

## **VRA-SC Fall Meeting and Tour of the Claremont Colleges December 7, 2007**

Approximately 20 VRA-SC members and guests assembled at the Claremont Colleges for tours of the campus with visits to the Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery at Scripps, the Pomona College Museum of Art, and the Turrell Skyspace. A business meeting was held after lunch.

### **Scripps College**

Despite the rain, attendees braved the freeways and enjoyed refreshments and socializing at the Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery on the Scripps College campus to start the day (see <http://www.scrippscollege.edu/williamson-gallery/index.php>). Then Mary MacNaughton, the Director and Professor of Art History, provided background information about the gallery, which has 5 exhibits a year including the ceramic annual which is in its 64<sup>th</sup> year. The latter, curated this year by Phyllis Green, explores the intersection of ceramics and new media, opening with an exciting program of lectures and entertainment on January 26<sup>th</sup>. The current exhibition is entitled "LA Live: Contemporary Art in Los Angeles" in which the works of several local artists are featured. Professor MacNaughton explained that the artists were chosen by the Studio Art faculty who felt their students would benefit from seeing these particular people's work firsthand and she then provide additional information about each. There was plenty of time for us to explore the art more closely on our own as well. Since the weather had cleared, the group toured the colleges looking at murals and visiting libraries walking from Scripps to the Pomona Campus where lunch was served in a conference room off of Lebus Court.

### **Business Meeting**

Jackie Spafford, the VRA-SC Chairperson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and profusely thanked our Claremont hosts, Susan Thalmann and John Trendler, for their gracious hospitality as well as clutch planning to fill the void left from the need to cancel the Carlsbad meeting at the Gemological Institute due to the Fall wildfires.

The results of the recent local VRA-SC Board Election were shared with the group. John Trendler is the new Chairperson and Jennifer Patton the new Treasurer with Maureen Burns continuing to fulfill the role of Secretary. Sincere thanks were extended to the other candidate, Jina Jamison, for her spirit of volunteerism and to Anne Bleckmith for stepping-up to fill Deb Lenert's Treasurer role when the latter moved back East. The nominating committee consisted of the following people: Sheryl Frisch, Loy Zimmerman, and Jackie Spafford. They were also profusely thanked for all their efforts with a special commendation to Loy for his assistance interpreting the Bylaws. The officers visited the bank earlier to hand over the signature privileges and were assured by Union Bank

that this would become official after the minutes are faxed to them. The group applauded Jackie for her terrific work as the Chairperson for the last two years.

Financial Matters were then discussed. Anne reported that the bank balance was at \$951, but would increase with membership renewals and program fees today (non-VRA members were asked for a \$5 contribution to attend). VRA members were encouraged to renew their membership in the national organization before end of year in order to remain on the VRA-L and enjoy all the other privileges of membership. Any Chapter dues paid after October 1<sup>st</sup> will be applied to the next calendar year. It was pointed out that the request for dues on the current form asks for \$15 when we voted to raise the dues to \$20 a few meetings ago. The Secretary checked the minutes from the Spring 2006 meeting and discovered that this was the case. Since many members have already paid their dues for 2008, it was agreed that the \$5 rise in local dues will not occur until the 2009 calendar year. The idea of offering some sort of local travel award for the VRA conference in San Diego was then discussed. Since it will be easier for many of us, including staff who don't usually get to go, to attend a conference in our SC Chapter area, it was suggested that it would be valuable to offer several smaller awards rather than one big one. It was agreed that it would be nice if one of these awards could be earmarked for student attendees. It was decided that \$600 could be used towards a maximum of 3 awards, 1 of which can be used for a student. A travel awards sub-committee was formed with Jackie Spafford and Jina Jamison taking care of this business. Whether the SC Chapter should offer a donation to fund a coffee break at the conference was then discussed. It was suggested that the \$250 provided last year for the silver anniversary did not buy very much with the high costs of hotel catering and that we would skip it this year to fund the travel awards. Ideas and contributions were solicited for an SC Chapter basket for the VRA-SD raffle. A variety of ideas for contributions were aired, including the following: a CA museums theme, a surfing theme, movies about art historians (maybe a night at the museum as a centerpiece), and disaster flicks. There were so many good ideas that it was suggested we could offer more than one basket. It was decided that the Secretary will send these ideas out to the VRA-L to see if some consensus on the theme emerges and we can take it from there.

Jackie then provided some background and a tour of the VRA-SC Web site. It has gone from a locally produced and managed site on the UCSB server to being hosted on the national VRA Web site. So, it is now centralized and easier for anyone to manage with password access. If members would like to see any additional information up there, please contact John and Jackie. Jackie will update everything after this meeting, make sure all the old content from the previous Web site is moved over, take the other site down (check with Martine Sherill, VRA archivist, to determine whether the old one should be archived), and continue to update content, unless another volunteer steps up to take this duty

over. The Web site is a good place to record past activities, but the local Board members also need to consult with Martine about what archival information needs to be sent on to national and ask her advice about what we should archive at the local level.

A discussion of themes and program suggestions for future SC Chapter meetings were then discussed. John should consult with Judy Colbert ([jcolbert@gia.edu](mailto:jcolbert@gia.edu)) at the Gemological Institute in Carlsbad (see [http://www.gia.edu/3954/gia\\_home\\_page.cfm](http://www.gia.edu/3954/gia_home_page.cfm)) to determine when she might like to try again to host a meeting. The theme of that meeting was going to be VR collections outside the academic arts. Other suggestions old and new for future meetings were the Jet Propulsion Lab, Otis, Ascent Media, Santa Monica Public Library, the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in LA, and the possibility of doing something in conjunction with the Association of Moving Image Archivists. In the end, the idea that seemed most popular was the theme of how to get your faculty to go digital at Otis this summer (since the annual conference is in March and some recovery time may be necessary). A desire to hear how people who are using digital images are actually doing it, especially hearing from art history and studio art faculty who are using image services like Insight and ARTstor or tools like MDID, was expressed. The possibility of trying to organize a joint meeting with ARLIS at Pebble Beach or somewhere in the middle of California with an overnight stay in order to be able to include both the northern and southern chapters of those organizations was also considered. It was pointed out that the summer or fall might provide the best timing for such an ambitious meeting for those with limited or competitive funding.

Greg Reser then shared information about the planning of the San Diego 26<sup>th</sup> VRA Conference. He reported that things are going well so far. They need volunteers for the following tasks. Manning the registration desk with people who know the area is one job. There is an online form to volunteer for this service and Maureen Burns is coordinating this effort, but she will need many reliable volunteers. Shepherds are needed to keep group tours together and Trish Rose is the contact for this. Shepherds are also needed to help with the larger events and Lilla Sweat is organizing this, including finding people to check nametags at the door of events. Marti Pike is coordinating the effort to ensure access for people with special needs. Judy Colbert is gathering brochures and putting together the local information about favorite things to do in San Diego as well as considering events people might be able to attend occurring in the same general time period as the conference. It was suggested that there may be a need for alternate hotels if the room block sells out. The program at a glance does not seem to be printing more than one page at the present time. Greg mentioned that the main links for transportation are there, but that he will probably add other alternative transportation ideas like the ferries, train, and trolley. He is working on walking tours that will be online and printable for

things close to the hotel. They are working on lists of restaurants, taco shops, and want to have an interesting range of dining establishments represented. They will be adding more about local attractions, such as museums, parks, ships like the Midway, areas such as the Gaslamp, etc. The hotel has good links to the conveniences close by and a map of the general area, but it was noted that this information may need to be pointed out to members since it is subtle. Teddy Bozhilova from UCR won the logo design contest and Greg expressed his gratitude for the terrific mission and wave design. Lisa Hawkos actually did the Web site and although they are trying to avoid clutter, suggestions are welcome about other information that may need to be there. If we notice anything missing or not functioning, let Greg know. There will be more information about the tours soon. The Tansey event will be a Charles Phoenix slide show and slide collection talk (see <http://www.charlesphoenix.com/>) at the hotel for \$30, which will be open to ARLIS, MCN, and other professional organizations in the area as well. They are expecting about 300-400 attendees. Greg closed by asking us to e-mail him if we think of anything else. Expect to see messages requesting further assistance as the planning progresses.

### **Pomona College**

The afternoon started at Pomona College Museum of Art to view the Charles Turrell exhibition (see <http://www.pomona.edu/Museum/>). Kathleen Howe, Director and Professor of Art, provided a tour of the museum and fascinating background information about Turrell and his luminous work. She explained how his work is really a multi-person collaborative process which Turrell orchestrates. The artist is a Claremont alumnus and he designed and curated the exhibition, which includes a selection of models and drawings, two LED Tall Glass works from 2006, and the Ganzfeld, "End Around." Then the group walked over to the Turrell Skyspace, "Dividing the Light," and enjoyed refreshments while watching the visually engaging light program and sunset.

### **Conclusion**

Sincere thanks were extended to Susan Thalmann for terrific planning and John Trendler for graciously hosting such an inspiring, art-filled day that was also productive with great networking opportunities. The quality time that the gallery and museum directors spent with the group was also much appreciated. Those who did not want to brave the Friday traffic wandered into the Claremont village for a festive dinner at The Press. Many agreed that the Claremont Colleges are truly one of SoCal's treasures.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maureen Burns  
VRA-SC Secretary