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Innovative project bridges art and science

Libraries bring artists and faculty together in online effort



Levee Trail Poplars by Paul Hotvedt (oil on panel).

A new collaboration on the University of Kansas campus brings together art and science in its most basic form.

Librarians working in Scholar Services, a program of Information Services, have teamed with regional artists and faculty on campus to create the interactive image collection "From the Ground Up."

The site works in conjunction with the Kansas Geological Survey and uses GIS mapping to allow users to view actual sites in Kansas that correspond to specific pieces of landscape artwork.

Paul Hotvedt a painting instructor at the Lawrence Arts Center, is co-director of the project, along with Garth Myers, associate professor in the Department of Geography at KU.

"Professor Myers and I developed the idea of 'From the Ground Up' when I became interested in organizing a body of landscape paintings that I had created in Eastern Kansas," Hotvedt said.

Hotvedt explained that "From the Ground Up" provided an excellent opportunity for researchers of all kinds. "'From the Ground Up' is a searchable database for researchers where they may construct and explore image collections to discover relationships between regional culture and subjects in the humanities," he said.

Scholar Services has created a way to preserve and provide enhanced access to the artwork and photographic images associated with these pieces through LUNA Insight, a powerful image management system housed within KU Libraries.

"We are working to ensure a life for these images beyond just this project," said Sarah Goodwin Thiel, KU's digital services librarian.

"One of the goals of Scholar Services is to continually add to and build the digital image collection, accessible to both KU and non-KU users. The addition of this work creates an unprecedented collaboration and partnership between local artists and campus scientists."

The gallery currently holds two collections: "Landscape Paintings of Douglas and Jefferson counties, Kansas, 1995-2005" and "Langston Hughes in Lawrence, Kansas."

The mapping feature shows the user where a piece is located and, in many cases, the actual landscapes that inspired the pieces.

Goodwin Thiel said she hoped the collaboration would increase awareness of the rich cultural offerings in the state.

"This really brings the arts and sciences together like never before—certainly at KU and maybe beyond," said Goodwin Thiel. "We are thrilled to provide tools and strategies to support the ideas of scholars and artists in the community and throughout the state."

The Luna Insight database is accessible at www.lib.ku.edu/imagegateway/index.cfm?page=detail&collection=38.



“From the Ground Up” can be viewed at www.groundsight.org.

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RESEARCH TOOLS AND EXPERTISE FOR
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SCHOLARS