Attendees:
Nedda Ahmed, Georgia State University; Amy Ciccone, University of Southern California; Ann Whiteside, UNC Chapel Hill; Anna Fishaut, Stanford University; Anna Helgeson, SVA and Christie’s; Barbara Reed; Beth Hylen, Corning Museum of Glass; Beverly Mitchell, Southern Methodist University; Burharn Poluwy, Smith College; Catherine Petersen, Northwestern Az. University; Heather Topch, Bard Graduate Center; Ian McDermott, Yale Center for British Art; Jeremy Flatchley, Bryn Mawr College; John Hagood, Natl Gallery of Art; Kathy Woodrell, Library of Congress; Kim Detterbeck, Frostburg State University; Melissa Wagner, Sotheby’s Institute of Art-NY; Suz Massen, Frick Art Reference Library; Kim Wishart, Princeton University; Leslie Ward; Linda Seckelson, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Lois White, Getty Research Institute; Lorraine Weber, Fashion Institute of Technology; Mary Stark, Beverly Hills Public Library; Nicole Fabricano-Person, Princeton University; Phil Jones, University of Arkansas; Rachel Issa-Menard; Rick Sieber, Philadelphia Museum of Art; Ross Day, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Sara Sherman, Getty Research Institute; Susan Craig, University of Kansas; Mia D’Avanza, Yale University; Susan Davi, University of Delaware; Stephanie Frontz, University of Rochester; Jennifer Garland, McGill University; Heather Slania, Georgetown University; Carol Rusk, Whitney Museum of American Art; Barbara Prior, Oberlin College

Virginia Allison welcomed the group and announced the names of the Vice-Moderator and the Recorder. She then provided the meeting agenda to be passed around, and attendees introduced themselves around the room. Virginia opened the meeting by asking what we want RISS to be and what we can do to contribute to the section and ARLIS/NA. She stated that four working groups have spun off of RISS and meet separately, specifically mentioning the Free Web Resources working group. She also asked the group if they felt that the RISS mission needs to change in any way. Virginia stated that in response to feedback from other RISS meetings, perhaps the section should start a blog, working with Nedda Ahmed and ARLIS/NA management company TEI to link the blog to the ARLIS site.

Virginia then stated that new officers for RISS must be elected, as the Moderator leaves after one year. She suggested electing two Co-Moderators to switch off years, so that the quick rotation of the Moderator position could be avoided. A question was raised from the floor, asking how to make sure that the Moderator would attend next year. Virginia answered that to make sure, perhaps the incoming Moderator should be from the state that the conference will be held at (Minnesota for 2011). Ross Day mentioned that local members are already pressed into service when the conference is held in their state and committed to other duties. Virginia then asked for volunteers for Moderator, and the floor suggested that it continue to be decided by acclamation. This means that Virginia remains Moderator and Amy Ballmer remains Vice-Moderator for the coming year. Everyone agreed and clapped.

Virginia mentioned some topics on the agenda – how to launch or organize future initiatives, creating a FAQ for arts reference. She asked the floor what changes or innovations they
have brought to their reference services in response to reduced budgets. Amy Ciccone replied that because of furloughs in the California university system, the reference desk is down to one person, but a pilot text reference program is in use and chat and text statistics have risen. She also stated that they are looking in to roving reference librarians or a desk in circulation to respond to low night time statistics. Other responses from the floor included “A student staffs the reference desk at night with a librarian on call, but the librarian is rarely called.” Amy Ballmer asked how the on-call librarian system worked, and the reply was that the librarian is logged on their email and their phone line is open during that shift. Heather Slania said that at Georgetown, the reference desk is staffed by a student with the librarian available in their office or by email and that this system has worked very well. She added that this has been very successful, and that chat reference is used heavily. Anna Fishaut stated that at Stanford, the chat reference service is not really used, and that it is a “face-to-face place.” She asked if anyone else is interested in establishing core competencies for paraprofessional staff and students.

Amy Ciccone mentioned the student reference program at her library. They have an established manual for training for tiered reference services that are shared among students, staff, and librarians. She described this as an active training program with modules that must be completed. Phil Jones stated that his main library’s reference statistics have decreased, specifically noting that the social work stats remain stable while general undergraduate questions have decreased. Virginia asked if this was due to good marketing, or user behavior changes. Phil replied that the marketing tactics haven’t changed much.

Virginia asked the group if anyone has done away with a physical reference desk. Ian McDermott stated that while the Yale Center for British Art Library has a desk, the main library at Yale does not. He explained that all librarians use chat and text services to stay involved despite the lack of a reference desk. Amy Ciccone remarked that LibGuides are good for creating basic FAQs on reference. Susan Craig said that the reference desk was removed by the dean but when faculty complained it was re-established, pointing out that these trends can be cyclical. Phil mentioned that at Arkansas, circulation and reference desks were combined to create a one-stop shopping source.

Virginia then asked if print sources are still in use. The floor responded that print source usage is down, and that students don’t seem resistant to that. Amy Ballmer stated that her PhD students prefer online journals despite print journals being closer physically. Next Virginia asked about retaining print resources when they are mirrored online. Responses included “depends on the resource – some National Biographies are not available in print” and the importance of basic information vs. research information being provided in different formats. Some online versions of materials don’t include the same scope and content. Heather stated that an evaluation of print vs. online content would be helpful, and Virginia asked for volunteers to create a core list of electronic arts reference sources.

Anna Fishaut asked about integrating the reference materials into the stacks. Her print reference sources aren’t used much. Barbara Prior replied that her library reduced the reference section by 30-40% and replaced that space with reserves. She stated that only the reference staff had been using the ref. section anyway. Linda Seckleson remarked that browsability can be impacted by relocating materials and changing classification systems.

The Future of Art Bibliography (FAB) session was discussed next. Linda and Carol attended the session and Linda was at the Metropolitan Museum of Art event. She reported that working groups have been formed to discuss BHA funding by grants. The results of the FAB meeting were to rely on the College Art Association and other societies in the meantime. The impact on French libraries by the BHA change was also questioned, and the floor answered that RAA is available online.

Meeting was adjourned.