Annual Report 2005
George Wittenborn Memorial Award Committee

Submitted by the committee chair:
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The 2005 Committee:
The members of the 27th Annual George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award Committee of ARLIS/NA were:
Louis V. Adrean, Cleveland Museum of Art; Mona Chapin, Cincinnati Art Museum; Gary Ginther, Ohio University;
Chris Hatten, Huntington Museum of Art;
Anne O. Morris, Toledo Museum of Art;
Cristine Rom, Cleveland Institute of Art.

Meetings and Activities:
2 April 2005. Met with outgoing (2004) Wittenborn Committee members and received all relevant documents. $350 to take the award winners to dinner was requested (and received) for FY 2005.

15 July 2005 – Committee tasks were identified and divided into four categories, each taken by two committee members.

October 2005 -- 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 other list-servs.


27 January 2006 -- The full committee convened to finalize decisions. 130 submissions were received from 59 publishers of which 114 were eligible. After a lengthy discussion regarding the appropriate number of winners and “Honorable Mention” titles, the group decided to keep the number “reasonably small” while not limiting ourselves to one winner. The 2005 Committee chose three works to receive ARLIS/NA’s most prestigious book award. Three additional titles were recognized as honorable mentions, and one title given a “Special Mention.”

March & April 2006 -- Members of the committee prepared our display and presentation for the annual conference.

5 May 2006 -- Met with incoming 2006 Wittenborn Committee members at the ARLIS/NA national conference and forwarded all relevant documents.

6 May 2006 -- The 27th annual George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award was presented in Banff, Alberta, at the annual ARLIS/NA conference. The award presentations were made during the conference convocation. A press release was distributed immediately after the conference.
Winning titles:
- *The Pollaiuolo Brothers: the Arts of Florence and Rome.*
  By Alison Wright.
  By Jewel Stern.
  Dallas, Texas: Dallas Museum of Art, c2005.
- *Visual music: synaesthesia in art and music since 1900.*
  Organized by Kerry Brougher ... [at al.]
  London: Thames & Hudson, c2005

Honorable mentions:
- *The Art of Frederick Sommer: Photography, Drawing, Collage*
  by Keith F. Davis, et al.
  Prescott, AZ: Frederick & Frances Sommer Foundation, c2005.
  Edited by Barbara Drake Boehm and Jiri Fajt.
- *Recarving China's Past: Art, Archaeology, and Architecture of the 'Wu Family Shrines."
  By Cary Y. Liu et al.

Special Mention
Max Marmor and Alex Ross
*Guide to the literature of art history 2.*
Chicago: American Library Association, 2005

**Issues**
We investigated the geographic intent of the award, tried to resolve the meaning of
“publication date,” and compared our current method of soliciting entries (sending
announcements to 300+ publishers) with placing ads in targeted journals.

**Geographic Intent of the Award:**
Mona Chapin summarized the question of the geographic intent of the award (see attached).
The 2005 committee adopted her recommendation that the 2006 committee follow the
“short term” strategy while the chair of the Award Committee take the question to the
ARLIS/NA Board to decide the “long term” solution:
- **Short term** - List the countries served by ARLIS/NA (Canada, United States,
  Mexico) in all Wittenborn Award documentation in order to clarify eligibility.

- **Long Term** - Consult with the ARLIS/NA Board with a recommendation to
  expand countries eligible for the Wittenborn Award to include Central America,
  and islands of the West Indies.

Allow the ARLIS/NA Board to determine whether or not expansion of the
geographic area for Wittenborn Award eligibility will affect ARLIS/NA in other
ways. If the Wittenborn Award is intended to serve the members of ARLIS/NA
and the publishers with whom they deal, then the geographic intent of the award
is could possibly be limited to Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Since the
Bylaws are not as clear as they could be the Board may want to reconsider some
of the wording in the Bylaws to make the ARLIS/NA geographic intent more clear.
Comment - Regardless of what countries are ultimately determined to be eligible for the Wittenborn Award, each eligible country should be listed on all Award documentation.

Publication Date Question
The 2004 Wittenborn committee recommended that the Wittenborn guidelines “clearly state that submissions must have a copyright date that matches the Wittenborn Award year.” After researching the question and discussing it at length the 2005 Committee could not agree on this or another solution. Other professional groups allow a range of publication years (e.g., 3) for their book awards, so the 2005 committee investigated their policies and discussed this as a possible solution. Again, there was no consensus about how to proceed.

Advertising versus Mailed Solicitations
The 2005 committee discovered that an ad in Publishers Weekly would cost about as much as mailing solicitations to 300+ publishers. Since we are not getting books from known publishers (often art museums?) we wonder if the current system is effective. Plus maintaining a publishers database is a lot of work. There was discussion about which trade journal / scholarly journal would be the best place to put such an ad (Art Bulletin? Art Newspaper? Chronicle Higher Education? Museum News?). The committee felt a letter mailed to a publishing house would have more of an impact than an ad, but there was also concern that the high turnover in publishing and among museum staff many letters may go unnoticed. The issue wasn’t resolved, but the idea of purchasing advertising was seen to have merit and warrant further consideration if the 2006 committee is so inclined.

Remaining Issues:

Logo
The 2004 Committee also suggested that ARLIS/NA “re-design the Wittenborn award logo and produce the new logo as a digital file only.” Because “Stickers are expensive, obsolete, and no longer of much use to publishers.” We did not address this issue.

Certificates
There are currently no guidelines for printing the certificates for award winners. Future committees would benefit from guidelines regarding for whom the certificates should be printed.

Recent Practices
The 2005 chair started a “Recent Practices” document and collected sample forms and letters for the 2006 committee. There is very little direction passed from committee to committee, which these documents hope to alleviate.