

VRA Southern California Chapter Meeting April 18, 2007

Approximately 35 VRA-SC members assembled at the Getty Villa in Malibu for an information session on the Cataloging Cultural Objects project, a behind-the-scenes tour of the Research Library in the Ranch House, a discussion of the VRA 2007 Kansas City conference, and a business meeting.

CCO

The program began with a brief discussion about everyone's familiarity with the Cataloging Cultural Objects project provided by Murtha Baca, the Head of the Getty Vocabulary program and Digital Resource Management, and Patricia Harpring, the Managing Editor of the Getty Vocabulary Program, who are both at the Getty Research Institute and also serve as CCO Editors. Summary handouts were provided and the book is published by the American Library Association http://www.ala.org/ala/ProductsandPublications/Products_and_Publications.htm, but information is also online at <http://www.vraweb.org/ccoweb/cco/index.html>. The Web site continues to grow with 100 or more cataloging examples and expanding training materials. A detailed overview of CCO was then provided by Patricia in which she covered the background and principles of these data content standards for descriptive cataloging, went through the metadata elements or rules, and then discussed authorities.

By way of introduction, it was mentioned that it all began with the development of metadata standards starting with Categories for the Description of Works of Art, which provides 507 broad, encompassing guidelines for the information elements needed to describe an art/material culture object and has since been reduced to 31 categories for CDWA Lite. CDWA Lite is an XML schema to describe core records based on the data elements and guidelines contained in the CDWA and CCO (see http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/cdwa/cdwalite.html). A crosswalk where you can see how the various standards map to each other is available at the Getty Web site (see http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/standards/intrometadata/metadata_element_sets.html). It is the intention for many of these standards and guidelines to work together to facilitate shared information, including OAI harvesting for repository interoperability (see <http://www.openarchives.org/>). CCO essentially is the AACR2 (see <http://www.aacr2.org/>) or cataloging rules for art/material culture objects. The informative presentation was followed by an interactive discussion. Among the topics were how best to implement CCO. A varieties of strategies were suggested for retroactive work, such as: 1) starting with one field and cleaning them all up in your database, then moving on to another, 2) starting with current work being added to the database and working on other areas as time allows, and/or 3) focusing on specific areas based on user

requests. There was also much discussion about VRA Core 4 (<http://www.vraweb.org/projects/vracore4/index.html>) and the leap from flat file, item level cataloging to an image/work, more complex relational model for metadata elements. Murtha mentioned an authority dream of hers in which the Getty might facilitate the gathering, development, and sharing of image work records. In the end, it seemed clear that visual resources collections should work towards implementing the new standards as much as their budgetary and staff resources will allow shooting for at least consistent data within the limitations of their information system. The VRA SoCal Chapter is fortunate to have the Getty Research Institute and a collegial network of members who provide excellent local resources to draw upon during this transitional time.

Business Meeting

The business meeting was held over lunch on the patio of the Villa's new restaurant with lovely views overlooking the Malibu site. It began with the Treasurer, Deb Lenert's, report on the state of the SoCal Chapter's finances. The balance was at \$786.00, but would be increasing with the day's renewals. The Chair, Jackie Spafford, then reported on VRA-SC's contributions to the VRA's 25th anniversary conference, which included \$250 to support a coffee break and a terrific raffle contribution based on a silver screen theme with books, CDs, and a variety of Hollywood gifts items in a fun tote. The contributors were thanked for their clever ideas and generous donations. The biggest news from the Chapter Chairs meeting in Kansas City was that the national Web site renovation requires information to be added to the Chapters' areas of the Web site and Jackie will be working on that. Vickie O'Riordan, from UCSD and VRA Vice President for the Conference Program, then shared information about planning for the national conference in San Diego. She reminded everyone of the deadline for conference proposals and encouraged SoCal members to get actively involved. Greg Reser, from UCSD, has stepped up to handle the local planning and is the main "go to guy." They are soliciting help with a variety of conference planning activities and will be sending out extended information on the VRA-SC Listserv. They were particularly looking for suggestions about a logo, catchphrase, and possible venues for the Tansey fundraiser. They then mentioned needing volunteers for a variety of planning jobs such as bringing together local information, organizing tours, coordinating the registration desk volunteers, etc. Since there are so few VRA-SC members in the immediate San Diego area, they are relying on extended SoCal Chapter members to help. Ideas were then solicited for locations for future meetings. It was suggested that the Fall meeting could be at the conference hotel in San Diego to continue working on the planning and/or at the Gemological Society in Carlsbad with the possibility of an overnight stay to work on conference planning. Other suggestions for future meetings were: Otis, Ascent Media, Santa Monica Public Library, and the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in LA. Meeting in conjunction with or joining in on some of the activities of the Association of Moving Image Archivists was also suggested.

The final business alerted the membership of the need for candidates to run for local office and the formation of a nominating committee. A upcoming Fall election for the Chairperson and Treasurer positions was in the works. SoCal members were asked to consider volunteering for this important service.

Getty Villa Research Library

In the afternoon, the attendees were split into two rotating groups, one to discuss the Kansas City conference and the other to tour the Research Library at the Getty Villa (the group was too large to tour altogether, see http://www.getty.edu/visit/see_do/libraries.html). Barbara Furbush, who is in charge of this facility, walked everyone through the library and study spaces located in the original Ranch House, which was recently remodeled. The approximately 20,000 volumes focus on the arts and cultures of ancient Greece, Rome, and Etruria and are primarily intended for Getty staff, Getty scholars, and faculty and graduate students in the UCLA/Getty Master's Program on the Conservation of Ethnographic and Archaeological Materials. Barbara also provided historical information about the building and grounds as well as shared photographs of its various uses in the past—from house to museum to offices and now library. Maureen Burns and other VRA-SC members who attended the VRA conference shared information about the Kansas City program with the alternating groups. They provided highlights and handouts related to the sessions, workshops, and user groups focused on aggregating images, new technological tools, fair trading, metadata, implementing new standards, federated searching, collaboration, educating the educators, DIRC, etc. The remainder of the day was spent perusing the Getty Villa's galleries and gardens on a picture-perfect SoCal day.

Conclusion

Sincere thanks are extended to Deb Lenert and Barbara Furbush who planned, organized, and hosted this terrific meeting working closely with Jackie Spafford. Attendees were also sincerely grateful to Murtha Baca and Patricia Harpring for their terrific presentations and clarifying discussion. It was a substantive, productive, and thoroughly enjoyable meeting as well as a treat to explore the newly re-opened Getty Villa.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Burns
VRA-SC Secretary