VIEWS

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INSIDE

From the Chair
Stephen Fletcher
UNC-Chapel Hill

Staying Relevant . . . from 30,000 feet.

When all else fails, look up . . . or down. I was having the hardest time writing this, my final column as Section Chair, trashing a half dozen attempts. I wanted to talk about the three-year plan and just didn't know where to go with it, getting bogged down in the minutia. Finally, way (way!) past my final deadline it hit me: look at it from 30,000 feet.

The theme for the midwinter meeting was "staying relevant." We discussed many ideas from different perspectives, and many of the specific initiatives can be found in the document now in formation. But when I stepped back from the individual discussions or specific ideas, the overall picture—the view from 30,000 feet—pointed to new emphasis on staying current in order to stay relevant.

One of our section's trademarks has been pushing the frontier, with VIEWS and our section's web site being two shining examples. As meeting attendees looked at both of these, however, they were looking a bit dated—not only stylistically, but more importantly, in their functions. A quarterly publication and static Web 1.0 website stand little chance of being relevant in the current realm of Tweets and social networking. The most important revelation that emerged from this year's Midwinter Meeting was the need to converge our best assets, making the web site more informative and interactive, and being able to convey information on a regular basis rather than every few months. As the section goes forward, you will begin to see this convergence with a newly designed web site based upon the content management system Drupal. Coincidently, SAA has recently implemented Drupal for its redesigned web site. But as VMers, we want to do more than SAA can currently implement. By pushing the VM web site beyond what SAA headquarters can currently provide, the Visual Materials Section can stay relevant with timely information and interaction, once perhaps more importantly, staying on the frontier.

SAA Annual Meeting, Washington DC
VM Section Events and Sessions of Interest

Wednesday, August 11
10:00 AM – NOON:
- Library of Congress Open House: viewing special collections, new housing ideas, and hopefully a stack-tour

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM:
- Architectural Records Roundtable Meeting

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM:
- Visual Materials Cataloging and Access Roundtable Meeting

Thursday, August 12
8:30 AM – 10:00 AM
- Real-World Digitizing for Humble Shops Undertaking Hefty
- Digitization Projects.

10:30 AM – NOON
- Providing Web Access to Medical and Health-Related Visual Materials for Diverse Users
- The Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiative: Case Studies of the Guidelines at Work

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM
- Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division behind-the-scene tours. Appointment required.

6:15 PM
- Visual Materials Section dinner at Madam's Organ in Adams Morgan

9:00 PM – 10:15 PM
- Archives in the Movies

Friday, August 13
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
- That Was Easy! Making Digital Archives a Pleasure to Use

10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
- On the Case with the "History Detectives": Public Television and Archival Advocacy

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
- Visual Materials Section Meeting

Saturday, August 14
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
- Working Toward Clarity on Copyright Publication for Visual Works
- Perspectives on Cartoons: Art, Archival Objects, Assets

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM
- The World at our Doorstep: Digitizing Historical Maps

Perspectives on Cartoons

Susan Kline, Assistant Librarian/
Cartoon Archivist
Special Collections Research Center,
Syracuse University

Later this year, the Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) at Syracuse University will be wrapping up a grant project funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to process 189 collections of work by cartoonists. In the 1960s, then curator Martin Bush contacted dozens of cartoonists asking if they would like to donate their original artwork to Syracuse. However, over the last forty years, the resulting collections have remained minimally processed.

To reveal these "hidden collections", SCRC applied for, and was awarded, an NHPRC detailed processing grant to complete a two year project involving the processing and description of these resources. The project has proven an exciting way to reveal the holdings of one of SCRC's larger collecting areas, which documents the medium of cartooning, particularly in the twentieth century. Cartoons are an especially accessible medium with nearly universal appeal. They hold the power to entertain while also providing social and political commentary. SCRC hopes the processing of these collections will attract scholars interested in exploring the medium of cartooning or studying the subjects depicted in the cartoons. Spanning approximately 1,000 linear feet and amounting to tens of thousands of unique cartoons, SCRC's 189 collections include primarily original artwork. However, selected collections also contain sketches, proofs, and correspondence. Excitingly much of this correspondence is in the form of letters from readers.

Generally, the cartoon collections at SCRC fall into two categories: comic strips and editorial cartoons. While the contents of cartoon collections at SCRC span the twentieth century and late nineteenth century, they are particularly strong in material from the 1950s and 1960s. Artwork for original comic strips held at SCRC includes familiar titles such as Archie and Beetle Bailey, as well as material from Prince Valiant and Mutt and Jeff, which is often regarded as the first daily comic strip.

Our editorial cartoons document defining events of the twentieth century such as the Cold War, Vietnam War, and the presidencies of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, as well as localized issues related to the cartoonists' home papers. Included is work that was published in geographically diverse locations and projects positions along the political spectrum. Several Pulitzer Prize winners are represented, including Paul Conrad and Don Wright. Also of interest are sports cartoons, such as those by Bill Gallo of the New York Daily News.

While not all of the cartoonists remain well known today, the work of lesser known names reflects the moment in time in which it was created and remains valuable documentation of American society and culture.

The grant project commenced with a survey of the collections to determine the general scope and contents of each collection and possible preservation issues. The survey led to discoveries of material SCRC was unaware it had. Following the survey, very basic finding aids and MARC catalog records were made available

Detail of original artwork for Roy Crane's Captain Easy strip, August 20, 1933.

Sorting and processing of editorial cartoon artwork.

online for each collection utilizing existing paper based finding aids (when they existed) and information gleaned from the survey.

With these initial finding aids and records in place, the processing and description phase began. The extent of prior processing has varied from collection to collection and has ultimately influenced the nature of what has been done to each collection during the project in terms of physical arrangement and description.

Biographical information obtained at the time of donation or initial processing has been confirmed and expanded utilizing specialized cartoon reference sources as well as some contributions of amateur scholars and fans, particularly in the form of blogs, which have proven very useful for describing lesser known comic strips. The format has also required creativity in terms of storage and preservation. It was determined that comic strips, having distinctly unique dimensions, best fit into boxes that were custom made by an archival supplier. Other cartoons, generally ranging in size from 11"x14" to over 18"x 24", have been relocated to newspaper boxes and occasionally odd sized items have been placed in map case drawers. Of concern, as well, has been the need to interleave editorial cartoons featuring charcoal and crayon shading, in order to prevent smudging.

Perhaps the most crucial aspect to the project has been the process of describing the cartoons so they may be of use to researchers. This process has provided challenges and opportunities for experimentation when it comes to working

with visual materials. Description of the comic strip collections was carried out in a fairly straightforward manner with inventories of dates. The editorial cartoons, however, generated discussion about how to best communicate their subject matter while balancing the cartoonist's intent and what exactly is depicted in the artwork.

While clearly appreciated by researchers, item level descriptions have not been feasible, except in a few circumstances where typed lists (and therefore OCR scannable) already existed, due to the volume of original art and the project's timeline. Instead, for editorial cartoons, SCRC has experimented with the EAD tag <index>, as a way to provide subject descriptions at the folder and box level. Carefully selected specific LCSH terms have been used to document the dominant people and subjects depicted in comic strips and editorial cartoons.

Another objective of the grant was to contribute to the Wikipedia articles for several dozen cartoonists. For cartoonists for which SCRC holds a large quantity of material, links to the respective finding aids have been added to their Wikipedia articles. In some cases biographical information in articles has been expanded using resources in the collections. SCRC's EAD finding aids are also indexed by Google. Because Wikipedia and Google are often the starting point for many casual (and serious) researchers (as well as comic art fans), promoting SCRC collections through these avenues will allow SCRC to reach more potential researchers. A final aspect of the project has been making other archivists, scholars and the public aware that SCRC is home to these unique collections through conference presentations and articles.

If you are interested in learning more about the issues involving these collections and cartoons in general, plan on attending session #508, Perspectives on Cartoons: Art, Archival Objects, Assets, at the Society of American Archivists annual meeting. For more information about SCRC, visit: http://www. scrc.syr.edu. For a list of finding aids for all the cartoonists see: http://library.syr.edu/digital/ guides/ead/subj_list_from_db.htm#cart

NEW in Print
By Liz Ruth, Assistant Editor
Los Angeles Maritime Museum

Falconer, John and Louise Hide.
Points of View: Capturing the 19th Century in Photographs.
Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009. 176 p.
Cloth $55.00. ISBN: 9780712350815
Paper $29.00. ISBN: 9780712350822
Available from http://www.press.uchicago.edu/new_releases/38.html

Fanning, Patricia J.
Through an Uncommon Lens: The Life and Photography of F. Holland Day.
Boston, MA : University of Massachusetts Press, 2008. 320 p.
Cloth $40.00. ISBN 978-1-55849-668-2.
Available at: http://www.umass.edu/umpress/subject/art.html

Kopelow, Gerry.
All Our Changes: Images from the Sixties Generation.
University of Manitoba, 2009. 180 p.
Paper $39.95. ISBN 978-0-88755-714-9
University of Manitoba, available at http://msupress.msu.edu/

Mraz, John.
Looking for Mexico: Modern Visual Culture and National Identity.
North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2009. 360 p.
Cloth: $84.95. ISBN 978-0-8223-4429-2
Paper: $23.95. ISBN 978-0-8223-4443-8
Available at: http://www.dukeupress.edu/

Potter, Russell Alan.
Arctic Spectacles: The Frozen North in Visual Culture, 1818-1875.
Montreal, CAN: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007. 272 p.
$39.95. ISBN 9780773533332
Available at: http://mqup.mcgill.ca/browse_books.php?by=subjects

Schulz, Constance B., editor.
Bust to Boom: Documentary Photographs of Kansas, 1936–1949.
University Press of Kansas, 2007. 160 p.
Cloth $29.95. ISBN 978-0-7006-0799-0
Available at: http://www.kansaspress.ku.edu

Shand-Tucci, Douglas.
Built in Boston: City and Suburb, 1800–2000. Revised and expanded edition.
Boston, MA : University of Massachusetts Press. 506 p.
$32.95. ISBN 1-55849-201-1.
Available at: http://www.umass.edu/umpress/subject/art.html

Siegel, Elizabeth.
Galleries of Friendship and Fame: A History of Nineteenth-Century American Photograph Albums.
Yale University Press, 2010. 216 p.
Cloth $50.00. ISBN: 9780300154061.
Available at: http://yalepress.yale.edu/yupbooks/ArtAndArchitecture/index.asp

Great Googie-Moogly!

Exhibit Reviews by John H. Slate, CA, Dallas Municipal Archives

A Record of Emotion: The Photographs of
Frederick H. Evans
February 2 – June 6, 2010
Getty Center, Los Angeles, CA

Las Vegas Studio: Images from The Archives of
Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown
March 21 – June 20, 2010
The Museum of Contemporary Art,
Los Angeles - Pacific Design Center,
West Hollywood

Two exhibits in the Los Angeles area featured similar yet very different areas of historic photography. While both showcased historic and artistic photo documentation, each had a different agenda. In one case, it was the artistry of late-19th century photographic prints and lantern slides. In the other, it was the use of film and photography as a learning and teaching tool. In the former, the object itself is in many ways as artistic as the subject matter; in the latter, the subject matter is the focus.

In A Record of Emotion: The Photographs of Frederick H. Evans, the subject is mostly architectural photography, punctuated with the occasional celebrity portrait (GB Shaw, Aubrey Beardsley). On first glance, it was a gallery filled with repetitive soft-lighting British cathedral and church interiors and exteriors. All have a very carefully constructed, ethereal sense of space. But what becomes more apparent upon individual inspection is the distinct and consistent quality of the prints themselves. Their beauty as physical objects are almost more impressive than what they are as visual documents. The haunting and enduring quality of platinum continues to charm.

Evans' work moves from monumental buildings to more intimate ones, such as studies of Dante Gabriel Rosetti's home and William Morris's Tudor farmhouse turned homestead, Kelmscott Manor. If you ever wondered where Morris's personal tastes ran in interior design, this would answer your questions. A side gallery containing a generous sampling of Evans' lantern slides took a greater look at depth of field and dimensionality in that format, one he actually favored over paper prints. Also included were a few examples of his microphotography.

If British architectural photography is new to you, you'll want to become familiar with Evans' work. The photographer (1853–1943) was very popular in his heyday. However, if you are a printing nut, and into something as specific as platinum prints, this show is also for you.

In an entirely different look at architecture, Las Vegas Studio: Images from The Archives of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown was actually a meta-exhibit: it's documentation of documentation. In preparation for what became the landmark 1972 book Learning from Las Vegas architects Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, together with students from Yale University, made a critical study of what is generally considered the classic tawdry architecture, signage, and cityscapes of Las Vegas. What made this a meta-exhibit is the display of original research materials, including over 80 photographs and a selection of films shot during the authors' 1968 research that figured into their study.

During the 1968 trip, both color transparency (most likely Ektachrome) and color eight millimeter film were shot of street views, signage, and buildings later used in classes and in a lengthy dialogue about the meaning of mixed building styles.

On one wall, an oversized graph created for classroom use incorporated photographs of then-famous hotels with corresponding reductive information about its elemental styles – Moorish design elements in the Sands, Neo-classical elements in Caesar's Palace, Space-Age "Googie" style, and so forth. At one end of the exhibit space a slide carousel projected duplicates of the slides. Beside it a more modern projector looped the silent films completing the "work in progress" feel. Cases for two-dimensional paper items displayed original notebooks. In another case, a sampling of the many foreign printings of Learning from Las Vegas offered a vivid demonstration of the book's

lasting importance and how it redeemed Googie and other modernist architecture styles.

The exhibit was organized by The Museum im Bellpark, Kriens (Switzerland), and followed presentations at Museum im Bellpark, Kriens,; Deutsches Architekturmuseum, Frankfurt; and Yale School of Architecture.

A Little Background and Context on the Chair-elect

Stephen Cohen. MetLife

Of late, I am performing as a records manager at MetLife in New York City. As it sounds, it does not leave much room for involvement with visual materials. My days are spent mostly with text-based legal records like pleadings, correspondence, agreements, certificates, and so on. My colleague and I provide reference/retrieval support on inactive records, ensure the records management database runs smoothly, investigate solutions to strengthen the records management program (since it can only facilitate the legal hold and discovery process). Additionally, I am also the fire warden for my floor, and the Continuing Legal Education administrator for the company's 400+ lawyers and paralegals. To its credit, Snoopy's insurance company is serious about staying out of trouble. And for that, it keeps its lawyers, paralegals and me very busy.

Let me digress for a while...

"How did a records manager get to be elected chairman of the SAA Visual materials Section?" you might ask. The short answer is, "I was elected, that's how." Here's the longer answer: While I am now pegged as a records manager, I do not draw distinctions between a records manager andan archivist. To me they are two sides of the same coin. Now that I've reconciled that part, the VM piece is easy. I see all records as equal, whether they're legal, personal papers, lab notebooks, microforms, or even visual materials. I also do not like to draw distinctions between human-

eye readable and machine-readable records. I think all archivists/records managers should be knowledgeable to a degree with visual materials as in our lives we are constantly confronted with visual information that we must understand.

Digressing a little more, my educational background is in the fine arts (University of Connecticut), specifically photography, printmaking (lithography and intaglio), and a wee bit of graphic design. And not to overlook my graduate education in archives and records management at the University of Texas at Austin, where I took every elective on visual materials that I could.

To get my "fix" of visual materials while living as a records manager, I do periodic consulting work for the Yale Swimming Association, processing their records which include a wealth of photographs, ephemera, albums stretching back more than 90 years. I also am an amateur photographer who tinkers with Photoshop and recently got a snazzy Epson V700 photo scanner to begin reviewing and printing selections from my 20 year backlog of medium format film.

I urge everyone to look over the blogged conversations from our late mid-winter/vernal equinox meeting (http://vm3yr2010.wikispaces.com/) and to be able to contribute one way or another toward improving the communication and knowledge of our constituents. Contributions needn't be grandiose or require significant time commitments. An hour of your time, whether it's writing part of an article, providing expertise on a specific topic or project, or just making a few phone calls is all that's need in most instances. If you think you can help, whether in a small way or a big way, let me know so I know who to reach out to when the opportunity arises.

Visual Materials Section Midwinter Meeting participants visit the Skull and Bones building at Yale University during a break in the action. (L – R: Stephen Fletcher, Chair; Anne Salsich, Steering Committee Member-at-large; Tim Hawkins, Newsletter Editor; Stephen Cohen, Chair-Elect.)

To review the 3-year plan developed during the meeting, or to revisit the entire discussion, go to http://vm3yr2010.wikispaces.com/

Cooliris:a browser based method for image viewing

By Scott Prouty
American Institute of Physics (AIP),
Emilio Segrè Visual Archives (ESVA)

Cooliris[1] has been around since 2006, but has only recently experienced a large pick-up in use of its free tools.[2] Why the interest? At its essence, Cooliris is a browser plug-in that works with Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, and Google Chrome to allow users to quickly browse and view large numbers of images and videos as well as partnering television and cable channels. More specifically, the tool allows you to drag or scroll through image sets at any speed while viewing any number of rows (these features can be adjusted). Users can also zoom in and out and see the image filenames and file size when hovering over an image. Once installed in your browser, you can activate Cooliris by clicking a browser toolbar icon or a browse over icon in the corner of any website image you pull up.

For photo archivists, this has the potential to be a powerful tool as Cooliris works not only with content on the web but images stored on your hard drive and networks as well. For instance, if someone sends me a large donation of electronic images, whether on CD or via FTP, I can quickly scan through them in order to appraise which images will receive full cataloging. In addition, a newly developed features is Cooliris Express, which is a "version of the Cooliris Wall you can embed into your [web]site."[3] Using Express, you can share content you may have already posted to certain social media sites by publishing an embedded wall on another such site. While the service is free, if you register, Cooliris allows you to save and edit your embedded walls. Google Analytics also provides statistical support to registered users. For archivists with limited time and budget, tools such as Cooliris and Cooliris Express may be useful in fulfilling the appraising, processing, and publicity functions for your collection.

1 http://www.cooliris.com
2 http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/technology/2010/04/cooliris.html
3 From "Facebook, Flickr, Picasa, YouTube, or any Media RSS feed" to "Facebook, Twitter, Blogger, WordPress, or your website."

QR Codes: Could You Use These to Promote Your Collection's Services?

By Karen Holt, Digital Assets
Instruction, and Outreach Librarian
The University of Texas at Austin

QR codes…They're big in Japan! They have also been cropping up recently on everything from San Francisco restaurant windows to library catalogs. But what are they exactly? Like a barcode, the quick response, or QR, code stores data. While the typical barcode is capable of storing a maximum of approximately 20 digits, the QR code can store up to 7,089 characters.

QR codes are capable of storing a URL, a social network address (like your collection's Facebook page), your contact information, an SMS, text, a Google maps location, and an RSS feed. If you have a phone with a camera and you can download a QR code reading app, then you are set to read these codes. Your phone will decode the symbol and then point your phone's web browser to the encoded info.

Creating QR codes is super easy with a QR code generator. These can be found online from a variety of sites. Some of the most popular include Kaywa, Delivr, and QR Stuff. Popular QR code readers include Beetagg, Google Zxing, and NeoReader.

Libraries are beginning to do a number of interesting things with QR codes. The University of Bath and the University of Huddersfield have embedded QR codes into their catalogs, so that their users can download call numbers by snapping a pic of the QR code. They can then take these call numbers into the stacks with them and find the books they need.

The Sacramento Public Library has a QR code on their blog grandCENTRAL that will offer to add the phone number for their new "My Info Quest: text 4 answers" service to the user's cell phone. With the phone number added to their contact list, it will be easy for the user to call the library whenever they have a library-related question.

The Columbus Metropolitan Library has put codes in their stacks that, when scanned with a QR code reader, take users directly to the mobile catalog. This service makes it much more convenient for patrons to find books while they are in the stacks, and there is the added bonus of not having to wait in line to use a library computer to access the catalog.

At the University of Texas Fine Arts Library, I am currently working on a project to create QR codes to be placed with items in our exhibition spaces. When scanned, these QR codes will take our users to call numbers for books that they can check out to learn more about the objects on display.

QR codes are a relatively new technology to the libraries and archives world, so there will probably be a slight curve in introducing your users to this technology. However, I think that possibility of introducing your users to a new technology is an exciting opportunity to show off your tech savvy, while promoting your collections and services. Try them out and let your users experience your collection in a new way!

Resources:
QR Code generators:
Kaywa - http://qrcode.kaywa.com/
Delivr - http://delivr.com/qr-code-generator
QR Stuff - http://www.qrstuff.com/
BeeTagg - http://generator.
beetagg.com/?a=facebook
QR Code readers:
Beetagg - http://www.beetagg.com/
Zxing - http://code.google.com/p/zxing/
NeoReader - http://www.neoreader.com/

Exhibits

By Shawn Waldron
Archive Director
Conde Naste Publications

Photographing the American West
Palm Springs Art Museum
Palm Springs, CA
May 29th to January 3rd

Beat Memories: The Photographs of Allen Ginsbergs
National Gallery of Art
Washington, D.C.
May 2nd to September 6th

Twilight Visions: Surrealism, Photography, and Paris 1924-39
Telfair Museum
Savannah, GA
June 11th to October 10th

Out of the Box: Photography Portfolios from the Permanent Collection
Decordova Museum
Lincoln, MA
Ends on October 1st

Walker Evans: Decade by Decade
Cincinnati Art Museum
Cincinnati, OH
June 12th to September 5th

Imogen Cunningham: Everything Under the Sun
Seattle Art Museum
Seattle, WA
Ends August 29th

Parting Shots...

By Tim Hawkins, Editor

Where's my VIEWS?

If you're one of those Visual Materials Section members who anxiously scans your email waiting for the announcement of the release of the latest VIEWS, then I sincerely apologize. Actually, I apologize even if you're not.

This issue of VIEWS has been sitting "in the can," to use the film term, since last April. Unfortunately, there have been a couple of key items missing, so it hasn't been possible to publish the issue until those were in place. That's the reality of working with limited resources and a completely volunteer staff on a publication that "goes to press."

At the Midwinter Meeting we had lengthy discussions about our VM communications strategies. A key issue is making our communications timely. Even with the move from a printed version of VIEWS to circulation as a PDF, it's difficult to get the issue out while all of the content is still relevant. Maybe you've seen announcements for exhibit reviews or events that have already passed? I know that I had to delete a number of them from this issue, and now I just hope that I can get it to you before the SAA Annual Meeting.

We're planning to premiere the beta version of a new Visual Materials Section web site at the meeting in Washington DC. Our intent with this site is to make it more current, more in tune with the new design for the SAA web site, but more importantly, to make the web site serve some of the functions of this newsletter for information that is time sensitive.

Certainly I want to continue to publish VIEWS, but I'm also thinking that some of the contents, like the articles, might be of interest to a wider audience who would look at them on the web site. In addition, publishing on a web site has the advantage of being "on-demand," rather than having to wait for a specific publication date.

I'm very much looking forward to showing our work on the new web site and getting feedback from the VM membership before going too far with it. I hope to see you all there.