

## **ARLIS/NA + VRA 3rd Joint Conference 2016, Seattle – Conference Session**

### **Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Uktena Monster: Subject Cataloging for Images**

The Uktena monster is a mythical cosmic creature of darkness from the Mississippian period in Native North America. Many catalogers find the prospect of subject indexing so daunting that they don't know where to start, so they don't. As image collections move into centralized repositories and become accessible to users from multiple disciplines, adding more descriptive content to their metadata can bring the images to the light of day for more people, making them more valuable resources. This hybrid panel and interactive Special Interest Group discussion will begin with three presentations on new approaches to subject cataloging for images and comparisons of image descriptions from different sources. A free-ranging discussion about establishing best practices for effectively adding subject descriptions to image records will follow the presentations, considering work flow and setting parameters for inclusion and exhaustivity. We will invite attendees to participate in a group subject cataloging exercise with images and sample descriptive terms and audience suggestions. We will provide handouts with references to the current VRAF publication *Cataloging Cultural Objects* and its recommendations for creating subject and concept authorities and other current materials on subject cataloging for images and create a contact list for continuing the discussion. Images have become ubiquitous in public discourse, yet the cataloging records in our databases tend to include sparse if any subject descriptions. Subject cataloging makes natural connections possible between traditional users of visual images and a potential broader audience.

#### **Moderator**

Karen Kessel, Visual Resources Curator, Art and Art History Department, Sonoma State University

#### **Speakers**

Karen Kessel, Visual Resources Curator, Art and Art History Department, Sonoma State University

Hannah Marie Marshall, Metadata Librarian for Image Collections, Cornell University

Shalimar Fojas White, Collection Development Librarian, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University