

Brooks Memorial Library
Fine Arts Committee
Minutes -- Meeting of July 23, 2019
Brooks Library Mezzanine Room
Brattleboro, VT 05301

Present: Howard Burrows, chair; Jenny Rowe

Howard called the meeting to order at 4:58. Brief discussion of function of the committee. The board's bylaws provide that each committee shall have at least three members, at least two of whom shall be trustees. The Fine Arts committee needs another member. Meanwhile, with two members present we have a quorum.

Old Business: Discussion of progress on preservation of the collection and on the Fine Arts booklet to include highlights of the collection. A good inventory of the collection is key to both efforts. About 300 of the 400 items in the collection are catalogued. The library's catalog may include some items that are missing from the collection. An expanded version of the inventory could be contributing to an "art map," a regional collective inventory that lets those interested find out where they can go to see certain works.

Preservation: we need volunteers to learn how to maintain the collection and check the inventory. Some of this process is, or could be, a staff function.

Fine Arts booklet: A grant could be sought to create the Fine Arts booklet. Photography, formatting, and printing will be necessary, in addition to selecting which items to feature and writing descriptions. An expanded version of the booklet could be an audio tour of the art on display, and that in turn could be expanded into an audio tour of art, and/or historical artifacts, on display in places other than the library.

New business: A goal is to figure out what is the best use of the library's art collection. What can we do with it that will advance our strategic planning goals? How can we maximize its contribution to the library community?

One way to make use of our collection is as a point of connection with other arts groups in town and in the region. Arts groups with artist members are primarily trying to develop an art economy. How can the library contribute to their efforts? Can working with our collection lead to other activities that link the library to the community?

The committee's immediate goal is to develop a short list of individual items that need attention: those that may be especially valuable to the library community or elsewhere, items that would be best displayed or understood as part of some other collection or in some other space, items that we want to display and highlight here at Brooks, items that most urgently need preservation. The list could include local history documents as well. Rachel Onoff, state archivist, will be a good resource.

Appraisal: We would need to be able to tell an appraiser why we are seeking a value for the collection, or items in it: insurance? sale? other? Phil Zea, curator from Deerfield Museum, previously advised that many nonprofits do not appraise or insure their collections because it is too expensive. Phil took an interest in our collection and will be a good resource to help us develop our priority list.

Purchase of Art: The library could consider buying art that is meaningful to our community. Buying art can support local artists and help out the art economy. There is an existing body of artwork the library has displayed that has been offered to us for \$700. Discussion of sources of funds.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45.