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# “Paint, Prints & Pixels” a VRA Affiliate Society session presented at the College Art Association’s 100th Annual Conference in Los Angeles, CA.

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the process of creating a VRA Affiliate Society session for the 100<sup>th</sup> annual College Art Association Conference, Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012.

**Author Bio & Acknowledgements**

John M. Trendler is Curator of Visual Resources at Scripps College in Claremont, CA.

Back in the summer of 2010, while I was still chair of the Visual Resource Association's Southern California regional chapter, I was asked if I would be willing to ask local chapter members if anyone would be interested in working on a session proposal for the College Art Association's 2012 conference. Two years seemed like plenty of time to come up with a proposal, but the deadline for submission was September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, less than two months out. Realizing that in 2012 CAA would be celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and VRA would be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> it seemed appropriate to focus the session on an historical perspective of image use. With the gracious help of Maureen Burns, we arrived at the working title, "Paint, Prints & Pixels: Learning from the History of Teaching with Images" and a proposal was drafted and submitted by the September 1<sup>st</sup> deadline.

Ultimately the full session was not accepted, but there was still the option to submit the proposal as an affiliate society session. Therefore, in the spring of 2011 I sent out another call for proposals to the members of VRA and several affiliated societies. Within the next couple months, proposals were received, reviewed and accepted. The session statement and speaker abstracts were submitted by the September 2011 deadline.

The session was accepted as an affiliated society session and was composed of the following presentations:

**"Revisioning Art History: how a century of change in imaging technologies helped to shape a discipline"**

**Allan T. Kohl, Minneapolis College of Art & Design**

Beginning in the latter nineteenth century, the use of photography to document works of art was a key factor in the emergence of art history as an independent discipline. The subsequent introduction of new technologies such as lantern slides, 35mm. color slides, and carousel projectors resulted in significant transformations in pedagogy. In the twentieth century, the growing use of photographic illustrations influenced a shift in emphasis in the textual content of scholarly publications such as exhibition catalogs, artist monographs, and journal articles. More recently, the digital revolution has increased access to art information, transforming the ways works of art are studied and taught. Today the high quality digital image is a fundamental scholarly resource, and specialized forms of investigative photography offer new ways of analyzing the ultimate primary sources: the works of art themselves.

**"Light Explorations: Teaching 19th - 21st Century Intersections of Photographic, Scientific, and Digital Technologies"**

**Sheila Pinkel, Pomona College**

In the class "Light Explorations" I introduce art and non-art students to a spectrum of low and high tech light related approaches to image making. Students spend the first half of the class learning 19th C. photographic techniques including photograms, pinhole

photography, and solar prints. They also learn to make large negatives, first in the darkroom and then using the computer and scanner. These negatives are then used to make cyanotypes and Van Dyke brown prints. During the second half of the course they go to the physics lab on campus to generate images using a high speed camera which takes 2,000 frames/second, an infrared camera, an optical microscope and a scanning electron microscope. The class finishes with students working on projects of their own choosing using any technology they want. In this lecture I will discuss approaches to these topics and the ways that both art and non-art students manifest their ideas.

### **“Pictures of Art History: The Getty Research Institute's Photo Study Collection”**

**Anne Blecksmith & Tracey Schuster, The Getty Research Institute**

In 1974, the J. Paul Getty Museum developed a “photo library” by consolidating the visual resources of each curatorial department. In 1983, the “library” was incorporated into the new Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities and quickly grew to become one of the world’s largest collections of photographs of art. In addition, collection development moved away from acquiring commercially available photographs in bulk to curatorially-selected acquisitions of photo archives assembled by art historians, conservators, archaeologists, photographers, and dealers. In recent years, the interdisciplinary use of these images has tapped into some of the unrealized research potential of the archive. In our paper, we will discuss the historiographical significance of four unique photograph collections acquired for the archive and how photographs of art objects, architecture, art-related professions and historical events form part of the permanent record of Art History.

### **"New Challenges for a Digital Generation: An Information Literacy Approach to Teaching Visual Literacy"**

**Joanna Burgess, Reed College; Ann Medaille, University Nevada, Reno**

The use of digital images continues to increase both in art history and across the disciplines with the accessibility and prevalence of technology. Students today are expected to apply information literacy skills (those abilities involved with finding, evaluating, and using information) in a visual context; however, students often struggle with using visual content in a scholarly setting. Librarians are playing a key role in helping students access and use visual media by integrating visual literacy into traditional library instruction. To provide educators with relevant teaching tools across the disciplines, the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) recently developed a set of Visual Literacy Learning Competency Standards. This presentation will review the connections between information and visual literacies, describe the ACRL Visual Literacy Standards project, and provide examples of ways that the Standards are being implemented.

The session took place Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> from 12:30 – 2:00 pm at the Los Angeles Convention Center. As this was my first time moderating a session at the College Art Association, it was interesting to see what goes into the creation of such a content-rich session. I was glad there was an opportunity to revise and resubmit the proposal.

Finally, I would like to thank Meghan Musolff, Mark Pompelia, Maureen Burns and Lauren Stark for their invaluable help and guidance throughout the process.