Can you talk about the "Stories that Speak to Us" project? How did it develop out of the DALN, and what is it about?

Ulman: We probably have different stories about these but we'll see, maybe they'll converge. Somewhere around two thousand narratives I realized that no one would ever listen to all of these and certainly not think, be able to spend time analyzing and studying all the work, we're closing in on three thousand now. That triggered an analogy to something like, this detail came up later but the analogy was there in the beginning, like the Smithsonian which says that about two percent of its total collection is ever at any one time on display the rest of it is sitting away and out of the public view. Researchers can ask to see it but…and when it is on public view some curator has made decisions about what to put on view and then presents it, filters it through labels, through exhibit catalogues and so I started trying to come up with assignments to ask my students do digital exhibits and talked to Cindy about the possibility of guest curators, asking people to come in and create in some ways windows onto that larger collection – do the careful, close reading and study of some group of narratives that they were interested in but do it in a way that would link to the DALN so that people following their ideas would end up in this vast space but with a sense of direction.

Selfe: And that was one of the reasons that we, I remember it just about the same way. It was an effort to provide people windows onto a large collection and one way we thought we could involve people in that project was to put together a digital project that gave them some guidelines for curating these exhibits, involve them in the curation of the exhibits, and then was shaped by the academic environment and reward system that these individuals were embedded. So we had to have a publication that offered individuals some sort of reward structure, which means it had to be published, it had to be available for their tenure and promotion cases and thus it had to be peer reviewed and it had to be recognizable as scholarship.

Ulman: And I think you're right, that was something that your eyes sort of lit up because it connected with the work you've been doing with the Computers and Composition Digital Press to create alternative publication venues for material that really could not be put on a print page or even on a static web page.

Selfe: It was convergence culture again , you know, things coming together- this provided us a way of making sense of the DALN and also taking advantage of the Computers and Composition Digital Press environment and I think it has been very positive in that way. The other thing I like about it is that now we have a series of these exhibits that people can use as models, or that they can see and maybe they'll make more and maybe they'll want to do collections like this or maybe smaller article length collections or contributions.

Ulman: As an interesting bit of convergence, somebody just sent me a link to the Women Writers Project, which I knew about before, but they have a new initiative in which they're asking guest curators to create exhibits, online exhibits, because the Women Writers Project has thousands of texts now and they said, "oh it's too big for anyone to read" so they are doing the same thing. It's clearly a broad need.

Selfe: It is a need because at some point we saw stuff going in but we didn't see how people could get it out, and that's the real challenge of digital archives today.