

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA)

Link to website: www.moca.org

Link to finding aid with digital images: www.moca.org/archive/

The MOCA Exhibition Archive makes accessible institutional records generated by the curatorial department during the course of developing and producing over 330 exhibitions and events from the museum's first programmatic activities in 1983 to 2004. MOCA's identity as a museum that celebrates contemporary art of all forms is reflected in the novel presentation of its exhibition finding aids. The Exhibition Archive homepage has a representative image from each exhibition that initiates a visual, rather than textual, navigation method. Visitors are encouraged to explore, but locating specific information is also simple using query fields on the homepage. This allows for either keyword searches across all the finding aids or browsing by year.

A separate XML finding aid, authored directly into XMetaL, was created for each calendar year. The decision was made to write one, high-level scope and content note for the entire website to streamline navigation. The biographical notes were expanded to include descriptions of each exhibition or performance, with information such as exhibition dates, curators, and travel venues. Links to installation images, sound files, and digital artworks were also placed within the biographical notes. There is no need to scroll through large amounts of text to find these items embedded in the container list. Over 4,500 exhibition installation images were scanned and digitized for this project. The biographical notes were later used to quickly fill in the metadata for these images when they were loaded in the museum's new digital asset management system.

MOCA contracted with an outside firm of web architects to work alongside its own web generalist to design the primary interface of the website. The website incorporates the needs of the archivists as well as the ideas of the designers who created an innovative entry into the finding aids as well as a unique look. MOCA opted not to display all sections contained within the underlying encoding structure, such as collection

provenance, processing history, etc., to keep the public interface from being unnecessarily complicated.

The MOCA Exhibition Archive utilizes a unique combination of technologies to parse, search, and display EAD2002-encoded XML files. The image mosaic on the homepage was built in Flash. Data resides in a PostgreSQL database, is parsed by Ruby on Rails, and is displayed using cascading style sheets. These files were uploaded using a specially-designed web-based utility that parses the data and converts it to the format seen on the web site using HTML and CSS. This uploading feature also allows for the overlaying of revised finding aids and the addition of new ones in the future.