Annual Report
2004 George Wittenborn Memorial Award Committee

Submitted by the committee co-chairs:
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The 2004 Committee:

The members of the 26th Annual George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award Committee of ARLIS/NA were: Paula Epstein and Dennis McGuire of Columbia College Chicago; Claire Eike and Henrietta Zielinski of The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Russ Clement of Northwestern University withdrew due to conflict of interest. No budget was requested for FY 2004.

Meetings and Activities:

24 June 2004. The committee convened to review the award guidelines, weight the established criteria, assign tasks, and establish a timeline. The database of publisher addresses was reviewed and work began on adding and updating contact information for the initial mailing. Agreed:

- Need for more inclusion of small presses/museums.
- Need for more outreach to Mexican publishers.
- Puerto Rico, officially a U.S. protectorate, should be included in the definition of “North American,” as should any other nearby protectorates of the U.S., Canada, or Mexico.
- Need to do more to recognize publishers who participate, in the hopes of encouraging broader participation in the future as well as rewarding the immediate participants. This should include acknowledging receipt of submissions as they come in, and sending thanks to participants at the conclusion of the award cycle.

August 2004. Committee members submitted additions and changes to Headquarters for inclusion in the publishers database. Twenty-one additions and many updates were added to the publishers mailing list.

September 2004. The Call for Submissions (in English, French and Spanish) was mailed from Headquarters to over 320 publishers. The Call for Submissions was also posted to ARLIS-L, ARTS-LIB, RUSA, VRA-L, Museum-L, and listservs for the Association of American University Presses, the Association of American Publishers, the Consortium for Art and Architecture Historians, and Women in Scholarly Publishing. An Excel spreadsheet was set up to log receipt of submissions.

December 2004. Committee members began independently reviewing submissions, sharing comments via e-mail and phone.

20 January 2004. The full committee convened to finalize decisions. One-hundred-and-twenty submissions were received from sixty-six publishers. The 2004 Committee chose two works to receive ARLIS/NA’s most prestigious book award. Three additional titles were recognized as honorable mentions.

Winning titles:

Honorable mentions:

24 February and 22 March 2005. The committee met to prepare our display and presentation for the annual conference.


3 April 2005. The 26th annual George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award was presented in Houston, Texas, at the annual ARLIS/NA conference. The award presentations were made during the conference convocation ceremony held in Stude Hall on the campus of Rice University. A press release was distributed immediately after the conference.

Issues:

1. **We suggest that the Wittenborn guidelines should clearly state that submissions must have a copyright date that matches the Wittenborn Award year.**

   That is, a book must show ©2005 (in its CIP, colophon, or elsewhere in the book) to qualify for the 2005 Wittenborn competition. This is to avoid the problem of committee members having to authenticate “publication” dates for books that are distributed in 2005, but show ©2004 or ©2006. Since questions of publication date are not always clear, it's better to go with a more precise requirement. Communication with members of the two previous Wittenborn Committees confirmed that they also followed this rule.

2. **We suggest that ARLIS/NA re-design the Wittenborn award logo and produce the new logo as a digital file only.**

   Stickers are expensive, obsolete, and no longer of much use to publishers.

3. **We suggest that subsequent committees take the trouble to acknowledge all submissions and thank all submitters for their participation.**

   Receipt of shipments can be accomplished efficiently via e-mail. The press release announcing award winners can also be sent, with a note of thanks, to all participants via e-mail after the conference. A list of all publishers who participated can be part of the Wittenborn exhibit. These simple courtesies will help to ensure continued interest in the Wittenborn Award on the part of publishers. The 2004 committee has received numerous compliments from the participants on our public relations outreach, as well as early inquiries regarding next year’s Wittenborn cycle.

4. **We suggest that subsequent committees submit a modest budget request for entertainment of award recipients who attend the conference in person.**

   Again, simple courtesies should be extended to non-ARLIS-members who arrive at the conference to receive a distinguished award. This might include lunch or refreshments the afternoon before the convocation, photos sent after the convocation, etc.

5. **We suggest that non-member award recipients should be issued name tags to allow them to attend the convocation and the exhibits at the conference.**

   It seems that this is generally done, but is still a bit problematic to arrange. It should be standard procedure.