

December 2015

Report on CAVRACON 2015

Jacqueline Spafford

University of California, Santa Barbara, spafford@hfa.ucsb.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://online.vraweb.org/vrab>

Recommended Citation

Spafford, Jacqueline (2015) "Report on CAVRACON 2015," *VRA Bulletin*: Vol. 42: Iss. 1, Article 1.
Available at: <https://online.vraweb.org/vrab/vol42/iss1/1>

This Association News is brought to you for free and open access by VRA Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in VRA Bulletin by an authorized editor of VRA Online.

Report on CAVRACON 2015

Abstract

This past June the third California Visual Resources Association Conference was held at the University of California, Santa Barbara. With this third iteration CAVRACON truly matured into an offering of exceptionally strong content, presented by diverse speakers. It represented collaboration at its best, resulting in presentations of great interest and value, and enhanced networking opportunities. This report summarizes the program and content, and remarks on the evolution of this institution in its three short cycles.

Author Bio & Acknowledgements

Jackie Spafford has been the Curator of the Image Resource Center at UCSB since 1998. During this time she has overseen waves of transition, and growth of the Center's services and collection. She is the co-editor of the Society of Architectural Historians' SAHARA project. Prior to coming to UCSB she worked at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Ontario, and attended the University of Toronto.

The third California Visual Resources Association Conference, now a biennial event, took place this past June at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The first CAVRACON was held here at UCSB in 2011, the second in 2013 at Sonoma State University. While each meeting has been a rich and rewarding experience for all concerned, with this third iteration CAVRACON truly matured into a professional summit, offering exceptionally strong content, diverse and knowledgeable speakers, and advanced opportunities for networking and idea sharing.

CAVRACON originated from the desire to bring together the Northern and Southern California Chapters of the VRA for a joint meeting. The concept was quickly expanded to include California ARLIS/NA members, and all others working with or interested in image collection management, image-related technology and pedagogy, and other issues of interest within this general focus. The goal has been to move around the state each time to make it as accessible as possible at least every four years. Santa Barbara has been flagged as a popular destination as it is as close to mid-state as possible, which makes it drivable for most attendees. (It is, however, an expensive city to fly to, so having venues closer to larger airports has been requested for future meetings.) In terms of scheduling, mid-June has proved to be the best time for many, and opens up opportunities for hosting venues as institutions on the quarter system (e.g., most of the University of California campuses) are between sessions. The format of a half day and full day, falling on a Thursday and Friday, has also been a formula that has worked well from the beginning as it allows travelers a morning to get to the destination, and the option of staying over into the weekend.

The local hosts and organizers this year were myself and my colleague Christine Fritsch-Hammes. Fortunately, we were able to go back to our 2011 planning experience and repeat the things that worked, and improve the rest. We were able to secure the same facility as last time, the McCune Conference Room, through UCSB's Interdisciplinary Humanities Center. It holds about seventy-five people comfortably, and has the advantage of a side room that can be blocked off with sliding doors. This space was used for coffee breaks, lunch, and our wine reception. Attendees and speakers were on their own for accommodation, but we provided an extensive list of options in the area, as well as recommendations for restaurants, travel, parking, entertainment, and cultural offerings in the area.

Among the factors that raised the bar with CAVRACON 2015 was the joint leadership of Greg Reser (UC San Diego; Chair, VRA SoCal) and Jason Hosford (UC Berkeley; Chair, VRA NoCal). Together they kept everyone and everything on a schedule, sent out calls and announcements, and managed the website and online documents. They were ably assisted by Brenda Lozano (Getty Research Institute, and VRA SoCal Secretary/Treasurer) who handled attendee registration.

Arguably the biggest factor that elevated this CAVRACON was the work of the excellent Programming Committee. It was chaired by Maureen Burns (VRA Past President) and included Teodora Bozhilova (UC Riverside), Jason Hosford (UC Berkeley), Kathryn Stine (UC Berkeley), and Rachel Wen-Paloutzian (Loyola Marymount University). The committee put out calls to a wide variety of institutions and listservs, and received a broad range of proposals; in addition, they brainstormed topics and directly approached a number of individuals to participate as

speakers and panelists. They worked together to organize these proposals and speakers into a program of sessions with themes that provided a logical structure and flow of ideas.

Another aspect of CAVRACON which stood out this year was the way vendors were incorporated into the program. Maureen Burns was able to secure representation from several California-based companies. In exchange for a modest sponsorship fee, these vendors were given demonstration space around the perimeter of our meeting room, and time before and after the sessions and during refreshment breaks to meet with attendees and discuss their products and services. The vendors included Archivision (Maureen Burns), Artstor (Caroline Caviness), Digital Revolution (Paul Grippaldi), Gawain Weaver Art Conservation/Two Cat Digital (Gawain Weaver), and Luna Imaging (George Helfand). All were very generous with their time, and made strong connections with attendees.

The program began midday on Thursday, June 18, with attendee check-in and the first round of vendor-attendee contact, followed by welcome remarks and introductions. The first session, “The Digital Public Library of America,” included two presentations: *Hubba Hub: DPLA as a strategic collaborator with the USC Digital Library* (Matt Gainer, Giao Luong Baker and Caroline Muglia from the University of Southern California Libraries), and *Lowering the Hurdles to Open Access: Artstor’s Tools for Contributing Digital Collections to DPLA and Beyond* (Caroline Caviness, Assistant Director of Strategic Services, Artstor).

After a coffee break (generously sponsored by the UCSB Library), we reconvened for “Collaborative Collection Building” with three presentations: *Preserving and Sharing Architectural Images* (Jackie Spafford, Image Resource Center, UC Santa Barbara); *The CSU Japanese American Digitization Project: Planning and Implementing a Multi-Institutional Endeavor* (Greg Williams, Director of Archives and Special Collections, CSU Dominguez Hills; Sue Tyson, Special Collections Archivist, Getty Research Institute; and Maureen Burns, Consultant, IMAGinED); and *The Theory and Practice of Digital Collections in an Institutional Repository* (Kelly Riddle, Digital Initiatives Librarian, and Rachel Lieu, Special Collections Manager, both from the University of San Diego).

Day One wrapped up with a wine reception sponsored by Archivision, Artstor, Gawain Weaver and Digital Revolution. In addition to enjoying wine and nibbles, attendees had further opportunity to chat with the vendors, and the chance to win raffle draw prizes donated by the vendors.

Day Two, June 19, started off with the session “Digital Capture and Image Management.” The first paper, *Sizable Growth + Change: Digital Asset Management through SFMOMA’s Expansion* (John Morris, Visual Resources Associate, Collections Information and Access Department, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art), was followed by *Cost Saving Strategies for High Volume Image Capture: the Levi Strauss Project* (Jeff Hurn, Photographer/Videographer, and Jack Schaeffer, VP/Executive Producer, Digital Revolution/Act 3). The next session, “Image Collections, Access and Permissions”, included *What’s New with NGA Images* (Peter Dueker, Head of Digital Imaging Services, National Gallery of Art [Peter was the one representative of an institution outside California, but is himself a Californian]), and *Image Permissions for Publication as a VRC Service* (Linda Fitzgerald, Director, Administration and VRC; Jason Hosford, Senior Digital Curator; and Kathryn Stine, Senior Digital Curator, Visual Resources Center, all from UC Berkeley).

Our first afternoon session, “Teaching with Images and Information Literacy,” did not go quite as planned and required some last minute heroics. Rachel Wen-Paloutzian (Special Collections and Metadata Librarian, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University), presented *More than Images: Postcards and New Reflections on Information Literacy*. Unfortunately, two of the other speakers scheduled for this session were unable to attend, so Greg Reser (UC San Diego) stepped-up on short notice and gave a demonstration of the latest developments in Embedded Metadata and the VRA Panel. In addition to saving the day and keeping the schedule on track, our attendees got a bonus preview of this wonderful tool.

The day and the conference concluded with a panel discussion, “Defining Digital Humanities: Where We Are, What Might Lie Ahead,” moderated by Miriam Posner (Digital Humanities Program Coordinator, UC Los Angeles). The panelists included Anne Cong-Huyen (Digital Scholar, Whittier College); Craig Dietrich (Research Assistant Professor, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California); Melanie Hubbard (Digital Scholarship Librarian, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University); Emily Pugh (Digital Humanities Specialist, The Getty Research Institute); and Kathryn Stine (Senior Digital Curator, Visual Resources Center, UC Berkeley). Each panelist spoke briefly about how DH is changing their work, and how they are adapting and innovating. Dr. Posner then led a discussion, which included many comments and questions from attendees.

After the panel, many attendees and speakers were keen to continue their conversations, as well as reluctant to head out into Friday night Southern California traffic, so a second impromptu wine reception was convened. It was evident from this final hour that everyone enjoyed the conference content, the exchange of ideas, the networking, and the general camaraderie. We thank all who planned, coordinated, presented at and attended this summer event and look forward to CAVRACON 2017!

You can see more about program here, with links to most of the presentations:

<https://sites.google.com/site/cavracon2015/home>