Annual Report 2006
ARLIS/NA Gerd Muehsam Award Committee

Submitted by: Tony White, Chair
twhte@pratt.edu
718-636-3531
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2006-2007 Gerd Muehsam Award Committee:
Carole Ann Fabian (Board Liaison), Kevin Madill, Maria Oldal, Jenny Tobias, Barbara Reed, Barbara Rockenbach, Laura Tatum, Amy Trendler, Tony White (Chair),

2005-2006 Gerd Muehsam Award Committee
Roberta Blitz, Margaret Boylan, Suzy Frechette (Board Liaison), Barbara Reed, Jeffrey Ross (Chair), Maryly Snow, Laura Tatum, Tony White

Activities of the past year (April 2006-March 2007):

May 5-9, 2006, 34th Annual Conference, Banff:
Jeffrey Ross rotated off of the Gerd Muehsam Award (GMA) Committee as Chair and Tony White assumed the Chair responsibilities on May 9th. Jeffrey Ross, Tony White and Maryly Snow attended the Gerd Muehsam Award Committee meeting at Banff.

Ross’s proposed calendar for the coming year was distributed and agreed to. It was generally agreed that the voting system works quite well and needed no tweaking.

Ross explained that the current contact list for library schools and professors was in need of updating. At that point it was not clear if the Awards Committee would be responsible for this or if there would be some support from Headquarters and/or the new umbrella Awards Committee. The Awards Committee chair also felt that the contact list of schools and professors should be updated by the GMA and the Travel Awards Committee (TAC), as it affected them specifically.

White suggested that the email contact list, generated by Henry Pisciotta and the Internship Award Committee (IAC), be used in addition to the mailing list traditionally used by the GMA and TAC. Pisciotta’s list was generated for the IAC the previous year and attempted to include every email address for every faculty member in all the library science programs in North America, including Puerto Rico. It was generally agreed that White would try using the IAC’s email list in addition to the mailing list of schools and professors currently maintained by the GMA and TAC.
June, 2006:
The GMA announcement, with cover letter for faculty, deans or administrators, was sent electronically to those on our contact list, and to all faculty and chairs listed on Pisciotta’s email list as well.

Late September, 2006:
The GMA announcement was again sent to the contact list, with a cover letter as a reminder, urging the recipients to encourage students to enter their papers.

November, 2006:
19 submissions were received by the deadline; 16 were judged to be eligible according to the stated submission criteria. Of the 16 qualified submissions, 13 were papers and 3 were web-based projects.

Mid-December, 2006:
Shortly before the holidays, White sent copies of student papers and information related to the web-based projects, along with the ballots, to the committee members. White made the deadline for return of ballots by GMA committee members to White by mid-February, 2007.

Mid-February, 2007:
White tallied the votes. The winner, Tang Li, a student at the University of Maryland, College Park, was immediately notified that her paper (Developing a Shape-and-Composition CBIR Thesaurus for the Traditional Chinese Landscape) had been chosen as the GMA recipient. Shortly after the committee members, the other applicants, headquarters, the president and the chair of the Awards Committee were all notified of this outcome. Li was also encouraged to contact Judy Dyki and Kathy Zimon, editors of Art Documentation, with her abstract for consideration for possible publication.

Shortly after contacting Li about winning the GMA, she notified White that her paper had just been accepted for publication in the peer reviewed Library Student Journal. I contacted Dyki and Zimon immediately with this news. Normally they would not publish an article in Art Documentation that had been previously published elsewhere, however, Dyki and Zimon felt that in recognition of winning the Gerd Muehsam Award it would be appropriate. Correspondence between Dyki and Zimon occurred with Eli Guinnee, Editor-in-Chief, Library Student Journal. The journal has a Creative Commons license that allows Li to grant ARLIS the rights to republish this article in whatever form she desires. Dyki emailed Guinnee and noted that Li’s submission would go through the established review process at Art Documentation and that Dyki and Zimon would cite Library Student Journal as the source of the first publication.

Atlanta Conference, April 26-30, 2007:
Tony White will continue as chair of the GMA Committee. The Committee is scheduled to meet on Sunday, April 29, from 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m., in the Brookwood conference room. New members will be introduced; a calendar for the upcoming year will be passed around; mailing list updates and Committee member duties will be discussed.

Further commentary:
The submissions received for this past year’s Gerd Muehsam Award were all from schools we contacted. Previous to my term as Chair, the GMA was concerned about
the issue of better advertisement. I feel that using both the GMA/TAC mailing list and the IAC mailing list will alleviate this concern. However, with a broader reach the GMA submission guidelines may need to be revised just slightly to emphasize the link to Art Librarianship in the paper topics.

A number of the submissions came from students enrolled in courses that were not specifically in ‘Art Librarianship’ or ‘Visual Resources’, but were from students who had enrolled in such courses as: archives, preservation, special collections, art history and related areas. One committee member felt that a few of the papers were ‘out of scope’ and did not relate specifically enough to ‘Art Librarianship’. Another member countered that the papers on art historical topics and the history of libraries did relate but that the link between art librarianship was not clearly linked. After a very productive email exchange between GMA committee members, the following revision in the wording of the guidelines was suggested: add “relevance to” after “the practice of” (see below).

“Papers and projects will be judged on their relevance to the practice of art librarianship or visual curatorship, depth of research and scholarship, quality of organization, appropriate use of terminology, style and readability, and originality of thought or observation.”

I would like to recommend this wording change to the Executive Board. If approved I would like to update the webpage and the promotional materials that the committee sends out to schools and faculty each year. Please let me know.

Chairing the Gerd Muehsam Award Committee is, periodically, time-consuming. It is, however, in my opinion, a very satisfying and fulfilling ARLIS committee to chair. As a faculty member who is actively involved in teaching an Art Librarianship course at Pratt Institute’s Graduate School of Information and Library Science, it is fascinating to see what the hot topics are in other library schools, to follow current research trends, and it is equally enjoyable to read the commentary and tally the scores from the GMA committee members. I enthusiastically look forward to another year as Chair of the Gerd Muehsam Award Committee.

Cc:
Carole Ann Fabian (Board Liaison)
Daniel Starr (Chair, Awards Committee)