

November 2014

2014 State of the Visual Resources Association

Jolene M. de Verges

Southern Methodist University, jdeverges@smu.edu

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



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

de Verges, Jolene M. (2014) "2014 State of the Visual Resources Association," *VRA Bulletin*:Vol. 40: Iss. 2, Article 4.

Available at: <https://online.vraweb.org/vrab/vol40/iss2/4>

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.

2014 State of the Visual Resources Association

Abstract

During the 2014 Annual Business Meeting of the Visual Resources Association in Milwaukee, WI, the president highlighted the accomplishments and challenges of the Association in a state of the association presentation. This article provides the transcript.

Author Bio & Acknowledgements

Jolene de Verges is currently the Director of the Hamon Arts Library at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Her background is in the field of art librarianship and visual resources where she has focused on the coordination of metadata and the management of curated digital collections in art and architecture libraries.

It is time for us to consider the state of the Visual Resources Association in 2014. The efforts and projects undertaken and completed this past year by the Association encompassed strategic internal themes and professional trends across the world. Before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity to again thank the VRA Foundation for their sponsorship of the Legacy Lecture. Two years ago, with assistance from the Education Committee, the Board developed a Speakers' Fund designed to enhance our conferences with new voices from outside our profession. Now in its second year, this fund allows us to bring in colleagues with expertise and different perspectives on topics and areas relevant to the VRA membership. We thank the VRA Foundation for funding our plenary speaker, Philip Yenawine, and last year's sponsorship of James Elkins. These speakers address topics that further research and education in our field. I encourage all to attend the closing speaker, Matthew Israel, tomorrow.

In the interest of time, I will keep my remarks fairly short this morning. I would like to highlight three important initiatives which your Executive Board has focused this year.¹ These initiatives have served to

1. raise VRA's international profile;
2. build and reinforce relationships with our affiliate organizations; and
3. empower the Association through financial growth and stability.

The first initiative I would like to highlight is the VRA International Task Force. Exactly three years ago, this task force was launched to explore the potential for collaboration amongst visual resources professionals and institutions outside of North America. One goal of the International Task Force, chaired by our UK colleague Vicky Brown, was to "improve the support for international participation in the activities of VRA and increase VRA's international membership." The Task Force membership has grown in its three-year existence, and along with the UK and Ireland, currently there is representation from Italy, Germany, Finland, New Zealand, Australia, and Qatar. Overall international membership, which has been monitored and mapped by the Task Force, now covers ten countries across three continents and totals 30 VRA members.

I am pleased to report that the Executive Board has been presented with a petition for recognition of a new VRA chapter, the International Chapter. In the words of the Chair, Vicky Brown, "The formation of the *International Chapter* would enable us to continue our mission and to strive to achieve the task force aims; furthermore, we are satisfied that there is an abundance of support (across multiple continents, including North America), a powerful impetus, and compelling rationale to bring this to fruition." The International Task Force has been working through the potential logistics required to run a chapter that extends across borders and several time zones. They have drawn on the expertise of their Canadian colleagues. A dues structure and a set of chapter bylaws for Board review were included in the petition.

So, it is with great pleasure today that I announce that the VRA Executive Board has voted to approve the petition for recognition of the new VRA International Chapter. Until

¹ The 2014 Annual Conference of the Visual Resources Association was held March 12-15, 2014 in Milwaukee, WI. The conference program is archived at http://vraweb.org/conferences_page/past-conferences/

elections are conducted, provisional chapter leadership will be a Chair, Vicky Brown, University of Oxford, and serving as Secretary/Treasurer, Adreas Knab, who is based in Germany.

A formal announcement will be made soon, but I wanted everyone present today to share in this wonderful news. Please join me in congratulating the International Task Force on the successful fulfillment of their charge. The attendees of this conference, VRA 32, are already benefiting from their work and mission. Session 9 of this conference, *Case Studies in International Copyright Compliance*, is jointly sponsored by the International Task Force and the VRA IPR Committee.

And while I am not prepared to make any predictions about future VRA conferences or activities outside of the US and Canada, [*yes, I would love to be the first VRA president to announce an international conference venue*], I do know that you all share my excitement about the possibilities and look forward to future endeavors from the VRA International Chapter and its growing membership.

Continuing with the theme of raising the international profile of VRA, I would like to draw your attention to the work being done by the Data Standards Committee this past year that demonstrates our growing international visibility. Through the outreach efforts of the Embedded Metadata Working Group with the IPTC community, VRA is now participating as a founding partner in an international project tasked with developing a global standard for cultural heritage embedded metadata, through the addition of fields to the IPTC Extension. The project membership includes representation from libraries, archives, and museums from several countries. Additionally, the Embedded Metadata Working Group has received several inquiries about the VRA tools from colleagues throughout the world, including Canada, Brazil, Denmark, and Italy.

The next area of focus this year has been to build and reinforce relationships with affiliate organizations. As you've seen in the recent announcement about the appointments of our Affiliate Representatives to ARLIS/NA, CAA, SAH, and SECAC, VRA is committed to building upon relationships with our affiliated organizations. These are organizations whose various areas of interest overlap with our own and with whom we seek to insure steady communication and collaborative opportunities. Because the mission of VRA has greatly expanded into new 21st century fields of digital media management and curation, including moving images and non-image media, digital humanities, and visual literacy, it is critical to our future that we continue to strengthen those relationships. Quoting from the Education Committee's Annual Report, "embracing professionals from other, related fields is the key to keeping VRA a vibrant and relevant organization and expanding its membership."

An important step was taken last year to capitalize on our ongoing track record for collaboration with ARLIS/NA. The ARLIS/NA-VRA Joint Conference Task Force Report was submitted to the boards of both ARLIS and VRA at the end of last year. Comprehensive and thorough in its analysis of our historically different conference planning models, the report proposes that "a joint conference lends itself to the adoption of a new model different from the approach each organization takes when hosting its respective annual conferences. Further, the

joint conference serves to bring members together for a unique and collaborative experience resulting in a level of engagement only possible in a joint conference milieu.”

There will be more substantive news to share in the year ahead as our respective boards jointly respond to the recommendations of the Task Force, including updates related to the 2016 Joint Conference in Seattle. The proposed theme of the 2016 joint conference is “Natural Connections,” highlighting the shared values of ARLIS and VRA. Creating a meaningful conference experience through the development of programming and opportunities that enhance our professionalism and relevance to our institutions is the goal shared by ARLIS and VRA.

The third and final area of focus for VRA is to empower the Association through financial growth and stability. Here my remarks will be very brief, since Treasurer Allan Kohl will report in greater detail our financial goals and strategy. In mid-November, the VRA Board, in consultation with the Financial Advisory Committee, voted to adopt the VRA Investment Policy and Procedures, to be implemented at the start of fiscal year 2015. The policy lays out two primary objectives: 1) to preserve and grow our accumulated assets through an investment in a portfolio of long-term, moderate-risk growth strategies, and 2) to provide an additional source of funding through an annual drawdown of the accumulated total portfolio value. The Endowment will be dedicated to one or more purposes that would provide more direct benefit to the membership. Please give Allan your full attention during the Treasurer’s report, next on our agenda.

In closing, and on behalf of the Executive Board, I would like to thank all of you for your support and encouragement this year. Speaking personally, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve you as the VRA President.