John Melville Bishop (Media Generation; and UCLA) “Ghosts From the Cutting Room Floor: Continuity in the Tradition and Current Practice of Ethnographic Media”

In narrative film structure, ghosts are the invisible things that inform a story, things that have been left out but continue to affect the characters. Continuity is the product of decisions that shape the perceived flow of events and ideas, the part that rises above the cutting room floor. This presentation uses film clips to stimulate discussion about how ghosts and continuity apply to the practice of visual representation of events and ideas in anthropological film today. Topics may include these questions: Does the imperative of continuity in media trump the chaos of experienced life? How are concepts of truth and authenticity relevant to visual storytelling? In addition to attending to focus, exposure, and being in the right place, what does the cameraperson actually do? What do filmmakers (as crafts persons) owe their subjects? What is editing? How, if at all, do the ethnographic films and written literature of the last sixty plus years influence anthropologically oriented photographers and videographers working today? What are the most appropriate shooting and editing strategies for the production tools and delivery platforms in the present? Film clips include interviews with Robert Gardner and John Marshall as well as sequences from edited films and unedited footage.

Justin D'Agostino (California State, Los Angeles) “Into the Jungle”

At this year’s visual research conference, I will lead an interactive presentation that will generate a lot of back and forth discussion about my experience doing an international anthropological documentary. The presentation is organized into several modules that will encourage audience participation.

My first experience with international research came in 2011 when I completed a six month stint as a research assistant on the island of Borneo, working on a project about the influence of fruit scarcity on the ecology of nonhuman primates in East Kalimantan, codirected by Dr. Stephanie Spehar (University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh) and Dr. Roberto Delgado (currently with the National Science Foundation). We looked at how variation in resource distribution and abundance affect the ecology of orangutans, Bornean gibbons, and red langurs. I focused on travel paths the primates followed and what visual markers they were using to orient themselves in the environment to allow them to travel to food sources. We also examined vocal behavior to improve our understanding of the role acoustic communication plays in mediating social relationships and conspecific interactions. Of particular interest are species that live in resource-scarce environments, occur at low density, and face feeding constraints that impact their socioecology. From July 2011 to January 2012, we collected 348 hours of data and calculated a calling rate of 0.26 calls per hour. The number of feeding bouts, their
duration, and daily travel distance did not differ significantly between calling vs. non-calling
days, thereby suggesting that there was no feeding and travel cost associated with calling
during our study period. The primary contexts in which vocalizations occurred included
when near territorial boundaries and during intergroup encounters with neighboring troops,
followed by intragroup activities such as feeding and preparing to travel.

I decided to keep a visual log during my six months in the jungle to be able to answer a
simple question from friends and family when I returned: what was your experience like? I
made one hundred copies of the visual project that turned out to be a little over eight hours
in duration. I received a lot of feedback, but the most pressing issue was that I needed help
editing the footage. I was successful in funding a Kickstarter campaign to raise over $5,000
to finish turning the visual project into a documentary, Into the Jungle, that is currently an
official selection in the 2014 California State University, Los Angeles (Golden Eagle) Film
Festival.

During the presentation, I will focus on several aspects of this visual research in progress,
one of them being the target audience of the finished product. At first, this documentary
was simply designed to be informative for friends and family to explain my inter-national
adventure doing anthropological research. But the documentary has become more than that
through editing, narration, and an anthropological lens, and as the audience has expanded. I
will also discuss what has formed from this process, which is starting a collective of
anthropologists who will investigate compelling world issues in a documentary television
series called The Phenomenologists. SWe have already filmed the background footage and
sent a reel to Discovery Channel, National Geographic, Science Channel and Travel
Channel. All of these experiences will be good talking points for interactive discussion and
will hopefully refine my approach to visual anthropological research.

**Carrie Ida Edinger (independent artist)** “Visual Methods and Interdisciplinary Practice,
from an Artist’s Perspective”

This presentation will consider an Internet-based collection project, an artist using ethno-
graphic research methods borrowed from anthropology, and forms of digital media used in
documenting interdisciplinary visual research. I contend that the artist’s perspective --
concerned with individual experience -- can also be utilized in the development of
interdisciplinary theories drawing from the breadth of current art and from anthropology.

My current Internet-based project, Carrie Ida Edinger’s Collections, will be an example
that will introduce the ethnographic roles for research and the visual significance of digital
media used for representing the concept of the project and related research. The Internet-
based collection project is formed and defined by material culture, ethnographic methods,
and social and culturally based research. These methods contribute to visual documentation
in a form of media such as video clips or print media objects that form specific collection
themes. The collection project website (www.carrieida.com) offers accessibility to each
addition that is posted monthly.

From the current project, my roles within the ethnography process are a postmodern
inquiry that includes Sarah Pink’s proposal to rethink the traditional roles of participant
observation to a multi-sensory experience. Borrowing ethnographic methods enables me to
create a process to analyze specific activities involved with an object in forming collection
themes. In my interdisciplinary practice, I am currently investigating the phenomenological theories related to material culture and interdisciplinary research.

The acknowledgement of the artist’s voice contributes to the future discussion of visual research and the development of various forms of digital media for theory and for practice.

Three to four minute modules will be presented, with the majority featuring single frame grabs (or video clips that are under a minute), leaving ample time for active questioning in between.

**Graeson Harris-Young (DePaul)** “Phenomenal Teaching: Toward Collaborative Knowledge and Value Creation with Teachers through Visual Research”

The unique experience of teaching and being taught the Alexander Technique (AT) grew out of proportion to the rest of an ongoing project, which aims to broadly document and share teachers’ diverse phenomenological experiences spanning K-12, higher education, and informal teaching, across a range of disciplines, through collaborative visual research. Although capturing, reconstructing and explicating the lived experience of any teaching is difficult, even quixotic, as each experience is at once immediately and extemporaneously embodied as well as a performative reenactment from the teacher’s pedagogy, philosophy and past experience, I found the Alexander Technique most difficult to both access intellectually as well as satisfyingly to capture and construct an audiovisual account of this technique in action. The Alexander Technique is a psychophysical pedagogy that aims to teach what John Dewey called “thinking in action,” developing powers of attention to understand “use of the self” and skills of “inhibition and direction” in order to effect positive change in that use. Teachers work generally one-on-one with pupils in lessons that revolve around everyday movement in experiences that engage aural and visual senses, but also especially the use of the teacher’s hands on the student, thus deeply engaging kinesthetic and haptic senses. The continued attempt to understand and create an account of these experiences has led to a year of fieldwork that vacillates between traditional participant observation and the collaborative visual approach with which I entered the setting. In the work-in-progress spirit of the Visual Research Conference, this presentation will describe and invite discussion on my research journey so far with an eye to the future of both the ‘larger’ project and the particular work with the Alexander Technique.

**Carol Hendrickson (Marlboro)** “Visual Fieldnotes and the Anthro-Artist's Book: Part II”

During the 2013 Visual Research Conference I was one of the invited speakers and gave a presentation on “Experiments in Visual Anthropology: Visual Fieldnotes and Anthro-Artist’s Books.” This year I propose to follow the earlier presentation with a poster display, including examples of my visual field notebooks and anthro-artists books. Some text will accompany the display; however, my main goal is to share my work with others and thereby engage people in conversations about their own (possibly related) experiments in visual anthropology.

A bit of background information: I am interested in exploring different ways of recording and disseminating information that fall at the intersection of the visual and the verbal. Visual fieldnotes are examples of drawing as part of data collection and the contemplation of what is happening around you in the field. Their production involves a number of issues of interest to anthropologists including iconic and indexical representation, the embodied
nature of ethnographic data collection, and participatory data collection. In general field-notes live their lives after the fact of collection in private spaces and serve as a means to a more conventional public end, namely written publications or insights delivered verbally in classrooms. Anthro-artist’s books, on the other hand, are alternative means for public dissemination of ethnographic materials. Drawing on the practices of book artists, these works attempt to integrate words and images so that the whole is larger than the sum of the visual and verbal parts, so that the visual does not serve merely as an illustration of the verbal text but the two act as equal partners and integrated elements in imparting insights on a particular topic.

Joshua Holst (Arizona) “Advocacy and the Documentary”

As anthropologists, we cross social boundaries, and so do our films. Advocacy documentaries in particular often target a specific audience for a specific purpose—the way the filmic subject is framed and represented has everything to do with documentarian’s desire to communicate a cause to a community with a particular worldview, and a particular set of biases. Whether conveying the injustices of South American oil exploitation to North American audiences or exposing the corrupt ineffectiveness of Nigerien food aid to administrators with vested interests, pre-existing narratives must be challenged for a documentary to be effective.

The frame contests described by visual anthropologist Naomi Schiller or linguist George Lakoff are the heart of advocacy documentaries. Following Goffman, a frame’s “cultural resonance” is different from one audience to the next. As opposed to being strictly analyzed in terms of the accuracy of their representations in the minds of an imagined mass audience, advocacy documentaries in particular can fruitfully be analyzed in light of their impacts on specific target audiences, the practices and perceptions they transform.

David Whiteman argues that in place of evaluating documentaries in terms of their impact on dominant discourse by way of surveys of individuals, that a coalition model would include, among other things, impacts in alternative spheres of public discourse. I would expand this farther to say that sometimes the most relevant impacts are not necessarily just a coalition but at times very specific sets of people, some of whom may not be coalitions to be recruited to the documentary’s cause: college students, village elders, high-level NGO staff, or government officials.

I explore several documentaries that have been used as part of wider efforts to reframe issues among target audiences, including a documentary on oil impacts shown to college students living near a refinery and a video on food relief used to impact NGO practices in West Africa. Documentaries are unique in their ability to bring the visceral experiences of one place to another. They bring people face-to-face with worlds they otherwise would never be exposed to. These experiences, laden in a shroud of affect or objectivity as the case may call for, challenge the frames held by key decision-makers central to the transformation of the frames that make up social change in each culturally-specific context.
Vincent Joos (North Carolina) “Urban Visions: Representing and Navigating Port-au-Prince, Haiti”

In May 2012, I was walking in Port-au-Prince, trying to find the National Library. When I asked for directions to a street book seller, the man replied: “When you see the shrimp vendor on your right, you take a left, you go down and you will see a two-story yellow house. Take a right and go up until you reach the beer vendor. There you’ll ask again.” Since the 2010 devastating earthquake, the city of Port-au-Prince has lost most of its landmarks. As churches, cathedrals and skyscrapers collapsed, it became increasingly difficult to navigate a city where street signs are quasi-inexistent. This presentation explores the complex visual culture people have developed to map the city and tracks the remembrances people mobilize to make sense of a landscape in constant change. Trees, colors, vernacular structures, advertisements, graffiti, and other elements form a reservoir of mundane but structuring visual remembrances that enable urban dwellers to appropriate their environment and to create limits between neighborhoods. These visual memories of present and collapsed urban materiality function also as instruments of social differentiation and economic separation.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in Port-au-Prince, this presentation displays photographs taken by the principal investigator and his main collaborator to document the construction and present demolition of Port-au-Prince. Visual materials have been used as eliciting devices but have also been created by consultants through collaborative ethnography. Through these multiple images, a socially differentiated city emerges in all its materiality. This visual concreteness in turn nourishes imaginaries of a functioning city where the right to access resources, public space and privacy emerges as the main discourse around personal representations.

Andrea E Leland (independent filmmaker) “Insider / Outsider Collaboration: Producing Documentary Films with the Garifuna/Carib communities”

Yurumein (Homeland): The Cribs of St. Vincent (2014) is a fifty minute documentary film that recounts the painful past of the Caribs on St. Vincent – their extermination at the hands of the British, the decimation of their culture on the island, and their exile to Central America where much of that culture survived, even thrived. Yurumein (your-o-main) also explores what few cultural remnants of Garifuna still exist on St. Vincent and the beginnings of a movement to teach and revitalize Garifuna language, music and dance, and ritual to younger generations.

The Garifuna Journey (1998) is a forty-five minute documentary about Garifuna /Caribs of Belize. In first person Garifuna voices, this documentary presents the history, the language, food, music, dance and spirituality of the Garifuna culture. It is a celebratory documentary, with engaging scenes of fishing, cooking, dancing, cassava preparation, thatching a temple, spiritual ritual, ritual music and dance, demonstrating the Garifuna link to a Carib-African past.

I have been working with the Carib/Garifuna community for over 20 years, utilizing a methodology that I call “insider/ outsider” collaboration. The method becomes a dialogue between practitioners and tradition bearers of Garifuna culture (insider), and the observer/filmmaker (outsider). The result of this dialogue is dialectical: To be able to hold and
convey multiple perspectives, speak broadly to larger audiences, and create media that is more dimensional than either insider or outsider could produce alone.

As an outsider, I often consult and collaborate with insiders who point me toward significant individuals in the community from whom to collect deeper oral histories. Through this process, I continually engage the community in the creation of a film. As a filmmaker, I often choose to document seemingly ordinary details: a mother braiding her daughter’s hair, a pot on the stove, or a recipe for fish soup. Often when I am collecting this kind of material, a community member will be surprised (even amused) by my attention. Yet as a result of my attention they begin to reflect on this ordinary object in a different light. Through this process, I continually engage the community in the creation of a film and increase the appreciation of their own culture.

In the context of visual anthropology, I will present specific examples of the process I use to document indigenous cultures, including the Garifuna of Belize and St. Vincent. In the end, I see my primary responsibility to the community I am documenting. It is my hope that my films will reach a wider audience and in doing so, in some small way, bridge the gap between the community and the broader public.

Jonathan S. Marion (Arkansas) “Image/Intermediality/Identity”

Images lead multiple lives. Variances in real-time perception, combined with differing recalls, reproductions, appropriations, and remixes, all complicate any stabilization of images into a fixed set of meanings and purposes. In line with this, and related to Deleuze’s notion of intermediality, this poster highlights the social lives of images, highlighting: (1) images’ social trajectories and (re-)contextualizations; (2) some of the ethical considerations and implications of producing and disseminating images within today’s media universe; and (3) the real world consequences of such considerations (such as the lack of anonymity or confidentiality when working with images).

Relating to various understandings of “social lives” as applied to images—from the role of images in social media like Facebook, Instagram, and Tumblr, to the impact of images on day-to-day social relationships—images have moved to the foreground of social life and must be taken seriously as the complex, polysemic, unwieldy contributors to social action that they have become. As a case in point, competitive ballroom dancers’ “image”—and hence images—become inextricable from their professional capital and identity. With broader implications for how images are created, disseminated, and perceived in contemporary life, this poster interrogates the role of images in personal and social re/presentational processes, and how these dynamics ramify and feedback into broader circuits of social and cultural negotiations and living.

Steve Moog (Arkansas) and Jonathan S. Marion (Arkansas; project co-author, not presenting) “Piloting an Applied Visual Research Project among Garifuna in Dangriga, Belize”

This presentation is based in my participation and involvement in the inaugural season of an applied visual research course and community service project amongst the Garifuna people in Dangriga, Belize. As part of a growing set of visual anthropology courses offered at the University of Arkansas, and as the first faculty-led travel course offered in cultural anthropology, our applied visual research team was comprised of five undergrad-
uate students, one graduate student, and one faculty member. Some of the topics presented today concern the ethical, theoretical, methodological, and practical issues involved in balancing the varying agendas of different interested parties, including (a) the study abroad office, (b) the sponsoring service learning program, (c) the on-the-ground facilitating partners, Peacework (a 501(c)3 global nonprofit organization), (d) the other university team’s and instructors travelling with us, (e) the Garifuna and other people in Dangriga, Belize, (f) our specific team, and (g) most importantly, the specific community partners with whom we worked. Our primary projects for this pilot season were twofold:

1. Visually documenting and collecting the related oral histories concerning both local craftworks (in the form of making traditional drums) and local foodways (in the form of cassava processing).
2. Crafting visual products in line with community partners wants and needs (e.g. for marketing purposes, to preserve traditional knowledge, and more).

This session is intended to take maximum advantage of the participatory nature of the Visual Research Conference, using the gathered perspectives and expertise of Conference participants to provide feedback and suggestions regarding the different approaches attempted and products produced. Far from abstracted comments, the responses provided in these discussions will directly influence the future design and refine the implementation of this project and be fed back to all of the students involved as invaluable input in their learning of visual research.

James Scanlan (Arkansas) and Jonathan S. Marion (Arkansas; project co-author, not presenting) “Unpacking Visual Tropes of Body and Identity in Comics”

Unlike real-world enactments, comic book characters’ appearances are only limited by their artists’ imaginations and the media through which they are presented. How characters are depicted thus emerges as a particularly telling facet of broader cultural dynamics related to issues of image, body, and identity. As such, the underlying questions behind this research are twofold: (1) how do different identity-types get visually represented when “image” need not conform to the factual and the possible (i.e. when bodies and costuming can be drawn in ways that are not physically realistic); and (2) what are the implications of the tropes involved both as reflections of and contributors to broader sociocultural discourses of body and identity.

While comic books themselves are at the heart of this project, the current popularity of many comic-character based movies (e.g. the Batman franchise, Green Lantern, three iterations of Superman, two separate Spider Man franchises, two Captain America films, two versions of the Hulk, three Iron Man movies, four X-Men Films, and the Avengers—with the biggest opening weekend in US history—just to name several of the most popular), as well as still expanding attendance at events like Comic-Con, with over 150,000 people in attendance, reflects something powerful. Indeed, the cross-media popularity of these characters points to comics’ significance as culturally prominent vehicles for visually communicated ideas about issues of appearance, identity, and character. Highlighting pilot work on several types of visual content analysis of primary characters—both heroes and villains—in the DC and Marvel pantheons (the two largest comic companies), this presentation looks at issues of image, gender, ethnicity, identity, and the like. Embedded within a larger project on comics and culture, this session is meant to be especially participatory and
interaction. More specifically, we look to get feedback on the different approaches and analyses presented, suggestions for new and different angles, and otherwise gather input for more fully developing the project.

Anna Seegers-Krueckeberg (Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity; and University of Goettingen) “Visualizing the Neighborhood”

During the summer of 2013 and 2014 I undertook my Ph.D. fieldwork in Astoria, New York City (within the Globaldivercities Project at the Max Planck Institute). My aim was to find out how visual methods can help us to understand spatial and social patterns that arise or are used under conditions of diversification when new diversity meets old diversity. I used photography, video and mapping strategies alongside the more traditional ways of doing ethnographic participant observation to investigate the processes of everyday interactions amongst diverse people in public spaces.

In this presentation, I will focus on mental maps and their potential to make social and spatial patterns visible. How do local residents see their neighborhood especially when the neighborhood is known as one of the "most diverse places on earth"? Does this diversity come into play when asked to draw a map or to mark special places of their everyday surroundings in a map? How do their visual representations differ from one another? I shall discuss my approach, findings and challenges of working with a visual method.

Stephanie Takaragawa (Chapman) “Revising, Revisiting and Re-envisioning History: Examining Japanese American Place in History”

For over 50 years the Japanese-American internment during WWII was part of an American history largely ignored by Americans. However, in the last two decades incursions have been made both by the National Park Services and private interests to restore that history and the internment sites themselves to the historical record. Shifting discourses about the Japanese American internment from World War II to the present demonstrate the flexibility of ideologies of race in American culture, which is particularly poignant in our current era’s appeal to the “post-racial.” Analyzing the historic body of representations of Japanese-Americans reveals the social, political and economic climate that contributed to how Americans of Japanese descent were framed and understood in America during this time period, and provides an opportunity to examine the larger discourses about race, ethnicity, nationalism, and identity.

This presentation works through these issues about Japanese Americans’ history, distributed across four modules, for which I intend to limit my presentation to four to five minutes each.

Module 1: Brief overview of the history of the Japanese American internment (justification for internment; social, economic, and political climate). Module 2: How the internment has been “revised” in its narrative across 75 years, including the apology and redress, the passing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, and the shifting discourse about the internment. Module 3: My analysis of the National Historic Site of Manzanar in California, including how the narrative fits into the ideology of the “post racial.” Module 4: How best would I convey and relay this information and history into public discourses?