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Contact: Justin Baker-Rojas

International Visual Literacy Association

Email: media@ivla.org

GIBBES MUSEUM OF ART AND INTERNATIONAL VISUAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION PARTNER TO BRING GLOBAL CONFERENCE TO CHARLESTON

Annual gathering explores the role of images in memory, culture, education, and society

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, USA — The International Visual Literacy Association (IVLA) will bring its 58th Annual Conference to Charleston, South Carolina, gathering scholars, educators, artists, designers, researchers, and creative professionals from around the world to explore the power of images in shaping human understanding.

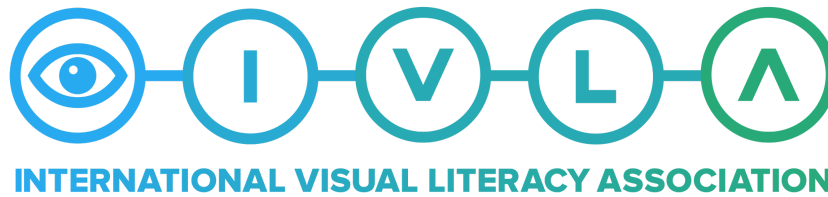
Hosted in partnership with the Gibbes Museum of Art, the conference, titled *Seeing Through Time: The Legacy of Images in Memory, Place, and Representation*, will examine how visual communication influences the ways people preserve history, construct identity, tell stories, and engage with an increasingly image-driven world.

Founded in 1968, IVLA is the leading international organization dedicated to advancing research, education, and practice in visual literacy. The annual conference serves as a forum for interdisciplinary dialogue across fields including education, communication, media studies, design, psychology, technology, the arts, and cultural studies.

The 2026 conference represents a collaborative partnership between IVLA and the Gibbes Museum of Art. More than a host venue, the Gibbes has worked alongside conference organizers to develop a gathering that connects international scholarship and creative practice with Charleston's rich artistic, historical, and cultural landscape.

Becca Hiester, Director of Education and Programs at the Gibbes, is particularly excited for the conference in October. "This will be a wonderful opportunity to highlight the rich cultural and visual heritage of Charleston while also offering space for critical dialogue on memory and place. Visual literacy is a key skill of the 21st century and as Charleston's only art museum we are proud to collaborate with IVLA."

Conference attendees will participate in presentations, panel discussions, workshops, exhibitions, and networking opportunities focused on contemporary issues in visual literacy, including visual storytelling, artificial intelligence, media literacy, design, education, visual culture, and emerging forms of communication.



p2 of 2

The conference theme also invites participants to consider Charleston itself as a living visual text. From its historic neighborhoods and architectural landmarks to its museums, galleries, and cultural traditions, the city provides a compelling backdrop for examining the relationships between images, memory, and place.

“Charleston offers a remarkable setting for conversations about memory, place, and representation,” said Justin Baker-Rojas, Communications Director for IVLA and a Charleston native. “Having grown up in Charleston and later worked as an educator in the area, it is especially meaningful to help bring this international gathering to a city whose history, culture, and visual character so naturally reflect the themes we will be exploring.”

The conference is expected to draw attendees from across the United States and internationally, bringing together a diverse community of scholars, educators, artists, researchers, and practitioners for dialogue at the intersection of visual communication, culture, and learning.

Registration is now open, with Early Bird rates available through July 15, 2026.

For conference information and registration, visit ivla.org/conference.

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ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL VISUAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION

Founded in 1968, the International Visual Literacy Association is an interdisciplinary organization of professionals working toward a fuller understanding of the way we derive meaning from what we see and the way we interact with our visual environment.

ABOUT THE GIBBES MUSEUM OF ART

The Gibbes enriches lives through art. Charleston’s only art museum, they are committed to telling the story of Charleston’s ever-changing landscape and its people. Including historical, modern, and contemporary works, the collection spans 350 years and features some of the country’s most celebrated artists. With world-class rotating exhibitions and a dynamic visiting artist residency program, there’s so much to see inside. Set in the heart of downtown Charleston, the Gibbes is a southern museum with a global perspective.

Media Contact:

Justin Baker-Rojas, M.S., CSMP
Communications Director
International Visual Literacy Association
media@ivla.org