IT’S POLITICS AS USUAL IN WASHINGTON

Now is the time to start planning for the annual SAA meeting! This year we’ll be in the hot and humid center of the East Coast, Washington, DC. Plan for weather in the high 80s, if not the 90s. Humidity will be in the 80s as well!

There is a jam-packed events calendar (see box at the right) of interest to Section members. Of course the big event is the Section dinner, to be held this year at America. Meet at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, August 30, in the Hilton lobby.

And, of course, don’t forget to order your tee-shirt. Chair-elect Miriam Meislik has worked hard to bring you another wonderful souvenir. Order forms were mailed in early July. If you didn’t receive one, please contact Miriam at <miriam+@pitt.edu>.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR
James K. Burant, National Archives of Canada <jburant@archives.ca>

Recently, the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, in association with the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, cooperated on an exhibition called Light! The Industrial Age 1750-1900. Art, Science, Technology & Society, which was accompanied by a magnificent catalog of the same name, published by Thames & Hudson in 2000. The co-curators, Andreas Blühin and Louis Lippincott, did a terrific job in examining a subject that, surprisingly, had been sorely neglected from both an art-historical and a scientific perspective. I was pleased to see that one of the first, and major sources which the authors acknowledged were the rich archives of the Artificial Light in Art Foundation, located in Eindhoven, Netherlands. Their other sources were right and varied, from museums, galleries, universities, archives, and private collectors all over the world, as they wove together a fascinating story of the hisory of light in the Industrial Age.

Lest, however, the reader thinks I am writing a book review, I will not further describe either the

The Visual Materials Section Web page will be found at:
http://www.gsu.edu/~libpjr/vm.htm

ANNUAL MEETING EVENTS OF INTEREST TO VM FOLKS

Wednesday, August 29
9:00–1:00 Standards Committee

Thursday, August 30
3:30–5:00
17. Photograph Albums and Scrapbooks: Wherefore and Whereto?

6:30 ANNUAL SECTION DINNER see Miriam’s column, p. 2, for the details.

Friday, August 31
8:00–10:00 Visual Materials Section Meeting
10:30–12:00
25. What Else Do You Need? Beyond Traditional Description Metadata for Audiovisual Digital Content

1:30–3:00
36. You Can Run But You Can’t Hide: Meeting the Challenges of Access to Nontraditional Archival Records
38. Archival Practice and the Authenticity of Photographs

Saturday, September 1
8:00–9:00
Architectural Records Roundtable
Visual Materials Cataloging and Access Roundtable

10:00–11:30 [ok, why are there 4 sessions here and only 1 session on Thursday afternoon?]
44. Storage and Management of Color Slides and Transparencies
45. Data Storage and Migration
49. Marketing and Promotion: Raising Community Awareness of Moving Image Archives

50. More is Not Necessarily Better: Appraising Modern Architectural Records

11:45–1:15
52. Moving Archival and Special Collections Materials
54. Beyond Architectural Documentation: Beyond the Blueprint
exhibition or the catalog. What I want to say relates more to the spirit, rather than the substance, of such research. As we all perform our day-to-day work in our archives, museums, research centers, and other institutions, we can become complacent, even bored, by the tasks which we are all called on to perform. But why do we work with visual materials? Because they have the power to bring new ways of seeing the world to everyone, especially to those who are unfamiliar with the past and who need to know about it. A 14 year old confronted by a television with a dial channel-changer will express amazement that an era before remote controls existed, just as a 60 year old may be unfamiliar with the concept of a magic lantern show. But we are among those whose jobs it is not only to guard the past, but also to illuminate the past and make it palpable, understandable, and visible to all. We can do that by thinking beyond the bounds of our everyday existence, and constructing new ways of presenting old ideas, subjects, and everyday life, and Blühin and Lippincott have done that. This is why we are together as members of a Visual Materials Section, to share our knowledge, our experiences, and ideas, not only among ourselves, but with our colleagues, and with the greater public and humanity whom we serve. The several sessions of this year’s SAA conference will provide us with one means of sharing our research, our outlooks, and our experiences, and I hope that those of you in attendance in Washington will be able to attend all of the sessions which VM either sponsored or cosponsored (although I again lament the fact that some of the VM sessions have been placed in direct opposition with one another). At the same time, I hope the business meeting, the various roundtables, and special events, and the social aspects of the Conference itself will provide everyone with the opportunities to exchange ideas and information in both formal and informal settings.

The Chair-elect, Miriam Meislik, already has done a great job in the Section’s Web site on digital images, preparing the Section tee-shirt and arranging for dinner at the Annual Meeting; and Laurie Baty, the Newsletter editor (who does so much else) has been her usual terrific and dynamic self. I thank everyone who helped me out this year—although I feel somewhat guilty at having done so little as the Section Chair. I hope you’ll forgive me for that. We have two excellent candidates for Chair-elect, Laurie Baty and Mark Martin, and I encourage everyone to take the time to exercise their democratic right for the election! I look forward to seeing all of you in DC and hope that you will all continue to be inspired by the work that you do, and by the materials with which you work. Take care, and all the best for the future of the Section.

FROM THE CHAIR-ELECT
Miriam Meislik, University of Pittsburgh
<miriam+@pitt.edu>

This year we will be eating our way across America! (The America Restaurant, that is.)

Dinner will be on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. Meet in the lobby of the Hilton for a ride on the Metro's Red Line. A sign up sheet will be available on the message board, or if you know you will definitely be there, email me at <miriam+@pitt.edu> and I will add you to the list. If you RSVP before the meeting, please do so before August 23. A menu will be provided for your viewing pleasure next to the sign-up sheet or you can go here for a preview: <http://www.americarestaurant.com/our_restaurants/washington/americaindex.cfm>

Washington, DC, here we come!

ARCHITECTURAL RECORDS ROUNDTABLE
Beth Bilderback, University of South Carolina
<bilderbk@gwm.sc.edu>

With the SAA annual meeting around the corner, here are some highlights. The main show for the Roundtable will begin at 8:00 a.m. Saturday, 1 September. In addition to the business meeting there will be a presentation “Collaborative Approaches to Collecting American Architectural Records,” by Sherry Birk, Director of Collections, The Octagon, the Museum of the American Architectural Foundation. At the business meeting portion, Mary Woolever (Art Institute of Chicago) will be stepping down, so a new co-chair will be selected. Please consider volunteering for this position. Sarah Turner (AIA) will be the continuing co-chair. The Roundtable also will entertain any proposals for joint sessions with the Visual Materials Section.

On Wednesday, August 29, at 4:30 p.m., there will be an open house at the Octagon, hosted by Sherry Birk and Sarah Turner, Archivist & Records Manager at the AIA. The open house is at the American Institute of Architect’s Library (1735 New York Ave., NW) Sarah and Sherry will give a tour of the archives and give an overview of the AIA’s archival collections and the Octagon’s prints and drawings collection. Wine and cheese will be served after the tour. Please RSVP to Sarah Turner by Monday, August 27, either e-mail <sturner@aia.org> or telephone (202) 626-7496. This is open to Visual Materials Section members as well.

There are two sessions of note for Roundtable members, both on Saturday. The first is Session 50, 10-11:30 a.m., More is Not Necessarily Better: Appraising Modern Architectural Records addresses appraisal issues for today’s large architectural records collections. Following that, at 11:45 a.m. is Session 54: Architectural Documentation: Beyond the Blueprint explores the use of photographs, institutional records,
and postcards as sources of architectural and historic preservation information. Both of these feature Roundtable members.

As we realize that no one is immune to the headaches of preserving electronic records, there are several sessions on electronic records that may be of interest. They do not deal specifically with electronic architectural records, but they may relate in a general way: Session 16 Real-World Strategies for the Management and Preservation of Digital Records (Thursday, 3:30–5 p.m.), Session 23 Emulation as a Digital Preservation Strategy: An Empirical Test (Friday, 10:30 a.m.–noon), Session 45 Data Storage and Migration (Saturday, 10–11:30 a.m.). Another session of interest is Session 22 Privacy, Confidentiality, and Ethical Considerations in Dealing with the Historical Records of Active Businesses (Friday, 10:30 a.m.–noon).

In other news, the MassCOPAR (Massachusetts Committee for the Preservation of Architectural Records) announces the availability of printed proceedings from its 1999 program “Blueprints to Bytes: Architectural Records in the Electronic Age.” The proceedings are $15.00 each, postage included. You can send a check, payable to MassCOPAR, to MassCOPAR, Box 425129, Cambridge, MA 02142-0004.

AMIA Cataloging and Documentation Committee Report
Jane Johnson, UCLA Film and Television Archive <jdj@ucla.edu>

The AMIA Compendium of Moving Image Cataloging Practice was published by the Society of American Archivists (SAA) in June 2001; see the new SAA Publications Catalog at: <http://www.archivists.org>. The Compendium copyright is held jointly by SAA and AMIA. An appendix of cataloging examples will be simultaneously published on the AMIA Website.

Grace Agnew, consultant to the Cataloging and Documentation Committee’s National Cataloging Project Subcommittee, has prepared her report on the AMIA Moving Image Gateway (formerly the National Moving Image Cataloging and Information Center Project). This project represents an ambitious effort to provide universal access to the world’s moving-image collections. As originally envisioned, it includes a union catalog, a federation of distributed databases (a virtual union catalog), and a Web directory of moving image repositories, and incorporates education, training, research, and outreach components. The project promotes use of several metadata standards, includes a training center and information clearinghouse to coordinate and advocate for standards, and provides support to assist archives in the organization and management of their catalogs and collections. The Committee will be reporting on the current status of the Project and next steps at the Portland conference.


Valarie Schwan <vschwan@cinema.usc.edu> has been appointed Liaison Coordinator, to improve the coordination and reporting of liaisons to other organizations.

The Committee is exploring ways to improve and extend its cataloging education activities. Among things considered is extended cataloging training beyond the cataloging portion of AMIA’s Basic Training (pre-conference) workshop. Plans are underway for a program in Portland; the Committee also has discussed holding workshops throughout the year, and workshops in collaboration with other organizations, such as SAA. These would be in addition to the annual conferences’ Basic Training workshops.

The Committee has been working with Artesia Technologies to create a prototype Web-enabled database designed to illustrate how use of cataloging standards can optimize access to moving image collections. The prototype is hosted inside a Digital Asset Management (DAM) system, which utilizes MARC records from the National Moving Image Database (NAMID) and selected clips from the UCLA Film and Television Archive to show how use of cataloging standards can allow clear and convenient access to bibliographic records and the moving images themselves. The project is intended to explore and to invite commentary on the issues that must be understood in order to make collections available onsite and over the Internet. The prototype includes a subset of 20 essential MARC fields. Jane Johnson has created a draft white paper, “Making Moving Image Collections Available on the Web,” which is available from <jdj@ucla.edu>.

The Committee is exploring ways to bring together representatives of the Cataloging and Digital Assets Management worlds, and in order to do so has established a liaison with the Digital Assets Management Interest Group (DAMIG). AMIA 2001 is scheduled to include programming co-sponsored by both groups. The Committee is also considering making presentations at DAM vendor conferences.

The Web site Subcommittee is working to revise the Committee’s pages on AMIA.net.

AMIA’s eleventh annual conference will be held November 6-10, 2001, in Portland, Oregon.

For more information on the conference, AMIA projects, or AMIA in general, visit the AMIA website at <http://amianet.org/>, or contact me, Jane Johnson, Cataloging and Documentation Committee Chair. I
welcome input about the Committee's work, future projects, etc. Please do not hesitate to send your questions and comments.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE UPDATE
Marcy Silver, Silver Image <silverim@mindspring.com>

The Standards Committee is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, August 29, between 9 and 12 during the annual meeting. All are welcome! Although the agenda is not yet final, topics of interest to Visual Materials section members may include the NISO draft standard, Data Dictionary: Technical Metadata for Digital Still Images and the ISAAR (CPF): International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families. The Standards Committee encourages your participation!

MEETINGS, EVENTS, AND GATHERINGS

August 18-23. Preserving Photographs in a Digital World, sponsored by the George Eastman House, Rochester Institute of Technology, Image Permanence Institute. $1,295. For more information contact Laura Brown, education Department, at (716) 271-3361 x 234 (voice), <Education@geh.org>, or see the Website <http://www.rit.edu/IPI/>.


NATIONAL GALLERY ACQUIRES NEW WORKS

Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery of Art recently announced a number of acquisitions approved by the Gallery's board of trustees.

Two "exceptional" etchings by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) are among the new acquisitions. One of the finest known impressions of The Great Jewish Bride (1635), portrays his wife Saskia posed as a figure from history. The Goldweigher (1639), the last of Rembrandt's highly pictorial etchings, depicts the tax collection Jan Uytenbogaert (a friend and art patron), at his counting table receiving payments. This second etching is a very rare artist's proof that survives in only a few impressions. Additional acquisitions and gifts include a "monumental" early woodcut of The Deluge (c.1580) by Andrea Andreani, four etchings by Félix Buhot from the 1880s, including extremely rare impressions in color, a cubist etching Table d’echecs (1920) by Jacques Villon.

The newest addition to the Gallery's collection of early printed books is a "rare and exquisite" German Bible (1483) with 108 woodcuts, printed in Nuremberg by Anton Koberger. This particular copy is colored by hand with added gold highlights and is still in its original Nuremberg bindings. Additional major illustrated books include a gift of a second German Bible, printed in Frankfurt in 1570, with 144 woodcuts by Jost Amman and other artists; an apparently unique copy of Friedrich Beuther's 1824 book on stage designs with color aquatints; and a rare complete set of Charles Hullmandell's early lithographs Twenty-four Views of Italy (1818).

The Joshua Smith Collection of 197 photographs, five portfolios, two bound volumes, and one sculpture by 82 American and European photographers of the Twentieth Century, also has been acquired. The collection focuses on works made from the 1940s through the late 1970s and is remarkable for its breadth, depth, and quality. The strength of the collection lies in its holdings of rare, vintage prints of the so-called New York School of photographers who worked shortly before and during World War II. It also contains rare examples of European photographers who worked after the war and an excellent survey of American photographs from the 1960s and 1970s.

Seventy-six silver gelatin photographs and one assemblage by Ilse Bing were donated to the Gallery by Bing's estate.

For more information, please contact Domenic Morea at (202) 842-6358 or <d-morea@nga.gov>.

IN PRINT

The Review


Reviewed by Wendy Welker, Photography Archivist, California Historical Society.

The first time I leafed through a volume from the In Focus photographers series published by the J. Paul Getty Trust, I didn't think much of it beyond its pleasing compact shape and clean design -- the In Focus volumes are the Chiclettes of photography books. But how good or useful could skinny 6"x7" books be for conveying any kind of an impact? That first volume I looked at was on Carleton Watkins and I wondered, why bother looking at what are originally large format photographs that have been forced into the confines of very small pages. And besides, there wasn't much text. Upon first impression, I wrote it off as a Readers Digest version of a photography book, an ephemeral souvenir of the collections from the Getty Museum. After taking the time to really look
through and read it, however; I changed my mind. The little book packed a punch. I read the volumes on August Sander and Eugene Atget for this review and they continue to provide readers with an excellent entry into the world of major photographers.

Each In Focus book contains approximately 50 plates selected from the often hundreds of images that the Getty Museum owns of each photographer. The books open with three to four page introductions on the photographers' life and work that, despite their brevity, manage to set the stage for the work that follows. Photographs are accompanied by two to four paragraphs of commentary printed on facing pages. Following the plates, each book offers a transcription of a colloquium in which various curators, scholars, professors and others participated. It is within the pages of the transcriptions that the In Focus series serves up something meaty. In discussing the intentions of the photographers and comparing images (usually two at a time), the participants posit a variety of theory and opinion and often engage in emphatic disagreement and debate. The resulting swirl of interpretation is a dynamic approach to supplementary text that stimulates and activates the readers' own ideas and opinions.

In the introductions and discussions of both the Sander and the Atget books it is remarked upon that each photographer was quite enigmatic and ultimately unknowable to those studying their lives and work. Sander and Atget were vastly different photographers, yet both were conscious of documenting ways of life that were evaporating or transmogrifying. They both witnessed the changes brought on by the transition to an industrialized society. Sander's focus was the Weimar woman, and yet we discover that the subject of the photograph was the creation of her husband. Whether in front of the camera or not, Peter Abelen orchestrated every aspect of his wife's appearance, from designing her clothes and cutting her hair to the seductive pose itself. Also layered into this image is the fact that social identities were slipperier than Sander may have realized and his photographs could actually run counterpoint to the human classification system that underlaid his work. As one colloquium participant said, "Rather than confirm that the typical German was still accessible to interpretation, it proved that he did not exist."

In the introduction to the Atget volume, curator Gordon Baldwin writes that the In Focus survey of Atget might best be thought of as a highly eccentric guidebook to Paris. That is pretty much how this book approaches Atget's work. There is not much analysis or debate over these images in comparison with the Sander volume. The text that directly accompanies the photographs is concerned less with interpretation than with historical facts. We are told what has become, over time, of the buildings or streets pictured in the photographs. There are some forays into deeper interpretation within the colloquium transcription. There is an especially fascinating section on how an image of an old mill conveys ambivalence. On occasion, the participants can really get carried away and cling to their esoteric theories that can sometimes seem far-fetched, but that's part of the fun.

The problem of picture quality and size is more accentuated in the Atget book. The warm albumen tones of many of Atget's images are gone, making them all look like silver gelatin prints. Details are important in Atget's images and the small size of the reproductions make it hard to notice them. But think of the In Focus books as appetizers. You get a solid bite-size taste of the life, work and interpretation of great photographers that will have you craving for more. After enjoying an In Focus volume you'll be primed to move on to heavier fare.

The Books


DO YOU KNOW THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE? Is it perhaps Mr. Bailey of Barnum and Bailey? All we know is that he’s dead, but if you know his identity, would you please please contact Larry Rhoades <toades54@charter.net> (562) 434-1881 (phone/fax) with the documentation? No reward, but you’ll be thanked for a job well done. Thanks! We’ll publish the answer when we receive it.


Haymatloz—Exil in der Turkei 1933-1945. Berlin: Verein Aktives Museum, 2000. [Catalog containing all text and photos from the exhibition looking at Roma/Sinti (Gypsy) exile in Turkey during World War II.] To order, contact the Verein Aktives Museum, Chausseestraße 8, 10115 Berlin, Germany.


[Views welcomes additions to this column documenting visual-material publications. If you know of such additional publications, please send relevant bibliographic information to the editor.—Ed.]

WHAT’S UP


through October 7. The Unfinished Print. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.


opens November 4. Best Impressions: 35 Years of Prints and Sculpture from Gemini G.E.L. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

[Views welcomes additions to this ongoing column documenting visual-materials exhibitions around the world. If your institution is having such an exhibition, please send the relevant information to the editor. To keep this column timely, please remember that Views is in print three months after the deadline posted on the last page—Ed.]

ARTFUL DODGING: Things Heard, Enhanced, and Passed On

London, England. Pam Roberts, Curator of the Royal Photographic Society, Bath, is looking for a few good authors to participate in the Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, of which she is the editor. The prospectus inviting contributors to step forward is curious, to say the least, and reflects a definite “East of the Pond” perspective on who is a photographer deserving of a main entry and who is “minor” or “emerging”; there will be over 1300 entries for people. In addition there will be information on equipment, techniques, processes [I can hardly wait for yet another list of terms—Ed.], formats, artists movements, aesthetic questions, criticism, development of the commerce of photography, and survey articles on the development of photography within individual countries. Of particular interest is the statement, “The Encyclopedia will also be equipped with an index.” [Thank goodness for that—Ed.] If you’re interested in participating in this writing extravaganza, please check out the publisher’s Web site at <http://www.fitzroydearborn.com/london/ncp/intro.tm>. Authors receive a copy of the volume for their first 2,000 words and then are paid at the rate of $75 per 1,000 words (of commissioned length) for any writing over the initial 2,000 words. You won’t get rich, but you will be published!

The International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB) offers a unique new service: the best antiquarian books, manuscripts, maps, prints, and autographs can now be traced and ordered online, thanks to a sophisticated new search engine, the only one in the world that provides full text-search including 28 special characters such as the Scandinavian â, the French ç, the Spanish ñ, the Berman ß and the Portuguese õ. The search engine has now been installed in the ILAB internet Web site <http://www.ilab-lila.com/> where booksellers from Europe, Asia, Africa, American, and Australia present their rare and precious goods. The Web site is bilingual (English and French).

For more information, see the Web site or contact Robert Fleck, Oak Knoll Books, (302) 328-7232 (voice), 328-7274 (fax), <oakknoll@oakknoll.com> (e-mail) or <http://www.oakknoll.com/>.

Ft. Worth, TX. The Amon Carter Museum has announced it will reopen Sunday, October 21, following its two-year $39 million expansion. The new 109,000 square-foot building will have three times the exhibition space as before.
DON’T FORGET TO VOTE!
MAILING ADDRESS ERROR
ON THE BALLOT
Ballots were mailed the second week of July! PLEASE NOTE John’s street address was spelled incorrectly on the ballot [so sue me.—Ed.] Please correct and send to:
Mr. John Slate
1527 Severs Avenue
Dallas, TX 75216

DON’T FORGET TO ORDER YOUR TEE-SHIRTS!
Great design from an 1879 Washington, DC, carte de visite. Order today. S, M, L, XL $12; XXL and XXXL $15. Ad $3.50 if you want it mailed to you. Checks payable and orders sent to Miriam Meislik, 452 Geisler Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15221.
ORDER BY AUGUST 25

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Your comments and suggestions for improvements will always receive a cordial hearing. The next deadline is October 1, 2001. Opinions expressed are those of the authors.

http://www.gsu.edu/~libpjr/vm.htm