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DISCUSSION GROUP CO-CHAIRS

Archives Conservation Discussion Group 2013: Is it Real? The Value and Ethics of Using Surrogates

ABSTRACT

The Archives Conservation Discussion Group moderated a discussion delving into the issues, uses, and needs of surrogacy in collections. The demands on physical collections are growing as interest in unique collections increases. These demands are a concern to the conservation and preservation community. Surrogates are often suggested in order to mitigate damage and exposure of the physical objects. This solution is a controversial topic. Some have embraced this practice while others refuse to make the switch. A summary of the presentations and the subsequent discussion session is provided below.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

JEANNE DREWES
REPLACE, REPAIR, REMOVE, OR REMAKE: DECISION-MAKING FOR SEVERELY DAMAGED ITEMS IN GENERAL COLLECTIONS

Libraries view the Library of Congress as the library of last resort or the library of record. When an item is requested for use, it should be mechanically sound. However, there are times when materials are so badly damaged that they cannot be used. Those materials come to the Binding and Collections Care Division. A flowchart was developed to aid staff in making decisions on these damaged materials (fig. 1). After many other decisions, there is an option for producing a facsimile. When a damaged title is within copyright, it may not be digitized and published online; therefore, a physical facsimile of it may be necessary. When a digital copy is created, the Library of Congress also keeps a physical copy. Digital copies are rigorously checked for quality. If a physical facsimile is created, any original pieces to the item are kept with it as well. For example, the design on the cover may be retained and put in a pocket of the newly created, bound facsimile. Accompanying materials may include items such as maps and color plates, all from the original, which are inserted into the facsimile. A note is added to the catalog record listing the original elements retained. A whole process is now in place to ensure that the collections are usable by researchers. Facsimiles work because they ensure that a mechanically sound object can be used by researchers.

Jeanne Drewes, Chief of Binding and Collections Care and Program Manager of Mass Deacidification, Library of Congress

GARY FROST
DIORAMA: INTERPLAY OF ORIGINALS AND COPIES IN EXHIBITS

We are confronted with a lot of binaries such as originals and copies, screen and print. The large space between the two binary views, originals and copies, is referred to as a diorama. Exhibits are moving away from the original object to re-representation of the original as a physical or digital surrogate. The "cabinet of curiosities" or Wunderkammer was popular in the 17th century. The 19th–20th centuries saw a transition from artifact-rich, systematic exhibits to dioramic or habitat installations. Much like those early cabinets of curiosities, libraries exhibit groups of things and interpret their presentation. The displacement of physical artifacts has become more apparent. We are moving away from the real things to their representations or facsimiles. In addition, captions that interpret the collection are added to the re-representation of the items. We go to an exhibit to be, if not enthralled, then at least transported into a new perspective on the given topic. The exhibit represents a

This open discussion took place on May 31, 2013, during the AIC 41st Annual Meeting, May 29–June1, 2013, Indianapolis, IN. The moderators organized and led the discussion and recorded notes. Readers are reminded that the moderators do not necessarily endorse all the comments recorded, and that although every effort was made to record proceedings accurately, further evaluation or research is advised before putting treatment observations into practice.

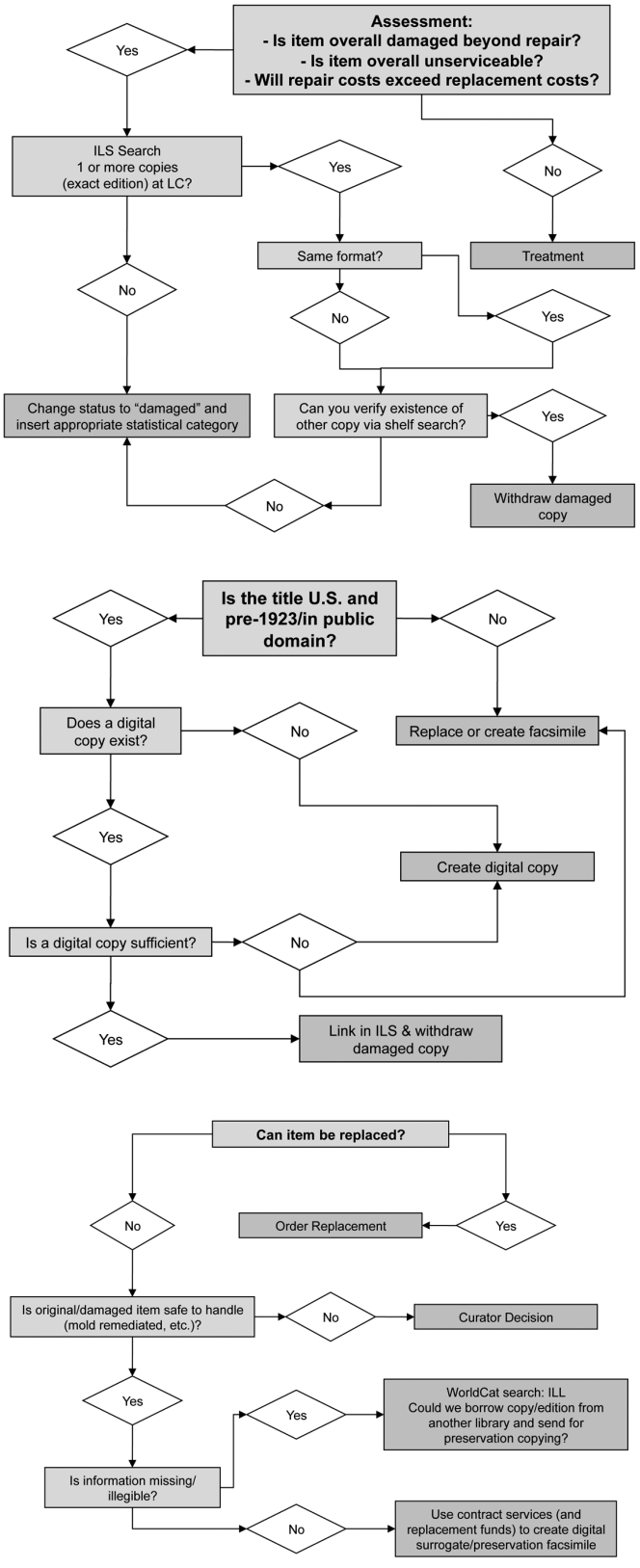

Fig. 1. Library of Congress flowcharts for decision-making regarding damaged books and the production of facsimiles

moment of learning or a moment of discovery. Those behind the curtain—the preparators, conservators, and curators—take the same journey as the viewer.

According to the 1968 Webster's Dictionary, "The diorama is an imaged succession of brilliant scenes or episodes imperceptibly merging one into another like a pageant in miniature." All are key words in the circumstance of interplay.

The displacement continues as more information is placed into databases and is extracted from databases. The digital re-representation in effect proliferates the copies before the emergence of the exemplar in a strange reversal of authentication. Conservators can offer insight into the authentication of the artifact as well as the modification of the artifact. Therefore we can extend the preservation agenda forward by authenticating the process of authentication that is inherent in exhibits and by acknowledging the provenance of the original. This can be the conservator's special contribution.

Gary Frost, Conservator Emeritus, University of Iowa Libraries

JANE E. KLINGER
THE RELATION OF THE SURROGATE AND THE REAL

The use of surrogates at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) can be viewed through the lens of the development of digital reproduction. The USHMM has always had a strong commitment to authenticity in presenting the history of the Holocaust. Thus, in developing the permanent exhibition, the museum determined that the most effective way to remember the victims, honor the survivors, and respond to Holocaust deniers was to display only original artifacts. The overarching framework of the main exhibition is a carefully constructed, strictly chronological format, making it difficult to alter an area or exhibit case. There was, however, a nod to preserving light-sensitive material early on. Items could be removed from permanent display when like could replace like: one copy could replace another, or—in some cases—an item could be replaced with another item that was similar in size, format, and content.

At the opening in 1993, the museum ran into some snags. Lenders imposed restrictions on exhibition parameters of unique items. The fledgling museum's response in 1992 was to hire an artist experienced in producing facsimiles using materials consistent with those of the period. The first time this approach was used was in reproducing the McCloy letter that belongs to the National Archives. The letter is an important item in the exhibition. In it, Assistant Secretary of War John McCloy writes to the World Jewish Congress about why the administration will not honor their request to bomb Auschwitz. The artist used a period typewriter and paper and recreated the stamps. The facsimile is embossed with the name of her company. The copy of the letter has

been on display for 19.5 years, longer than is preferable by the conservation staff.

The children's drawings from the orphanage in Theresienstadt could also be on exhibition for only six months. The Jewish Museum in Prague agreed to allow the USHMM to have an artist create facsimiles of the drawings and requested a second set of facsimiles be produced for them. The Rassenschande poster is not an artist's reproduction because it does not duplicate the original printing method or materials. Instead, a member of the design and production staff made a silkscreen reproduction.

About seven years after the opening of the USHMM, discussions were held regarding the condition of the affidavit of Rudolf Hoess regarding the number of Jews and other victims gassed at Auschwitz. It had been on permanent display since the opening and the ink had faded considerably. The value of preserving the original was discussed at length with the curator. In this instance, the museum did not want to appear to be manufacturing evidence and so decided to make an obvious photographic reproduction of the letter. In addition to the label stating that it is a reproduction, visitors have visual cues that help them identify it as such. The museum has also used traditional photographs as reproductions in other instances, for example as a surrogate for the forged passport of Vladka Meed, who was living under an assumed identity.

As time progressed, different reproduction techniques were employed. The plan and advertising poster for the ship *St. Louis* were also replaced with reproductions after unsuccessful attempts at trying to find additional copies. The curator agreed to use reproductions because they serve more as a background in the exhibit case than as primary objects. A photograph of the poster was taken and the traditional film negative was scanned and then printed. Within the following year, reproduction of the ship's plan was completely digitally produced. By visiting the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, one can see the development of the production of surrogates from artist-made facsimiles to full digital reproductions.

Jane E. Klinger, Chief Conservator, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

VALERIE HOTCHKISS

FROM PHYSICAL ARTIFACTS TO COPIES TO SUPER SURROGATES: THE USE (AND ABUSE) OF SURROGATES IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

At the University of Illinois, teaching and exhibition are the lifeblood of the library. At a teaching library, as stewards of one of the best rare-book collections in the country, staff don't want to tell scholars that they are not worthy of consulting the originals. The Rare Book Library shuns the use of surrogates in exhibition for the same reason. The use of facsimiles cheapens the whole experience and makes the library seem more off-putting and arrogant than it is already perceived to be. People do not want to see copies; it is the real thing that takes the public's breath away. This is the so-called "Clooney Law" of exhibits: It is one thing to see George Clooney in a movie but quite another to have a glass of wine with him. The library wants visitors to experience the thrill of the real thing.

What if a given library doesn't have the proper conditions, such as lighting, temperature, or proper cases? What if the item needs to be placed on exhibit for an extended period of time? These limitations can be used to advocate for better exhibition space at the institution. Conservators should not endanger original materials, but neither should they dumb down exhibits if they can avoid it. Building limitations should not be a justification for fooling the public.

There are many innovative ways to use facsimiles in conjunction with the original. If the real thing is absent, the copy tends to fall flat for the visitor. In some cases, however, facsimiles can be used effectively to enhance the exhibit. They can show details, inform a text panel, or show more than one portion of a book. There need to be visual cues to denote a surrogate. Facsimiles should not be placed in book cradles or mounts, and they should be prominently labeled as copies. When used properly, surrogates can broaden the curatorial range and can supplement the visitor's experience. Even more impressive is the use of digital displays to flip through a book. The First Folio display at the Folger Shakespeare Library allows visitors to digitally flip through the entire book, just below an exhibit of the real thing. This can especially engage younger visitors—often more so than the book itself.

The most respectable and common use of digital facsimiles in exhibition work—the online exhibit—is a useful phenomenon that allows us to curate exhibitions of our collections that can reach a far broader audience than any event in our galleries. But the ground rules are clear to everyone involved. Looking at an image online—even a beautiful, amazingly detailed image that shows every chain line and ink splatter—one remains quite aware that it is not the real thing. Digital surrogates can be used to "use" or see items that are too fragile to be handled.

Some are moving away from the online exhibit to providing access to e-versions of rare books or "super surrogates," as in the "value added Ebook" series or ShE-Book project at the University of Illinois. In addition to providing digital access to the complete book, the tablet-friendly platform also offers searchable text and translations, a virtual visit to the vault that provides a 360° view of the book, and a commentary by a well-known teacher of each text.

In conclusion, there are distinct places for copies, facsimiles, and super surrogates in special collections work, but not in exhibition cases and not in the hands of researchers

unless requested. But for enhancing access, study, and understanding, our brave new world that has such pixels in it is a wonderful place to be.

Valerie Hotchkiss, Director of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library and Andrew S. G. Turnyn Endowed Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

MARIEKA KAYE
SURROGATE USE IN INTERACTIVE EXHIBITS

These days visitors expect more interactive elements in exhibits. Very often interaction is achieved through digital means, such as digitized books with pages that are turned through a computer screen. At the Huntington Library there is a permanent exhibit called *Beautiful Science: Ideas That Changed the World*, which is housed in the Dibner Hall of the History of Science. There are a number of interactive elements in this exhibit, such as replicas of scientific instruments, but unique challenges arose with anatomical books containing movable parts. The challenge was to provide viewers with the experience of using the books while still keeping the delicate originals safe. The items were digitally scanned, cut out, laminated, and then reassembled. The parts were sewn together with a thin elastic beading cord so that the viewers could flip through them with flexibility and ease. The downside is that the parts often become loose and damaged from so much use. It is helpful to have extra copies of the movable parts made and ready for replacements. Conservation staff members routinely walk through the exhibit checking on the physical integrity of the surrogates. There is a lot of manual labor and maintenance associated with these structures.

There are times when library items are too delicate to be handled as desired, but book conservators strive to prepare and care for items so they may be physically handled, not just placed in a vitrine and kept locked away. Fortunately there are creative solutions such as the construction of surrogates, which allow people to still have an intimate encounter with the structures firsthand, as was originally intended. At the Huntington Library the anatomical models are displayed next to the originals, enhancing the visitor's experience (fig. 2).

Fig. 2. A visitor interacts with a surrogate of an anatomical model from George Spratt's 1841 *Obstetric Tables*, Huntington Library. Courtesy of Marieka Kaye

Marieka Kaye, Exhibits Conservator, The Huntington Library

MEG BROWN
WEARING TWO HATS: EXHIBIT COORDINATOR AND CONSERVATOR

Most conservators assume that curators will object to the use of a facsimile. It precludes us from even asking the question, "Is it okay to exhibit a facsimile?" Conservators need to gauge how much interest is in the original. If facsimiles are made, then they can increase the legibility of an illegible original. Facsimiles can also be used to digitally resize an item if the original does not fit in the exhibit case. A facsimile can be made better than the original. As an example, illustrated figures from a Dickens novel were scanned, and puppets were produced from them, making 3D objects from 2D objects (fig. 3). This enhanced the exhibit by allowing the curator to add detail to a story (fig. 4). Sometimes facsimile-making is about the interpretation and the story the exhibit is trying to tell rather than about the objects themselves.

Facsimiles of the original photographs were used in the *Caribbean Sea Migration and Boat People* exhibit. The exhibit focused on the stories of the people and their incredible journeys, not on the photographer. In this case, the curator was amenable to allowing facsimiles in the exhibit with the original artifacts as supplements. At Duke University Library, conservators have good relationships with curators, so there are open conversations about why originals should not be displayed.

At Duke, facsimiles are often used for permanent displays or when the conditions in a case are not up to conservation standards. Facsimiles and labels were placed at the ends of a case where the lux levels were too high: 2900 lux. Originals were placed only in the middle of the case where the light levels could be adjusted through the use of filters. Conservators should open dialogs with administrators and explain the damage that can occur to original objects so the question of surrogates can be resolved. Showing administrators and curators visible damage caused by exhibiting items can enable conservators to change the conditions for their exhibit areas.

Meg Brown, Exhibits Librarian, Duke University Library

Fig. 3. The original, uncut version of Pollock's illustrations for Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist,* meant to be cut out and used for puppet theatre. Courtesy of Meg Brown

Fig. 4. Although the original illustrations were visually appealing, they were made with light-sensitive watercolors. This cut-out 3D puppet version offered something extra that helped convince the curator to use the facsimile instead of the original. Courtesy of Meg Brown

ANN CARROLL KEARNEY
CONSERVATION CONVERSATIONS: SURROGATE CREATION AND THE PRIVATE CONSERVATOR

As conservators we "know our stuff," and we focus on preserving original artifacts. Collectors and private clients are also professionals who have carefully assembled items that have subjective and objective value. Our goals include protecting clients' artifacts; creating surrogates for display, research, and security; and communicating the importance of these goals to clients. Collectors' concerns can differ. Their pride and personal respect for the artifacts' value often compels them to handle and display the real things. At the same time, collectors do want to provide ideal care for their collections. Additionally, they have concerns about the expense of creating surrogates.

This talk steps away from the conservator's point of view of facsimiles, and, borrowing elements from the user-centered design and business models, adopts a different perspective. Look at the issue from the collectors' point of view. Their goals and concerns can offer focus to our technical knowledge and theoretical understanding. Considering their viewpoint allows us to clarify the benefits and challenges of surrogate creation for all concerned. Stepping back and seeing the situation from the client's point of view can help conservators reconfigure a wider view of their responsibilities and objectives, thereby strengthening the relationship with the client. And a strong working relationship is the foundation for success in any business venture.

Ann Carroll Kearney, Collections Conservator, University of Albany–State University of New York Libraries

IS IT REAL? THE VALUE AND ETHICS OF USING SURROGATES: DISCUSSION SESSION

Audience Member: If and how do you label facsimiles in exhibits?

Kaye: In the Huntington's *History of Science* exhibit, all the original flat manuscripts were displayed for 3 months and then replaced with facsimiles. The exhibit has been on display for 5 years. The items are explicitly labeled as facsimiles. Occasionally, items are lent to other institutions. It can be difficult to control how your objects are labeled when borrowed. In one case an institution wanted to display both sides of a two-sided letter. The original was framed next to a facsimile of the verso, displayed side-by-side. There was one instance where an alarmed viewer believed an original Washington letter was cut apart to show two sides because it was not labeled properly. The facsimiles can be so good that they can even fool an educated viewer, so labeling is crucial for exhibits.

Hotchkiss: Labeling is a problem. I recently visited major university libraries that often do not label their surrogates. I encourage AIC members to advocate for better labeling in exhibits to denote when a facsimile is displayed. At least give some visual clues that the item is a facsimile. Do not try to fool the visitor.

Brown: For Jane Klinger, how does one define different kinds of facsimiles? What do you mean by a facsimile and how do you explain the type of process that was used in the limited

amount of space a label affords? For instance, if the original is a photographic negative and the exhibit includes only the photographs that were produced, how do you succinctly convey to the viewer that the negative is the original and the print on display is a surrogate? There seems to be a limit to the amount of text that the viewer will read. Standards do not seem to exist in the literature.

Klinger: Even in our own discussion, in this talk, there is a loose use of the term facsimile, and its definition is varied. What is original and what is the copy, when we are looking at large runs of prints? As a group we need to work on the terminology. The older labels at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum have the phrase "artist-made facsimile." In order to increase the amount of space available on the label for expository text it was reduced to "facsimile" by curators.

When digital copies came to the forefront then "Giclée" was added to the label. Buzz words are popular. They try now to be more general by using the term "digital reproduction" or "photo reproduction." "Facsimile" implies that the same materials and techniques were used to create the copy that were used to make the original. In this manner the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum is very particular in the use of the terminology.

Brown: Why is that your definition of "facsimile"?

Klinger: It comes from my European training background. Back in the 80s and 90s it was either photography or photocopy. Otherwise, you had experts and craftsmen come in to reproduce with original materials. I don't feel that visitors have the same experience with the use of all reproductions in exhibits.

Brown: I am only worried about what the average user understands in terms of the labeling. With the terms "facsimile" and "digital reproduction," it is clear that it is not the original. A "photo-reproduction" of a photograph may be more difficult for the viewer to grasp. Perhaps the education literature in museums can provide some guidance.

Audience Member: In my institution we also grapple with the issue of facsimiles. Labels clearly identify all facsimiles and specifically use that term. We also have a sign at the entrance of the exhibit area, and we explain to visitors why facsimiles are used. Often it is because of damage from light levels or due to the fragility of the object. We even label why we have low light levels. In our estimation it is important to explain to the viewer why they see facsimiles when they go to an exhibit.

Audience Member: I suggest that private clients drape a curtain over their item when it is not being viewed. The item is thus protected from unnecessary light exposure. Plus the light can be movement activated. Perhaps this technique can also be used in museums or libraries.

Hotchkiss: At the Gridwall Library at Southern Methodist University, the lights turn off after 5–10 minutes of no movement. It takes a minimum of renovation to achieve this, and all galleries should strive to install it.

Moderator: The Art Institute also toyed with the idea of replacing the gallery lights with motion detectors, so that all galleries not being used would be in the dark, as a green initiative.

Audience Member: Do some institutions label the actual facsimile instead of the label?

Klinger: The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum labeled both the item and the label. For the McCloy letter, which is an artist-made facsimile, the name of the artist's company, *Faksimile*, is embossed on the item. For the children's artwork, where embossing was found to be disruptive, there is an archival stamp on the back. If you decide not to display the real thing then you need to be honest about it. For the Hoess confession, researchers have requested and have been allowed to see the original.

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FURTHER READING

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