The 2008 College Art Association Annual Conference will be held in Dallas-Fort Worth from February 20th to 23rd.

The Catalogue Raisonné Scholars Association will be holding a Business Meeting and a Special Session devoted to the topic of sculpture and the catalogue raisonné.

Until the time and date of our two sessions are announced, please enjoy the information about the upcoming panel.

Why Sculpture is Never Boring

Chairs: E. Adina Gordon & Steven Manford

In the once-narrow but now ever-expanding ranks of catalogue raisonné scholars, painting is the premier discipline and photography the charmed youngest offspring, while sculpture is the step-child attracting the fewest patrons and publishers. Why so, when sculpture embraces a broader range of vital issues than other media? Consider the complexities of commissions for free-standing public monuments and architectural sculpture, the quagmire of versions in varied size or medium; the problems of multiples and editions; of foundry practices in enlargements, reproductions, or marking; and the appearance of posthumous casts, unauthorized versions and outright forgeries. Moreover, sculpture produced by traditional means leaves a creative trail of drawings, models, casts, scale renderings and alternate forms.

All these factors become challenges that bring the Catalogue Raisonné researcher beyond the phenomenological aspects of sculpture to the point where the object is not the sole subject. The panel seeks to undercut the bias epitomized by Charles Baudelaire’s notorious mid-nineteenth century diatribe against sculpture in his celebrated review of the 1846 Salon, “Why Sculpture is Boring,” in which he decried the limitations of three-dimensional sculptural representation. In this short session, we highlight three unique
and disparate aspects of the oeuvre catalogue in sculpture: bizarre paths in discovery, multiples, editions and forgeries.

The Roy Lichtenstein Catalogue Raisonné and the Authentication of Editioned Sculpture

Yolande Trincere, Ph.D., Roy Lichtenstein Foundation, New York

In the late twentieth-century, multiples by sculptors proliferated and often could not readily be distinguished from mass-produced objects. To add to the confusion, new materials became available to the artists. These factors increased the complexity of the task of the catalogue raisonné scholar. For example, several editioned sculptures created by Roy Lichtenstein during the 1980’s were focused on the Brushstroke as symbol of the artist and the essence of the art process. Each of these objects, while a multiple, has individual characteristics that can be authenticated by specific colors, paint application, age, marks, labels/plaques and other specific information.

The talk will further an understanding of how the researcher determines the uniqueness of each sculpture and establishes a process for its authentication. To this end, formal research techniques and the use of maquettes, drawings and other supporting materials will be explored.

Surprises on the Catalogue Raisonné Trail: Frederick W. Macmonnies’ Public and Private Sculpture Commissions

E. Adina Gordon, Ph.D., Independent Scholar

For over sixty years an archival photograph of MacMonnies seated amidst various sculptures and drawings was in public view but scholars sought neither their location nor identity. Searching led to a bust seen in that picture and a collection of vintage photos showing previously unknown statues. Clues to works that were lost and found, or found then lost, also came from artist’s correspondence, oral interviews, and errors in art catalogues and extant literature.

Connoisseurship and primary methodology for Catalogue Raisonné scholars require actual examination of objects when possible. The sheer physicality of this research
Lawless Bronze: Forgeries in the Sculpture of Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell

Rick Stewart, Senior Curator of Western Painting & Sculpture, Amon Carter Museum. Fort Worth, Texas

The bronze sculptures of Frederic Remington (1861-1909) and Charles M. Russell (1864-1926), depicting various subjects of the American West, were exceptionally popular during the artists’ lifetimes, and they certainly remain so today. Remington created twenty-two individual subjects, and Russell a total of forty-six; not too surprisingly, forgeries of these works began to appear during the artists’ lifetimes. In addition, the principal foundry responsible for the majority of the bronzes by both artists continued to produce unauthorized casts of their works for decades following the artists’ deaths. Until recently the sheer number of forgeries, unauthorized and inferior casts, and wholly new subjects falsely attributed to Remington or Russell made serious study of their sculptural oeuvres extremely difficult. Moreover, the absence of primary source material such as the artists’ papers, gallery correspondence, or foundry records greatly hampered systematic scholarly study. However, in the last twenty years many of these problems have been rectified. Today, the availability of many of those records, coupled with key innovations in scientific investigative technology and good old-fashioned connoisseurship, have enabled scholars to isolate the forgeries, copies, and outright imposters from the authentic lifetime works, resulting in a far better understanding of the artistic achievements of these important self-taught American sculptors and paving the way for the courageous work of writing their Catalogues Raisonnés."