

ARTifacts

The American University
Art History Newsletter
Summer 2004
Issue No. 13

Fellow Alumni:

We are watching with great anticipation as the Katzen Arts Center has begun to take shape. The gallery has been in place for awhile, and now the structure of the academic wing is clearly defined. Go to www.american.edu and click on the Katzen Arts Center to see the live webcam view of the building progress. The art department is carefully preparing for the move to our new quarters next year. Because we are making the transition from analog delivery (slides) to digital delivery (MDID), we are thinking about equipment and space issues for both the Visual Resources Center (VRC) and the classrooms themselves. Our students are helping to bring us closer to our pre-move goals. You can read more about our students—their academic work, part time jobs, and other activities in *Departmental News*.

We've heard from many of our alumni this year—news about new babies, jobs, publications, and other educational endeavors. As a group our alumni are active in the art history and museum fields, and, from sea to shining sea, they set a fine example of dedication, optimism, and enthusiasm for their chosen fields.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 30 - September 18, 2004

American University, Watkins Gallery

What's the Story? - Narrative Art from the Watkins Collection. Paintings, drawings, and prints from the Watkins Collection explore the definition of the narrative in visual art.

September 27 - October 23, 2004

American University, Watkins Gallery

Jennie Lea Knight. Washington sculptor Jennie Lea Knight will exhibit new carved wood sculptures and drawings. Her work is in the collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, National Museum of Women in the Arts, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, and the Phillips Collection, among others.

October 2, 2004

George Washington University Campus

George Washington University / American University Art History Symposium.

October 13 - 17, 2004

South Eastern College Art Conference (SECAC)
Jacksonville, Florida.

November 1 - 23, 2004

American University, Watkins Gallery

Baltimore artist, Christine Buckton Tillman creates installations using overhead projectors and found objects. She collects knick-knacks and figurines from second-hand stores to use in her installations, which embrace and question the cute, fun, festive, and romantic.

January 10 - February 5, 2005

American University, Watkins Gallery

Professor Deborah Kahn, recently named a 2004-2005 Guggenheim Fellow in the Visual Arts, will exhibit recent paintings.

▪ *Know of an event that you think other AU grads would enjoy? Please send dates, locations, and other information to the ARTifacts editors.*

Faculty Update

▪ **Professor Kim Butler's** articles "Reddita lux est: Raphael and the Pursuit of Eloquence in Leonine Rome," in *The Renaissance Court Artist: Design in Theory and Production*, published by the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum of Art, A. Chong and S.J. Campbell, eds., and "Rethinking Early Raphael," from the 2002 conference, *Raffaello - pluralità e unità*, co-published by the Bibliotheca Hertziana/Max-Planck-Institut and the Instituto di Norvegia, are due out shortly. She is putting the finishing touches on three other articles: "Gendered Heroics and the Immaculate Body in Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling," "Raphael and Giovanni Santi," and "Raphael and Quattrocento Sculpture." She is also continuing to work on her Raphael book manuscript, contributing a catalogue entry to a new Walters Art Gallery publication, and writing a Signorelli book review for the South Eastern College Art Conference (SECAC). Summer travel included trips to Monterey, Boston, and Italy. In addition, she has been invited to speak at a National Gallery, London conference in November in conjunction with the opening of a major Raphael exhibition. In April, Professor Butler presented a paper "Raphael's Madonnas and the Triumph of Eros?" at the annual Renaissance Society of America meeting in New York.

▪ On February 14, at the Kristen Frederickson Contemporary Art Gallery in New York City, **Professor Norma Broude** made a presentation on the Pattern and Decoration Movement and participated in a panel discussion on the art of Miriam Schapiro. In April, Professor Broude introduced her student, Laura Brower, AU's graduate student representative, at the Middle Atlantic Symposium in the History of Art at the National Gallery of Art. Ms. Brower delivered a paper on the work of Romaine Brooks.

Professor Broude, on sabbatical leave last year, has been pursuing research projects on the work of Tiepolo and Degas. This year, with Professor Garrard, she completed work on their new, jointly edited book, *Reclaiming Female Agency: Feminist Art History after Postmodernism*. The book is now in press with the University of California Press and will appear next February.

▪ In March, **Professor Helen Langa** lectured at the Greenbelt Museum in Greenbelt, Maryland, on "Art for the People: American Murals from the Great Depression." She is also working on two essays for upcoming publications. "Women and Early 20th Century American Printmaking: Modern Life and Modernist Innovation" will be included in *Spirited Moderns: The Women Students of Robert Henri*, exhibition catalog for an upcoming show at the Brigham Young University Museum of Art (2005). "Bold Gazes, Lively Differences: Women Printmakers' Images of Women" will be included in a catalog for an exhibition, *Prints by American Women, 1910-1960*, at the Kansas State University Museum of Art and the Block Museum, Northwestern University in Chicago (2005). In addition, Professor Langa will be presenting papers at the Southeastern College Art Conference in October and the American Studies Association Conference in November. Professor Langa will be teaching a new course in the fall, "Women's Voices Through Time", which will be taught through the Women's and Gender Studies Program at AU. She is also preparing to teach an upper level U.S. art course in the fall using digital images. This will be the first upper level course taught solely with MDID image delivery.

▪ Retirement has not slowed **Mary Garrard** down at all. She had two essays published recently. "Art More Powerful Than Nature? Titian's Motto Reconsidered" was published in *The Cambridge Companion to Titian*, edited by Patricia Meilman, Cambridge University Press, 2004. "A Matter of Virility: Three Faces of David" appeared in *The Washington Post*, on February 29, 2004. Professor Garrard also served as chair and respondent in the session "Constructing Female Identity: Signatures in Early Modern Italy," at the Renaissance Society of America's annual meeting in New York, New York, in April 2004. She lectured at Vassar College on "Leonardo da Vinci's Enigmatic Ginevra de' Benci: A Problem of Genre," in March 2004. Professors Garrard and Broude both served as discussants on a panel on the art of Miriam Schapiro at the Kristen Frederickson Contemporary Art Gallery in New York in February.

The spring semester included our usual activities: the spring luncheon and undergraduate award ceremony, the Middle Atlantic Symposium for the History of Art, the seminar course, and continued work on MDID. Some activities are highlighted below.

VRC Prepares for Move to New Building

Early in the spring semester, the department was given funding for part-time student help. Four new workers were added to the four VRC assistants already in place. This was both a blessing and a challenge. Space is cramped in the Visual Resources Center and adding four students, at 10 hours per week each, was a logistical puzzle. We managed beautifully though and the students made significant improvements and advances in the VRC during the semester. The students will be sorely missed in the fall.

Amy Hammond and **Carolina Alarcon** worked on the MDID project. With their help, the electronic collection was increased at a great pace. They learned to scan images, size them into three versions (full size, postcard, and thumbnail), transfer them to the MDID server, and catalog them according to our standards. Having Amy and Carolina help **Emily Schiller** and **Laura Brower**, who are experts at the process, worked well, once we got the workflow set up, as there is only one scanning workstation.

Jaime De Simone has worked with ACCESS extensively, so she was a natural choice for the task of developing an electronic records database for the slide collection. Visual Resources Curator Kathe Albrecht began to work on this task a year ago and had a prototype database in place, ready for expert tweaking. Jaime and Kathe worked together to make sure the database had the features and capabilities necessary for searching and records management. After Jaime perfected ATHENA (so named for the benevolent goddess of wisdom and the arts), she began the data entry. This is a laborious process and the two of them worked together in the following manner. Kathe read through the drawers against the card catalog, making certain that all slides were accounted for on the cards, missing slides were noted, and artist cards were correctly filed. A few terribly pink slides were removed at that point in the process. Then Jaime took each completed slide drawer and the stack of

catalog cards and began entering the information into the new electronic database, using the VRC laptop. Work was started at the alphabetic beginning of the painting section (Aegean, American, Austrian, etc) and will continue through all the painting drawers. The hope is that in the fall, all new acquisitions will be recorded electronically, with the card catalog slowly and ultimately becoming an archivable relic. Jaime would like to continue this work in the fall, and it is the department's hope to have her do so. Despite the size of the task, Kathe has set an ambitious goal to eliminate the card catalog completely by the time the department moves to the Katzen Arts Center.

Amanda Salley had previous experience working in book libraries, so she became the Kassalow librarian for the spring semester. A growing backlog of donated books was catalogued, labeled, and shelved. The shelf list was then updated, printed and bound for use in the Kassalow Collection. The thesis list was also updated, reprinted, and bound with the Kassalow Collection for easy reference. The vertical files were taken out of the lockers and boxed for the move to the new building. Amanda brought the Kassalow Collection up to an excellent standard, and it is now ready for its move to the new building.

The Art History Spring Luncheon

The Spring Art History Luncheon is always a grand affair, with students, staff, and faculty gathering to celebrate the successful conclusion of the academic year. One of the highlights of the luncheon is the presentation of the Undergraduate Award. It was given this year to Jackie Kelleher. Bob and Susan Pence were unable to attend this year's luncheon, but Professor Butler spoke eloquently about Jackie's work and presented her with the award. Among attendees were Dean Kay Mussell, Associate Dean Kathleen Kennedy-Corey, Cristal Cherry, and Katie Stratton (CAS-Development), art history faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students. Alumna Pat Marx, also attended.

Middle Atlantic Symposium for the History of Art

AU was represented at the annual Middle Atlantic Symposium for the History of Art held at the National Gallery of Art on Saturday, April 4. Graduate student Laura Brower presented her paper on Romaine Brooks and was introduced by Professor

Norma Broude. The paper was very well-received and the day's events were attended by many AU students and faculty.

Summer Fun!

A great gift was bestowed upon the department by our current crop of art history graduate students. They augmented the Kassalow Collection by using their allotted funds from the Graduate Student Council to purchase new books. What a thoughtful idea and a lasting contribution to the department! Future students will be indebted to this year's class for some great additions to the collection. Current students **Olivia Kohler** and **Julianna Hills** joined **Kathe Albrecht** in the quest for books. It was quite an exciting shopping spree at the National Gallery of Art bookstore. The three swooped in and chose with abandon the best scholarship, the most comprehensive catalogs, and most intriguing niche volumes that they could find. They covered the subject territory as broadly as possible. From sculpture to painting, from prints to architecture, from ancient to modern, they grabbed, totaled, and looked for more. And using Kathe's American Association of Museums discount card, they were able to select an additional \$200 worth of reading material. There were 26 books in total added to the Kassalow Collection. A few sample titles are below:

American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States, 1820-1880 (Andrew Wilton and Jim Barringer)
Alexander Calder, 1878-1976 (Marla Prather)
Early Italian Paintings: Approaches to Conservation (Patricia Sherwin Garland, ed.)
Mexican Muralists (Desmond Rochfort)
The Renaissance Print, 1470-1550 (David Landau and Peter Parshall)
Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation (Michael D. Harris)

Summer in Washington, D.C.

Emily Schiller, second year graduate student, is interning at the Library of Congress, working on The Veterans History Project (American Folklife Center). This project was originally funded as an oral history project by the U.S. Congress in 2001, but has since expanded to include more varied collections. Emily is learning archiving and preservation techniques as she assists in accessioning audio tapes, written memoirs, journals, photos, and other memorabilia from veterans of various wars. Emily explains that the charcoal sketches and watercolors these veterans drew during their times in faraway conflicts are particularly moving, as are the oral histories that she's heard. During

the recent World War II Memorial Opening and Veterans Reunion in Washington, many more oral histories were recorded and documented. In addition to the LOC internship, Emily is working in the AU Visual Resources Center, resizing and cataloguing images from our vendors. At this point, she is an expert in scanning, sizing, and cataloging digital images.

Amy Hammond is interning at the Hirshhorn Museum, assisting Valerie Fletcher, curator of painting and sculpture. Amy is working on an exhibition on Isamu Noguchi, currently at the Whitney Museum, that will come to the Hirshhorn in the fall. She is helping to develop the catalog and is working on coordinating loans. In addition to her internship at the Hirshhorn, Amy is working in the AU Visual Resources Center, researching Baroque image sources, learning copy photography, and preparing slides for a course to be offered in the spring.

Olivia Kohler traveled to Ireland with her family in the early part of the summer. Since her return, she has been working in the Visual Resources Center on the MDID project. She is assisting Professors Broude and Langa with their image needs for courses to be taught in 2004/05. She has learned to scan and catalog images from various sources, develop Excel spreadsheets, and refile the slide drawers. ■



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views**

Alumna Profile

What Is a Visual Resources Curator?

by *Kathe Hicks Albrecht*

There are many career paths open to someone with a master's degree in art history. Although mine is not a typical path, it is one that is both fascinating and challenging. When meeting someone socially and explaining what I do, I am often met with a blank stare. What exactly is a visual resources curator, they ask? The visual resources field is rapidly expanding and plays a important part in education in the digital age; it is, therefore, worthy of explanation. So, here is my story.

After receiving my master's degree in art history from AU in 1989, I began the task of finding intellectually-challenging, but part-time, work in the art and architectural history fields. I was interested in museum work, managing a historic building site, or teaching art history in the secondary school system. With three young children and a husband working on Capitol Hill, part-time was my only option. A short time after beginning my search, Elizabeth Frick, slide librarian at AU, asked if I might be interested in applying for the position she was leaving. I had worked for Elizabeth when I was a graduate student and enjoyed accessioning slides, refiling, and managing new slide orders for the art historians. Little did I know that this would be the beginning of an exciting and challenging career.

I quickly found out that the visual resources field is very challenging. Historically, slide librarians maintained and developed large collections of analog slides for use in the art history classroom. Collection sizes can vary from small (under 50,000 slides), to large (the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU collection numbers over 2 million images). Much like a book library, these slides must be arranged logically for easy retrieval by professors, shelf-read regularly, replaced periodically, and developed as a collection for emerging curricular needs. Unlike a book library, however, there is no standard cataloging system (no Dewey decimal or Library of Congress standard). Each slide librarian develops his or her own method to organize collections. When I began working as the slide librarian, the AU collection consisted of around 75,000 35mm slides, plus about 10,000 lantern slides (large glass slides dating back to the earlier part of the century, which must be shown with a special, creaky, 3-

foot long projector). We used a customized alphanumeric coding system to enter our records information on old-fashioned card catalogs and filed the slides according to that system. At the time I began working at AU, there were no electronic records, digital images, professional listservs, or much other networked information.

It used to be that most slide librarians had educational backgrounds in art history or other humanities fields. And that is still often the case. But today, more and more of us may also hold degrees in library science or in technical fields. Today's slide librarian, more likely called a Visual Resources Curator, manages digital collections, has up-to-the-minute knowledge of scanning techniques and digital preservation issues, understands cataloging, and should be able to oversee technical staff. The visual resource center is more likely to consist of computer workstations than typewriter stands!

Visual resources positions vary greatly from university to university. Very few are considered clerical or support staff, which was unfortunately common up until about 15 years ago. But some VR curators work within the university library system (as a member of the library faculty), while others are housed within academic units. Those in academic units may enjoy more autonomy, but they likely struggle for funding and other resources. Many visual resource centers are one-person operations, others are complex organizations with dual accessioning (analog and digital) operations running side by side, such as the Slides and Digital Imaging Center of the Fine Arts Library at Harvard University.

At AU, the position has changed dramatically since I arrived. Some of those changes are a result of the transition from analog slide display to digital delivery, but other changes are unique to AU and perhaps to my own interests and skills. The Visual Resources Center (as we now call the slide library), serves as the hub of the art history program. It is the gathering place for students before classes and the rendezvous point for students and advisors. We've added some formal activities such as a fall Welcome Reception and Orientation for new and returning grad students and a spring luncheon. We also periodically hold a reception at the College Art Association annual

(Alumna Profile, continued page 6)

conference. Each of these events takes planning and implementation, an added task for the visual resources curator. Serving as co-editor of *ARTifacts* is another of my newer duties. Working on *ARTifacts* brings me in contact with the alumni office, and I've worked with them on updating alumni contact information. Mrs. Sylvia Kassalow's generous donation of her slide collection and then her book collection brought the responsibility for maintaining and developing that library, adding book librarian to my list of duties! But overseeing the transition from analog image management to digital image management has been the most challenging part of my job. Learning about electronic delivery of information, special cataloging issues, proper image sizing for various display levels, arranging server space with university IT staff, setting up accounts for accessing the server, understanding and interpreting copyright issues, and ordering new hardware such as scanners, are all duties not covered in my original job description! Today, I work with staff at the University Library, the IT staff, and other colleagues from across campus.

I became involved years ago in the Visual Resources Association (VRA). VRA is the pre-eminent international association of image professionals from the academic, museum, and commercial sectors. For VRA, I have chaired the Mid-Atlantic regional chapter, the Intellectual Property Rights committee, and the Membership committee. I also co-chaired the Strategic Planning Task Force, which developed VRA's first and very comprehensive Strategic Plan. Last year, I was elected to the position of President of VRA, and I am currently serving my first-year of a two-year term. I have leadership duties at our annual conference, serve as liaison to many other associations such as the College Art Association, the Museum Computer Network, and the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA), among others, and steer the Executive Board in administering the ongoing work of the Visual Resources Association. I speak at conferences across the country and recently served on the faculty

of the first Summer Educational Institute for Visual Resources and Image Management. I find the work extremely gratifying and am honored to have been elected to lead the Association over the next few years. You can go online and check out what we do. Our Web site offers interesting resources for the cultural, educational, and technical communities. Our educational component is a large part of VRA's efforts and most of our resources are openly available online.

<www.vraweb.org>.

In addition to our electronic resources, we have several print publications. Our *Guide to Cataloguing Chinese Art*, for example, is due out this fall and is eagerly anticipated as the most comprehensive guide of its type.

On a more personal note, I have been described by one of the current graduate students as the "ultimate Washington insider!" In fact, my husband and I do socialize within the Washington establishment, and attend fascinating events at the embassies, museums, and other venues. For example, during the past several months, I have attended two U.S. State Department ceremonies in which friends were installed as Ambassadors! I travel regularly and recent destinations have included Hong Kong, London, Paris, and Moscow.

One of my fondest duties is to work with our current students—and then meet up with them as alums to hear about their work and contributions. And, although my life is hectic, and I frequently think my somewhat peripatetic lifestyle is overwhelming, I cannot imagine giving up the fun of working with students. Keeping in touch with the alums gives me a chance to remember back to other days in the slide library, other wonderful students, and other fascinating conversations. I feel lucky to have found this interesting career and would recommend it as a fascinating and potentially adventurous opportunity! ■

Be profiled in the next *ARTifacts*.
Contact the editors for details.

- **Lisa Farrington (MA '80)** participated in An Evening of Women Designers at the New School/Parsons School of Design in New York City in April. The reception, book signing, and lecture highlighted Professor Farrington's new book on Faith Ringgold.
- **Kathe Hicks Albrecht (MA '89)** was installed as President of the Visual Resources Association at the Visual Resources Association (VRA) annual conference in Portland, Oregon, in March. In July, she served on the faculty of the Summer Educational Institute for Visual Resources and Image Management, held at Duke University. AU alums, **Natalie Yoder (MA '02)** and **Lisa Coldiron (MA '95)**, were students at the Institute. ■
- **Vanessa Rocco (BA '92)** has just completed her doctorate at the Graduate Center, CUNY. The title of her dissertation was "Before Film und Foto: Pictorialism to the New Vision in German Photography Exhibitions from 1909-29." She is currently an assistant curator at the International Center of Photography in New York and curated an exhibition this past spring on Moholy-Nagy's photographic experiments of the 1920s.
- **Leo Costello (MA '96)** has taken a temporary art history position at Rice University. Leo and his wife have been living in the Houston area for several years while Leo was associated with the Houston Museum of Fine Arts.
- **Marisa J. Pascucci (BA '96)** is the associate curator of Paintings and Sculpture at the Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts in Montgomery, Alabama. She recently curated the exhibition, *Roger Brown, A Different Dimension*. The exhibition of three-dimensional works by this Alabama native also traveled to the Chicago Cultural Center in Chicago, Illinois.
- **Suzanne L'Heureux (MA '99)** recently wrote an article for the environmental magazine, *Sustainable Industries Journal*. She and her husband, Tony, welcomed a new baby boy, Miles, to their family in July.
- **Jennifer (Guen) Griffiths (BA '01)** is in the art history doctoral program at Bryn Mawr and has just completed her first year of coursework. She will be exploring Italian modernism (La Corrente) for her thesis. This summer she will be in Rome, doing research and exploring the sights and sounds of Italy.
- **Karla Huebner (MA '02)** writes that her year is going well at Pittsburgh. She taught a class session on Czech Surrealism for her advisor and is looking forward to continuing her language courses in the summer. She is studying both Czech and Slovak. She took her comprehensive exams in April, concentrating on 1860-Pop, Central European Art, and International Surrealism. She is hoping for summer research funding for travel and language studies.

IN MEMORIAM

Alums will be saddened to hear of the recent death of Professor H. Diane Russell, scholar of Baroque graphic art, who taught as an adjunct professor in the AU art history program for many years. Professor Russell died on March 4, 2004, of lung cancer at the age of 67.

From 1990 until her retirement in 1998, Diane Russell held the position of curator and head of the department of Old Master prints at the National Gallery of Art, where she had served as curator since 1964. She curated and wrote the catalogues for major NGA exhibitions on Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Jacques Calot, and Claude Lorrain, and *Eva/Ave: Woman in Renaissance Prints*. She received awards from the American Association of Museums and the College Art Association for her work on the Lorrain catalogue.

A Kansas native, Professor Russell held a BA in art history from Vassar College and a doctorate from the Johns Hopkins University. Throughout her active career as a museum professional, she maintained a strong interest in college teaching, which led to her association with our department. From 1966 through the early 1990s, she offered advanced courses in Northern Renaissance art, Baroque art, and the history of graphic arts. On occasion, she taught Approaches to Art History and was once the department sponsor for Lisa Kirk, our speaker in the Middle Atlantic Symposium in the History of Art. Professor Russell greatly enjoyed and valued her association with the students and the program. She was highly respected and admired by her students, and faculty and staff tremendously valued her exceptional contributions to the program. We will all miss her as a mentor, colleague, and friend.

— Mary D. Garrard