

Preparing the catalogue raisonné: A guideline for publishing online

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This paper presents findings from interviews conducted with editors of catalogue raisonné projects in various stages of development combined with the author's work on the *Catalogue Raisonné of the Drawings of Jasper Johns*. A summary is presented of the common mission and challenges in preparing the catalogue raisonné as well as the considerations for, and benefits of, publishing online. The result is a concise reference tool of best practices and suggestions for future catalogues raisonnés and online catalogue projects, including features available if publishing online; staff recommendations; workflow; database options; data migration; research; storage of research assets; and long-term maintenance.

Introduction

In the last decade, there has been an increase in catalogue raisonné (CR) initiatives for Post-War and contemporary artists due to a consensus in the importance of preserving an artist's legacy along with the scholarship that accompanies such an endeavour. An increase in forgeries and the discovery of unknown works in the art market has led interested parties to invest in catalogue raisonnés especially to secure authentication. They are a valuable resource for scholars, collectors, dealers and art enthusiasts alike. However, due to their high production costs, they are traditionally printed in a limited edition and are very expensive to purchase. In addition to their limited accessibility they are out of date as soon as they are printed. Unknown works are discovered; missing works are found; ownership history will change; works will be exhibited; and in some cases, the artist is living and continues to make new work.

Considerations for publishing online

The online catalogue raisonné is a relatively new publishing format not considered by the catalogue raisonné community until the mid-late 2000s due to technological limitations or fear of the web's impermanence. Greater access to content through online databases (such as Jstor), digitizing initiatives

of libraries and archival collections and various grant initiatives (The Getty Foundation's Online Scholarly Catalogue Initiative) has seen a recent trend in CR initiatives to shift their primary publishing platform to online. If the mission of the catalogue raisonné is to preserve the artist's legacy, and an online version has the potential to create a greater awareness of the artist, it's difficult to ignore the value of publishing online.

Benefits

Keeping the scholarly research process in mind provides a 'best practice' understanding of how a CR will be consulted. A key benefit of the online CR is to translate this understanding into an interactive experience online without compromising the importance of individual interpretation and discovery. The website presence allows for greater immediate access to materials based upon keyword searches without the traditional index searching that is required from print materials. An equilibrium must be maintained when developing the site's architecture and deciding which online features to include so that the site appeals to the general user while remaining a serious research tool.

Features:

- Multiple display views
- Linking to external source material such as archival collections or articles

Database	Proprietary	Customization & Support	Web Publishing	Database and Software Server	Features	Price Range
Artbase (artbase.com)	Yes	Yes	Yes, is said to have website integration	Filemaker database. Accessible via local network or VPN.	-Multi-platform sharing on iPad and iPod -Targeted to galleries and art organizations -Subscription includes data transfer, installation, training, and technical support.	Subscription packages available from \$2,500- \$7,500. Monthly subscription fee ranges from \$15-\$175 depending on number of computers.
Artifex Press <i>Targeted for CRs</i>	Yes	Yes, at an additional cost	Yes	Web-based. Available via web browser with an internet connection.	-Targeted for the online CR -Customizable webpage design -Online publishing	Available as is or customizable for additional fee.
Collective Access (collectiveaccess.org)	No	Free online documentation support.	Yes	Web-based. Available via web browser with an internet connection.	-Targeted for museums and archives -Pre-configured with Dublin Core, PBCore, VRA Core metadata standards. -Supports timelines and visualizations -Customizable through simple user interface. -Online publishing	Free and open source. A custom built database and website with installation and support costs \$60K-200K, or less.
Filemaker Pro (filemaker.com)	Yes	No (you will need a developer)	Yes, is said to have website integration, but not perfected yet.	Accessible via local network or VPN.	-Comes with 51 built-in-themes -Multi-platform sharing on iPad and iPod	1 computer license is \$329 and include 16 database designs. Any further customization will require an outside developer
The Museum System (TMS) (gallerysystems.com/tms)	Yes	n/a	Yes, eMuseum is separate web publishing module	Microsoft SQL Server. Accessible via local network.	-Various image display mode -Open architecture -Metadata standards and vocabularies can be integrated	Initial fee followed by annual subscription fee.
PanOpticon (panopticondesign.net) <i>Targeted for CRs</i>	Yes	Yes, at an additional cost	Yes	Web-based. Available via web browser with an internet connection.	-Targeted for the online CR -Utilizes controlled vocabularies -Automatic formatting and styling -Is an online publishing tool -Option to display images in scale	\$3,000-\$9,500 range basic: out-of box basic + 1: migrate data or customization basic + 2: migrate data and customization

Fig. 1. Database options for catalogue raisonné projects

- Addition of audio and video clips
- Integration of ephemera from the artist's archives
- Addition of research documentation such as checklists, installation photographs, or announcement cards.
- Links from publications to open public access catalogues and databases to aid in further research

Misconceptions

An online catalogue will cost less to produce than a printed catalogue. The initial production cost associated with either a print or online version is comparable. Both versions require the research time and manpower to produce. It is after the point of publication that the costs will differ. Updates associated with a catalogue raisonné become prohibitively more expensive with the print version than its online counterpart. This is due to the costs related to a second print-run or addendum.

The artist's archive will have most or all the information required for a catalogue raisonné. While the artist's archive is an incredible resource with substantial ephemera or documentation, there will be gaps in information. Time for archival processing should be considered before any information in the artist's archive is available for ingestion into the CR research and database. Processing could add months

or years to your project.

Image costs will be less for an online version than a printed version. While resolution requirements for a web image is not as high as that for print, the object still has to look as true as possible. Depending on the photographer's fees and the size of the artwork to be photographed, a digital image capture could cost at minimum several hundred dollars. It is advantageous to any CR project to inquire about existing photography either from the artist's gallery or private and public collections.

The amount of time needed to produce a catalogue raisonné. A CR will take 5–10 years on average to produce and funders may not understand why a CR project would take so long. In order to ensure the integrity of the primary and secondary information found in a CR, it is responsible to allot a bulk of resources and time towards the research phase of the project. A CR project with resources for only part-time staff will take longer than a project with a full-time staff.

Software

To publish online you will need a web-publishing module in addition to your research database. It is advantageous to decide you are publishing online at the start of a CR project so that you can factor this into your database selection. There is software

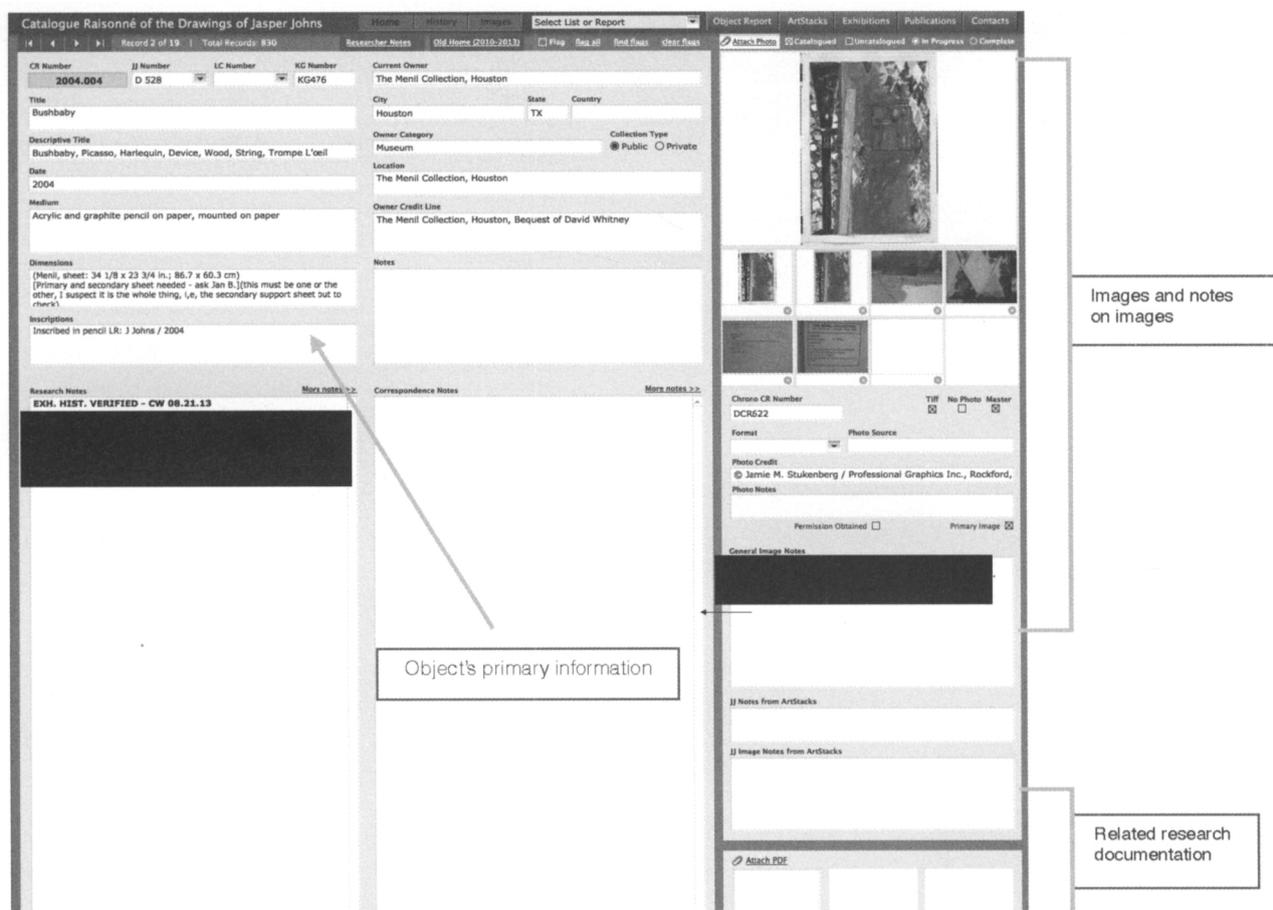


Fig. 2.1. *Object Module*

available that includes a web-publishing component. Further detail on database selection is included in Part II.

Updates and Maintenance

As with any digital initiative, long-term maintenance should be planned and reassessed often. Catalogue raisonné research continues even after publication due to the discovery of unknown works; changes in ownership; and new exhibitions. Updates made to a published catalogue should be factored into the project plan as well. To address the issue of updating already published primary and secondary information without confusing the scholar, some online CRs will time stamp records with the latest update. Some CRs choose to publish their completed research in phases. For example, a first launch will be of works in the foundation's collection, thus extending the research time necessary before the second launch of works in private and public collections. Alternatively, some CRs choose to publish as new content and updates become available. No approach is better than the other as long as the online CR is treated as the

authoritative catalogue of the artist's work and the content put online is accurate.

Recommended staff and their roles

Editor/Advisor: Scholar who ensures the CR is true to the artist's practice.

Object examiner: Examines artworks and ensures their technical descriptions are accurate.

Project Manager: Oversees the project and manages the content for the CR.

Researchers: Retrieve research documentation.

Archivist: Manages the research documentation and images for the purpose of production, retrieval, and preservation.

Data entry staff: Enters appropriate research findings into the database.

Database developer consultant: Builds a database to your specifications.

Web developer or Design consultant: Designs the architecture and look of your website.

Responsibilities for staff may go beyond these individual roles and could encompass more than one role. Open communication amongst staff is advised to avoid duplicate efforts.

Fig. 2.2. *Object Module*

Databases

Database Selection

A relational database is the backbone of any catalogue raisonné project. A database will be utilized by a CR project whether or not the decision has been made to publish online. Selecting the right database is an important decision that has to be made at the very beginning of any CR project and can sometimes require extensive research of its own.

Some CR projects affiliated with artist foundations began work within their existing collection management database and found these databases insufficient for the needs of a CR. There are a select number of database options designed specifically for an online CR and which integrate the back and front ends seamlessly. Other databases are one-sided tools that work in tandem with a web-publishing module. See *Fig. 1* for CR database options ranging from out-of-box with minor customization to those with customizable a-la-carte capabilities.

Considerations when selecting your database solution:

- Do you plan to publish the CR online?

- Do you prefer access via a web-browser or local network access only?
- Do you want to assign access restrictions?
- Does the database sufficiently exploit relationships amongst records types/modules for the needs of your CR?
- What is your budget?
- Do you want a database solution that offers customer support? Does your organization have I.T. staff in place that can install, build, and maintain your database?

Data Migration

In most instances the CR will begin by migrating legacy data from a collections database – this could be from the artist, foundation, or gallery. Legacy data might include inventory, details of artworks, collections, exhibitions, and publications. Data migration will involve coordinating with your database developer and can take several weeks depending on the flexibility of your source database; the time needed for cross-walking schemas for ingestion; and data formatting.

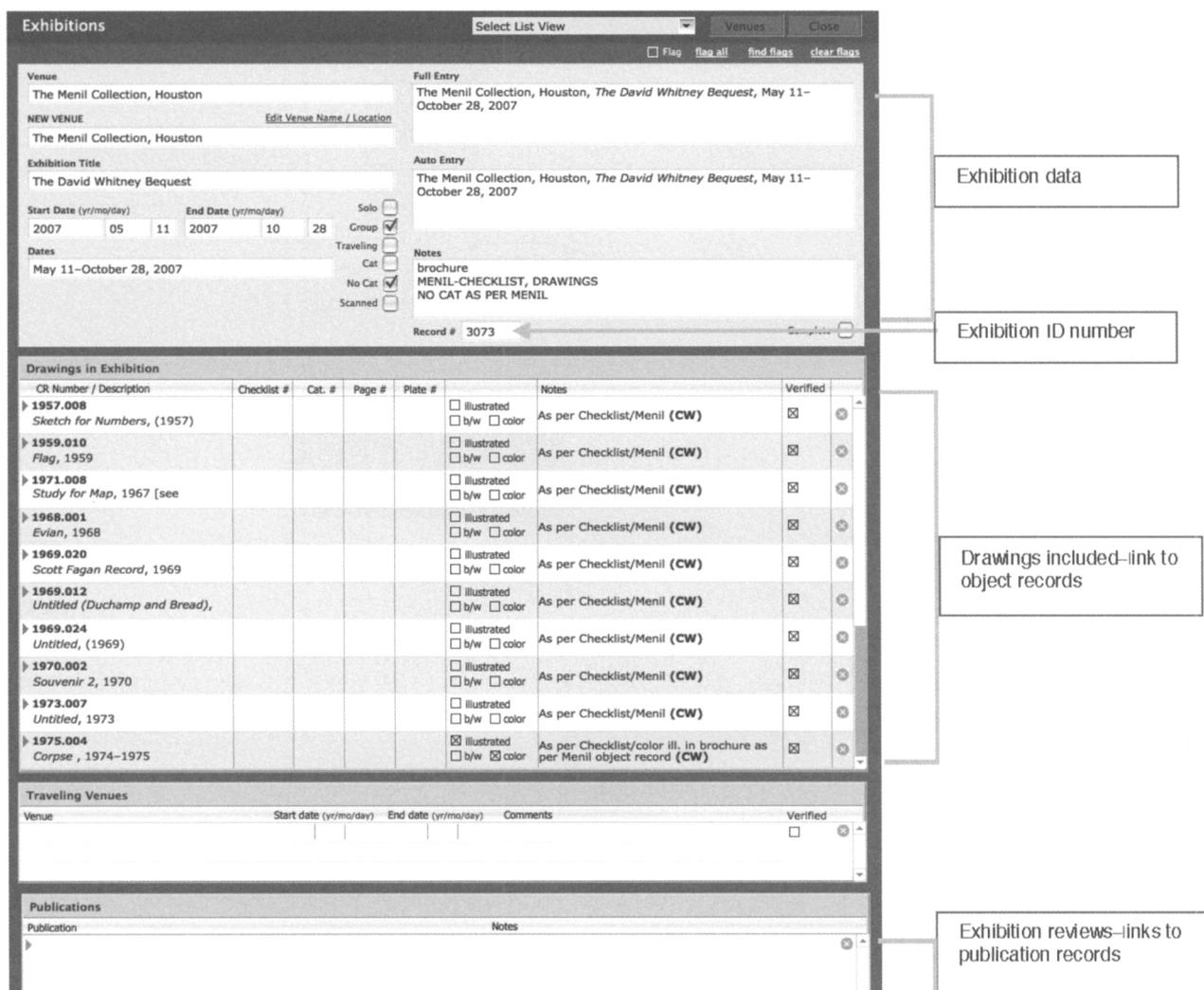


Fig. 2.3. Exhibitions Module

CR Database example: The Catalogue Raisonné of the Drawings of Jasper Johns

The database used for The Catalogue Raisonné of the Drawings of Jasper Johns is a customized Filemaker database. The database is comprised of five modules specific to each research focus area: object module; publication module; exhibition module; object examination module; and collections module. Each module holds data fields specific to its research purpose. The object module is the main module that all other modules relate to. See Figs. 2.1–2.4 for images of the object, publication, and exhibition modules.

Research process

Available primary sources

Artist’s archive: Catalogue raisonné projects, especially those of Post-War and contemporary

artists, are fortunate to have access to the artist’s archive. An artist’s archive will contain valuable source material such as audio and visual recordings; photographs of works in progress; diaries and writings; correspondence; fabrication files; inventory; consignments; sale records; exhibitions; etc. The artist’s archive is a rich and invaluable asset to any CR project because it provides insight into the artist and their practice.

Additional primary sources are:

- Museum archives – for retrospective and survey exhibition records.
- Gallery, dealer, or collector archives – many can be found at repositories such as The Archives of American Art, Washington D.C. and New York; The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; or NYU Fales Library and Special Collections, New York.
- Correspondence, interviews, and recorded oral histories with former studio assistants; art dealers; and other personal associations provide context into the artist’s life and creative process.

The screenshot shows the 'Publications' module interface. It is divided into several sections:

- Bibliographic data:** Includes fields for Title ('Jasper Johns's Modus Operandi'), Primary Author (last/first: 'Cohen', 'David'), Publisher/Periodical ('New York Sun'), Publication Date (year/month: '2008', 'March 25'), and Page Numbers ('1-13').
- Full Entry:** Displays the citation: 'Cohen, David. "Jasper Johns's Modus Operandi," *New York Sun*, March 25, 2008, 1-13.'
- Notes:** Lists related works: '"Untitled" 2004.007 comm. p. TK by David Cohen', '"Usuyuki" 2002.003 comm. p. TK by David Cohen', '"Map" 2005.007 comm. p. TK by David Cohen', and '"Bushbaby" 2004.004 comm. p. TK by David Cohen'.
- Reader / Date:** Shows 'KC' and '12/19/2013'. Includes checkboxes for 'Located', 'Scanned', and 'Location known'.
- Where:** Lists 'Online NY State Newspapers'.
- Research Notes:** Contains the note: 'Need to confirm page numbers. Not 13 pages.'
- Exhibitions Mentioned:** A list of exhibitions, currently empty.
- Annotations:** Contains the text: 'Review of "Jasper Johns: Gray", Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and "Jasper Johns: Drawings 1997-2007" Matthew Marks, New York.'
- Drawings in Publication:** A table listing drawings with their CR numbers, descriptions, page numbers, comments, and verification status.

CR Number	Description	Page #	Comments	Verified
▶ 2004.007	Untitled, 2004	TK	comm. p. TK by David Cohen	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ 2002.003	Usuyuki, 2002	TK	comm. p. TK by David Cohen	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ 2005.007	Map, 2005	TK	comm. p. TK by David Cohen	<input type="checkbox"/>
▶ 2004.004	Bushbaby, 2004	TK	comm. p. TK by David Cohen	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fig. 2.4. Publications Module

Four research focus areas

Object research is related to the actual artworks. This includes locating every known object for inclusion in the CR. Some CR editors will view artwork in person to confirm physical aspects of the object such as materials used, size, inscriptions, markings, and condition. Important details should be noted and documented with photographs.

Provenance research confirms the ownership history of the object. Included in a CR, provenance helps with the authentication and appraisal of the object. Provenance research will involve consulting with:

- *Current owners* who can tell who they acquired the work(s) from.*
- *Galleries and dealers* known to have sold works by the artist will know which collectors works were sold to, or consigned from for re-sale.
- *Retrospective and survey exhibition catalogues* for collection credit lines in order to confirm ownership.
- *Gallery, dealer, and exhibition archives*, which often contain registers of sale, consignment, and loan.
- *Auction catalogues* – include information on previous owners for all lots.

*An additional benefit consulting with the current owners is that they may own, or have owned, other works by the artist and will share this information with you.

Exhibitions research includes the retrieval of checklists, catalogues, floor plans, installation photographs, and loan forms. This documentation will confirm the exhibition's dates; what works were included in an exhibition; and if the works were exhibited at every venue for travelling exhibitions. Exhibition research will involve consulting:

- *Current owners* who will know if their work was loaned for exhibition.
- *Galleries and dealers* known to have exhibited the artist.
- *Retrospective and survey exhibition catalogues* will often include an exhibition history for the artist or for an object.
- *Gallery, dealer, and exhibition archives* may have consignment and loan forms for works included in any exhibition.

Literature research of writings about the artist's work and includes locating monographs, magazines, reviews, essays, newspaper articles, scholarly texts,

and interviews. Literature research will involve consulting:

- *Retrospective and survey exhibition catalogues* that, in addition to an exhibition history, may include a publication history for the artist or for an object.
- *Art libraries and online databases* such as Jstor, Worldcat, Ebsco for articles, reviews, and books.

Organizing research documents at The Catalogue Raisonné of the Drawings of Jasper Johns

Workflow: As research comes into the office pertinent information is recorded in database. 90 percent of research documentation that comes into the office is in digital format and saved on a network server. Research documents are then printed and filed within corresponding analogue files.

Digital Storage: All digital files are stored on local network server with cloud backup. Server folders are organized based on workflow and our retrieval needs. At this point in time we are not using a digital asset management systems and find that for smaller CR projects like ours a DAMS is not necessary. Research documentation is in JPG, TIFF, or PDF file formats. We utilize file-naming conventions and apply descriptive metadata to research documents for easy search and retrieval.

Analogue Storage: Paper files are kept as back-up and are organized based on the four research focus areas: object based; exhibition research; literature research; and collections.

- Object based documents
 - *Examination reports* – handwritten notes from drawing examinations are entered into the database object module. Originals are stored in archival binders.
 - *Object files* – one file per object with copies of research documentation related to that work. Includes exhibition research; provenance research; supplementary correspondence; condition reports; to name a few.
- *Exhibition documents* – filed as either solo or group exhibitions and arranged chronologically. Contains copies of exhibition catalogues, checklists, installation photographs, floor plans, or announcements.
- *Literature documents* – full or partial copies of publications pertaining to the artist, organized chronologically, and colour-coded by publication type.
- *Collection documents* – correspondence with private and public collections regarding photography; permissions; provenance; and credit lines.

Recommendations for artists

A survey was taken to determine what studio records are most beneficial to a CR project. The consensus is that there can never be too much documentation. It is important for the artist's studio to maintain the best records possible. There is a misconception that the artist's gallery will maintain records on behalf of the artist. Unfortunately this is not always the case. A gallery's priority is to promote the work of their entire artist roster. While a gallery will do its best to maintain archives – due to the fast paced environment of a commercial gallery– time dedicated to record keeping and archives is rare. Ideally the artist will maintain their archives or hire staff that will.

Inventory and database

Keeping an inventory database is crucial because identifying those works recognized by the artist as complete will not only benefit the artist, it will help with estate appraisal later on. An inventory also lays the foundation for the CR. The materials used in making a work should be recorded to help with conservation and in writing the technical description of the work in the CR.

Consignments, sales, and exhibitions

In addition to inventory the artist studio should track consignments, sales, exhibitions, and publications. It can be difficult to track this information once works are sold but there are ways to stay on top of the documentation. For example, artists can include a stipulation in their contract with the gallery that they must be informed of all sales and be provided details of the collectors. Some artist studios employ an image policy so that all image permissions must come through them. This not only ensures that works are reproduced correctly, but also informs the studio when a work will be included in a publication or exhibition.

Photography

Maintaining an image archive of the artworks in their finished state is important. Photographing the back of artworks is also important, especially if it's within the artist's practice to change a previously exhibited work over a period of time. The back of artworks might have unique notations by the artist. Taking a photograph now may help identify a forgery later.

Conclusion

Producing a catalogue raisonné is an extensive undertaking. Most organizations that have an online CR have published after several years of research and continue to provide either *next phase* additions or regular updates. The advent of online publishing has allowed the information within CRs to be used in a multitude of ways and to reach wider audiences. Keyword searches, access to supplemental documents, and multiple object viewing provides any researcher with a better understanding of the artist and their practice. The assemblage of information, its groupings and its production all require planning, appropriate staffing and flexible production schedules, but ultimately leads to a rich user experience.

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reflect the highlights of my findings. The full version of the report is available on the Metropolitan New York Library Council's website: <http://metro.org/media/files/files/0df1431c/Gabrielli.pdf>.

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