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Metadata for Moving Image Collections
CINE-GT 1803
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Assignment #1

For this assignment I chose Italian cinema as a general search, to see what sorts of materials would come up, followed by a search for the specific Italian filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini. For the most part the results from searching “Italian cinema” were too broad to be useful, but with Pasolini, an Italian filmmaker, writer, and poet there was a wide range of works by and about him, as well as his actual films. I chose to search within two film archives that seemed like they would have sizable holdings of international cinema: the Pacific Film Archive and UCLA’s Film & Television Archive.

The documentation on how to search within the Pacific Film Archive, or the University of California, Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive (BAM/PFA), is somewhat confusing. It gives two distinct options for searching within their collection: and in-house catalog and OskiCat, UC Berkeley's Library Catalog. There is also a menu on the left of the page with a variety of options for finding out about the collections themselves, rather than searching within them. The impetus is to search within OskiCat, because there is a box to enter your search term, whereas the in-house catalog requires following a link before getting to the search page. There is no immediately apparent information on why you would pick one option over the other. Because of this I alternated between both, and was easily able to find what I was looking for. The in-house catalog was useful for finding actual films, but had a more limited selection of books compared to OskiCat, which could search within other collections simultaneously.

Both had basic and advanced searches, but only the in-house catalog seemed to support browsing. The OskiCat advanced search allows you to pick additional UC Berkeley locations to

search within, like the Music Library. The results were about what I expected. Searching for Italian cinema brings up 413 entries, mostly books with a few e-books. Narrowing it down and searching for Pier Paolo Pasolini brings up twenty-five results.

The records are in MARC, and OskiCat gives the option of looking at the MARC display view. The elements and search fields were very granular in the advanced view. You could search between any combination of UC Berkeley collections, for languages, material types, different types of government publications (federal, local, state, international, multistate, multilocal), different video formats, etc. Because of these options the metadata definitely supporting finding what I was looking for, but the search results were not always displayed in a meaningful way.

Of the twenty-five results for Pasolini there are eight books about him before a copy of one of his films, even though the third and fourth results are the same book: “Pier Paolo Pasolini: a future life.” Neither record is particularly helpful in understanding what the book actually is. Each has a different publishing year, 1988 versus 1999, but the latter is listed as a first edition. The description fields are “xi, 335 p. : ill. ; 29 cm.”¹ and “1 v. (unpaged) : ill. ; 30 cm.”² The call numbers are even different enough (PN1998.3.P38 A252 1988 and PN1998.3.P38 P37 1989) that these books are probably not shelved next to each other. The in-house catalog results even find materials were unaccounted for in the OskiCat search. For example: the search terms bring up a 35mm print of the film *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* in both the in-house catalog and OskiCat, but only the in-house catalog search finds the eleven 16mm prints of the same film in the BAM/PFA collection.

With UCLA’s Film & Television Archive it was easy to find what I was looking for, and there was a large section on the search page about how to format your query based on which

¹ <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b11181653~S1>

² <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/record=b10467409~S1>

field you were searching in (title, keyword, etc.) Both the basic and advanced options are intuitive with drop-down menus to narrow down what fields you are searching in. I prefer BAM/PFA's presentation of the search options, because you can highlight multiple fields and collections to search within simultaneously, whereas the UCLA makes you select a finite number of terms, fields, and collections (unless you search all collections), but both are easy to use. Browse is not supported from what I could tell.

The results of were a mix of expected items and unexpected but relevant and interesting items. Searching for the keyword "Italian" in the Preservation Vault gives 133 results, from individual tapes of a television series to feature films. A record of "The 1930s--prelude to war. Tape 5" gives detailed description of its contents, including what year each segment (e.g., "excerpt. Rome, Italy. Italian king opens parliament (May 12, 1934)").³ The notes give you a preservation history, although the detail here is possibly the result of it being a UCLA preservation project.

The default view of a record is called Brief View but there is also the option of looking at the Staff MARC View. The Brief View is very informative, and easy to read without any knowledge of metadata. The basic information (country, year, credits, genre(s), subject(s), summary) is easy to read and understand, and with most fields and elements being clickable (either to search within a field type or find similar items) it allowed a significant depth of information. For example, under Version: "Short 88 min. version? (Playing time on release was 100 min. in Italy and 91 min. in United States, according to AFI catalog, 1961-1970.)"⁴

The metadata did not always support finding what I was looking for. Searching for Pier Paolo Pasolini within the full collection leads to twenty-seven results. These all appear to be his

³ <http://cinema.library.ucla.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=139513>

⁴ <http://cinema.library.ucla.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?searchId=319&recCount=50&recPointer=15&bibId=47278>

actual films, although the format (film, video, DVD) is unclear without clicking on the records. Some are noted as being a “motion picture” in the result heading, whereas others are not, despite them all being Pasolini’s actual works. Interestingly, if you click on the genre “Italian films” it pulls up mostly what you would expect, but also American production *Italian Job* (2003 remake). For the most part the organization of search results made sense, although in few instances (such as with the Pasolini search) you would have to click on each record to really understand what it was for.

Sources

UCLA Film & Television Archive. <http://cinema.library.ucla.edu/index.html>

OskiCat UCB Library Catalog. <http://oskicat.berkeley.edu/>

Pacific Film Archive Library Search: http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu/pfalibrary/search_library