

VRA Conference San Antonio 2023

E Event **M** Meeting **R** Registration **S** Session **C** Social **T** Tour

SEPTEMBER 25 • MONDAY

10:00am – 3:00pm **M** **VRA Board Meeting I** TBA
Closed meeting of the VRA Board

4:00pm – 6:00pm **R** **Registration** Hotel Valencia lobby

SEPTEMBER 26 • TUESDAY

8:00am – 11:59pm **R** **Registration** Hotel Valencia lobby

9:00am – 10:00am **S** **Handle with Care** Hotel Valencia - Verona

Moderator and Speaker: Xiaoli Ma

Speakers: Barbara Elam, Allan Kohl, Sarah Byrd

Pedagogical collections offer hands-on, experiential approaches to learning that can be of great value to students. Also known as teaching collections, these resources, ranging from study collections to object archives to materials libraries, are often maintained by universities. Students are not only allowed but encouraged to touch, handle, and closely examine objects in pedagogical collections, in contrast to museums where similar access is often restricted to professional art handlers and conservators. Stewards of these collections come from a variety of backgrounds and have different areas of expertise. It is not unusual for visual resources professionals, librarians, and archivists to assume the role of overseeing pedagogical collections, whether or not they have prior experience as collections managers or registrars. Collections often include items with damage and deterioration that frequent usage can exacerbate. In fact, objects with major condition issues are generally deemed “suitable for pedagogical purposes only.” How do pedagogical collections managers care for these items and ensure their use for future generations? Should museum best practices provide models for how these collections are managed? Is the preservation and conservation of these objects important (or even feasible)? This session will explore the challenges of overseeing object collections outside traditional museum settings. Discussions will include an examination of practice-based support, an overview of study collections in a historical context, and an exploration of university collections' current, and varied, practices. Speakers will share anecdotes about their experiences as behind-the-scenes managers, teachers, and curators working with collections of fashion, textiles, decorative arts, and books.

This session is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

10:00am – 10:15am **C** **Break** Hotel Valencia

This break is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

Moderator and Speaker: Xiaoli Ma

Speakers: Sara Schumacher, Millicent Fullmer, Lilli Keany, Cassie Tanks

This is a session built from individual papers submitted by members and professionals. There are some thematic similarities between some of the papers in this session, but they all were created independently and stand on their own merit. The papers to be presented in this session are:

1) Unsettling Collections: Bias in the Visual Canon (Sara Schumacher and Millicent Fullmer)

This paper will cover the results of a research study looking at visual resources professionals' perceptions of the visual canon at their institutions and their actions confronting biases in their visual collections. This research is innovative because the "visual canon" as a concept is often evoked but rarely defined, and there has not been research into perceptions and practices that span different types of cultural heritage institutions. The researchers seek to focus on the role of the visual resources professional as a potential change-maker in confronting bias and transforming the "visual canon." In our presentation, we will discuss the analysis of our survey and interviews around three key research questions: What barriers do visual resources professionals perceive in remedying the biases in the visual canon? What authorities, past and present, do they identify in shaping the visual canon? How do they approach teaching users to identify and critically confront these issues? We will highlight trends as well as unique concerns and solutions from our research participants and engage our audience with how these issues impact their own collections, policies, and instruction.

2) Description in practice: thoughtful description of problematic images (Lilli Keaney)

In an effort to diversify the holdings at Houghton Library, the Library has acquired a number of collections with visual material documenting the lives of people of color. One of these collections included photographs with racist imagery and language. It quickly became apparent that the collection would require special consideration when describing so as not to continue harm, but also provide the means of discovery for researchers. This presentation will discuss the planning, processing, and description workflow from acquisition to a published finding aid with item level metadata of a problematic image collection. It will outline the decisions made and the resources used to apply thoughtful description practices.

This session will provide attendees with a workflow on how to approach problematic image collections and show how it has been used in practice.

3) "A picture is worth a thousand places": Mapping images in digital humanities and critical archiving work (Cassie Tanks)

The following email arrived from an undergraduate collaborator late one evening:

"Subject line: "HELP!"

I need your help. I know Professor wanted us to write about the Harlem Hellfighters in South Carolina but I really want to include photos of the segregated parades, Paris, and how it's part of the Red Summer in South Carolina. Is that ok?

Thank you!"

What evidence of the power of collaborative digital humanities projects driven by critical use of visual resources. This student had no prior DH experience but over the course of a semester she began making critical connections of how space, place, power, and history can be explored through images.

"A picture is worth a thousand maps" explores the methods used by "After the War," a public DH project that uplifts the experiences of Black veterans of the U.S. military and other veterans-of-color through archival materials to critically map images to facilitate a more nuanced view of these histories. Student collaborators who have contributed to the interactive process of this project will reflect on how they put theory into practice and what they learned in the process.

From mapping enlistment cards and to interviews about long ignored historical markers, the value of the spatiality of images will emerge. In all, drawing on the words of Alanna Prince and Cara Marta Messina- that Black DH provides a framework for "how we might all work together to uplift each other"- this presentation argues that visually driven projects are not just about product, but about process."

This presentation emphasizes the importance of "intergenerational" work in academia, public methods, and transdisciplinary methods to create digital humanities projects and digital project archive exhibits for the public. Because myself and my collaborators do not have a technical background, we can offer an accessible view into doing this kind of work. Additionally, attendees can hear how this project is attempting to challenge the "whiteness" of digital work and, hopefully, consider how they may be able to do so at their institutions.

This session generously sponsored by Artstor/JSTOR

In this session Andreas Knab from vrcHost will share updates made to the MDID3 application over the past year. Topics for discussion include software and hardware requirements, installation issues, best practices, system integration, custom application development, etc. This informative session is open to anyone using or interested in MDID, and everybody is encouraged to share about their experiences and use of MDID at their institutions. Adequate time for a question and answer period will follow the short presentation.

Please feel free to bring and eat your lunch during the session!

This event is generously sponsored by vrcHost

11:45am – 12:15pm

T Institute of Texan Cultures tour

UTSA Institute of Texas Cultures (801 E César E. Chávez Blvd, San Antonio, TX 78205)

Join us for a tour of University of Texas San Antonio's cultural heritage museum, the Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC), located in downtown San Antonio at HemisFair Park. Photographs Curator Tom Shelton and Library Assistant, Carlos Cortez will lead participants on a tour of the museum's exhibit floor which features rich collections of photographs (and artifacts) that document the state's diverse communities and ethnic groups.

The tour length will be approximately 30 minutes, but the participants can stay longer if they want to look at areas not covered on the tour.

The tour will meet Photographs Curator Tom Shelton and Library Assistant Carlos Cortez outside the front entrance of ITC promptly at 11:45 AM on Tuesday, Sept 26. Participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from ITC. If walking, allow 25 minutes for travel. Please note, ITC is closed to the public on Tuesday and Wednesday so the free parking lot directly in front of the building will be closed. ITC can be accessed from E. Cesar Chavez Blvd. Proceed across the bridge behind the flags. Here is a link to the HemisFair campus map.

UTSA Special Collections holds more than three million photographs which originate from a multitude of sources, including commercial photographers, image-rich portions of personal papers and organizational records and several photographic archives that document the university's history. Holdings include two extensive collections from local newspapers including the San Antonio Express News and the San Antonio Light.

UTSA's photographic collections cover a broad range of topics including: historic views of San Antonio, small towns in South and Central Texas, ethnic communities and culture, daily life, street scenes, family photographs, events, architecture, and UTSA history.

You can peruse more detailed information by visiting the Photographs Collection webpage.

12:30pm – 1:30pm

C Lunch (on your own)

TBA

1:30pm – 2:30pm

S Blended Session: Archives Tools and Techniques

Hotel Valencia - Verona

Moderator and Speaker: Allan Kohl

Speakers: Marcia McIntosh, Christina Kellum, Annalise Welte, Maureen Burns, Lavinia Ciuffa

This is a session built from individual papers submitted by members and professionals. There are some thematic similarities between some of the papers in this session, but they all were created independently and stand on their own merit. The papers to be presented in this session include:

1) Breaking down the Book: Literature Review and Practice of Book Digitization Methods (Marcia McIntosh and Christina Kellum)

With a large number of books flowing into their department, one digital projects lab decided to conduct research on the methods of scanning using the equipment and software available to them. Lab staff will report on their findings and what factors went into deciding what type of books get scanned where and how. Results will include changes to local digitizing standards and clarified workflows based on the types of books to be scanned.

2) IIF as an Instruction Tool (Annalise Welte)

IIF (International Image Interoperability Framework) creates larger scale access and approaches to images across institutions created within their universal standards. There are several types of "viewers" created that serve as the discovery layer for these images. Different tools and options are available within each of these viewers. IIF can be used as a resource that can greatly benefit any user working with visual material. This paper seeks to give a foundational explanation of what it is, how to use it, and what makes this a powerful tool for educators, librarians, and students. Examples will provide clear use cases for instruction with a focus on books and art resources across several institutions internationally. In these examples three popular IIF viewers will be explained, including Mirador, Seadragon, and Universal Viewer. There will also be discussion on the strategies of harnessing technology like IIF for remote and virtual instructional spaces.

3) Interactive Topography with IIF: Open Access to Photographs from the Ernest Nash Fototeca Unione Collection (Maureen Burns and Lavinia Ciuffa)

The Ernest Nash collection documents ancient Roman architecture in pre- and post-World War II Italy. What made Nash's work significant, beyond capturing the present state of the ancient Roman monuments at a volatile historical moment, was the primacy of the topographical photography and the systematic order he brought to this subject. The American Academy's Photographic Archive contributed Nash's images to an open access, interactive website called the "Urban Legacy of Ancient Rome." It reveals the city in stunning detail and uses geo-referencing to provide the viewer with a better understanding of the overall contextual and spatial logic. These Nash images and metadata are also IIF compatible. As the Academy continues to digitize and describe the full collection of about 30,000 images, thanks to the generous support of the Kress Foundation, a new partnership has developed with Archivision and vrcHost. Current high quality digital photographs of the same ancient Roman monuments are being added to compare with the historical images documenting architectural changes--whether conserved, restored, altered, reconstructed, re-sited or destroyed. This presentation will provide a progress report about what it takes to move new digital photography into IIF and the various tools available for close examination and presentation. Finding ways to provide ready access and juxtapose historic and contemporary photography online, builds upon the legacy of Nash's quality curation and scholarship to create 21st century, accessible, online educational resources of great interest and utility to scholars, students, and a wide audience of ancient Roman enthusiasts.

This session is generously sponsored by VrcHost

2:30pm – 2:45pm

C Break

Hotel Valencia

This break is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

Moderator and Speaker: Margaret McKee

Speakers: Courtney Mumma, Morgan Gieringer, Kenneth Stewart

In this session representatives from Texas-based visual collections will provide an overview of the collections they work with that are unique to the state and give attendees a window into the projects they are undertaking to make these local collections accessible to their community and beyond.

Courtney Mumma, Deputy Director for the Texas Digital Library (TDL), will share how TDL, a collaborative consortium based in Texas and rooted in higher education, builds capacity among its membership for ensuring equitable access to and preservation of digital content of value to research, instruction, cultural heritage, and institutional memory. TDL represents large and small institutions from every region of Texas and has expanded to institutions outside the state. Learn how TDL is helping these institutions share and preserve unique digital collections through consortial services including DSpace digital repositories, DPLA aggregation, and DuraCloud digital preservation storage.

Morgan Gieringer, Head of Special Collections at the University of North Texas, will present the paper "Mod City: A photo archive of mid-century Dallas architecture and design." Husband and wife photographers John Rogers and Gerogette de Bruchard were active in Dallas from the 1940s to the 90s. Their work in commercial, architectural, and portrait photography captured a major period of artistic development and innovation in Dallas, Texas, and in American culture and politics. The archive, which includes over 300,000 unique images, has been heavily utilized as a resource for images from this time period. Additionally, the archive has helped uncover the artistic work of a previously unrecognized Korean-American designer named Alma Shon. Shon designed elaborate gift wrapping designs for Neiman-Marcus. Her designs incorporate "devices," such as animals and people made from paper and ribbon that enhance the gift wrapping. This paper makes a case for preserving commercial photography and the unexpected use of commercial photography driving additional large-scale digitization of the collection.

Kenneth Stewart, Archivist at the San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum (SAAACAM), will take us on the journey of founding a non-profit that seeks to collect, preserve and share the cultural heritage of African Americans in San Antonio and the surrounding region through a community-based digital archive. SAAACAM, founded in 2017, is working in a grassroots effort to uncover the legacy that reaches the founding of Texas, as a republic. Learn how the organization has partnered strategically with Texas A&M University-San Antonio to create a growing digital archive and gotten the community involved in research that fills gaps in the historical record.

This break is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

Speakers: Melissa Gohlke

A historical record that focuses on white, heteronormative society and events obscures many facets of San Antonio history. Peel back the veneer of normalcy and one can find rich, diverse, and unexpected strands of the city's past. From female impersonators of the early 1900s to queer life in derelict spaces during the 1960s and finally, gay and lesbian bar culture of the 1970s and beyond, the hidden threads of San Antonio's history reveal themselves. In this presentation, LGBTQ Historian Melissa Gohlke explores these hidden histories and stitches together an alternative interpretation of the city's historical narrative by examining a wealth of primary sources found in archives and personal collections.

This Keynote session is generously sponsored by Artstor & JSTOR

The Welcome Reception gives attendees a chance to mingle and enjoy some food and beverages. This is an event where you can see colleagues you haven't seen in over a year. You can also meet new colleagues and help welcome those who are new to the organization. It doesn't matter if this is your first or fifteenth conference, this is a great opportunity to meet other like-minded professionals. Come and join your fellow VRA-ers to greet old friends and make new connections!

This event is generously sponsored by vrcHost

SEPTEMBER 27 • WEDNESDAY

Please note, this event will not be live streamed.

Moderator and Speaker: Ann McShane

Speakers: Pamela Caussy, Binky Lush

This is a session built from individual papers submitted by members and professionals. There are some thematic similarities between some of the papers in this session, but they all were created independently and stand on their own merit. Papers to be presented in this session include:

1) Inclusive curating within exclusive visual collections: challenges of implementing DEI collection development initiatives (Pamela Caussy)

In recent years, the Faculty of Fine Arts at a Canadian University has been actively working to decolonize their curricula, and the university's visual resource collections also wanted to provide better support for more inclusive pedagogy. Therefore, an annual Curator-in-Residence program was created in 2020, inviting scholars to curate a collection of works created by Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) filmmakers and artists. The program's goal was to expand collection development and provide a learning opportunity for the fine arts faculty. Historically, collection development for films and images was prioritized by curriculum requests from professors, and a limited budget left little room to expand on research and collection development. With support from the Faculty of Fine Arts, the program was off to a good start; however, we met challenges along the way as some artists were reluctant to share their works with an academic institution, and funding started to trickle. This presentation will give an overview of the Curator-in-Residence program, address efforts to diversify visual resource collections, and expand on the outcomes of the program, which is now in its third year. It will explain how the program was able to secure additional funding and promote the work done by the curators while providing tips for those thinking of creating similar projects.

2) Amplifying Access to Feminist Art: Cross-institutional Collaboration to Create the Judy Chicago Research Portal (Binky Lush)

This paper presents a case study in hosting and developing an online portal aggregating the archives of Judy Chicago, a prominent contemporary feminist artist, held by multiple institutions. The project represents a model for collaboration, iterative development, and improving access and discoverability for both feminist art archives and for collections at smaller institutions. The portal was planned, designed, and developed at Penn State, which coordinated input and contributions from four other institutions (Harvard's Schlesinger Library, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Nevada Museum of Art, and the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation) as well as the artist's studio and Through the Flower, a foundation established by Chicago. Representing Penn State, the presenters will share lessons learned in this complex, multi-year project working with many disparate participants and moving parts.

This break is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

Join us for a tour of University of Texas San Antonio's cultural heritage museum, the Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC), located in downtown San Antonio at HemisFair Park. Photographs Curator Tom Shelton and Library Assistant, Carlos Cortez will lead participants on a tour of the museum's exhibit floor which features rich collections of photographs (and artifacts) that document the state's diverse communities and ethnic groups.

The tour length will be approximately 30 minutes, but the participants can stay longer if they want to look at areas not covered on the tour.

The tour will meet Photographs Curator Tom Shelton and Library Assistant Carlos Cortez outside the entrance of ITC promptly at 10 AM Wednesday, Sept 27. Participants are responsible for their own transportation to and from ITC. If walking, allow 25 minutes for travel. Please note, ITC is closed to the public on Tuesday and Wednesday so the free parking lot directly in front of the building will be closed. ITC can be accessed from E. Cesar Chavez Blvd. Proceed across the bridge behind the flags. Here is a link to the HemisFair campus map. ITC can be accessed from E. Cesar Chavez Blvd. Proceed across the bridge behind the flags. Here is a link to the HemisFair campus map.

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You can peruse more detailed information by visiting the Photographs Collection webpage.

10:15am – 11:15am

S Blended Session: Collections Management in Fashion and Media

Hotel Valencia - Verona

Speakers: Samantha Levin, Joseph Anderson, Wen Nie Ng

This is a session built from individual papers submitted by members and professionals. There are some thematic similarities between some of the papers in this session, but they all were created independently and stand on their own merit.

1) The Growth of a Homegrown Digital Media Repository (Samantha Levin and Joseph Anderson)

This paper presents a long-term project that is culminating in a multi-faceted digital media repository created largely from open source software. A milestone of this project was reached last Fall 2022 when a large collection of student theses were published, which showcases design and visual art in a visually stimulating way that meets the needs of a design school. The repository will soon publish still imagery and video created by students and faculty, both current and legacy. It will also publish visual media digitized from its collection of rare publications held by its Special Collections unit. <https://institutionalrepository.fitnyc.edu/page/home> In this presentation we discuss the planning, development, and problem solving steps related to the growth of the repository, which both fulfills digital preservation standards and delivers fashion- and design-related content to the FIT community. We also hope to learn from attendees through discussion and feedback. Subjects covered include digital preservation, metadata, controlled vocabularies, file formats, copyright concerns, file storage, migration, workflows and time management, costs, maintenance and sustainability. We also review our use of Archivematica for digital preservation, Omeka-S for delivery and access, and the Amazon cloud for storage. We discuss the challenges we have yet to meet, such as getting a better handle on rights issues, additional digital file formats, fully integrating linked open data, and more.

2) Comparative Study and Expansion of Metadata Standards for Historic Fashion Collections (Wen Nie Ng)

The goal of the paper is to enhance the metadata standard of fashion collections by expanding the controlled vocabulary and metadata elements for Costume Core, a metadata schema designed specifically for fashion artifacts. Various techniques are employed to achieve this goal, including identifying new descriptors using word embedding similarity measurements and adding new descriptive terms for precise artifact descriptions to use when re-cataloging a university fashion collection in Costume Core. The paper also provides a sneak peek of the Model Output Confirmative Helper Application, which simplifies the vocabulary review process. Additionally, a survey was conducted to collect insights into how other fashion professionals use metadata when describing dress artifacts. The survey results reveal 1) commonly used metadata standards in the historic fashion domain; 2) sample metadata respondents use; and 3) partial potential metadata that can be appended to Costume Core, which is relevant to Virginia Tech's Oris Glisson Historic Costume and Textile Collection. The expanded Costume Core resulting from the project offers a more comprehensive way of describing fashion collection holdings/artifacts. It has the potential to be adopted by the fashion collections to produce metadata that is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable.

11:15am – 11:30am

C Break

Hotel Valencia

This break is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

11:30am – 12:30pm

S Post-Custodial Archiving

Hotel Valencia - Verona

Moderator and Speaker: Maureen Burns

Speakers: Christina Bleyer, Amanda Matava

Post-custodial archival praxis was born out of a critique of traditional archival practices coupled with the capacity that digital technology opens for archives. This session presents a more inclusive and equitable approach to collecting archives through an examination of the de-colonial nature of a deeply rooted post-custodial archival praxis. The Watkinson Library at Trinity College has recently partnered with the Lloyd Best Institute of the Caribbean to digitize their archives "post-custodially." Through this unique digitization project, we show how a post-custodial praxis can be implemented in smaller institutions. In addition to explaining the theory behind our practice, we explore lessons learned, relationship building, metadata collection, training, workflows, grants, and more.

12:30pm – 1:45pm

C Lunch (on your own)

TBA

1:45pm – 2:30pm

S Blended Session: New Frontiers in Visual Resources

Hotel Valencia - Verona

Speakers: Meghan Rubenstein, Kate Leonard, Allie Craver

This is a session built from individual papers submitted by members and professionals. There are some thematic similarities between some of the papers in this session, but they all were created independently and stand on their own merit. Papers to be presented in this session include:

1) Personal Archiving for Undergraduate Students (Meghan Rubenstein and Kate Leonard)

The Art Department at Colorado College is piloting a Personal Archiving program in select undergraduate studio courses that combines visual and digital literacy instruction with personal reflection and professional development. Meghan Rubenstein, Curator of Visual Resources, and Kate Leonard, Professor of Art, will discuss the drive behind this initiative to develop student competencies within a liberal arts setting. We will share our ongoing iterative process as well as select student activities and learning outcomes that may be adopted to various institutions.

2) Copyright or Wrong: New United States Small Claims System May Help Decide (Allie Craver)

The focus of this paper will center on the recent development of a U.S. small claims system for copyright. Congress passed the Copyright Alternative in Small-Claims Enforcement (CASE Act) in 2020, which established a Copyright Claims Board (CCB) to resolve disputes outside the federal court system. By providing a brief overview of the CCB, the nature of claims capable of being brought, and the ability to opt-out of the system should federal litigation be preferred, this writing will analyze the pros and cons of the new tribunal. Federal and state government entities are excluded from any CCB action and libraries and archives can preemptively opt-out of having claims brought against them. The CCB is symbolic of the Copyright Office's digital advancements and upcoming significant decisions: the Supreme Court will determine the scope of fair use and its transformative test (*Warhol v. Goldsmith*), a congressional study was initiated on NFTs and intellectual property, and a revision to the outdated DMCA (1998) may occur soon. These latter topics could be expounded on should time permit.

This Session generously sponsored by Artstor/JSTOR

2:30pm – 2:45pm

C Break

Hotel Valencia

This break is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

2:45pm – 3:45pm **S Engaging New Technologies** Hotel Valencia - Verona
Moderator and Speaker: Beth Haas
Speakers: Jennifer Kniesch, John Trendler, Todd Arsenault
Trying to keep up with all of the new and emerging technologies is daunting. Successfully implementing new technologies to increase efficiency and workplace fun can be an even bigger commitment. This fast-paced, lightning talk style session will demonstrate a rich variety of new technologies, emphasizing concrete examples that show engagement in professional contexts. Utilizing the expertise of energetic, tech-savvy presenters, this session will introduce new tools as well as creative uses of more established technologies, discovering them and empowering you to further investigate on your own. You'll leave the session thinking of ways to introduce and encourage use of new technologies among faculty, colleagues and patrons, as well as in your own work environment. This session is endorsed by the VRA Education Committee.

3:45pm – 4:00pm **C Break** MajesticTheater, 3rd floor (224 E Houston St, San Antonio, TX 78205)
This break is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

4:00pm – 4:45pm **S Challenges and Censorship to Intellectual and Artistic Freedoms** Hotel Valencia - Verona
Moderator and Speaker: Sara Schumacher
Speakers: Scott Gage, Dacari Lambert, Troy Hoyles
The last few years have seen a shocking increase in the instances of books, ideas, art and imagery being challenged, banned, or removed across the nation, and Texas has been an epicenter for many of these conflicts. As visual media professions, what do you need to know when faced with challenges to our collections, pushback on harmful language statements, and resistance to updating pejorative terminology?

This panel features professionals in libraries and higher education that will discuss the impacts on groups and communities, preparing for challenges, and what you can do even if you live in states with less restrictive laws. This session will utilize Google Jamboard to allow for anonymous virtual and in person questions and idea sharing.

Resources:
Session Jamboard: <https://bit.ly/vracensor>
Challenges and Censorship to Intellectual and Artistic Freedoms In the News Google Doc: bit.ly/vrachallenge

4:45pm – 5:00pm **C Break** Hotel Valencia
This break is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

5:00pm – 6:00pm **E VRA Organizational Awards and Recognition event** Hotel Valencia - Verona
Moderator and Speaker: Marcia Focht
The VRA Organizational Awards and recognition event is a special highlight of every annual Visual Resources Association conference. This is the organizations opportunity to honor individuals or teams of information professionals for distinguished achievements or outstanding career contributions. This event shines a light on leading-edge efforts and accomplishments in the educational, cultural heritage and commercial image management environments. It potentially includes the VRA Distinguished Service Award, the Nancy DeLaurier Award, the Honorary Life Members Award and the new vrcHost Membership Awards. These are bestowed to acknowledge and celebrate the highest achievements in the visual resources profession. The awards ceremony is open to all members and conference attendees.

SEPTEMBER 28 • THURSDAY

8:00am – 9:00am **E Leadership Breakfast** Hotel Valencia - Siena
This event is by invitation only. Please note, this event will not be live streamed.

8:00am – 3:00pm **R Registration** Hotel Valencia lobby

9:00am – 10:00am **S Diligent Data: Promoting Equity, Accountability, and Engagement through Flexible Cataloging Structures in Digital Collections** Hotel Valencia - Verona
Speakers: Alison Verplaetse, Lori Goldstein
The Public Art Archive (PAA) is a free, continually growing, online database of completed public artworks throughout the US and abroad. In our mission to make public art more public, we are interested in advocating for digital collection spaces to be sites of equity and advocacy, as well as places to engage audiences of all kinds in the public art world. In this session, we will explore the ways PAA has evolved in its cataloging and public engagement methods, placing our archival practice at the convergence point of authoritative research database, activation portal for advocacy and accountability within the field, and browsable site of discovery and exploration for all audiences. In collaboration with our technology partner, CollectionSpace, and public art organizations across the country, PAA is working toward more flexible, responsive cataloging structures that allow for greater opportunities to analyze, advocate, (re)discover, and (re)imagine the power of digital collections. These practices allow PAA to simultaneously provide opportunities for artists and organizations to document their works for field visibility, research, and journalism while attracting general audiences who may have little background in public art nor interest in structured data. With thoughtful consideration, digital platforms can illuminate public art collections as dynamic engagement tools with the potential to activate public agency and incite positive change in public space. Our presentation will outline key areas where PAA has implemented more flexible, equitable data practices to promote access, engagement, and accountability between public art collections, their administrators, and their wider communities.

10:00am – 10:15am **C Break** Hotel Valencia
This break is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

Moderator and Speaker: Emily Leon

Speakers: Otto Luna, Sarah Beck, Andrew Maurer, Jon Cartledge, Amy McKenna, Joe Favini

3D technologies are increasingly being used in the classroom to provide students with new ways of engaging with course content. For example, 3D scanning and photogrammetry are being employed to create digital models of sculptures, architectural structures, and other artworks or objects. These digital models can then be printed in 3D to create physical replicas that can be studied and analyzed in detail by students. Professors are also beginning to use Virtual Reality (VR) to create immersive experiences for students that allow them to explore virtual environments and interact with artworks and material culture in new ways. For instance, students can use VR headsets to "visit" museums and galleries around the world and examine objects up close, or they can explore virtual reconstructions of historical sites or architectural structures. Digital technologies can also be utilized to breathe new life into historic, 3D materials such as stereographs. While this session will primarily focus on case studies in the visual arts, speakers will also discuss potential collaborations with the sciences. The panel participants will discuss their experiences collaborating with faculty who have introduced 3D technologies in their teaching and research. Otto Luna (University of New Hampshire) will discuss the use of 3D scanning and printing to teach students about polychromy in ancient sculpture. Sarah Beck (Lafayette College) will describe her contributions to "Zeuxis VR," a digital initiative focused on the creation of 3D models of cultural heritage sites to be used in teaching. Andrew Maurer and Jon Cartledge (Smith College) will talk about their department's collaborative work on the creation of a hybrid desktop/VR platform for creating richly annotated virtual tours of historical spaces. Amy McKenna (Williams College) will discuss her project that uses Photoshop and cardboard 3D glasses to recreate the 19th-century spectacle of a historic glass stereo collection. Joe Favini (Williams College) will speak about using virtual reality to view immersive photographic panoramas from 360Cities.net's world-spanning database of historical sites.

This session is endorsed by the VRA Education Committee

This session is generously sponsored by Artstor/JSTOR

This break is generously sponsored by Gallery Systems

Speakers: Elisabeth Narkin, Mark Pompelia, John J. Taormina

This session seeks to highlight the evolving field of visual resources in the 21st century with an emphasis on how image collections can be developed for research in art and architectural history, museum and library collections, and the digital humanities. Initially the transition from analog to digital images most often involved institutional image databases to support teaching in the classroom. Using what was learned from those early ventures, image databases can now take their place as powerful research tools, especially as methodologies unique to the growing field of digital humanities are incorporated into arts and humanities disciplines. This session will include case studies from multiple institutions about image databases that have been created/are being created for specific research purposes. The image database presentations will emphasize specific projects, highlight and make available important collections for institutional or public access, or aggregate disparate collections from within one institution or from different institutions and collections. Two of the desired outcomes of image databases today are that they are public facing and provide access to visual materials that otherwise would not be available, especially to the general public, either via one institution or from multiple collections. Rich metadata, well curated images, and ease of use become even more important for such research tools, especially for those who are working with visual materials for the first time; for example, those who are coming from non-visual humanities disciplines.

1) Database as Discovery: Clarence Ward's Photographs of Medieval French Architecture - Elisabeth Narkin
The Clarence Ward Archive at the National Gallery of Art's Department of Library Image Collections includes over 4,500 photographs, negatives, and digital files documenting primarily medieval French architecture in the early twentieth century. Originating at Oberlin College and with a sojourn at Duke University, the life story of the collection centers on its value as an extraordinary source for French architecture in the era before WWII. This paper will explore the Ward Archive's current existence in two image databases; ARTStor and the National Gallery Library's catalogue. In analyzing the benefits and drawbacks of these two systems, this case study will discuss successive campaigns to make the collection accessible to researchers through printing and digitization and poses the question of how databases can continue to help advance the utility of these photographs amidst a growth in online research and a decline in the teaching of medieval art history in the academy.

2) Material Order: A Discovery Group, Shared Catalog, and Research Platform for Materials Collections - Mark Pompelia

Material Order is an academic consortium of material sample collections (including wood, metal, glass, ceramic, polymers, plastics, textiles, bio-materials, etc.—any material that might be used in or considered for art, architecture, and design disciplines) founded by the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University and Fleet Library at Rhode Island School of Design and now comprising several more institutions in the US. It provides a community-based approach to management and access to material collections utilizing and developing standards and best practices. Material Order created the Materials Profile that serves as a shared cataloging tool on the LYRASIS CollectionSpace platform and can be further developed as the different needs of consortium members are identified. Open Web searching across all collections occurs via a front-end discovery portal built with Wordpress at materialorder.org.

The Material Order project was born from the acknowledgment that resource sharing and collaborative catalogs are the most promising approach to exploration and implementation. It was always the intent, now actualized, for partner institutions with different mission and scope to compel the project to consider and accommodate criteria such as material health ecologies, fabrication possibilities, and overlap into adjacent fields such as engineering and archeology. Thus, Material Order represents not just items on a shelf but a knowledge-base of compositions, uses, forms, and properties. No longer in its infancy, Material Order provides a shared and adaptable framework for managing collections across the consortium and optimal facilitation of materials-based research and exploration for art, architecture, and design applications.

3) The Medieval Kingdom of Sicily Image Database Project: From Concept to Reality - John J. Taormina

The Medieval Kingdom of Sicily Image Database project collects historic images of the medieval monuments of South Italy, from the so-called Kingdom of Sicily dating from c. 950 to c. 1430, during the Norman, Hohenstaufen, Angevin, and early Aragonese periods. The project was begun in 2011, as part of a 3-year Collaborative Research Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, under project investigators Caroline Bruzelius, Duke University, and William Tronzo, University of California, San Diego.

The site features over 8,000 historical images in a range of media, including drawings, paintings, engravings, photographs, and plans and elevations culled from museums, archives, and libraries in Europe and America, often from the Grand Tour, as well as from available publications. The value of the database lies in making accessible to scholars the visual documentation of changes to historical sites because the medieval monuments of South Italy have been damaged, changed, and restored on many occasions, with tombs and liturgical furnishings often destroyed, dismantled, or removed. In fact, many of the 600 monuments no longer exist, often bombed during World War II or destroyed in earthquakes, or obscured by modern buildings and urban sprawl.

All too often conference attendees find themselves choosing between attending sessions or leaving the conference to take in some of the local attractions. This block of time is provided as built-in time for attendees to see some of the Riverwalk area and beyond in San Antonio without worrying about missing significant programming. You can take in a museum, visit an historic site, or enjoy a stroll or meal along the Riverwalk. The time should allow you to go farther afield and see some of the sights away from the Riverwalk as well. A map of the sights in San Antonio has been compiled and is available at <https://goo.gl/maps/g5rYGNdbdiZ9ekmy7>.

Please bear in mind that at 3:30 the VRA Poster Session, Tech Showcase, and Community Event begins at the Majestic. As the last large event of the conference we urge everyone to attend for a wide variety of content. Please see the entry for that event for more details.

Speakers: Hannah Miller, Brinna Michael, Rachel DeNagy, Larry Eames

Please note, this event will not be live streamed

Join VRA community members for our final conference event! A broad mix of content, this event offers a bit of something for every attendee.

For those wanting to learn more about research efforts in the field of visual resources, our poster sessions will be placed around the room. Come and engage with the presenters and hear what they've been working on to move the profession forward.

There will be demonstrations of some of the 3D and VR technologies described in the earlier sessions of the day. If you haven't had an opportunity to experience these firsthand, this will be a great opportunity to see what they feel like.

Our vendors and sponsors will be present - please stop by their tables to express thanks for their support in making the conference happen. They will be able to answer product questions you have.

And last, but certainly not least, VRA organizations will also be at the event. This is an opportunity to learn about the sub-groups within the organization and how they operate. This is an opportunity to inquire about serving on a committee, as a chapter officer, or even on the Executive Board. Representatives of these groups will be available to answer your questions and give an idea of the work loads for these roles. They can also describe the various benefits to one's career gained by active participation in the organization.

There will be refreshments and camaraderie. Whatever your motivation - whether to network, or to learn about VR developments or tools, or try out a VR headset, or even just to grab a snack before the Riverboat Tour, drop in and visit for a while!

Special thanks to all our sponsors!

Featured Posters:

- [Decolonizing Data Standards in Art-based Institutions](#)
Rachel DeNagy, Visual Resources Graduate Assistant, University of Colorado Boulder
 Diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusivity (DEAI) standards vary amongst art-based institutions as employees seek to rectify previously accepted, colonialist structures. The poster will feature the research prompt for my developing Master's thesis: an analysis of the relationship between curators and collections managers, and how the two disciplines benefit or learn from one another as institutions react to new DEAI standards. The thesis will capture the results of institutional efforts to decolonize inward and outward facing data. DEAI topics are currently influencing published and homegrown vocabularies (Library of Congress Authorities, Getty vocabularies), data structures (VRA Core, CDWA), and data content standards (CCO). I am in the process of gathering information to aid in the development of a survey. The survey will help to identify specific terminology or standards that should be addressed. Assessing the changes in curatorial and collections metadata management practices will aid in moving the DEAI dialogue forward in the VRA community. My poster will feature questions to further facilitate discussion regarding the influence of DEAI standards and societal movements. A survey will be available both in physical and digital formats for the VRA professionals.
- [Decolonizing an African Art Collection: Engaging Undergraduate Students in Reparative Descriptions and Ethical Exhibition Practices](#)
Hannah Miller, Archives and Digital Collections Librarian, Regis University
 In 2009, Regis University Library received a donation of 24 African artifacts from two local collectors. The collection includes masks, statues, and ceremonial objects from 9 African tribes. The existing cataloging information provided by the donors and former archives staff, which has previously been used for instruction and exhibits, has been found to be inaccurate, outdated, and culturally insensitive. To address this issue, newly hired Art History faculty partnered with Archives faculty to engage undergraduate art students with the collection. Students first used formal analysis and visual literacy skills to analyze artifacts in terms of form and material and think about what inherent or original meaning those pieces have, in the absence of descriptive documentation. The students were then presented with the existing descriptions and invited to critically disentangle the ways in which African art from the early 20th century was and often still is contextualized by donors/art collectors, archivists, and collection managers as stylized and exotic; how, through a Western lens, their value is elevated by "masters" such as Picasso; and how outdated collecting and exhibition practices strip African artifacts from their intended, often sacred purpose. This poster will provide an overview of the collection and donors; detail how students were exposed to Regis's harmful catalog descriptions and exhibition practices; outline methods used for introducing students to principles of reparative cataloging practices as well as ethical practices for exhibiting cultural heritage collections; and generate ideas continuing to build coursework around the collection.
- [The Image Within: Part/Source Relationships in a Digital Collections Environment](#)
Brinna Michael, Cataloging and Metadata Librarian, Pitts Theology Library, Emory University
 Descriptions of digitized manuscripts and print materials often neglect the illustrative contents of a work, making those rich and engaging aspects inaccessible through traditional search and discovery methods. Generally, a brief mention that illustrations exist, the name of an illustrator or engraver, and/or a short description of particularly notable illustrations are the extent of description for these elements. This raised a critical issue as the Pitts Theology Library team began the process of developing a new digital collections site. For over twenty years, the Digital Image Archive (DIA) (<https://dia.pitts.emory.edu/dia/>), served as the primary access system for digitized materials at Pitts. The DIA primarily offered access to individual illustrations from digitized works and as a result, was primarily used by those interested in the visual elements of the manuscript and print materials. As the new site was designed, it was critical that the needs of these users were not overlooked. The solution was two-fold: 1) to incorporate the identification and description of illustrations into the existing metadata and digitization workflows, and 2) to leverage that metadata to define relationships between works and their component illustrations and to develop a method of displaying those part/source relationships on item pages.
- [EDIA Remediation of Digital Exhibits: A Case Study in Colorado Black History](#)
Larry Eames, Digital Curation & Scholarship Librarian, University of Colorado Colorado Springs
 Using a StoryMap exhibit on Colorado Black History created by the author, this poster will examine workflows for remediating an existing digital exhibit to improve it for equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. EDIA should be a primary focus, but sometimes it falls by the wayside. In a digital exhibit, there is an opportunity to return and improve the content and interpretive framing, which is more limited in physical exhibits. This poster will elaborate on the author's exhibit ideation and design workflows. It will then identify examples from the exhibit "Colorado Black History in Eight Monuments" of instances that could be improved with regard to EDIA best practices. Viewers will be able to take away an EDIA-grounded workflow, including a framework of questions to aid in assessment and remediation.

6:00pm – 8:00pm

T Black History River Boat Tour

SAAACAM at La Villita (218 S Presa St, San Antonio, TX 78205)

Cost: \$25

Attendees must register using the link above

The San Antonio African American Community Archive & Museum (SAAACAM) will host a private, sunset river boat tour as a part of VRA 2023 in San Antonio on Thursday, September 28, 2023 at 6pm.

The Black History Boat Tours provide an untold perspective of African American influence on events and locations in San Antonio from 1526 to the present alongside the picturesque banks of the historic RiverWalk. The charter boat holds up to 30 passengers maximum and the tour is approximately 90 minutes long.

The meet-up location is 218 S. Presa, on the back patio of the downtown exhibit space of the SAAACAM. They are located at building #20 in the La Villita historic arts village. Plaza Nacional is the name of the small plaza just off the back patio.

Passengers should be at meet-up location no later than 6, boat departs the dock at 6:30.
