October 7, 2015 by gbeasle1

RRCHNM hosted the second Getty Foundation-sponsored institute for digital art history, "Building a Digital Portfolio." The institute began on July 13, 2015 with twenty ardent art history graduate students eager to explore how digital humanities could enhance their own scholarship. The ten-day institute immersed the cohort in lectures, tutorials, and hands-on workshops. Though entering the institute with varying levels of comfort and ideas of what digital art history meant, each participant left the institute rethinking how their current research could be transformed digitally.

Led by Sheila Brennan and Sharon Leon, the cohort met each morning to discuss the theory, methods, and practice of digital humanities. Fruitful discussions from the morning sessions tied to participatory afternoon sessions where the budding digital art historians learned how to use the digital tools through demonstrations and hands-on work. Gretchen Beasley, Jannelle Legg, and Spencer Roberts, doctoral students from George Mason University's history and art history program, shared own knowledge and experiences when offering tutorials and served as guides and mentors to the cohort.

By the end of the two weeks, the cohort successfully registered their own web domain; installed WordPress, Omeka, and Zotero; learned to annotate and aggregate repositories, collections, and metadata; measured, mapped, modeled, and visualized their data in a variety of forms; and discovered the various publication formats available. One participant reflected that the institute "provided a comfortable space to exchange ideas, learn about new tools, and build the confidence to explore the digital humanities within [their] own work." Each student left with additional perspectives on how they could incorporate digital techniques into their art history work and reach new audience with their scholarship.

Personal reflections of "Building a Digital Portfolio" participants were aggregated and are available on the course website, with the help of RRCHNM's PressForward plugin. Conversations continue in the #doingdah15 twitter stream, that include participate of all three Getty Foundation-funded digital humanities summer institutes.
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