VISUAL RESOURCES ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

The mission of the VRA Foundation is to advance knowledge in the field of visual resources and image management and to provide educational and training opportunities in support of broad access to cultural information in the digital age.

The Foundation advances awareness of important issues for digital information management; encourages the application of professional standards, innovative technology, and metadata cataloging protocols; facilitates workplace training; and promotes awareness of intellectual property rights and copyright issues.

The VRA Foundation supports a range of educational offerings to help ensure that such information reaches a diverse and global audience.

Message from the Chair

The VRA Foundation (VRAF) is dedicated to the work of advancing the visual resources profession and this annual report is an opportunity to share information about our activities and to show how much we value our relationship with Visual Resources Association (past, present, and future) members as well as like-minded information professionals in associated fields. The Board of Directors is so very grateful for the ongoing partnership with our donors, volunteers, and supporters—it is your generosity that allows us to fulfill our educational and outreach mission.

True to our profession, the Foundation has been nimble and proactive in responding to the many challenges brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. During this difficult time, members of our profession have stepped-up in a big way to keep our community active and to support institutional constituencies—leveraging technology, sharing expertise, and innovating collaboratively. This environment of fear and uncertainty has also led to hardship in the form of ever-changing schedules, difficult working conditions, and lost positions. We want you to know that you are on our minds and the VRAF is here to support you. We will continue to evaluate, transform, and refine our practices to match the profession's needs so we can be helpful in our outreach and educational offerings. We are simultaneously asking for your suggestions, participation, and support in the coming year.

Detailed information about VRAF activities and projects is provided in this report and I encourage you to read on, but here are some highlights of last year's activities.

During the Fall of 2019, we launched a **fundraising campaign** which featured the theme "Navigating the Future of Visual Resources," using the artwork Earthenware plaques: Tile panel with seascape, Tegelbakkerij aan de Delftschevaart, c. 1680 | c. 1730, Rijksmuseum to track progress. This artwork became even more relevant when Spring found us tossed into the great unknown at both work and home. We received **$8,100** from **48 donors** like you in support of our educational initiatives and we could not be more thankful for your generosity. Speaking of support, don't forget that AmazonSmile is an easy way to help sustain the VRAF. Whenever you shop at Amazon a percentage of your purchase can be donated to the VRAF, at no extra cost to you. The funds generated through this program are used to support the Legacy Lectures at VRA conferences, such as Ashley Minner's Repatriating the Archives: An Urban Reservation Reunion, which was previously scheduled for the 2020 Baltimore conference.

The Foundation has a symbiotic relationship with the **VRA Executive Board** and membership. We sponsor a variety of activities at VRA conferences and thank our donors with a special reception. VRAF-sponsored committees, implementation teams, and task forces typically include VRA members as recognized experts in the field. The Foundation supports a wide range of emerging and existing visual resources professionals through our programs highlighted below. Finally, we collaborate with the VRA Executive Board to raise funds in support of the visual resources profession and to envision the future progress of the field. For example, the **2020 Joint VRA and VRAF Solidarity Statement** condemning all violence, and acts of racism, including police brutality, against Black people, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) was released in June of 2020. We understand that statements require action and we will continue to examine our policies, practices, and purposes to make measurable change in our profession and community.

When news of COVID-19 began, we put all VRAF Face to Face events and programs on hold in the interests of safety. Our **educational mission** continues as we adjust our ability to provide professional development activities remotely and use technology to collaborate. The **Summer Educational Institute for Digital Stewardship of Visual Information (SEI)** is a joint project with **Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA)** & **VRAF**. SEI provides information professionals with a substantive educational and professional development opportunity centered on digital stewardship information, and experience needed to stay current in a rapidly changing field, and the opportunity to create a network of supportive colleagues. 2020 SEI, originally scheduled in June at Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At present, plans are underway to offer SEI in 2021 at the same venue.

VRAF's **Regional Workshop Program** continues to flourish, providing localized educational and professional development opportunities relating to cultural heritage. The program offers expert instruction and training on a variety of pertinent topics. This year an in-person workshop on permissions and rights statements took place in the fall, with a swift pivot to a virtual workshop on intellectual property rights and visual media in spring. We applaud director Beth Haas and the Regional Workshop Implementation Team for their agility and hard work, especially with so many unexpected obstacles.

VRAF also offers opportunities for growth and experience through awards and grants. These opportunities are designed to assist Visual Resources professionals at every stage of their career. The **Internship Award** grants $4,000 to help current and recent graduate students to obtain pertinent work experience while preparing for a career in image management. **Professional Development Grants** provide $1,000 to successful applicants for conference participation or other visual resources related professional development opportunities. **Project Grants** in the amount of $3,000 may be used for various types of project initiatives, whether stand-alone, pilots, or components of larger projects.

The programs described above would not have been possible without generous funding and the ongoing support of the **Samuel H. Kress Foundation**. We are fortunate to have the Kress Foundation encourage new VR projects, support our professional development, and provide scholarships for SEI, for which we extend our deepest thanks.

Those who serve on the Foundation collaborate successfully, so our programs are rewarded by bonds of collegiality and shared experience. With much appreciation and fondness, we thank the Board members who completed their terms this year: Elaine Paul, who served as Chair, and Sheryl Frisch, who served as Secretary, with Project and Professional Development Grants, and with the transition of CCO to VRA. We welcome Robb Detlefs and Bonnie Rosenberg, who joined the Board in March of 2020. I'm grateful for the crucial role each Director plays in sustaining our various programs and progressively moving the VRAF forward.

Finally, know that the 2020-21 Board is working hard to achieve our mission, as we go forward with optimism and determination.
--Marcia Focht, Chair

SEI 2019-2020

SEI 2020 was scheduled take place on June 23-26, 2020 at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL but was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the SEI 2020 implementation team made significant progress revamping the structure and curriculum of the annual workshop. The workshop was renamed the Summer Educational Institute for Digital Stewardship of Visual Information. The planned core curriculum consisted of the basic components of the digital life cycle, with modules on Intellectual Property and Copyright, Project Management, Digitization, Metadata, and DAMS and Digital Repositories. Additionally, SEI welcomed new faculty lineup in an effort to increase the diversity of the instructors and expand the curriculum to incorporate diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility content. The new modules focused on accessibility, digital stewardship, and critical cataloging and metadata. The team introduced a new component: daily Choose Your Own Adventure breakout sessions, on topics such as the photo management tool Tropy, to give SEI participants the ability to customize their SEI experience. We would like to thank the 2019-2020 co-chairs Courtney Baron, Bridget Madden, Molly Szymanski, and local host Nicole Finzer, and the SEI implementation team members Annie Sollinger, Kimberly Wolfe, Tina Budzise-Weaver, and Otto Luna. Beth Haas served as VRAF Board Liaison. The 2019-2020 SEI implementation team will stay on to plan the SEI 2021 workshop. For more information and updates, visit https://seiworkshop.org/.

Internship Award

The VRA Foundation supports the education and practical training of new information professionals through the Internship Award in visual resources and image management. Generously funded by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the award includes a $3,000 stipend, a contribution of $1,000 toward a professional development opportunity, and a year's membership in the VRA.

The 2019-2020 internship award was granted in August 2019 to Kristine Clark, a recent graduate in Museum Studies at Arizona State University. We selected Kristine's proposed project for the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art for

a number of reasons, including Kristine's demonstrated initiative, passion, and record of high achievement; the benefits to her professional development; the support for visual resources standards and best practices within the museum community; the importance of culturally sensitive and competent cataloging practices; the benefits to this small, understaffed museum; and the potential to reach diverse communities with diverse content. Kristine's objective was to "bridge the gap between accessible and available" on the museum's website, with a focus on image tagging and catalog descriptions. Clark established a methodology for creating these tags, including a lexicon of controlled vocabulary terms that others will be able to apply into the future.

The Foundation is grateful for our VRA colleagues' service on the 2019-2020 VRAF Internship Award Committee: Linda Callahan (representing the Awards Committee) and Carolyn Lucarelli (representing the Education Committee). We also thank the 2018-2019 Internship Awards recipient Adelaide McComb for her hard work. In this unpredictable time of COVID-19, it is clear that remote work and research are dependent upon online collections. VRAF believes that there are many learning opportunities for interns to help provide scholarly and public access to collections by working remotely in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Professional Development Grant

The Fall 2019 Professional Development Grant was awarded to Malkia Okech (Augmented Reality Developer for the Penn & Slavery Project, Penn Libraries Digital Scholarship, UPENN, Philadelphia, PA) to participate and attend a 4 day workshop with African Digital Heritage in Nairobi and Kisumu, Kenya, Africa. Malkia's video regarding her experience at the African Digital Heritage workshop can be viewed here. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Jy-HLlrgRX0&feature=youtu.be

The Winter 2020 Professional Development Grant was awarded to Meghan Lyon (MSLIS Student Graduate Assistant at the Pratt School of Information's Semantic Lab, and a NYARC Web Archiving Fellow at the Frick Art Reference Library) to co-present at the 2020 Society for

American Archivists National Conference. Ms. Lyon will present virtually at a session titled, "Digital Access and preservation in Artists' Archives: Challenges, Strategies, and Solutions". This program offers two $1,000 grants yearly, one with a summer deadline and another in the winter. The purpose of the grant is to support professional development in the field of visual resources and cultural heritage information management. Grant funds can be used to participate in a professional development opportunity of the grantee's choosing (such as a conference, symposium, workshop, online education), or to enroll in relevant research activities (such as hands-on field work or a site visit for scholarly purposes).

Project Grant for Research and Development

Stephanie Becker, Digital Collections Manager and Project Manager for Regionally Speaking: A Virtual Symposium, at Case Western University, Cleveland, OH has been awarded the 2020 VRAF Project Grant to will allow Ms. Becker, and other project collaborators at Case Western's, Kelvin Smith Library, to find, research and collaborate with a vendor, who will assist in transcribing approximately 70 moving image and oral history files regarding the community of Cleveland, Ohio. The text and/or captions will then be applied to the files, and the Regionally Speaking collaborators will create and build a framework for the audio and video files to be available with caption formatting for easy and intuitive public viewing and downloading. The project will create needed accessibility features for the public and provide a more accessible portal for the Cleveland, Ohio community. This program supports projects that reflect the VRA Foundation mission to advance education, research, and outreach in the field of visual resources and image management. The Project Grant funds may be used for stand-alone projects, pilots or start-up financing for larger projects, or for a component of a larger project. Collaborative projects and those proposed by groups, whether or not affiliated with an organization or institution, are encouraged. Of particular interest are innovative projects with the potential to have a broad impact across the global community.

Regional Workshop Program

The VRAF Regional Workshop's fifth season was, not surprisingly, disrupted by the COVID-19 global pandemic. As in-person events throughout the world came to a grinding halt, so did our planned spring workshops.

We were able to host one in-person workshop, as planned, on November 22, 2019. This workshop was significant as it was the first workshop where the local hosts proposed the topic, rather than choosing from our proffered list. The workshop, *Beyond Licenses: Integrating Creative Commons, RightsStatements.org, and Traditional Knowledge into Permissions*, was hosted by the University of Denver and led by Anne M. Young, Director of Legal Affairs and Intellectual Property at Newfields in Indianapolis, IN. Eighteen registrants signed up for the workshop and we received a significant number of inquiries about attending the workshop virtually. At the time, this was not an option. However, our team agreed that an intellectual property rights topic would be ideal if we were to test remote options.

Can We Do That? Intellectual Property Rights and Visual Media with instructor Cara Hirsh was originally scheduled at Occidental College on March 13, 2020. We first postponed until June 5, and then decided to host this as our first virtual workshop. The content was presented in two, 2.5-hour segments on June 5 and June 12 using Zoom video conferencing software. Of the original 43 participants registered for this workshop, 35 chose to stay registered for the online version. Of those, 31 attended the first live session and 28 attended the second live session, while others chose to view the content asynchronously for a limited time. Recordings, slides, and additional materials were made available to all participants. Both participants and the instructor reviewed this experience positively. The process may be used as a model for any future online workshops.

The two workshops cancelled due to COVID-19 will be rescheduled for the 2020-21 season. Both workshops have significant interactive elements that could not be duplicated through online tools at this time. *Collaborating Across the Institution: Creating Professional Partnerships to Support Cultural Heritage* will be hosted by the University of Michigan Library and led by instructor Jackie Spafford. *Metadata and Management of Cultural Heritage Digital Media: From Fundamentals to Future Trends* will be hosted by the University of Toronto Mississauga and led by instructor Shyam Oberoi. *Metadata and Management of Cultural Heritage Digital Media* will be the first international Regional Workshop. In addition, the Regional Workshop Implementation Team will continue to explore online content.

The program was developed and executed by the Regional Workshop Implementation Team, with Sonya Coleman as Workshop Coordinator, Meghan Rubenstein as Sr. Workshop Liaison and Beth Haas as VRAF Board Liaison. Two Junior Workshop Liaisons assisted briefly with the 2019-2020 season. Recruiting and building a Regional Workshop team has proved challenging, but we hope to have all open positions filled by the time planning begins for the 2020-2021 workshop season.

Our Generous Donors Fiscal Year 2019-2020

Grants partner for the Internship Award, Regional Workshops Program and Summer Educational Institute:

Samuel H. Kress Foundation

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Financial Statement, July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Income	FY18-19	FY19-20
Contributions Income	$ 8,422.34	$ 9,283.83
Grants	10,000.00	4,000.00
Regional Workshops	12,884.12	6,525.00
SEI	37,090.00	16,030.44
Interest Income	4.48	6.76
Other Income	0.00	546.84
Total VRAF Income	$ 68,400.94	$ 36,392.87
Expenses		
Annual Board meeting	$ 3,151.17	$ 0.00
Charitable Distributions	12,080.00	10,451.68
Other expenses *	7,354.59	7,522.40
Regional workshops	9,329.68	6,508.59
SEI	27,753.65	12,061.64
Total VRAF Expenses	$ 59,669.09	$ 36,544.31
Net Income	$ 8,731.85	- $151.44

* Fundraising fees, Insurance, Zoom, PayPal monthly charges, Accounting, Consulting, Web services.