

Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego and University of California, San Diego Libraries Form Partnership

Students, Faculty, Curators, and Others to Benefit from Transfer of Resources, Access Agreement

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Dolores Davies

The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego and the University of California, San Diego have formed an innovative new partnership that will expand student and faculty access to more than 8,000 visual art catalogues and related materials, and provide MCASD curatorial staff with access to the vast holdings of the UC San Diego Libraries, the largest academic library system south of Los Angeles.

The MCASD-UC San Diego Libraries partnership is mutually beneficial for both institutions, given the close proximity of the two La Jolla institutions, as well as their common intellectual and scholarly interests. The transfer of art materials to UC San Diego will integrate access to these catalogues and other materials with all the resources—more than 7 million print and electronic items—of the UC San Diego Libraries.

Discussions leading to the MCASD-UC San Diego Libraries partnership began in 2004 when Dr. Hugh M. Davies, The David C. Copley Director of MCASD, approached Brian E. C. Schottlaender, The Audrey Geisel University Librarian at UC San Diego. "While this project has been in the works for several years, now more than ever it makes sense to combine our resources where there are strong benefits and efficiencies to be achieved. MCASD's curators will gain access to one of the great academic libraries on the West Coast. We are also pleased that this collection of visual art books will be accessible to students and faculty at UC San Diego and will benefit teaching and research in the arts," stated Dr. Davies.

Schottlaender described the partnership as "a real win for both institutions and a wonderful extension of the collaboration between our organizations. The synergies between our institutions are evident and our academic community will surely benefit from this partnership."

The newly renovated UC San Diego Arts Library is on the cutting-edge of academic library research. The Arts Library was the first academic library in the U.S. to digitize its entire slide collection and the first major contributor to ARTstor—a widely-used digital library that supports scholarship in the arts. The Library supports innovative, award-winning faculty research, teaching, and performance in Visual Arts, Literature, Music, and Theatre and Dance. The addition of MCASD materials both strengthens the university's sizable collection of visual art books and image resources and adds to its stature as a great community resource in the arts.

According to Seth Lerer, dean of Arts and Humanities at UC San Diego, while the MCASD materials will be of particular value to scholars and artists in Visual Arts, interest in the materials is likely to go beyond that. "Since the collection crosses over into sound art, installation, and performance, I expect it will also be of interest to students and faculty in Music and Theatre and Dance departments as well, further enhancing trans-disciplinary exchange at UC San Diego."

While most graduate art history programs at the university level are housed separately from studio programs, UCSD's Visual Arts has been committed, since the department's inception, to research across the boundaries of art practice, history, and theory, said Grant Kester, chair of the Visual Arts Department at UC San Diego.

"UC San Diego's Visual Arts Department has the largest concentration of faculty in contemporary art history and art practice in the nation. In addition, more than 80 percent of UCSD's Visual Arts Ph.D. students are pursuing research in modern or contemporary art history. Many of our graduate students and faculty work as art producers as well as historians, theorists, curators, and critics," said Kester. "This partnership with MCASD will enhance UCSD's status as a magnet for scholars, critics, and curators working in the field of contemporary art history and theory."

MCASD's library will now serve as an institutional archive with materials focused on the Museum's collection—both texts and images—as well as information on MCASD's institutional history including texts, images, oral history audio tapes, and lecture audio and video tapes.

To date, the Museum has transferred more than 8,000 of its art volumes to the UC San Diego Libraries. Most of the MCASD materials are catalogues accrued via the Museum's long-standing international museum library exchange program, and are now being housed at the UC San Diego Arts Library.

The collection will grow annually as MCASD continues to produce between one and three scholarly catalogues each year, and will also provide a number of volumes via its international museum library exchange program. The Museum will offer all of these volumes to UC San Diego to add to its Arts Library collection. Additionally, MCASD curators will recommend titles to the UC San Diego Arts Library that support MCASD research needs.

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