



Images

The newsletter of the VRA

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Memo from the President

By Maureen Burns Burns (Archivision and IMAGinED Consulting)
President, Visual Resources Association

With the turkey leftovers reduced to soup and the Thanksgiving holiday just past, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the hard work and forward thinking of all the VRA Board members and welcome the newly elected officers Cindy Abel Morris, John Trendler, and Allan Kohl. Although their actual terms don't start until April, they are already participating in Board communications and sharing great ideas. Each Board member has a specific job to accomplish evidenced in their titles, but they greatly contribute to the overall decision-making process and future vision of the Association. Much of the heavy lifting for VRA is also accomplished by Appointees, Committees, and Chapters. On behalf of the Board, I would like to sincerely thank these leaders who contribute so much to VRA with their focused activities, creative thinking, and important initiatives. There are a number of VRA members whose extraordinary efforts on behalf of this organization might not be as visible, but they are equally important. Thank you one and all for your continued participation in and support of VRA. It is you, the members, and your volunteerism that make the VRA a vibrant professional organization.

In the spirit of the volunteer efforts that drive our organization, the Board would like to acknowledge the exceptional commitment of Mark Pompelia to the VRA Bulletin. Mark's editorial involvement with the VRAB began in 1995 when he started as an Associate Bulletin Editor and is nearing completion with the final distribution of the print edition and transition to an electronic journal. In his 16 years of dedicated service working on the organization's primary publication, Mark has done it all—design, layout, soliciting content, editing, distribution, and more—ensuring an aesthetically pleasing and substantive journal reflecting VRA's current professional practices. There are many more details to planning and production than can be outlined here, but one of many notable accomplishments was starting the PDF version of the VRAB, which began with volume 34 in 2007. Overall, his work represents an extraordinary contribution to our profession. We are grateful that he continues to share his experience and expertise by serving on the Publishing Advisory Group. It is with sincere appreciation that we thank Mark for all of his years of editorial leadership and fine publication efforts on behalf of VRA.

For those of you who haven't yet participated much in VRA activities, or those who have but might be looking for new and exciting opportunities, there are currently three appointed positions open for applications: Web Technology Coordinator, Social Networking Contributor, and Communications Technology Advisor. The need for these appointees was suggested in the Strategic Plan and recommended by the Publishing Advisory Group. These new functions will help us to better integrate Web 2.0 tools, introduce remote technologies, and support VRA members in their use. The Chapters in particular have been asking for access to GoToMeeting and the Board approved this expense to help those in extended regions to connect. Please consider these expanded opportunities to contribute to the work of VRA and contact Robb Detlefs, Public Relations and Communication Officer, if you would like additional information. Taking full advantage of new communications technologies and making them accessible is the goal of these appointments.

If you don't feel like you can currently take on such official volunteer roles, another crucial way to contribute to VRA is to publish your ideas, research, projects, and experiences. Think about whether the work you are doing might be of interest to your

Editorial and
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Brooke Cox (DePauw University)

Upcoming Conferences

Trudy Levy (Image Minders)

Chapter News

Anne Norcross (Kendall College of Art & Design) *Positions Filled*

Technical Advisor:

Trudy Levy (Image Minders)

Contributing Editors:

Elizabeth Meyer (University of Cincinnati) *Digital Scene and Heard*

Contributions to **Images** are due the 15th of the month before the issue. Please send your copy in ".doc" format and Arial font to Marlene Gordon - mgordon@umich.edu.

colleagues and share the lessons learned. This could be innovative practices in your VRC, a committee project, a chapter event, or a conference presentation that might simply require a little formalizing of the format or the addition of references to be publishable. The *VRA Bulletin* has always been and will continue to be, in its new electronic form, a journal of professional practice documenting VRA activities and the work of information professionals in image management. Anne Blecksmith, Content Editor, and Jason Miller, Production Editor, are working diligently to get the new system up and running, expecting to go live soon. Get those feature articles ready, you will be able to upload them to the bepressTM system soon. The goal is to get the first several issues published quickly to get back on track, so we need your contributions. Association and affiliate news, reviews, opinion pieces, and other creative formats are welcome as we rethink the best content for the VRAB. The Publishing Advisory Group, which continues its ongoing efforts to improve and streamline the VRA's publication program, is also currently working on a survey to help us better understand what types of information VRA members require and how you would like this information delivered. The VRAB is already indexed by reputable aggregators, but the electronic format allows for global digital dissemination, full-text search and display, enhanced discoverability, and increased citation rates that could strengthen resumes, impact professional opportunities, and promote the field of visual resources.

Opportunities abound for involvement in VRA and your volunteer efforts are most welcome. May Winter bring you time to consider such activities and you also enjoy a festive holiday season!

Digital Scene and Heard

Edited by Elizabeth Meyer (University of Cincinnati)
Digital Initiatives Advisory Group

3D Historic Preservation

By Elizabeth Meyer and Chris Strasbaugh

Ben Kacyra recently gave a TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) talk calling for help in his quest to document the world's heritage sites using 3D digital technology. Kacyra became motivated in this endeavor when the Bamiyan Buddhas were destroyed by the Taliban in 2001. Devastated because they were lost forever, with no detailed documentation having been performed, Kacyra vowed to use the technology he had helped develop to scan world heritage sites.

The non-profit company Kacyra founded is called CyArk, which stands for Cyber Archive. Currently, the archive contains documentation for Angkor, Deadwood, Pompeii, and Rapa Nui, and 24 other sites. Documentation includes 3D Point Clouds, drawings, photographs, videos, and different types of reconstructions, whether fly-overs, models, etc. Sadly, faster than his company can document these important sites, they are being destroyed or altered, either by natural disasters or by acts of human aggression. Kacyra is calling on others to help him achieve his goal of documenting 500 objects throughout the world in 5 years. The project is called the CyArk 500 Challenge.

CyArk hopes to achieve this goal by setting up local scanning centers that are in close proximity to historic sites and by partnering with universities, museums, foundations, and corporations.

As a civil engineer, Kacyra developed this high tech scanning equipment to survey nuclear power plants quickly and accurately. He sold his scanning patents to Leica in 2000 and now partners with Leica Geosystems to create these highly detailed and accurate scans of ancient structures, sites, and sculptures. These scanners are relatively small in size and can offer long-range scans as well as wide-angle views. They emit lasers at objects, which calculate the distance by measuring how long the beam of light takes to bounce and return. Light travels quickly, and these machines are able to process 10,000-100,000 points per second and are accurate within a couple of millimeters.

On March 16, 2010 the Royal Tombs at Kasubi were set on fire and burned to the ground. Luckily, in February 2009, the site had just been scanned and photographed by

a team led by Scott Cedarleaf who became interested in the CyArk project after hearing about it from a friend. Since detailed documentation existed, Prince James Wasajja of Uganda is planning to reconstruct the site using the data developed by CyArk. Besides the using the data for possible reconstruction following a tragedy, it is also being used for education materials, virtual tourism, and in determining structural weaknesses for future preservation projects.

Resources:

Ben Kacyra: Ancient Wonders Captured in 3D

http://www.ted.com/talks/ben_kacyra_ancient_wonders_captured_in_3d.html

CyArk

<http://archive.cyark.org/>

Ways to get involved:

<http://archive.cyark.org/get-involved>

Tech Tips

Color Profiling for Cameras

By Alex Nichols (Michigan State University)

Color management consists of two basic strategies, calibration and profiling (often, both are incorrectly lumped into the “calibration” category). Calibration occurs when you modify the physical behavior of a device to improve its color behavior (such as changing the “brightness” control on a monitor), while profiling occurs when you map the color behavior of a device, so that software can compensate for remaining inaccuracies (such as using a “Spyder” to profile a monitor). Ideally, every color input or output device (scanners, printers, monitors, projectors, etc.) would be both calibrated to its best performance settings, and custom profiled. Meanwhile, all software would be able to use the profiles to minimize any variation among devices.

Of course, most devices are not color managed to the full extent possible, and a great deal of software cannot make use of profiles, even when they are present. However, within those professional areas that work with quality image production/editing/archiving/output, a certain level of color management is typically maintained, usually beginning with calibration and profiling of monitors at the minimum.

There is one area of imaging, however, in which custom color management is typically neglected, ignored, or even considered a pointless exercise, even in the case of knowledgeable imaging professionals with high standards: the digital camera. There are several problems that make the digital camera less desirable as a subject of custom color management compared to other common devices:

- Cameras are typically used under extremely variant light conditions, especially compared to the scanner, which operates with an entirely fixed and controllable source.
- Default camera profiles (provided by manufacturers or built into software) are usually pleasing, if not always accurate.
- People often value pleasing or creative colors over accurate colors.
- Most color management packages do little to address cameras, typically focusing the most energy on output devices (monitors, printers), with scanners being by far the most commonly supported input device.

The points above make a strong case for ignoring the issue in a wide range of circumstances, however copystand photography in a visual resources context represents a special case in which color management of digital cameras can be both more practical, and more advantageous than usual. With copystand photography, lighting conditions are typically fixed and controllable, just like with a scanner, making color management substantially simplified and more accurate. Default camera profiles may be good, but they are compromised in order to perform well under a broad range of lighting conditions; under fixed lighting, a custom profile can be better. Finally, a visual resources setting

flips the usual priorities for color, holding accuracy above creativity or attractiveness.

The only remaining impediment to color management for copystand photography is the lack of support from most color management hardware/software packages. Fortunately, there is a solution that is relatively easy and inexpensive (especially compared to printer profiling). To create a custom color profile for a digital camera, you only need two things (assuming you already have a camera, a computer, and Photoshop): an X-Rite ColorChecker target (\$70), and Adobe's DNG Profile Editor Beta (free).

The procedure is fairly straightforward (detailed instructions are available on the DNG Profile Editor download page at Adobe Labs). Simply photograph the ColorChecker on the copystand with the same camera settings and lighting setup that you normally use, then save the resulting image (must be a raw file) in the DNG format using Photoshop or DNG Converter. Next, open the DNG file in DNG Profile Editor, and follow the brief instructions to map your camera's color behavior. If you are not entirely pleased with the automated results, you can manually tweak the colors and tone curve until it appears accurate on your (presumably calibrated and profiled) monitor. Once you are finished, your "recipe" will be used by DNG Profile Editor to create a custom profile, which can then be loaded into Photoshop or Lightroom, and automatically applied to every image shot with the same camera thereafter.

Assuming the colors represented in your source material are typically accurate and desirable, completing this procedure once will save time tweaking color adjustments for each individual image, presenting you with default colors that are customized in accordance with your standard copystand conditions.

Upcoming Conferences

Submitted by Brooke Cox (DePauw University)

Museums and the Web

April 11-14, 2012

San Diego, CA

<http://conference.archimuse.com/mw2012>

Visual Resources Association

April 18-21, 2012

Albuquerque, NM

<http://www.vraweb.org/conferences/vra30/>

Joint Conference on Digital Libraries

June 10-14, 2012

Washington, DC

<http://www.jcdl.org/>

Electronic Visualisation and the Arts

July 10-12, 2012

British Computer Society, Covent Garden, London

www.eva-london.org

Positions Filled

Compiled by Anne Norcross (Kendall College of Art and Design)

Princeton University

Amanda Smith has been appointed as Senior Image Cataloguer and Support Specialist of the Visual Resources Collection, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University. Amanda received her BA in Art History from Rutgers University (New Brunswick, NJ) in 2006 and her MA in Photographic Preservation and Collections Management from Ryerson University (Toronto, ON) through a program jointly run with George Eastman House (Rochester, NY) in 2011. She was previously the Fine Art Cataloguing Specialist at Rago Arts and Auction Center (Lambertville, NJ) from 2006-2009 and has performed diverse collections management projects at a variety of institutions including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Better Image, The Richard Avedon Foundation, and George Eastman House.

Northern California Chapter

Karen Kessel (Sonoma State University) and Abigail Dansiger (Academy of Art University)

The VRA Northern CA Chapter held its semiannual meeting at the UC Berkeley campus, with presentations by Jan Eklund on the campus' progress in renovating its image databases using a program called CollectionSpace, and by Michael Ashley, director of the Center for Digital Archaeology (CoDA). He provided an overview of the CoDA's activities and demonstrated two tools in use at CoDA, a robotic attachment to a tripod to create digital panorama views called a GigaPan:<http://gigapan.org/>. CoDA is documenting the Presidio National Park's excavation of an original Adobe structure on their blog, using the GigaPan <http://www.codifi.info/news/anthro-136e-summer-2011-course-el-presidio-de-san-francisco-part-4/>They also showed a 3-D imaging process, photogrammetry, which is explained here:

<http://www.codifi.info/news/the-presidio-photogrammetry-project/>. Later Michael showed some database development that he has done for CoDA. One was for a Mukurtu <http://www.codifi.info/projects/mukurtu/> a system to archive and organize their digital cultural materials in line with their cultural protocols. The other is one which he has done using Filemakerpro and iPads called Codifi. It is actually a publishing tool that he calls a Multigraph, as versus a monograph. Check it out at <http://www.codifi.info/content/projects/codifi/>.

The chapter voted to create a chapter sponsorship for a would-be local chapter member to join the national organization for a year and to make a donation to the speaker fees for the Art of the Americas workshop at the 2012 Albuquerque conference.

Southern California Chapter

Submitted by John M. Trendler (Scripps College)

The Visual Resources Association's Southern California Chapter will be holding its fall meeting at the Claremont Colleges, Friday, December 9th. The morning will begin at Scripps College's Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery for a morning reception and gallery talk by Kirk Delman, Registrar and Collections Manager followed by a chapter business meeting. Lunch, and the rest of the day's events, will be on Pomona College's campus followed by a tour of the Pomona College Museum of Art and gallery talk by Rebecca McGrew, Senior Curator, followed by talks by Terri Geis, Curator of Academic Programs, Jessica Wimbley, Museum Coordinator, and Mercedes Teixido, Associate Professor of Studio Art, followed by an evening reception and a viewing of James Turrell's Sky Space.

The chapter is pleased to announce Greg Reser (UCSD) has been elected Chapter Chair and will take the reins at the commencement of the business meeting.

The College Art Association's national conference will be held in Los Angeles, February 22–25, 2012. The Visual Resource Association's Southern California Chapter will be hosting a VRA business meeting lead by Maureen Burns Saturday, February 25th from 12:30-2:00PM and John Trendler will be chairing the session "Paint, Prints & Pixels: Learning from the History of Teaching with Images," Thursday, February 23rd from 12:30-2:00PM.