WASHINGTON, D.C.
Visual Resources Association
9th Annual Business Meeting
1991

VRA

**VISUAL RESOURCES ASSOCIATION
NINTH ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
AND PROGRAM**
Sheraton and Omni Shoreham Hotels
Washington, D.C.
February 20 -23, 1991

Welcome to the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Visual
Resources Association! We think we have an exciting
program planned for you. The Washington Local Arrange-
ments committee has worked hard to present a diverse look
at what the nation's capitol has to offer in the way of visual
resources, collections and extra curricular activities. We hope
that your stay in Washington will be informative and, most of
all, fun!

REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION:
VRA Suite, Omni Shoreham (see Hotel's Schedule of
Events for room number)

Tuesday, February 19: 7:00-9:00 PM
Wednesday, February 20: 8:00 AM-4:00 PM
Thursday, February 21: 8:00 AM-12:00 PM

A VRA Registration badge is required for admission to all VRA
sessions, exhibits and events. Payment of the VRA registra-
tion fee does not constitute payment of fees for any CAA
programs that may be going on at the same time (except the
joint sessions). A CAA Registration badge or single session
event ticket will be required for admission to CAA sessions
and events.

The Visual Resources Association is grateful to the College
Art Association for their generous assistance in making this
program possible. We also extend our sincere thanks to all
members and friends who helped in any way to ensure the
success of this program.

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY 20

9:30 AM-4:00 PM

STANDARDS AND VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS: A WORKSHOP
National Gallery of Art
Leader: Cathleen Whitehead, AAT
Cost: $10.00 Limit: 40

This workshop will address the role of standards and particularly the role of controlled vocabularies within automated visual resource managment and retrieval systems. The elements of cataloging information that require standard terminology will be identified and participants will receive an in-depth orientation to the recently published Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT). A demonstration of the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) AAT authority file will be provided. During the practical portion of the workshop, participants will have an opportunity to catalog slides, assigning AAT terms to within a MARC-compatible cataloging format.

1:00-3:00 PM

SLIDE MARKET: REVIEWS AND PREVIEWS
National Gallery of Art
Moderator: Norine Cashman, Brown University

pg. 10   "Quality, Documentation, and Service: What Do We Expect from Slide Vendors"
Norine Cashman, Brown University

pg. 11   "Recent and Forthcoming Slides of Art"
Andrea DesJardins, Harvard University

pg. 11   "Recent and Forthcoming Slides of Architecture"
Elizabeth A. Peck, Roger Williams College

WEDNESDAY,
FEBRUARY 20

2:30-4:30 PM

TOUR AND OPEN HOUSE RECEPTION
National Gallery Photo Lab, Photo Archives
and Slide Library

4:00-5:00 PM

DEMONSTRATION OF "ISABELLA"
Georgetown University
Academic Computer Center, Reiss Science Bldg

ISABELLA is a "user friendly" art history database project with the capability to display digitized images with the related text. The program is written in INGRES and is loaded onto the University's VAX 8700. If you are interested in attending the demonstration please call Bonita Billman, Slide Curator at 687-6944.

5:00-7:00 PM

VRA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING I
VRA Hospitality Suite, Omni Shoreham

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 21

8:00-9:15 AM
ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING
Executive Room, Omni Shoreham, West
A complimentary continental breakfast will be provided

10:30 AM-12:30 PM
DATAEASE TRAINING SEMINAR
Smithsonian Quadrangle

Chris Guziak, training representative for DATAEASE International, will present an indepth view of the database program DATAEASE. He will specifically address VRA user needs from first start-up to more sophisticated questions about advanced features. This is your opportunity to see a powerful database manager in action and to ask the expert those mystifying software questions.
Cost: $5.00 Limit: 25

10:30 AM-12:00 PM
TOUR OF NATIONAL ARCHIVES STILL PICTURE BRANCH AND CONSERVATION LAB
Limit: 30

12:30-2:00 PM
Lunch "on-your-own" at the Smithsonian

THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 21

2:00-4:00 PM
SHARED CATALOGING: DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES
Smithsonian Quadrangle
Moderator: Benjamin Kessler, Princeton University

The case for the use of the MARC format as a means for the shared cataloging of slides and photographs has been presented eloquently in a number of forums in the last few years, but many difficult issues remain to be resolved before this concept can become a feasible reality. Several members of our organization who have made initial forays into the sometimes daunting MARC environment will discuss hands-on experiences, visions for network implementation, and perceived obstacles to such implementation.

Panelists:
Rachel Allen, National Museum of American Art
James Bower, Getty Art History Information Program
Sara Jane Pearman, Cleveland Museum of Art
Maryly Snow, Univ. of California, Berkeley
Deirdre Stam, Catholic University
Respondent:
Eleanor Fink, Getty Art History Information Program

2:00-4:00 PM
TOUR OF "UNDERGROUND SMITHSONIAN" -
Photo and Slide Collections of the National Museum of African Art, Sackler/Freer Galleries and International Center

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

THURSDAY,
FEBRUARY 21

4:45-6:15 PM

VISUAL INFORMATION: PROBLEMS IN DOCUMENTING THE ARTIST'S WORK
CAA/VRA JOINT SESSION
Diplomat Room, Omni Shoreham

Session Chair: Carla Conrad Freeman, N.Y.S. College of Ceramics at Alfred University
Session Co-Chair: Jennifer Hehman, Herron School of Art

pg. 12   "When Does a Photographic Reproduction Become Something Other Than a Reproduction?"
Judy Natal, N.Y.S. College of Ceramics at Alfred University

pg. 13   "Towards Understanding Photography for Reproduction"
Melville D. McClean, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

pg. 15   "From Ted Turner to Madison Avenue: Computer Technology and the Integrity of the Visual Arts"
Tim Hawkins, Playboy Enterprises

pg. 17   "The Use of the Video in Documenting Artists' Work"
Dr. Anne Barclay Morgan, independent scholar, critic, producer, Gainesville, FL

pg. 18   "Slides Like Mine"
Linda Adele Goodine, Herron School of Art

6:00-8:00 PM

ANNUAL VRA RECEPTION
Honoring New Members and First-time Conference Attendees

Stanford in Washington Center
2661 Connecticut Avenue
Rockefeller Room

FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 22

8:00-9:15 AM
GRANTSMANSHIP FOR THE VISUAL RESOURCE CURATOR
Virginia Suite, Sheraton, Lobby level
Moderator: Margaret Webster, Cornell University

pg. 19   "How to Begin, An Overview"
Margaret Webster, Cornell University

pg. 20   "Is Doing Grants Like Doing Lunch"
Pat Molholt, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

pg. 21   "Applying to the National Endowment for the Humanities"
Jane A. Rosenberg, NEH

pg. 22   "Applying to the Kress Foundation"
Lisa Ackerman, Samuel H. Kress Foundation

10:00 AM-12:00 PM
TOUR OF TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES CENTER OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Hands-on exploration of state-of-the-art computer software, videodiscs, CD-ROM and videotapes from many companies and publishers. (Limit: 30)

PROGRAM OF EVENTS

FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY 22

12:00-1:30 PM
DUTCH-TREAT LUNCHES, in and around the renovated
Union Station

2:00-4:30 PM
ICONCLASS WORKSHOP
Capitol Room, Omni Shoreham
Leader: Dr. Catherine Gordon, Witt Computer Index,
Courtauld Institute of Art
Limit: 40 Cost: $5.00, includes a Workbook

2:00-4:00 PM
TOUR OF NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
Illustration Library, Explorer's Hall (Limit: 30)

SATURDAY,
FEBRUARY 23

9:00 AM-1:00 PM
VRA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING II
VRA Hospitality Suite, Omni Shoreham

SESSION ABSTRACTS

Session: **Slide Market News: Reviews and Previews**

What Do We Expect from Slide Vendors?
NORINE CASHMAN
Brown University

While projecting examples of both good and bad slides, I will explore the major aspects of quality: photographic techniques employed in shooting the original slides (lighting, framing, perspective correction, focus, etc.), production methods (color fidelity, film stability, contrast control, resolution, masking, etc.), and packaging options for delivering the slides to customers in undamaged condition. I will suggest ways in which documentation of slides might be improved, defining the essential components of identification and desirable optional components. Business practices of vendors will be discussed briefly, with attention given to those which are especially convenient and helpful to the customer. Finally, I will speak of the slide consumer's responsibility to be good customers, including the obligation to inform the producers and fellow consumers when slides fail to meet the standards of quality outlined in the *Slide Buyer's Guide*.

Session: **Slide Market News: Reviews and Previews**

Recent and Forthcoming Slides of Art
ANDREA DESJARDINS, Harvard University

Recent and Forthcoming Slides of Architecture
ELIZABETH A. PECK, Roger Williams College

We will each present examples of recent slide productions and describe some forthcoming projects to be undertaken by vendors. A list of all vendors mentioned, with addresses, will be provided as a handout. An effort will be made to include lesser known vendors whose work may be unfamiliar to the audience. In such cases, a general profile of the vendor will be offered, including scope of subjects covered, production methods, and business practices. The reviews will be evaluative as well as informational.

Following the presentation of papers, questions will be solicited and members of the audience will be encouraged to comment on the vendors reviewed, based on their own experiences.

Session: **Visual Information: Problems in Documenting the Artists' Work**

When Does a Photographic Reproduction Become Something
Other Than a Reproduction?
JUDY NATAL
Assistant Professor of Photography
New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University

There are two issues to be considered in the representation of
art through photography. The first issue is a theoretical one:
to dispel the persistent myth of photography as truth, a
cultural belief that the photograph is equivalent to reality. The
second issue is a practical one: to learn the craft of photogra-
phy well enough to render a fair representation of the original
art object without distorted interpretation. The reproduction of
a fine art photograph is a special problem because the
reproduction and the original are so easily confused. I will
illustrate these concerns with visual examples of my work
using early photomechanical processes.

Session: **Visual Information: Problems in Documenting
the Artists' Work**

Towards Understanding Photography for Reproduction
MELVILLE D. MCLEAN
Head of Collections Photography
Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Today's photomechanical processes create images unprece-
dented in their ubiquity, mobility, and affordability. Unfortu-
nately, these processes are often mystifying, with results that
can be disappointing in quality. Lost, distorted, and erroneous
visual information affect our interpretation and pleasure of
viewing the substituted image.

These problems are familiar to those who know what the
original work of art looks like and can compare second and
third generation reproductions with it. But this awareness by
comparision eludes most of those who will see the reproduc-
tions. In effect, the reproductions, for better and for worse,
represent the work of art for the majority of their audience.

Photographs of art can be evaluated in two basic ways. The
first key is authenticity. A successful photograph does not
betray our trust. Skilled lighting, color fidelity, texture, and
implied volume contribute to replicating the impact and
aesthetic enjoyment intrinsic to the original. Secondly, the
photographic image, which is itself reproducible, has to record
all of its detail using methods which minimize the loss and
deviation inherent in offset lithography. Fortunately, the
elements which enhance successful reproduction can be
identified. Indeed, discrimination is essential for quality to be
realized.

SESSION ABSTRACTS

By understanding the capabilities and limitations of both photographic and half-tone processes, it is possible to establish realistic standards and expectations. The links that bind the two processes are unavoidable even though they are frequently ignored. Nonetheless, each problem in a photograph will be amplified into more serious consequences during the processes of color separations and printing. Consequently, it is the responsibility of those of us who make photographs, choose photographs, and supervise their transformation into half-tone reproductions to protect the integrity of the original work of art. Clearly, prevention is the most effective cure. In the meantime, the reproduction of art need not be confusing, nor its results unanticipated.

Session: **Visual Information: Problems in Documenting the Artists' Work**

From Ted Turner to Madison Avenue: Computer Technology and the Integrity of the Visual Arts
TIM HAWKINS
Managing Photo Librarian
Playboy Enterprises, Inc.

The integrity of the visual arts are being challenged by rapid advances in computer imaging technology. These computer systems have the cabability to convert images from many media into digital files that may be transformed into subtly similar or grotesquely dissimilar reproductions. This technology has far reaching consequences for those of us who accept images as evidence of reality.

The colorizing of classic black and white films by Ted Turner is a good example of computer imaging technology. Although the content of these films remains true to the original there can be no question that the tone is drastically altered. Film directors and actors have testified to this effect before congressional committees yet the Supreme Court has upheld the right of artists to alter works and claim them as their own.

The Madison Avenue advertising agencies and publishing companies take the next step by altering the content of images. We may accept as fact that a well-known celebrity appeared wearing a T-shirt with the logo of a well-known corporation, so we also accept the implication that the celebrity endorses this corporation. Only within the inner sanctum of the corporate offices is the truth known that the entire event is nothing more than a computer-enhanced version of reality.

SESSION ABSTRACTS

The third step is appropriation. The artist begins with the work of another artist, scans the work into a computer system and manipulates it in a variety of ways. The end product is the new creation of the computer artist. This could be the *Mona Lisa* without the smile, the Monet without the haystack, the *Mona Lisa* with the haystack, or any other imaginable combination from a world of images.

Our concern, as curators, librarians or archivists, has to be to the integrity of the visual image as evidence. We experience the visual arts through reproductions and must be concerned that future generations could come to know the arts only in corrupted forms. Our mission must be to develop a methodology for recongnizing computer enhanced visuals and placing them in their proper place within the realm of art history. The danger is that the visual arts could become a universe of variations on a theme with little or no reference to the creator.

Session: **Visual Information: Problems in Documenting the Artists' Work**

The Use of the Video in Documenting Artists' Work
DR. ANNE BARCLAY MORGAN
Independent Scholar, Critic, Producer
Gainesville, FL

The advantages of video in documenting art, in particular kinetic and three-dimensional works, as well as in documenting the actions of the artist at work and the artist talking about the creative process, will be discussed in detail. Examples of successful use of video will be dealt with, comparing video, its expense, its accessibility, and its reception compared with other forms of documentation, and its power as a promotional tool.

In addition, portions of a new video program will be shown to illustrate some of the possibilites of the medium. It deals with contemporary installation art by artist collectives, documenting the process, the evolution of ideas, group dynamics, and interviews with the members of art groups from Eastern and Western Europe, Israel, and the United States at the "International Festival of Group Art" in Marseille, France in the fall of 1989. The tape, entitled *International Phenomenon of Group Art* premiered in October 1990, and will therefore be an up-to-date example of video documentation.

SESSION ABSTRACTS

Session: **Visual Information: Problems in Documenting the Artists' Work**

Slides Like Mine
LINDA ADELE GOODINE
Assistant Professor of Photography
Herron School of Art, Indiana University

Let us compare the reproduction of an art object with the written translation of a poem from its native tongue. The task of the translator can become the essential quality of certain works. As Walter Benjamin so aptly pointed out, "there is no muse of philosophy, nor is there one of translations." Therefore, the photographer given the task of photographing a piece of art calls in her highest technical skills and beyond that waits illusion. This reproduction must serve as the afterlife of the art object or event. The history of this art object carries with it the very definition of the artist and, in a sense, her immortality.

Finally, we come to a divergence in this comparison. Whereas in translations "the lower the quality and distinction of its language, the larger the extent to which it is information, the less fertile a field is it for translation, until the utter preponderance of content, far from being the lever for a translation of distinctive mode, renders it impossible. The higher the level of a work, the more does it remain translatable even if its meaning is touched upon only fleetingly," as stated by Walter Benjamin.

We have all seen inferior works of art shown in slide form take home the prize.

Session: **Grantsmanship and the Visual Resource Curator**

How to Begin: An Overview
MARGARET WEBSTER
Slide Librarian, College of Architecture, Art & Planning
Cornell University

Grant writing and fund raising are becoming necessary job components for successful visual resources curators. As professionals we need to know how to approach grant writing in an effective manner, how to discover which grants are available, and how to use those resources which are available to us locally in our own institutions. This paper will discuss the types of grants which might be relevant, the local resources which might be of help, and the implications of this activity on our profession. My recent attempts at grant writing for the slide library in the College of Architecture, Art & Planning will be used as a case study.

SESSION ABSTRACTS

Session: **Grantsmanship and the Visual Resource Curator**

Is Doing Grants Like Doing Lunch
PAT MOLHOLT
Acting Director, Institute Library
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

There are a lot of activities we are expected to engage in as professionals, and the range of those activities seems to vary in direct proportion to the number of staff we have (or don't have.) The fewer the staff, the more things we're expected to be master of. In this context, grant writing is often seen as an activity of last resort, something we don't have time for, or something we wish we had someone to do for us, and so forth. In fact, no one can do it as well as you can, and it can be as much fun as it is work. This talk will explore issues of choosing the right grants to apply for, garnering support within your own organization, organizing the work, and doing it. It is like going to lunch— the more you do it, the more it can add to your girth or your operating budget.

Session: **Grantsmanship and the Visual Resource Curator**

Applying to the National Endowment for the Humanities
JANE A. ROSENBERG
Assistant Director, Reference Materials
National Endowment for the Humanities

Successful fund-raising rests on matching a well-crafted proposal with an appropriate funding source. Each funding agency has a different set of interests and a distinct agenda. By statute, the National Endowment for the Humanities is charged with promoting progress and scholarship in humanities disciplines. Within the Endowment, the Division of Research Programs supports advanced research that will strengthen the intellectual foundations of the humanities. The Division's Reference materials program supports the organization of collections and the preparation of reference materials.

NEH staff members provide advice on the eligibility and competitiveness of proposals. They can also review draft proposals. Funding recommendations, however, are made through a peer review process, and the final decisions are made by the Chairman of the Endowment. Preparation of an effective NEH application involves attention to the purposes of the program, observance of NEH guidelines, and consideration of the audience for both the proposal and the results of the project.

SESSION ABSTRACTS

Session: **Grantsmanship and the Visual Resource Curator**

Applying to the Kress Foundation
LISA ACKERMAN
Chief Administrative Officer
Samuel H. Kress Foundation

The following topics will be discussed:

1.An overview of the Kress Foundation's grant programs
2.The importance of the development of scholarly resources to the Foundation.
3.The function that the Foundation believes projects such as the creation of photographic material, the dissemination of slide sets, and the cataloging of photographic/archival collections serve for scholars and students.
4.Examples of projects recently sponsored by the Foundation include: University of Illinois, Ciocognara Library Microfiche Project; Ohio State University, Huntington Photographic Archive; University of Michigan, ACSAA Slide Set Project

Visual Resources Association

Incorporated as a General Not For Profit Corporation in the State of Missouri, under No. N00028029
13 August 1982

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Visual Resources Association Journal, Joy A. Blouin, The University of Michigan
Visual Resources: An International Journal of Documentation, Helene E. Roberts, Harvard University, and Christine L. Sundt, University of Oregon

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1991 PROGRAM (Washington)

General Coordinator: Lise Hawkos, Arizona State University
Local Arrangements: Ira Bartfield, National Gallery of Art,
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Philbrick, National Gallery of Art; Adele Stevens, National
Gallery of Art; Bill Taylor, National Gallery of Art; Nancy
Yeide, National Gallery of Art;

Applications for membership in the Visual Resources Asso-
ciation will be available at the Registration Table during the
conference. Annual membership dues for 1991 are $40.00,
$55.00 outside North America. Contributing membership is
$80-$299. Patron membership is $300 and above. To
become a member, send your check (U.S. currency only) to
Christine Hilker, Treasurer, University of Arkansas, 209 Vol
Walker, School of Architecture, Fayetteville, AR 72701.
Membership includes a subscription to the VRA Journal. Visit
our booth in the Exhibits area for information about other
VRA publications.

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