlet on a bulletin board to whether it's acceptable to create an exhibition in the library's display area.

The ALA's model policy is directly tied to the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom's Library Bill of Rights (1992b) and forms part of the ALA's Intellectual Freedom Manual (1992a). While the PLA report found that most library exhibition policies do not mention freedom, several do.

The Department of Public Libraries for Montgomery County, Maryland employs an Intellectual Freedom Officer, currently its Chief of Collection Development (K. Ecelbarger, personal communication, August 23, 1995). The library system of Montgomery County approaches the issue of intellectual freedom carefully and

thoroughly. The Intellectual Freedom Officer issues monthly or bimonthly Intellectual Freedom Reports (Montgomery County Public Library, 1990-1995). The reports discuss community response—usually objections or questions—regarding materials in the library’s collection, on exhibition, or in the public forum handout area. The Intellectual Freedom Report includes staff memoranda dealing with community responses and letters sent by the library in response to community complaints. It reports local, regional and national issues touching on intellectual freedom, including news clippings.

The library’s Policy Manual on Displays, Exhibits, Handouts, Bulletin Boards, Political Literature and Petitioning in Libraries (Montgomery County Public Library, 1992) advises that some exhibition areas in the library are designated as a public forum space, protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. The display may advocate a position not endorsed by the library or the county government. The policy states that the library’s collection may represent more diverse opinions than the library exhibitions do. The exhibition spaces designated as non-public forums are for the use of the libraries or the government.

Having a stated policy about freedom of information can serve a library if a patron objects to an exhibition. For example in 1991, the Director of Martin Luther King Memorial Library received a patron letter requesting that photographs and literature in the exhibition on “Tibet, The Roof of the World” be removed. Declining to remove the material, the director responded by letter that exhibitions in the library supported the library’s mission to “acquire, organize and provide access to a wide variety of

information and resources to meet the educational, social, cultural and recreational needs of all the people of the city” (Franklin, letter to a patron, 1991). The director stated that the library operated under the guidance of the “Library Bill of Rights” (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1992) and the ALA’s model policy. The director included a copy of each of these documents in the letter.

Denver Public Library’s process of arriving at its new policy demonstrates how difficult it is to develop a policy that honors First Amendment Rights and facilitates the administration of the library. Denver Public Library’s exhibitions are reserved for library concerns and materials. Limited spaces are designated public forums or areas for public materials to be posted and distributed. With the Denver city attorney’s office, the library investigated other public libraries’ policies and practices governing designated public forums and the legal precedents defining public access to the library (Henson, pers. comm., 1995). Committed to the First Amendment, Denver Public Library had historically accepted all community materials brought to the library. It also felt that its libraries were inundated beyond capacity with materials in public forum areas. After carefully reviewing the issues, the city attorney’s office and the library felt that making determinations about content were difficult to impossible. A new policy of limited community access was developed, with handouts and free literature to be accepted on a first come, first serve basis, space permitting. The public may not present exhibitions in the library.

Denver Public Library may have scrutinized the issue even more than other libraries because of its close relationship to the community, who voted for a bond to build the new central library. Prior to the bond, an extensive community campaign had determined what kind of new central library the citizens of Denver wanted and needed. The list of 14 values attached to the library's mission statement begins with "Service. We find reasons to say 'yes' to the community, to our customers and to each other" (Denver Public Library, 1992, p. 1).

Exhibition Policies and Collection Development Policies

How should library exhibitions relate to the library's collection?

Susan Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995) sees the function of library exhibitions as drawing interest to the library's collection and encouraging learning. She believes that exhibitions of artwork outside the collection, or exhibitions derived from the community, have drawbacks. First, the library would need to decide whether or not to acquire the materials. Acquiring exhibited materials from outside the collection can pose difficult issues for collection development since the library's collection must be balanced and serve all constituents. On the other hand, the exhibition of little known materials from the library collection may result in some welcome donations. Second, if the materials are not acquired for the library, how are they to be available to the public for future study? Using limited library resources to exhibit materials from outside the collection is not a sound investment according to Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995).

Few exhibition policies refer to collection development issues. Miami-Dade Public Library's Exhibition Handbook 1987, which puts forth its goals in the introduction, specifies a connection between the library's exhibitions and its collections: "The first essential in the development of programs and exhibitions is a solid book collection. Life is given to the library and to the community by a harmonious interaction between the book collection and exhibitions" (Miami-Dade Public Library, 1987, p. 3).

Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995) advises that before undertaking a scholarly exhibition, it must be determined whether or not the library's collection can adequately support the proposed inquiry. She advises tightly narrowing the focus of a scholarly inquiry.

Setting Clear Standards in Exhibition Policies

The commitment to intellectual freedom directs both the ALA's and the PLA's model policies to express a wide variety of perspectives in library exhibitions (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1992; ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990). It is challenging to develop exhibition policy standards that allow for current and future perspectives, and also provide substantive guidance in choosing exhibitions. For example, a great number of Salt Lake City Public Library's exhibitions are of artwork, the genre of exhibition which, the PLA report states, is the source of most community complaints (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990). The Salt Lake City Public Library's exhibition policy makes this unusually clear commitment: "The Library will exercise reasonable discretion in the placement of all exhibits (for example,

an exhibit that may include sexually explicit or graphically violent material). In so doing, the Library will preserve the public's right of access and make reasonable efforts to preserve the integrity of the exhibit as a whole" (Salt Lake City Public Library, n.d., p. 3). The policy also sets ten standards by which a library selection jury will choose exhibitions. Five of those, while subjective, are more specific than standards appearing in other policies. They are: "(C) Relevance of work to the community as a whole; (D) Effective use of the medium and its appropriateness to the content of the work; (E) Insight into the human social condition; (F) Importance as a document of the times; (H) Representation of a movement, genre, trend or ethnic heritage" (Salt Lake City Public Library, n.d., p. 7). The policy specifies that all exhibitions will be documented and that the documentation will be preserved at the library that hosted the exhibition.

The Chicago Public Library exhibition policy stipulates 11 standards by which library exhibitions will be selected. Two of the standards that do not regularly appear in exhibition policies are: "Relation to past and future library exhibitions, to insure a variety of techniques, subject or medium" and "Relation to other exhibition in the community presented at or about the same time" (Chicago Public Library, 1995, p. 5). The policy's sixth criteria is "Interest of the community" (Chicago Public Library, 1995, p. 6). Both Salt Lake City Public Library and Chicago Public Library have handled community standards in this general fashion.

Los Angeles Public Library, like Denver Public Library, worked closely with the city attorney's office to create its exhibition policy draft. Elizabeth Gay Teoman (personal communication, October 19, 1995), the central library Director's, said she wanted to wrestle through the issues of community-initiated exhibitions by setting out standards and procedures that make these exhibitions possible. Most of the standards are familiar from other library exhibition policies; however, the Los Angeles Public Library's policy emphasizes presenting exhibitions in which the concepts and ideas are visually "self evident" and "visually illuminating and aesthetically pleasing" (Los Angeles Public Library, 1995, p. 5). The policy stipulates that exhibitions of a single artist's work will not be offered. The section "Proposal Stipulations and Requirements" states, as do some other library policies, "No appearances may be made before staff on behalf of a proposal" (Los Angeles Public Library, 1995, p. 7).

Exhibition Policies and Exhibition Controversies

Controversy over library exhibitions may or may not cause revision of library exhibition programs. In 1979, the Winston-Salem Public Library (North Carolina) hosted the exhibition "Knights of the Ku Klux Klan." The exhibition caused an uproar in the library's community, provoking many objections (Roberts, 1979). Apparently, the library did not see the need to protect itself for the future by developing an exhibition policy. Exhibition Coordinator Lori Alderman (personal communication, September 7, 1995) said the library does not have a formal exhibition policy, but does have a few guidelines that specify that material presented in its four display cases needs to come

from the library's community. Also, the displays must be from a non-profit rather than commercial source, and nothing may be offered for sale.

After a community uproar over homosexual materials at its library, the Fairfax County Public Library (Virginia) changed some of its priorities. Queried for this paper, Edwin S. Clay III (personal communication, September 22, 1995) Director of the County Library system stated that "mounting of exhibitions is not a function of this system." The Fairfax Public Library system has been the scene of community struggles over the exhibition, collection, and dispensing of materials on homosexuality. Prior to these struggles, the library regularly presented exhibitions; it continues to do so, but apparently the role of exhibitions in the library is now less important. After the library began to receive complaints about the open availability of the free gay newspaper, The Washington Blade, in its handout area, the library amended its exhibition policy. The first amendment states that the library may limit the size of a display and the frequency with which a single individual or organization may display (Fairfax County Public Library, 1993, p. 2). Exhibition requests are considered in the order received. The second amendment required a "credit line" stating the sponsor of an exhibition (p. 2). The third amendment made displays conditional on the library director's approval and stipulated that "such displays should reflect all viewpoints on a given subject where appropriate" (p. 2). The policy already carried the stipulation that "all aspects of the issue will be presented in an equal manner" (p. 2).

Exhibition Programs Not Guided by Exhibition Policies

In some libraries, the exhibition coordinator makes exhibition selections, and policies if they exist, are formalities. Although Boston Public Library has a few guidelines, it is Special Projects Librarian Ellen Graf who makes exhibition decisions (E. Graf, personal communication, September 9, 1995). Public Relations Director and Exhibition Coordinator Averil Kadis (personal communication, September 20, 1995) at the Enoch Pratt Free Library has ultimate authority for the selection of exhibitions; the library does have an exhibition policy. Philadelphia Public Library does not have an exhibition policy, but Exhibition Coordinator Lynn Washington chooses exhibitions that promote the library's collection and attract audiences (Washington, pers. comm., 1995). Coordinator of Exhibitions Miriam Jimenez Roman (personal communication, June 13, 1995) at NYPL's Schomburg Center for Research of Black Culture, makes exhibition selections for that institution's program. The Huntington Library does not have a written exhibition policy, and the library staff makes curatorial decisions (M. Robinson, personal communication, July 15, 1995).

What Does a Public Library Exhibition Program Look Like?

Individual Exhibition Programs: Focus, Goals, Titles and Collaborators, Programming, Benefits/Negative Effects of Exhibitions

The exhibition programs of many libraries emphasize the library's collections. This is particularly true for research libraries, public or private, that have extensive, scholarly collections and that may have a larger staff who can devote substantial amounts of time

to the exhibitions. Averil Kadis (pers. comm., 1995) said that research libraries like NYPL have the resources to create scholarly exhibitions from the library's own collection, whereas a rural public library in Pennsylvania may have to borrow exhibition materials from a local collector.

NYPL has had a revitalized exhibition program since 1983. The central library's exhibitions program has the largest staff and abundance of resources of any public library exhibitions program. The exhibition department has a staff of six people and can draw on the services and expertise of other library staff, such as curators of special collections, to contribute to the exhibitions. NYPL's central library exhibition program is an example of what a public library with significant resources and a strong commitment to exhibitions can produce.

NYPL's central library exhibition program almost exclusively presents exhibitions from its own collections. Rare Books, Food, and Dance are just some of the library's special collections. The central library exhibits material from the collections of the Schomburg Center and the New York Library of the Performing Arts. The exhibitions are generally thematic, varied in media, and organized into large or medium-sized scholarly exhibitions. Exhibitions strive to interpret the library's collection and to show as many sections of the collection as possible in an exhibition. By including material from many disciplines, Lou Storey (pers. comm., 1995) explains that exhibitions approach the library in the same way that a user might, researching or investigating an idea in different areas of the library's collection. NYPL central library exhibitions may

present new scholarship or theses, commemorate an anniversary such as that of Stonewall, or as decided recently, feature the work of a living artist whose work is in the library's collection. The exhibition department creates an average of one traveling exhibition per year that is an adaptation of one of its home exhibitions.

Recent exhibitions have included: "What Price Freedom," "Building the New York Public Library," "Celebrating the Library's Centennial," "Books of the Century," "Garbage, The History and Politics of Trash in New York City," "Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall," "La Fontaine, the Power of Fables," "Assault on the Arts, Culture and Politics in Nazi Germany," and "The Dead Sea Scrolls."

NYPL's central library offers programming that includes readings, performances, lectures, films and workshops related to exhibitions. The NYPL educational program is probably the most ambitious of all public libraries. For most exhibitions, a catalog, a brochure and three educational guides are developed; these educational guides include an educator's guide, a student guide and an activity guide. In addition to information about the exhibition, the publications may include bibliographies and glossaries, and the catalogs include object lists. The education department conducts school tours and activity days for younger library users. Polly Hubbard (personal communication, June 15, 1995) explains that the educational activities and publications use objects from the exhibition as motivation for learning. For the "La Fontaine" exhibition, fables were used as models of conflict resolution. For "What Price Freedom?," a Socratic seminar was offered. Other activities have been organized around Arthurian Legends, or the

library itself, which was used as the site of a library treasure hunt. The education department does not offer any bilingual activities; however, for school groups speaking languages other than English, activities are made “concrete rather than abstract” (P. Hubbard, pers. comm., 1995).

The NYPL central library exhibition staff describes three direct benefits from exhibitions: exhibitions can pay for library materials to be cataloged, encourage donations, and bring in new audiences. Lou Storey (pers. comm., 1995) states that the last benefit can be a double-edged sword because viewers who are not users of the library may want to see exhibitions that include less text and are quickly understood.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture is devoted primarily to showing its own extensive collections. Recent exhibitions have been: “Arturo Alfonso Schomburg: Race Man” and “Arturo Alfonso Schomburg: The Man and his Times,” companion exhibitions about the founder of the Schomburg Center developed for the 70th anniversary of the Schomburg Center and the Centennial of the NYPL. Other exhibitions have included: “Heroes of Our Heritage: The African American Tradition in Postal Stamps,” “Africa’s Children: Africa’s Future,” “Harlem’s Children, Harlem’s Future,” and “Harlem Reminiscence: Paintings by Billy Dee Williams.” Exhibition related-programming includes films, readings, and school tours.

New York Library for the Performing Arts, part of the NYPL System, also focuses on its own collections, accepting at most one traveling exhibition per year. The library’s special collections are: The Billy Rose Theatre Collection, The Dance Collection, The

Music Division, and The Rodgers and Hammerstein Archive of Recorded Sound.

According to the Curator of Exhibitions Barbara Stratyner (personal communication, June 16, 1995), the subject of many library exhibitions is stage design, and theatrical costumes are often displayed.

Recent exhibitions at New York Library for the Performing Arts include: "The Founders of Times Square" and the related exhibition "In the New World: New York Performances 1893"; "Screams on Screen, One Hundred Years of Horror Films," developed by a committee from throughout the library; and the simultaneous exhibitions "What is Jazz," "Jazz in New York," and "Images of Jazz." Features from the special collections offered in conjunction with these exhibitions were: "Transformations: Jazz Idioms in Classical Music" (Music Division), "Time Step: Evolution of Jazz Dance" (Dance Collection), "Revolutions: Documenting Early Jazz" (Rodgers and Hammerstein Archives of Recorded Sound), and "Eubie Blake" (Billy Rose Theatre Collection).

The library offers free programming daily, some of which relates to the exhibitions. Programming includes movies, performances, lectures and symposia. Performances and other presentations are videotaped and become part of the library's collection. Library departments may arrange materials related to the exhibitions in kiosks within the departments. The curriculum enhancement packet developed for "Jazz" (New York Library for the Performing Arts, 1993) was comprehensive, containing a general discography on jazz, with call numbers, a general bibliography (also with call numbers), 20 slides with descriptive information, a blank cassette, a poster, two exhibition

brochures, a calendar of events, a workbook with texts on jazz adapted from the exhibition labels and captions, ten discographies about specific aspects of jazz, and a questionnaire and evaluation form. This library exhibition department has an unusual funding situation. Private endowment funds pay the salaries of the six person exhibition staff, while production expenses are paid for with other library moneys which are sometimes quite limited (Stratyner, pers. comm., 1995).

NYPL, because of its abundant resources, is an exhibition program model that other public libraries cannot emulate. The exhibition programs of most public libraries, as a rule, have much smaller staffs than do those of public or private research libraries. As a result, fewer exhibitions may be developed in-house. Averil Kadis (pers. comm., 1995) says some libraries may not have collections that provide a base for exhibitions. In discussing the merits of scholarly and community exhibitions, Kadis remarks that there are "so many wonderful community exhibitions that the library can do" (Kadis, pers. comm., 1995). Many public libraries present varied exhibition programs that include a few scholarly exhibitions during the course of a year. As the PLA report indicates, many libraries also book traveling exhibitions (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990).

The Harold Washington Library Center occasionally hosts a traveling exhibition but usually features its own collections in exhibitions. J. Ingrid Lesley, Chief of Special Collections (personal communication, June 20, 1995), oversees the exhibition program and relates that at least three scholarly exhibitions are produced from the library's special

collections annually. These exhibitions are developed by the archivist of the collection and take six to nine months to prepare. The library's main exhibition hall is devoted to subjects considered to be of general interest to the diverse community served by the library. The library's street windows are used to advertise the programs of community non-profit organizations.

Recent exhibitions have included: the Smithsonian traveling exhibition "Jacob Lawrence, Thirty Years of Prints 1963-1993"; "At Your Service: The History of the Chicago Public Library"; "Harold Washington: Visions of a New City"; "Katherine Kyles Leab and Daniel J. Leab American Book Prices Current Exhibition Catalog Awards"; "Unseen Treasures of the Civil War," one of many Civil War exhibitions offered by the library from this collection; "From Slavery to the Supreme Court," a collaboration with the Just Beginning Fund; and "Claude Gafner Photographs the French Theatre," co-sponsored by the Consulate General of France and the Insituto Italiano di Cultura.

The new Denver Central Library opened in 1995 with an exhibition from its collection "The History of the Central Library in Denver." The next exhibition, "Colorado and the West" is a collaboration with the Denver Art Museum and the Colorado Historical Society; this exhibition will take place simultaneously at all three institutions, and each will feature selections from its own collection (Henson, pers. comm., 1995). The Denver Central Library has a world famous collection of photographs of the western United States.

The exhibition program is administered by the design department, a subdivision of the marketing department. Eventually the three collaborating exhibitions known together as the Civic Center Complex hope to merge their design and marketing offices (Henson, pers. comm., 1995). Perhaps because of this collaborative approach, the Denver Central Library will consider charging for the "Colorado and the West" exhibition.

At the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Averil Kadis exhibits "anything that stimulates the community to read" or involves the community in a new train of thought to motivate people to read new material (Kadis, pers. comm., 1995). The program is widely varied in an effort to draw in a broad community audience. Exhibitions are tied to the library's collection and to holidays and community collections; the work of local artists is also exhibited. The library's special collections include an Edgar Allen Poe collection, an H. L. Mencken collection, and an African American collection. The library has 12 showcase street windows devoted to displaying information on community non-profit organizations. Local artists are exhibited at branches.

Over the years Enoch Pratt has offered these exhibitions among others: "Poet of the Tabloid Murders"; "One Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of James McCain"; "Stonewall: Gay and Lesbian Literature"; "Mencken 100"; "Inventions of Leonardo da Vinci"; "Dolls, Dolls, Dolls," a local collection; "Guilded Treasures: The Twentieth Anniversary of the Needle Art Expo"; and "Are We to Be a Nation?," the traveling exhibition that originated at NYPL. Programming and products for exhibitions include storytelling, demonstrations, videos, films, lectures, and reading lists.

Lynn Washington at the Philadelphia Public Library stresses that the library's exhibition program is "service oriented and does exhibitions of interest to the community" (Washington, pers. comm., 1995). Exhibitions are "not too trivial, not too academic" (Washington, pers. comm., 1995). When preparing the exhibitions, the staff ask themselves if the exhibitions will attract audiences. The exhibitions promote the library's collections by focusing on its strengths and exhibitions are geared to encourage people to seek more information. They are organized thematically and avoid addressing cultural traditions or issues of a single cultural group; subjects that include multiple cultural traditions are selected. An exhibition on the subject of quilts covered African American quilts as well as quilting traditions from other cultures.

Boston Public Library shows exhibitions from its own collections and co-sponsors exhibitions with non-profit educational, cultural and civic organizations. They cover a wide variety of local and international issues, but mostly subjects tied to the geographical regions of Boston, the state of Massachusetts and New England (Graf, pers. comm., 1995). Because the library does not have exhibition security, it does not exhibit original works of art, but does offer many photography exhibitions. A list of exhibition titles from the last few years yields these: "A Voice for Citizens, A Force for Change" presented with the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts; "Bedrock—In Tribute to Boston's Black Women"; "Dismantling the Idea of the Bomb" presented with the New England Physicians for Social Change; "Focus El Salvador: The New Initiative"; "Czech/Slovak Photography," from the Navigator Foundation's Forbes Foundation; "The

Bigfoot Memorial Ride”; “Into the Landscape: Boston’s Emerald Necklace Parks,” developed by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department; and “Distant Relations: Cambodians Inside and Outside the Homeland.”

Dallas Public Library presents many exhibitions that are library-related or from the library’s collection. “Small Things Considered: The Art of the Bookplate,” “Greek Treasures” from the Dallas Library and the Gennadius Library in Athens, “Book Landmarks” books from the library’s collection, and “Their Indelible Mark: Rubber Stamps and Libraries” have been recent exhibitions.

The exhibition program at the new central library in Los Angeles exhibits on subjects of interest to the diverse community of that city. Many exhibitions come from the library’s collections and the library also exhibits group shows of local artists and traveling exhibitions. The library co-presented an exhibition developed by the gay newspaper The Advocate, which was quite successful (Teoman, pers. comm., 1995). A traveling exhibition on murals procured from a source in Germany was more problematic; the exhibition that arrived was not as complete as its description had been. Library Director Elizabeth Gay Teoman (pers. comm., 1995) indicates that the library is interested in collaborating as much as possible with other organizations to produce exhibitions.

From its own collections, the library produced the three part series on community photographs “Shades of L.A.” Other exhibitions scheduled are “Our Roots Run Deep: The Black Experience in California”; “Picture L. A.,” a collaboration with the Getty

Museum's Conservation program: "Retratos y Suenos"; and "Una Storia Segreta." An exhibition on pictorial maps put together quickly from the museum's collection brought in a number of map donations (Teoman, pers. comm., 1995).

San Francisco's new main library opens in 1996. The first exhibition to be offered will be "Building the Library" which will present information about the citizens and Affinity Groups who brought the new library into being; the work of the architects of the new building and of the artists who created permanent works for the new library will be exhibited. In fact, it was the Affinity Groups that encouraged the library to present an expanded exhibition program. Exhibits Coordinator Susan Saidenberg has modeled the exhibition as a downscaled version of NYPL's program. In one interview Saidenberg explained that library exhibitions serve as a "hook to reading and learning...providing tools that enable citizens to make informed decisions about issues under current debate" (Junius, 1995, p. 1). Saidenberg also commented that "the central goals of the program at the new main are to provide increased access to collections through the display of materials (heretofore) used mainly by scholars, to share the results of scholarship with the public and to reinforce the role of libraries as forums for public dialog and debate" (Junius, 1995, p. 2). Upcoming is a two-part exhibition "Born Cosmopolitan, Becoming International: How Does a City Progress From Diversity to Inclusivity?"; the two parts are titled "The Dimensions of Diversity: Who are 'We'?" and "The Politics of Inclusion." Films, lectures, family workshops, and school programs will accompany exhibitions.

As the ALA survey indicated, artwork is a prevailing subject of public library exhibition programs. This focus may or may not be reflected in the library's exhibition policy, but may be indicated by exhibition guidelines. The exhibition programs of four public libraries that present art work are discussed here.

Miami-Dade Public Library is committed to the presentation of exhibitions of artwork; its exhibition handbook (Miami-Dade Public Library, 1987) states its commitment to supporting local talent and creativity. The exhibition program also sets itself the goal of stimulating interest in the library's collections. Barbara Young (personal communication, August 10, 1995), Supervisor of Art Services, does not differentiate between "visual and written or recorded information." Young describes art exhibitions as visual information relating to all parts of the library's collection. The library's goal is to serve Miami's culturally diverse community. Working towards this aim, the exhibition program features annual exhibitions for Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage (October and November), as well as winter holiday and summer exhibitions. In general however, exhibitions presenting African American and Latino culture are not segregated to particular months (Young, pers. comm., 1995).

The 1995 summer exhibitions "Boat Images from South Florida Collections" and "Becalmed in Miami, Three Dimensional Boats by South Florida Artists" featured local artists and artists with international reputations from a wide variety of cultural traditions. Young chose to present these two exhibitions because of the many levels of meaning that boats have for Floridians—from recreational vehicles to the conveyance of immigrants

arriving on Floridian shores (Young, pers. comm., 1995). The exhibition featured more objects than it did text and was accompanied by a small catalog that included reproductions, an object list and a short bibliography on the subject of boats.

The Miami-Dade Public Library presents both individual and group art exhibitions. The library has a permanent collection of art and the Exhibition Handbook 1987 states: “Basically we purchase and exhibit artists who are established and listed in standard references such as Benizit, Havelice, Who’s Who in American Art, or artists who have built up a resume of juried and invitational shows such as the Hortt Memorial, or the Four Arts Society Annual Exhibitions” (Miami-Dade Public Library, 1987, p. 8). Young recounts that as a result of the art exhibition program, artists have donated work to the library. In prior years, the library operated an artmobile; artwork carried on the truck was used for “reverse storytelling” projects in which children described the art and their response to it (Young, pers. comm., 1995). Unfortunately, budget cuts required that this project be curtailed.

Like Miami-Dade Public Library, Charleston Public Library (South Carolina) is committed to the exhibition of art. The library states its commitment: “to provide exhibition space for the serious artist and craftsman working in various mediums and to provide the residents of Charleston county displays of good quality and broad variety” (Charleston Public Library, n.d., p. 2). In 1996 the new Charleston Central Library will open. Sara Breibart (personal communication, August 10, 1995), who coordinates exhibitions at the library, said that the library will try to tie its exhibitions to an important

cultural event in Charleston. The annual Spoleto Festival features both visual artists and musicians. Breibart says that the library will try to book exhibitions by prominent artists to coincide with the festival. "Beyond Category: the Musical genius of Duke Ellington," the traveling exhibition organized by SITES has been booked for the central library's opening year. Breibart points out that this exhibition will serve to connect the library with the musical aspect of the Spoleto Festival.

Approximately 70% of exhibitions in the Martin Luther King Memorial Library's main gallery are devoted to artwork. Elena Tscherny (personal communication, June 7, 1995), Exhibits and Program Coordinator, says that in a city filled with museums and galleries, the library is one of the few places that local artist can exhibit without charge. The library also has various special collections, and exhibitions devoted to special collections material are presented in their respective departments. The library accepts traveling exhibitions and actively collaborates with community organizations to present joint exhibitions or exhibitions sponsored by those organizations (Tscherny, pers. comm., June, 1995).

These exhibitions were some of the many presented over the last five years: "Hidden Talent at Oak Hill," artwork by Washington, DC youth residing in a Maryland detention center; "Creating Positive Solutions," children's artwork in response to community problems, co-sponsored by Washington Very Special Arts; "African American Neurosurgeons"; "Yesterday, Today, Forever," celebrating the fourth anniversary of the Supremes' Fan Club and co-sponsored by that organization; "The Sweet and Sour

Animal Exhibit,” Children from the Harlem School of the Arts respond to Langston Hughes’ poetry with artwork and poetry of their own; “Messages from our Youth,” co-sponsored by the city’s public school system and Bureau of School Health Services; “Asian Recollections, Dreams and Journeys,” co-sponsored by Philippine Arts, Letters and Media Council; and two exhibitions “Tibet, “Roof of the World,” sponsored by the Chinese Consulate, and “Tibetan Frontiers: Contemporary Art and Images from a Refugee Community,” co-sponsored by Year of Tibet DC Committee, International Campaign for Tibet, and dZi, Inc.

While the Montgomery County Public Library system (1992) does not emphasize any particular content in its exhibition statement, a list of 1994 exhibitions at the Rockville County Library indicates that an overwhelming number of the exhibitions were devoted to artwork. The exhibition program collaborates with many community groups to present exhibitions; it also presents local collections.

The particular interests of library exhibition coordinators may have a strong impact on the orientation of a library exhibition program. San Diego Public Library is devoted to the exhibition of artwork, particularly of local artists. Nora Brooks (personal communication, July 15, 1995) at San Diego Public Library says part of the reason for this interest in art is that the previous exhibition coordinator had close ties to the local arts community. The library also accepts approximately one traveling exhibition per year and is planning to host “A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the U.S. Constitution,” circulated by the ALA. Brooks reports that the library also offers

exhibitions on annual events, using Chase's Calendar of Annual Events as a source for exhibition themes.

Public Library Exhibition Presentation

In many library exhibitions, perhaps most, the exhibition narrative is developed in the exhibition labels and didactic panels. Diantha Dow Schull (pers. comm., 1995) describes well-conceived exhibition labels as communicating three levels of information; a main heading, a subheading, and then full explanatory notes are necessary. If a visitor reads only the main headings, they can come away with "one or two good, big ideas" (Schull, pers. comm., 1995). At NYPL Exhibition Research Coordinator Jeanne Bornstein (personal communication, June 15, 1995) supports curators in developing exhibition copy. Curators are experts in particular collections or subjects, but explaining those subjects in label format requires a particular skill. San Francisco Public Library's exhibition department will have a handbook on labeling standards developed by Nina Zurier of the University Art Museum, Berkeley, who will design the first three exhibitions. The handbook and centralized production will keep labeling consistent even when exhibition areas in special collections will be operated by non-exhibition staff.

Exhibition programs like NYPL, The New York Library for the Performing Arts, the Harold Washington Library Center, the Newberry Library, and San Francisco Public Library are able to hire professional preparators to install exhibitions. Miami-Dade Public Library's Exhibition Handbook 1987 establishes standards for transporting, storing and handling artwork, installing exhibitions, production of brochures and

publicity. The directions are written for the non-professional installer. Equipment needed for exhibition presentation varies depending upon the scope of the program; for instance, New York Library for the Performing Arts maintains a collection of mannequins for the display of theatrical costumes. Libraries with rare book collections need a selection of conservationally sound book cradles.

Public Library Exhibition Assessment

Library exhibition programs often rely on circulation figures to gauge their success. Thomas Phelps (pers. comm., 1995) regards this as a sound method. NYPL uses questionnaires and keeps track of attendance figures, though these methods of assessment are not as important as the comment books and personal observations that accompany exhibitions (Storey, pers. comm., 1995; Bornstein, pers. comm., 1995). Both Lou Storey and Jeanne Bornstein observe visitors to exhibitions, noting traffic patterns, length of time spent at cases, individual responses to exhibited materials and the way in which viewers interact with each other. Bornstein observes that while attendance figures for exhibitions like the “Dead Sea Scrolls” are high, exhibitions with lower attendance may actually serve the program’s goal better; they may communicate more about the library’s collection and increase the interest in and use of it. Storey says that the staff respond to recurring complaints or observations that appear in comment books. NYPL’s Education Coordinator gets feedback from visiting school groups (P. Hubbard, pers. comm., 1995). The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts includes a “memory book” in each

exhibition as a way of recording visitors responses to the exhibitions (Stratynier, pers. comm., 1995).

Miami-Dade Public Library's Exhibition Handbook 1987 reads: "Both the Art Services and Community Relations Departments stress that although the primary purpose of programming is not to increase the circulation of books—nor to bring more people into the library, creative programs and exhibits might achieve these results." (p. 2).

Traveling Exhibitions

Traveling exhibitions are a staple of public library exhibition programs. Because many libraries do not have the resources to create complex scholarly exhibitions, they depend on outside resources for these exhibitions. The same exhibition may be seen in dozens of cities in a single year. Libraries chosen by the ALA to receive exhibitions receive them at nominal cost to the library.

Some public libraries develop traveling exhibitions. Although NYPL is the leader in this effort, other smaller libraries like the Richmond Public Library (Virginia) and the Newport Public Library (Rhode Island) have also created traveling exhibitions.

ALA's traveling exhibition program, which sponsors exhibitions created by other institutions is funded primarily by the NEH. Thomas Phelps (pers. comm., 1995) feels that it is important for libraries' collections to be seen, particularly those of private libraries, wider exposure to collections is made possible by traveling exhibitions. Phelps

emphasizes the difference between “cultural education” and collection access. He points out that exhibitions can encourage reading as well as learning.

The ALA’s Department of Public Programs’ Fact Sheet (1994) states that it “supports libraries in their role as community cultural and educational centers and universities of the people” (p. 1). The ALA has produced nine exhibitions for travel. In choosing exhibitions to produce, the ALA ascertains whether the tone and the language of exhibitions are consistent with each other. Exhibitions that will help viewers make new connections are given priority because they help to “encourage public (humanities) programs in America’s libraries” (ALA, Department of Public Programs, 1994, p. 1). In addition to the exhibition, ALA provides workshops to train library personnel for exhibition presentation and program development, and also provides educational and publicity materials. ALA publishes the Whole Person Catalog (n.d.) which lists traveling exhibitions available from multiple sources, non-profit and commercial, as well other interpretive programming and sources for locating traveling exhibitions. These exhibitions may come equipped with a combination of the following elements: catalogs, brochures, discussion guides, bibliographies, publicity materials, program guides, slides, educational guides, computer software, postcards, posters, videos, audiomontages, or bookmarks.

The Whole Person Catalog (ALA, Department of Public Programs. n.d.) also provides information on applying for NEH grants; it states that the two things grant winners have in common are a project that is feasible in relation to the library’s resources and

community, and a commitment to involve credentialed humanities scholars in all phases of the project.

In selecting libraries to host its exhibitions, the ALA's Department of Public Programs assesses why libraries want the exhibition, the relationship of local history to the exhibitions, the library's plan for accompanying programming, and community or commercial resources that will support the project.

SITES, the traveling exhibition program of the Smithsonian Institution, was established in 1952 to provide greater public access to the Smithsonian's collections. SITES now circulates exhibitions generated by other institutions as well. Like the ALA's program, SITES is interested in exhibitions that make connections; asking questions and presenting multiple viewpoints are priorities. SITES Project Director Crisley McCarson (personal communication, September 10, 1995) underscores the importance of exhibitions that are well constructed, easy for small library staffs to install, and light enough to travel inexpensively. SITES provides traveling exhibitions, but does not secure funds for libraries to book them as the ALA does. SITES, the ALA, and the NEH collaborate in circulating exhibitions such as "Beyond Category: The Musical Genius of Duke Ellington," a 15 unit panel exhibition with an interactive audiovisual station and booklists developed by the ALA.

The Texas Humanities Council is another agency offering traveling exhibitions. As with exhibitions from SITES, libraries must seek their own funding to host exhibitions. Frances Leonard chooses to produce exhibitions that are interdisciplinary, explaining that

projects limited to an historical focus can be “flat” (F. Leonard, personal communication, August 4, 1995). Accompanying exhibitions are book selections that become the property of the host library’s collection. Unlike the traveling exhibition programs of ALA, the Smithsonian, and the L.C., the Texas Humanities Council both creates exhibitions and travels them. Host libraries pay for the exhibitions. For the Quincentenary, the Council worked with special collections in five states to develop four exhibitions. “New Spain: The Frontiers of Faith” examined the way that the systems of Spanish culture changed when they were brought to Mexico; records of the Inquisition formed the basis of the project. Leonard describes one issue that arose over a Quincentenary project. An institution in South Florida asked to see the text of the exhibition “Africa in the Americas: Slavery in Spanish and Portuguese Realms” before booking, because there was a concern that African Americans would be portrayed as undignified; the text proved satisfactory and the exhibition was booked. Leonard offers an example of the complexity of presenting multiple viewpoints. When the Texas Humanities Council updated their exhibition on Martin Luther King to create “The Road to the Promised Land: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement-- Perspectives in the 1990’s,” the new perspectives of Black scholars that were different from King’s were a challenge to introduce into the original exhibition (Leonard, pers. comm., 1995).

**What Information About Research (Federal and Private) and Academic Libraries
Can be of Use to Public Library Exhibition Programs?**

Exhibition Policies

No stranger to controversy, the L.C. is revising its exhibition policy through its Department of Interpretive Programs. That department has drafted an extensive set of guidelines that it will use to develop departmental policy. Irene Burnham, Interpretive Programs Officer (personal communication August 25, 1995), said that these guidelines will “undergird the beginnings of the long range planning process.” These guidelines outline areas of focus for exhibition subject matter, define the objectives for the traveling exhibition program and the online exhibition program, and describe specific exhibition programming and products. Exhibition priorities should be linked to those of the library. One of the guideline documents, Strategies for the Future (Library of Congress, 1995b), explains how exhibitions will support the “knowledge navigation” role of the library as spelled out by Dr. James Billington, the library’s Director (p. 1). The exhibition program is described as a mechanism for Americans to access the L.C.’s collections, which are their “national patrimony” (Library of Congress, 1995a, p. 1).

The exhibition guidelines of the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin specifically refer to both the mission of the University and the mission of the research center in its text (Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, n.d.). Both the institutions state a commitment to exhibitions. The research center’s guidelines stress the need for good communication and a generous staff attitude; they

define exhibitions and cover proposals, planning and implementation, conservation and preparation, documentation and security. The requirements for conservation include the rare stipulation that objects on extended exhibition be reviewed annually by a conservator. Exhibition length of large exhibitions is regulated by conservation concerns and because of the work involved the exhibitions will be no shorter than three months and no longer than six. The research center's exhibitions are devoted almost exclusively to its own collections, exhibiting one traveling exhibition, at most per year.

Individual Exhibition Programs: Focus, Goals, Titles and Programming

The L.C.'s Department of Interpretive Programs' guidelines outline three focus areas for its exhibition program that features the library's collection. These areas are: "Great Libraries/Written Traditions"; "Treasures of the Library of Congress"; and "Explorations of the American Character Past and Present" (Library of Congress, 1995b, p. 3). The goal of the L.C.'s interpretive programming is to present both "artifactual and digital exhibits" and to accumulate records of explorations of the three areas outlined (p. 3).

Recent L.C. exhibitions include: "My Dear Wife: Letters from Members of Congress to Their Wives," "1492: An Ongoing Voyage," "Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library and Renaissance Culture," "From the Ends of the Earth: Judaic Treasures of the Library of Congress," "Revelations of the Russian Archives," and "Maps of the Persian Gulf."

The guidelines specify that along with each exhibition, the following will be developed: catalogs, brochures, a video of the exhibition, a Global Library segment of the exhibition and related material, a traveling exhibition, a scholarly conference or

symposium, a lecture series, musical and literary performances, a reading list, and interpretive guided tours.

The L.C. also develops traveling exhibitions from its own in-house productions. Its guidelines for the future target the development of a network to help circulate their exhibitions. The L.C.'s Department of Interpretive Programs sees traveling exhibitions as one way it can make the library's collection accessible to broader audiences.

The guidelines put forth the benefits of online exhibitions as serving to publicize new acquisitions and collections emerging from arrears, thus encouraging new donations and the ongoing cataloging of the library's collections. The Department of Interpretive Programs feels that groups of online exhibitions can have a cumulative effect that single exhibitions can not. Online exhibitions can conclude with a questionnaire, providing more information about L.C. collection users. They can also provide chat rooms involving scholars, providing the public with direct access to dialogues on contemporary issues.

Like many private libraries, the Pierpont Morgan Library emphasizes its own collections which are the subject of about 60% of the exhibitions offered, the other 40% are traveling exhibitions (T. Herstein, personal communication, June 14, 1995). In recent years, the Morgan Library, which is a museum as well as a library, has booked "blockbuster" exhibitions. The library has many special collections; recent exhibitions have been culled from the illuminated manuscript collection, the Van Dyck drawing collection, and the James Furst music collection. Some exhibitions mounted in the last

few years were: "The Fox and the Grapes, Aesop Through the Ages"; "Animals as Symbol in Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts," presented in collaboration with other New York Institutions and organized by the New School for Social Research; "The Painted Page"; and "Auld Acquaintances." Programming accompanying exhibitions may involve videos, storytelling, music, and dance performances.

The Newberry Library draws from its own collections for exhibitions, occasionally mounting a related exhibition acquired from an outside source, or borrowing from an outside source to supplement its own exhibited collection (T.Eddling, personal communication, June 20, 1995). The library's collections cover a broad range of subjects, including Russian, French, and German collections of literature and music, The Newberry Choirbook Collection, The Driscoll Collection of American Sheet Music, and the Rudolph Ganz Papers. "The Caxton Club: A Century of Books and Book-loving," and "Personal Treasures: Favorites from the Collections of Current Caxton Club Members," were 1995 exhibitions that were part of a city wide program. Other 1995 exhibitions were "Susan Barron: Labyrinth of Time," the work of a book artist included in the Newberry Library's collection, and "The Newberry and the Humanities," a preview of a permanent exhibition of the library's holdings to open in 1997. The Newberry offers continuous programming consisting of lectures and symposia, story hours, tours, and events; often programming is connected to exhibitions.

The Huntington Library exhibits its own voluminous collections. Occasionally, the Huntington borrows from private collectors or other collections to supplement its

collection for display. For the Quincentenary exhibition it accessed a digitized Spanish Archive. "This Library Will tell the Story," the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Huntington, "William Blake's Illuminated Prints 1788-1822," "Personal Edens: The Gardens and Film Sets of Florence Yoch," "Spain and the Americas 1492-1600, What is the Legacy?" and "Fiber to Sheet, Papermaking East and West" were exhibitions produced during last the five years. Brochures and catalogs accompany the exhibitions; the brochure for "Spain and the Americas" was produced in English and Spanish.

The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin exhibits its own collections, accepting traveling exhibitions once a year at most.

Exhibition areas in the research center are devoted to particular special collection subjects such as theater, photography, and film. The Ransom Center has permanent displays of single items like the first photograph and the Guttenberg Bible, but its large exhibition area has space for 400 objects. Some exhibitions of 1995 and 1996 are:

"Mirror, Mirror: Costume Design for the American and British Stage, 1870s-1970s";

"Magic: A Brief History of the Unknown"; "The Company They Kept: Alfred A. and

Blanche W. Knopf, Publishers (Part II)"; "The Sculpture of Eric Gill"; "Gendered

Territory: Photographs of Women By Julia Cameron"; and "Eve Arnold: In Retrospect."

Exhibition Presentation

Tracy Eddling (pers. comm., 1995), formerly Head Preparator at NYPL, has worked with the Whitney Museum on several exhibitions that include books, and is now Exhibits Associate at the Newberry Library. Eddling explains that because books on display are

inaccessible in cases, they lose some of their power, therefore, the exhibition environment needs to be compelling. Eddling points to NYPL's exhibition on Victorian storybooks which was produced as a theatrical set and opened the door at that library to more theatrical exhibition settings. For the Caxton exhibitions at the Newberry Library, Eddling used red moiré fabric, and various props such as a partially-smoked cigar and an ashtray to enliven the environment. Eddling says that book exhibitions vary in emphasis: "Personal Treasures: Favorites from the Collections of Current Caxton Club Members" emphasized the process of collecting, while "The Caxton Club: A Century of Books and Book-loving" emphasized the book as object, and therefore the art of the book.

At the Morgan Library, Bill Voelkle (personal communication, June 14, 1995), Curator of Illuminated Manuscripts, advocates the use of "synoptic labels" which—in the case of an illuminated manuscript—interprets what is taking place in the manuscript image. The Morgan Library often develops its own labels for traveling exhibitions received from other organizations.

Exhibition Assessment

The Morgan Library recently made available questionnaires to poll viewers' responses to the video accompanying the Aesop exhibition.

Diantha Dow Schull (pers. comm., 1995) cites the Newberry Library as being especially committed to exhibitions that reflect their community's needs. The Newberry Library conducts focus groups to determine what subjects and services are of interest to their users. Within exhibitions, detailed questionnaires are available to determine the

effectiveness of exhibitions; the results are used in planning future projects. In 1995 the library presented a pilot exhibition of its collection in which the signage posed questions that the exhibition addressed. Public response to that show will be used in planning a permanent exhibition of the library's treasures.

Online Communication About Library Exhibition Programs

Generally, academic librarians have had access to the internet longer than public librarians have. The Exhibition and Displays in College Libraries Discussion group of the Academic and Research Libraries Association (ACRL) of ALA created Libex-L, a listserv for the purpose of sharing information about academic library exhibitions. Postings to the listserv occur from one to eight times a month. Librarians post information about exhibitions that they have mounted (including press releases), and query each other about exhibition programs and exhibits.

RESULTS

What is a Library Exhibition?

Although the PLA report defines library exhibitions, they are not fully described in any one source in the literature, nor in the interviews. The PLA report describes library exhibitions as organized around ideas and created with the intention of encouraging viewers to pursue exhibition ideas further (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990). The PLA report describes the presentation of local collections and the work of local artists as "displays" (p. 2). It states that in library exhibitions objects

are secondary in importance to ideas. As the interviews indicate, these definitions of “exhibition” and “display” are in some ways too narrow. The models of interpretive exhibitions created by larger institutions or organizations with significant resources gain attention while other successful library exhibitions are overlooked. Most literature on the subject describes library exhibitions as idea-based, which is borne out by the interviews. Idea-based exhibitions take many different forms. In fact, one of the most significant discoveries about library exhibitions is that they are immensely varied in subject, presentation, and scope.

As Lou Storey (pers. comm., 1995) points out, library exhibitions change to meet viewer needs. At NYPL, this has meant introducing information in new forms such as video and music.

Exhibitions and Interpretation

Thomas Phelps (pers. comm., 1995), Diantha Dow Schull (1985), Susan Saidenberg (1991) and the PLA report all stress the importance of interpretive exhibitions (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990). Library exhibitions interpret collections and ideas to varying degrees. Art exhibitions, whose interpretation is to some extent left open to the public, play an important role in library exhibition programs as the ALA survey and the interviews demonstrate (ALA, Department of Public Programs, 1992). As William J. Dane (1987) of the Newark Public Library (New Jersey) says, art exhibitions serve libraries because they require the user to interpret for themselves, drawing on information from many disciplines within the library’s collection.

Exhibitions and Library Collection Access

Most exhibition policies as well as the PLA report emphasize the role of library exhibitions in accessing the library's collection (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990). Collection access is generally interpreted as encouraging viewers to read. Some exhibition policies indicate the role of exhibitions in presenting ideas and information not necessarily limited to those that appear in the library's collection.

Exhibitions and Visual Access

Opinions vary as to the appropriate roles of visual elements in an exhibition. Susan Saidenberg (1991) has expressed the idea that exhibitions by including both text and visually stimulating materials can make the library's collection accessible to viewers accustomed to processing visual information. Matthew Simon (1995), in discussing the merchandising of library collections, emphasizes the importance of visual access to collections, especially to the "two generations born since 1960" who are accustomed to acquiring information from television (p. 35). Elena Tscherny's (pers. comm., September, 1995) example of the viewer who was appeased by the historical contextualization of photographs of the southern United States of the 19th century speaks in favor of including some contextualizing information along with visual information.

Exhibitions of Art

Barbara Young (pers. comm., 1995), the librarian in charge of exhibitions at Miami-Dade Public Library, treats art work as "visual information" to be read by the viewer in

the same way that written or recorded information would be. William J. Dane (1987) says that exhibitions of art are successful in bringing the community into the library. As Dane points out, artists are library users. The ALA survey indicates that exhibitions of art are some of the most popular library exhibitions (ALA, Department of Public Programs, 1992). The PLA report says that they are the most controversial (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in the Public Library, 1990). As the literature shows, artists' books are just one example of artwork that is particularly appropriate to the library. Susan Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995) is in favor of exhibitions of art only if the art is from the library's collection.

Exhibitions as Public Relations Tools

The literature revealed that many libraries consider their exhibitions to be high visibility public relations tools. Exhibitions serve to demonstrate the breadth of a library's collection and emphasize the importance of its services. By appealing to a wide audience exhibitions underscore the library's commitment to serving all members of the community.

What Questions Have Exhibitions Raised and How Have They Been Resolved?

The literature offers examples of controversies and their solutions; the solutions include replacing art work that has been removed from exhibitions and making changes in keeping with a library's exhibition policy or with community standards. Montgomery County Public Library's Intellectual Freedom Report (1990-1995) provides multiple examples of how to resolve controversy; it emphasizes staff communication. Another

example of how to handle controversy is the very practical approach of the Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center that chose to downplay "Seeds of Change." This approach minimizes the problem rather than solving it. Martin Luther King Memorial Library takes very seriously the commitment to present a variety of viewpoints; in the case of exhibitions on Tibet, two exhibitions based on opposing concepts were presented. While the literature theorizes that multiple viewpoints are important, examples of efforts to resolve exhibition controversy on this issue are few. One example is that of Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center's offer to Native Americans to display an alternative exhibition created by Native Americans as a challenge to "Seeds of Change."

Can Exhibition Policies be Useful? How? What Are Critical Aspects of an Exhibition Policy?

Exhibition policies in use in public library exhibition programs are not covered by the comprehensive literature except by the PLA report which criticizes content, or lack thereof, and provides an example policy. Opinions on the usefulness of library exhibition policies vary widely. Large institutions function for long periods without specific policies and give no indication of what guides their programs in the meantime. Other large institutions, particularly new ones, consult the city attorney's office in order to formulate a legal document as a policy guide. Still other institutions do not have policies or have very loose guidelines. Susan Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995) feels that exhibition policies should support library mission statements, but there is no clear

evidence that they do so. The literature presents examples of legal battles over public library exhibition content that involved the library's exhibition policy. Fortunately, all of the libraries involved had exhibition policies to guide their programs, although several were being revised.

What do Public Library Exhibition Programs Look Like?

The literature that deals with library exhibitions in a comprehensive manner is generated by sources from two public library exhibition programs; one of which, NYPL, specializes in presenting scholarly exhibitions, while the other, Newark Public Library, often shows objects from its large art collection. Interviews with public library exhibition staff throughout the nation showed exhibition programs to be much more varied than the literature indicates. NYPL and the Harold Washington Library Center almost exclusively present scholarly exhibitions generated in-house; for these exhibitions, narratives may be carried by exhibition labels. Other public libraries may create scholarly exhibitions and intersperse them with community-based exhibitions. One example is the Philadelphia Public Library which in 1991 created and presented the exhibition "Marian Anderson: the Lady from South Philadelphia"; this exhibition borrowed from many research libraries and collectors. At Philadelphia Public Library, as well as other public libraries such as the Enoch Pratt Free Library, scholarly exhibitions are part of a program that may also present a community exhibition like "Dolls, Dolls, Dolls" based on a theme and procured from a local collector. Scholarly exhibitions may

play a very small part in other exhibition programs like that of Miami-Dade Public Library which prefers to display art exhibitions.

What Kinds of Information About Academic or Research Libraries Can Be of Use to Public Library Exhibition Programs?

The L.C. has done the most work of any library to develop online exhibition programs. Academic library exhibition programs lead as an example of ongoing inter-library communication regarding exhibition programs through the ACRL listserv, Libex-L.

The Newberry Library is a model of a program that seeks to clearly define its audience and to plan exhibitions with the audience's concerns in mind.

As Susan Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995) indicates, private libraries do not have the same mission as public libraries, nor do they serve as wide an audience. None of the three research libraries interviewed expressed the need to present different viewpoints.

The material offered by the ARL Spec Kit provides document examples that can be tailored to public library programs (The Systems and Procedures Exchange Center, 1986).

What Challenges Might Public Library Exhibition Programs Face in the Future?

Literature on the Quincentenary exhibition gave some indications of future challenges. The Quincentenary demonstrated the complexity of presenting "multicultural" exhibitions. Hopefully, the voices of previously underrepresented ethnic

groups will be heard at greater volume, and library exhibitions will be one forum for the presentation of viewpoints from multicultural perspectives. The exhibition programs of Los Angeles Public Library, Miami-Dade Public Library, and San Francisco Public Library have demonstrated a commitment to exploring and representing diverse cultural perspectives.

The PLA report indicates that libraries are eager for traveling exhibitions (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in the Public Library Committee, 1990), although the particular libraries interviewed booked traveling exhibitions sparingly. Coordinators of traveling exhibitions indicated that their exhibitions were much in demand, especially the fully funded programs of the ALA's Department of Public Programs. The L.C.'s guidelines reveal a strong commitment to both online and traveling exhibitions for the future.

Both Miami-Dade Public Library and the New York Library for the Performing Arts cited ways in which their programs are hampered by limited budgets (Young, pers. comm., 1995; Stratynner, pers. comm., 1995). The ALA survey revealed that library programs are generally inhibited by lack of resources (ALA, PLA, Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990). Both Thomas Phelps (pers. comm., 1995) and Susan Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995) pointed to funding issues as future library exhibition program challenges.

What Information About Museum Exhibitions Can Contribute to the Development of Library Exhibition Programs?

Library literature offers very little information on the presentation of exhibitions or exhibition practice. A review of museum literature indicated that museums have information to offer library exhibition programs about a variety of subjects and especially about exhibition practice and presentation. In the interviews for this project, library exhibition coordinators and experts rarely discussed museum exhibitions in relationship to library exhibitions; Lou Storey (pers. comm., 1995), who had previously designed museum exhibitions was the exception.

Investigation of museum education programs reveals some examples that could prove useful for interpreting library exhibition programs. The “Explainer” program of the Exploratorium in San Francisco and the “Young Ambassador Program” of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco’s education department are decent programs that employ teenagers and young adults to give exhibition tours to other young people (S. Pressley, personal communication, August 24, 1995). The “Young Ambassador Program” has produced exhibition guides that could serve as useful models for library education departments.

Museums have grappled with the issue of presenting exhibitions of their permanent collections versus what Anne Mintz (1994) describes as traveling exhibitions that are theme-based and market-driven. Susan Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995) points out that in 1995 the Metropolitan Museum of Art chose to focus on exhibitions of its permanent

collection for the foreseeable future. The experience of museums in this matter might provide useful information for libraries. The Lila Wallace Readers Digest Foundation grants museums funds for projects that make their permanent collections accessible to the public. Some museums have used the grants to create online exhibitions with educational components.

What Does Information About Merchandising in the Library Offer Exhibition Programs?

Library exhibition personnel interviewed did not mention merchandising techniques employed by the library. Library literature best covers this subject. Most importantly, directions for merchandising library collections give clear, simple instructions that can be employed in the design of library exhibitions.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Libraries across the country are no longer content to make their collections accessible only upon request. As libraries increasingly play the role of community information centers, they are presenting information in a variety of forms. Many libraries have undertaken library exhibition programs, which do anything but follow the advice of a Virginia judge who advised one public library exhibition program to “stick to shells and Boy Scouts” (Howe, 1989, p. C1). Exhibition programs embrace new library functions, those of interpreting the library’s collection, presenting new ideas and scholarship, and offering information in a variety of forms.

Library exhibitions have become an important tool for connecting the library with its public. Library exhibitions attract both new and old library users and visitors, and exhibitions appeal to audiences with a range of reading and language skills. As well as presenting information, library exhibitions can elicit new ideas from the public. Operating independently or with some help from the ALA, the NEH, and other sources, library exhibition programs have found a variety of ways to serve their communities. In general, library exhibition programs have set important and difficult goals for themselves.

The Quincentenary as a Case Study

In 1992 many libraries chose to offer exhibitions on the Quincentenary. As a subject, the Quincentenary lent itself to the interpretive library exhibition form. The event stimulated new ideas and new scholarship. Public libraries that have large holdings

in the humanities saw the Quincentenary as a way of presenting their collections in a contemporary perspective and making their collections relevant to an important anniversary and national celebration. Lacking a forum for sharing information on exhibitions, libraries soon found themselves facing similar controversies alone. Although many Quincentenary exhibitions were well received, "Seeds of Change" (which traveled widely) was criticized by librarians and the public alike. As response to Quincentenary exhibitions shows, library exhibitions created for this anniversary challenged some of the theoretical models for library exhibitions and raised issues for library exhibitions that have yet to be resolved.

Internationally, interpretations of the events of 1492 changed from the "discovery" of the Americas by Columbus to an "encounter" between cultures (Kagan, 1993). Scholars wrote much about the event and many new literary works were available. The discourse on multiculturalism that developed in the late 1980's was a contemporary perspective from which to approach an event viewed differently by Native American, African American, Latino, Italian American, Jewish, Muslim and Spanish American communities.

In Minneapolis, Minnesota the library's actions and community's response to the "Seeds of Change" traveling exhibition pointed out the practical problems with the model exhibition policies put forth by the ALA's and the PLA's model policies (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1992; ALA, PLA Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990). Both documents form the basis of many library exhibition policies and serve as default

policy for others. The director of the Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center implicitly referred to the ALA model policy when she refused to remove “Seeds of Change.” The library followed ALA’s model policy when it offered the Native American community, who expressed objections to the exhibit, a chance to create their own exhibition. The course of events in Minneapolis challenged the two model policies on three accounts.

The ALA’s model policy states that staff members should endeavor to present a “broad spectrum of opinion and a variety of viewpoints” (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1995, p.1). The Smithsonian Institution, which originated the exhibition, had certainly attempted to do so, specifically involving Native American scholars in the development of the exhibition. However, the Smithsonian failed to realize that there are a broad spectrum of opinions within the Native American community. The PLA’s model policy is a little more specific than the ALA’s; it states that “as with all other activities, an effort is made to present various points of view, especially on questions about which there are widely differing shades of public opinion” (ALA, PLA Exhibits in Public Libraries Committee, 1990, p. 6). Even if the Smithsonian had followed the guidance of the PLA committee, it would still very likely have run into problems. The goal of presenting a wide range of opinions within a single exhibition is difficult to attain, leaving coordinators and curators in the position of trying to decide which perspectives and how many perspectives to include.

ALA's model policy was also challenged regarding its solution to critics who said their viewpoint was omitted from an exhibition. ALA's model policy instructs "those who object to the content of any exhibit held at the library should be able to submit their complaint and/or their own exhibit proposal to be judged according to the policies established by the library" (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1995, p. 1). But Minnesota Public Library and Information Center's offer was rejected. For Native Americans, the event had historical resonance. Outside chronicles of Native American culture have frequently been privileged over Native accounts (Churchill, 1994). ALA's model policy's suggested offer overlooks the perceived authority of the library and of its exhibitions. In one library exhibition review, L.C. Cobb (1992) explains that exhibitions offered by city institutions validate the material presented, a sentiment confirmed by Paul Goldberger (1996) when he describes museums as "anointing" objects by displaying them (p. 1). Practically speaking, it would be exceedingly difficult for dissenting community groups to attain the production standards of an exhibition created by a national museum that has a large staff and matching budget and that supplements the exhibition with an exhibition catalog and educational materials. Alternative exhibitions need to have the same endorsement from the library and the same authoritative look as the exhibitions they challenge.

The Minneapolis conflict challenges another tenet of ALA's model policy, which states that library exhibitions do not reflect the opinions of the library (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1995). Pat Amo, Minneapolis Native American spokesperson,

stated that the public perceived library exhibitions as representing the library's opinion, especially when the exhibition was sought from an outside source (Goldberg, 1993).

ALA's model policy states: "Just as libraries do not endorse the viewpoints of those whose works are represented in their collections, libraries also do not endorse the beliefs or viewpoints of topics which may be the subject of library exhibits" (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1995, p. 1). This stipulation reflects a certain naiveté on the part of the library world, which is fairly new to the business of exhibitions. A single collection can do what a single exhibition can not. By definition, a library exhibition presents a particular interpretation that generally must propose only few perspectives, or take a selected approach. For instance, "Seeds of Change" is described by Director of SITES Martha Sewell as taking a "natural history" approach to the telling of history (Furst, 1993, p. 1B). Libraries that choose to curate an exhibition are in a natural bind. As Lou Storey (pers. comm., 1995) says, by interpreting collections, libraries are running counter to their original purpose, which is to make all information equally accessible and to allow patrons to draw their own conclusions. If exhibitions in the library are limited to those created by community members, the library's position that it does not support the opinions expressed is credible. In the case of exhibits that the library procures, that position is not credible unless the library hosts outside exhibitions with opposing or different perspectives. Several exhibitions on the same subject are the best way to express a broad array of perspectives. The Tibetan exhibitions displayed at the Martin Luther King Memorial Library in 1991, two exhibitions about the same topic from

outside the library and each with a very different perspective, were both given equal support from the institution.

To those objecting to an exhibition, a library's insistence that its exhibition does not represent an institutional opinion strikes one as hypocritical. Karp and Levine (1991) state the need for museums to declare their biases and to deconstruct the myth that public institutions are not guided by opinions that most of the administration and staff hold dear. His advice is good for libraries as well. It is unlikely that a library would choose to present an exhibition that its administration and staff found abhorrent. But in the case of such an exhibition, a library can state its opinion by actively distancing itself from an exhibition. For example, when a Virginia court ordered the Alexandria Public library to allow a patron to present his graphically illustrated anti-abortion exhibition which the library had previously refused, the staff had signs disclaiming library support of the exhibition opinions. This preparation is not reported for any other library exhibition at that institution or elsewhere, although signs have been added later in response to viewer objections. An angry letter to the editor of the Minneapolis Star Tribune implied that the library was sympathetic to the content of "Seeds of Change" by asking if the director of the library would have defended the "baton used to beat Rodney King" in the same way (Draves, 1993, p. 13). On the other hand, librarians within the Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center had requested that the exhibition be canceled; the exhibition was not canceled, therefore, it could truly be said that the exhibition did not represent the library's opinion.

These challenges to ALA's model policy and to the PLA's model policy indicate that the policies need to be reformulated. Many libraries have had to contend with objections to their exhibitions. With exhibition policies that are not practical, libraries are blindly wading into controversy. Even for libraries that choose to operate without exhibition policies, the above issues need to be considered in order to maintain libraries' commitment to intellectual freedom.

Quincentenary exhibitions highlighted issues regarding the relationship between library exhibitions and library collections. Because Columbus' arrival in the Americas has been interpreted as a "discovery," most libraries' collections reflect this version of history, privileging a European perspective. Due to a lack of materials, libraries found it difficult to illustrate the event from both Native American as well as European viewpoints. Some exhibitions avoided exploring Native American response to the "encounter," focusing instead on the European or Euroamerican experience, as NYPL did with "New Worlds, Ancient Texts" and "Mapping the New World." The Huntington Library also focused on Europe, highlighting Spain's administration of the Americas. The Newberry Library tried to describe both experiences. The Newberry borrowed one third of its exhibition "America in 1492" from the Field Museum in an effort to present Native American culture more fully. In his review, Neal Salisbury (1992) acknowledges that the Newberry did its best with the resources at hand but implies that the library's collection, even with the Field's artifacts, did not do the topic real justice.

Susan Saidenberg (pers. comm., 1995) cautions that it must be determined whether or not a library collection can support an exhibition idea before embarking on the exhibition planning. If the goal of an exhibition is to access a library's collection, thereby encouraging reading, then library exhibition and library collection departments must work closely together.

"America in 1492" demonstrated the conflicting goals of accessing the library's collection versus commemorating an important event and celebrating new scholarship. As interpretive exhibitions become more popular, exhibition programs may sometimes be torn between the presentation of ideas and themes and encouraging people to read from its collections.

Salisbury (1992) described "America in 1492" as organized by the "European dichotomy of Mind and Body" (p. 712). This is one of the few sources to raise the issue of library exhibition presentation. Salisbury's critique reveals that the inclusion of multiple perspectives may sometimes require adopting new display techniques. The emerging discipline of museology has recently contributed a large body of scholarly work on this subject. Keeping in mind the particular goals of library exhibitions and the differences between museums and libraries, library exhibition programs can use this material as a valuable resource.

Although interpretive exhibitions have been produced by libraries since the 1970s, the volume of interpretive exhibitions produced for the Quincentennary established their importance in library exhibition programs. Not only were interpretive exhibitions

produced as artifactual exhibitions, they were also packaged as traveling and online exhibitions. These two exhibition formats stretch the definition of a library exhibition and are both likely to be developed further in the future.

The Quincentenary inspired the creation of more traveling exhibitions than any other theme has. At least a dozen traveling exhibitions were created or modified for circulation to libraries. Libraries with little funding for programs rely heavily on traveling exhibitions. As the ALA survey indicated, very little staff time is devoted to library exhibitions in many public libraries (ALA, Department of Public Programs, 1992). The problem is that an exhibition is not equally appropriate for all communities. Opinions and ways of thinking on a myriad of issues varies regionally as well as within communities. Libraries that do not have the resources to develop their own exhibitions may well need to consider how to adapt traveling exhibitions to their specific communities. Unfortunately, when one traveling exhibition is booked in a number of libraries, it takes the place of in-house exhibitions that might have approached the issue at hand in a new and interesting way. Creating a forum for community response to exhibitions could contribute to the development of new ideas about the topic.

Some of the first online exhibitions were produced for the Quincentenary. The Huntington Library and the L.C. both made use of the internet to offer exhibitions. The Huntington allowed viewers to access an online library from within its exhibition, while the L.C. put its exhibition "An Ongoing Voyage: 1492-1992" online. The online version of the L.C. exhibition contained more images, more text and more information than

either the exhibition at the L.C. or the traveling version of the show. The L.C. has since launched more online exhibitions and has plans for many more. The L.C.'s online exhibitions are interpretations of selected material from its collection which is not physically accessible for many online viewers. Online exhibitions can operate independently from the library and in some ways become a packaged information product.

The Future

Resolving the many issues facing library exhibition programs is difficult. The literature on the subject is limited and, except for occasional conference sessions, no real forum for the exchange of information has been set. When new library exhibition programs are established, library staff do not always seek out information from existing programs. For example, both Denver Public Library and Los Angeles Public Library developed their exhibition policies at approximately the same time. Both worked closely with their city attorney's office (Teoman, pers. comm., 1995; Henson, pers. comm., 1995). Neither reported going to the other to discuss their project, although Denver Public Library did report collecting exhibition policies from other libraries (Henson, pers. comm., 1995). As the PLA report showed, most exhibition programs are run with a minimum of staff time, which limits inter-program communication or the production of literature on the subject (PLA, ALA, Exhibits in the Public Library, 1990). To counter these barriers, the PLA report recommended the dissemination of information for and about programs. The PLA report also recommended that the ALA Department of Public

Programs should expand its database listing traveling exhibitions from a variety of sources as well as producing a quarterly printout. The PLA report further recommended that the ALA should create an information “clearinghouse” for sharing information on library programs and personnel. Since the PLA report, the ALA Department of Public Programs has created the Whole Person Catalog (n.d.) in response to the first recommendation. The described “clearinghouse” has not been established.

Library exhibition programs face the possibility of dwindling support from the NEH. Funding from the NEH and from state humanities councils has supported exhibitions like the Quincentenary exhibitions, that investigated complex and difficult issues. In the future, private and corporate donors may not be as eager to support potentially controversial exhibitions. Sharing information is crucial to the development of library exhibitions nationally. Thomas Phelps (pers. comm., 1995) recommends that to survive financial austerity library exhibition staffs must share information. Interviews with library exhibition personnel revealed that individual programs had developed materials or projects that could be helpful to each other. For instance, information about the Newberry Library’s focus group program could be useful to other libraries’ efforts to tailor exhibitions to the needs of their communities. Miami-Dade Public Library’s exhibition program created a handbook that gives instruction for the handling and installation of artwork. It instructs library personnel on seeking media attention for exhibitions. Montgomery County’s Intellectual Freedom Report (1990-1995) offers numerous examples of strategies for dealing with community objections to library

exhibitions, including model letters and examples of changes in its exhibition policy. Mindell Dubansky's work kit on library exhibition conservation and book cradle patterns is an important resource. San Francisco Public Library's brief label and sign guidelines would be an aid to many programs. The educational materials created by NYPL and New York Library for the Performing Arts are valuable models for library exhibition programs interested in producing educational materials themselves. Many libraries produce bibliographies for exhibitions, which could be shared for collection development. The proceedings of ALA or ARLIS conferences devoted to library exhibitions could be made available to those who were unable to attend. The advent of electronic communication presents some options for inter-program communication. Libex-L provides a model for communication between library exhibition coordinators. As more public libraries gain access to electronic communication, the establishment of a public library exhibition focused listserv or web site are very real possibilities.

Additional Questions to Ask

There are still more questions to ask about public library exhibitions. Establishing a forum would be a good first step towards further research. Questions to investigate might include:

How is a "community library exhibition" developed? What steps are taken? What subjects have been handled in a similar manner? The answers to these question would further describe the variety of library exhibitions and might offer models for other libraries to adapt.

How can the success of a library exhibition be assessed? Because exhibitions have different goals and take different forms, circulation figures may not always be the best way of assessing an exhibition's success.

Aside from budgetary constraints, why do some libraries choose not to exhibit? The ALA survey reported that some libraries did not plan to establish exhibition programs (ALA, Department of Public Programs, 1992). Does the administration of these libraries feel that library exhibitions do not help to access their collections? Information about these libraries' decisions may be useful in making library exhibitions more effective.

Library exhibition programs need to be asking themselves and each other larger questions such as: **How do libraries choose which perspectives to incorporate into their exhibitions?; How can libraries incorporate public response into exhibitions and exhibition programming?; and How do exhibition programs deal with unspoken library staff biases in selection and curating exhibitions?**

A Discourse on Library Exhibitions

One direct result of the dearth of communication between library exhibition coordinators is the lack of discourse on library exhibition practice. Without a discourse devoted to library exhibitions, it is difficult to explore ideas about methods of presentation and treatment of exhibition themes and ideas. Very often exhibition curators are subject specialists who leave the exhibition team after a project is complete, inhibiting vital communication. A contemporary discourse on library exhibitions would help to better define them, and also could stimulate effective, imaginative, and thrifty

new ways to approach exhibitions. An informed media would be more likely to review exhibitions in light of their goals. The responses of an informed public would help to further develop exhibitions responsive to community needs.

Library Exhibitions as a Public Forum

To serve the library, exhibitions must be distinct from those offered by other institutions such as museums. One of the many ways that library exhibitions are unique is that they serve as a public forum.

Susan Saidenberg hopes that the exhibition program at the new San Francisco Public Library will serve as a “public forum” (Junius, 1995, p. 2). Diantha Dow Schull (pers. comm., 1995) sees the role of library exhibitions in the future as public forums where people come together to solve problems. Challenging exhibitions that provoke debate and elicit public response and support are a measure of the success of a library exhibition as a public forum. Rather than contending with public response to library exhibitions, or as in the case of the L.C. closing exhibitions down, libraries need to find a practical way to welcome public response whether it is critical or supportive; this is the only way that exhibitions can be a vital tool for the library. Communities’ responses to library exhibitions are a valuable resource that libraries have still have to decide how to use most effectively.

To encourage dialog, library exhibition programs need to find ways to embrace impassioned public response. For instance, had the library exhibition for Black History Month at the Johns Hopkins University Library to which students objected (Flagg, 1993)

been juxtaposed with the exhibition which replaced it (adding documentation of the students' ideas) a far more educational exhibition would have been created. The original exhibition featured the writings of a White abolitionist, while the second celebrated the work of Frederick Douglass; students' critical response to the first exhibition would have added an important analysis to the combined exhibition. To truly serve as a public forum, libraries need to encourage debate and to recognize public response as yet another form of information presented by a community information center.

Art exhibitions in libraries have provoked a wide variety of community response. In one library, the community objected to nude photographs ("Nude Paintings Change Procedures," 1995); in another, the community objected when the library removed photographs of nursing mothers and infants (Flagg, 1991a). These exhibitions displayed art much the same way that museums or galleries do. It would be possible to contextualize art exhibitions and display them in a manner that is unique to the library. Information about the artist's intentions, bibliographies on the artwork and related subjects, and exhibition programming could further contextualize the artwork. Some of the programming could explore the perspectives of community members who object to the work. Such programming could address perspectives that are not available in museums.

In Conclusion

The ALA instructs libraries not to avoid controversial exhibitions (ALA, Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1995). If libraries cannot find ways to incorporate public opinion

into their forum, than they cannot truly follow this instruction. Meeting this and other challenges effectively requires a unified effort.

Presenting controversial exhibitions is a difficult task facing most institutions that exhibit objects and interpret them. This seems especially true for those institutions that are dependent on public funds. Recent controversies such as those at the L.C. suggest that it might be easier to offer “safe” exhibitions. However, it has become difficult to predict which exhibitions will be problematic. “Back of the Big House: the Cultural Landscape of the Plantation” was not challenged from without--by the current conservative Congress which funds it--but from within. African American staff members said the exhibition lacked historical context, perhaps because it touched on race relations that did not end with the plantation and continue to play themselves out in the present. The L.C.’s experience demonstrates that exhibiting institutions need to be prepared to take a close look at themselves.

If library exhibitions do not tackle thought provoking issues, they cannot be an effective tool for the library. Safe and static exhibitions run the risk of draining libraries of dwindling resources without actively supporting their missions.

In the last 20 years libraries have undertaken a new function, that of featuring particular ideas and particular parts of their collections. Libraries are new at this undertaking. In many cases they are not armed with an exhibition policy that encourages or enables them to take on complex, relevant exhibitions and to face ensuing controversy. To survive and to serve as a vital tool for the library, it is essential that library exhibition

programs develop a forum for sharing information about the many ways that they have found to serve their communities and for solving problems together.

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