

TheMedium

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Boston Conference Report by Lois Swan Jones Award Recipient

2010 Lois Swan Jones Award Recipient Report from Elizabeth Schaub

It is a great honor to receive the 2010 Lois Swan Jones Award. Thank you to my fellow chapter members for supporting this award and to the committee for selecting me as this year's recipient. The financial support provided by this award helped make my conference attendance possible.

Boston was still enjoying a vibrant spring in late April. There were tulips and cherry blossoms everywhere and the city seemed abuzz with activity after its post-winter reawakening. The conference programmers are to be commended for providing a very action packed, information rich schedule. My conference experience began on Friday, April 23 with two half-day workshops. The morning workshop, "Televising the Revolution: Designing & Building the Right Channel for Online Instruction," covered instructional design principles to address information and visual literacy challenges. Working in a visual resources collection nested in a school of architecture, I was particularly interested in discussion around the topic of visual literacy. Visual literacy is a nascent field increasingly recognized as encompassing a set of skills important for today's students; currently the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) is in the process of developing a set of visual literacy standards that will complement their information literacy standards. Workshop leaders Kaila Bussert and Sussette Newberry walked attendees through the process of developing an effective instructional module and provided an in-depth list of resources and tools to assist with development of instructional materials.

The afternoon workshop I attended, "Meeting User Expectations—Strategies for Supporting New Technologies in the Arts Library," was held off-site at MassArt. Workshop leaders Hannah Bennett and Carolyn Caizzi began the workshop by stimulating conversation around defining who our users are, their expectations, and how best to address their needs. I was particularly impressed with Hannah's use of jing—a free product that allows one to create video tutorials—to create custom video responses to reference questions. It was very inspiring and I hope to be able to use jing in a similar way.

The 38th Annual ARLIS/NA Convocation was a relatively short but meaningful event where award winners were honored followed by the welcome party and convocation reception. This was an opportunity for colleagues to network with old friends as well as to meet first-time attendees.

Saturday, April 24 began with an early morning ARLIS/NA Texas-Mexico chapter meeting. As always it was nice to see familiar faces and connect with the Texas contingent. The chapter's fall meeting, to be held in Houston in November, was discussed along with business related to the chapter's Web site, listserv, and recruitment of Mexican members. Following the chapter meeting I attended session A "Confronting the Future:

Articulating Purpose, Documenting Value.” It was a very engaging session. Jeanne Brown spoke about the value of assessment and strategies for using and presenting data effectively to university administrators. Jolene de Verges addressed the emerging future for image professionals who are navigating a landscape radically altered by the Digital Age and how these changes influence image collection building and services. In the afternoon I attended session F, “Revisiting the Past, Embracing the Future.” Allison Benedetti and Jolene de Verges discussed MIT’s FACADE (Future-proofing Architectural Computer-Aided DEsign) project at <http://facade.mit.edu/>. This project—supported by a two-year Institute of Museum and Library Services grant to the MIT Libraries—included research to determine best practices for CAD files during their entire lifecycle. In addition, Patricia Kosco Cossard and Kimberly Detterbeck presented their project to create an online resource documenting ancient Stabiae. Session H “Information Literacy Theories and Competencies in Practice: Making Information Literacy Instruction Relevant To Faculty and Students” presented both the theory and the practice driving effective information literacy instruction. Nichole Beatty’s explanation of how we translate verbal cues into visual ones was fascinating. Rina Vecchiloo’s presentation of her experience working with faculty and students to integrate information literacy instruction into the classroom was equally engaging.

Saturday evening I met with Summer Educational Institute (SEI) Team members Alix Reiskind and Nina Kay Stephenson. ARLIS/NA Board Education Liaison and VRA Foundation Board of Director Chair Elisa Lanzi joined us as well. Our meeting was productive and we look forward to welcoming SEI attendees to the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque in June. Following this meeting I met up with ARLIS/NA Texas-Mexico chapter members in the lobby for an informal gathering.

Sunday morning, April 25, I attended the leadership breakfast. It was an opportunity for attendees to hear from the Board, a representative from the ARLIS/NA management firm TEI, and news from local chapter leaders about regional activities. Session L “Divide and Collaborate: Building Digital Collections One Piece at a Time” provided two digital collection case studies. Tom Riedel presented Regis University’s Santo Collection online project and Deborah Kempe and Dan Lipcan discussed the collaborative projects of the NYARC consortium (The Frick Art Reference Library and the libraries of The Metropolitan Museum, Brooklyn Museum, and Museum of Modern Art) in partnership with JSTOR to create comprehensive digital collections of New York gallery publications. Along with co-presenter Elisa Lanzi, I presented a paper during session N, “Permanent Beta: Evolving Role of Visual Resource Professionals.” My paper was focused on the successful scenarios outlined in the Visual Resources Association’s White Paper “Advocating for Visual Resources Management in Educational and Cultural Institutions.” Elisa Lanzi’s paper focused on the transformation that visual resources professionals have made or in the process of making in response to a constantly changing, complex environment. Carole Ann Fabian gracefully moderated our session.

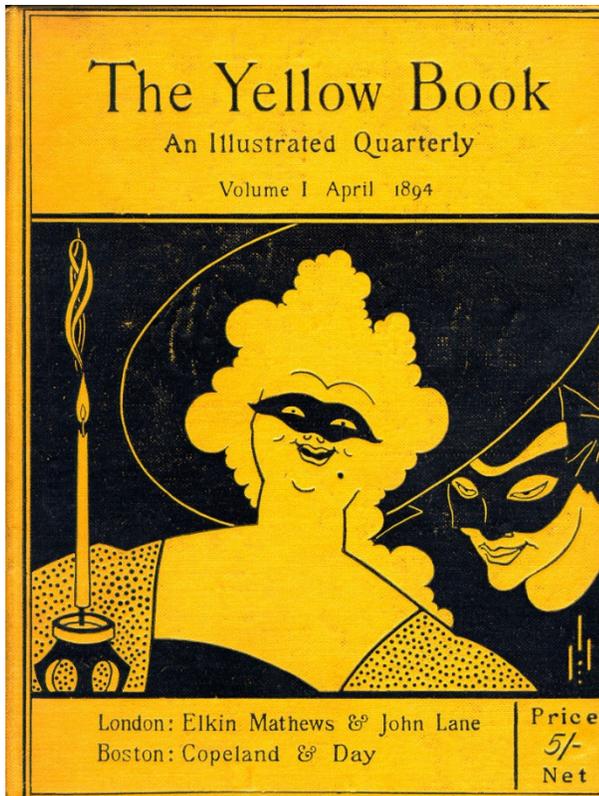
Sunday’s membership meeting lunch provided an opportunity for a change in Board leadership and for various Board officers to report to the membership about Society business. The lunch concluded with an enticing

promotional video encouraging participants to attend next year's joint conference with the Visual Resources Association in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Sunday afternoon's session O "Creative Practice in Cyberspace" provided an interesting mix of perspectives. Heather Saunders, an artist and librarian, discussed her approach to blogging and how it informed her creative process and Heather Koopmans presented her research into how artists seek and use online information. During Sunday's poster sessions ARLIS/NA Texas-Mexico chapter member Tara Spies presented her use of social networking tools and applications to promote resources and services to Art and Design faculty and students. The other two posters focused on teaching students the ethics and legal issues related to image appropriation and using assessment to analyze the effectiveness of information literacy instruction.

My conference experience came to a close with the Visual Resources Division meeting. It was a chance for attendees to discuss areas for focus over the coming year and ideas for conference programming in 2011.

Collection Highlight at the MFAH's Rienzi Library: THE YELLOW BOOK



The Yellow Book

Highlights of a lecture presented by Jon Evans at Rienzi on March 18, 2010

Rienzi is the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston house museum for European decorative arts. Comprising a remarkable art collection, a house, and gardens, it also contains a library amassed by the Masterson family who lived there and eventually donated the entire estate in 1997. A highlight of the libraries' holdings is a complete 13 volume set of *The Yellow Book* published between 1894 through 1897.

Every now and again, history provides us with an object that encapsulates a particular era in such a way that perfectly captures the essence of an entire age – *The Yellow Book* is just such an object.

The brain-child of Aubrey Beardsley and expatriate American writer Henry Harland, they conceived of "a new literary and artistic quarterly" that aimed to publish those who "cannot get their best stuff accepted in the conventional magazine."

It was a bridge between the waning age of Victoria, and a look forward to the age of modernism and the 20th century. Although short-lived, it featured some of the best and most representative literary art of the time, including several of Henry James's well recognized short stories, as well as contributions from other literary luminaries including Max Beerbohm, H.G. Wells, W.B. Yeats, and Joseph Conrad, while the visual arts include such figures as Frederic Lord Leighton, Walter Crane, John Singer Sargent, Walter Sickert, and illustrator Laurence Housman.

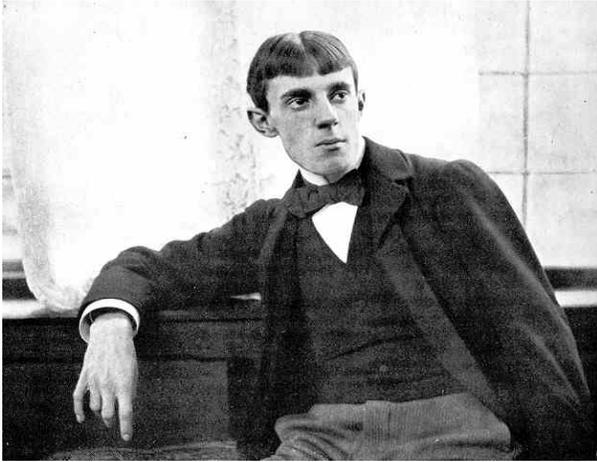
John Lane and his colleague, Elkin Matthews, who published under the imprint of the Bodley Head, became the publishers. The Bodley Head was known for its publications of fiction, drama, and poetry that were produced to high aesthetic standards.

More than any other published document of its time, *The Yellow Book* has come to represent the fin de siècle decadence that epitomized the 1890s. It was a multi-faceted, complex and often contradictory publication. While it was fashioned as a literary quarterly and eventually came out in 13 volumes, it was primarily comprised of short stories, poetry, and reviews.

It was uncommon, if not unique, in that it never serialized material as did many other illustrated magazines of its day. Nor did it include book reviews, political commentary, interviews or advertisements of any kind. Furthermore, visual artists also were not hemmed in by restrictions. Works of art were intended to be independent of the literary content and thus Beardsley was able to draw on greater talent than mere illustrators.

The Yellow Book drew from strong intellectual antecedents, such as those fostered by the Aesthetic movement. The Aesthetic movement's intellectual underpinnings developed in the 1830s through the writings of Theophile Gautier. However, it didn't come to full fruition until the latter half of the 19th century, roughly 1868 to 1900. Specifically, Aestheticism was an Anti-Victorian and proto-modernist European movement that emphasized aesthetic values over moral or social themes in literature, fine art, the decorative arts, and interior design. It was essentially a manifestation of the idea of "art for art's sake." Thereby, artists came to believe that art was an end in itself, with no wider social or moral implications. Thus, writers such as Oscar Wilde and artists like James McNeil Whistler exemplified this through their dandied mannerisms. The arts and by extension the artists were the central focus themselves. In fact, Wilde is quoted as saying, "art has no other aim but her own perfection, and proceeds simply by her own laws." Certainly Beardsley and his

companions at *The Yellow Book* took many of these ideas and the ideals of Aestheticism to heart and integrated them into their own works.



AUBREY BEARDSLEY

Our chief protagonist, Aubrey Vincent Beardsley (b. Brighton, 21 Aug 1872; d. Menton, 16 March 1898) burst onto the international scene at the ripe age of 21. Beardsley was an English draughtsman and writer. His mother gave her children an intensive education in music and literature. At a young age Beardsley became infected with tuberculosis that would ultimately be his demise. He showed an early talent for drawing, which was recognized by none other than Edward Burne-Jones, who informed Beardsley, "I seldom or never advise anyone to take up art as a profession, but in your case I can do nothing else."

Stylistically, the most remarkable features of Beardsley's work was his ability to create extremely austere, beautifully crafted compositions with limited means. Among his finest of his early work were 17 drawings done for Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* (1894). As the illustrator of *Salome*, Beardsley was immediately linked with that great provocateur of the time.

By March of 1894 Lane produced an announcement, appropriately, on bright yellow paper, decorated with a Beardsley female found in a book stall, a foretaste of future writers in *The Yellow Book*, who reference the act of reading and writing. The announcement stated that it "shall be beautiful as a piece of bookmaking, modern and distinguished in its letter-press and its pictures, and withal popular in the better sense of the word."

Notably, the publishers and staff barred Wilde from their "Yellow" pages, although Lane was Wilde's publisher. Oscar Wilde could be said to have nothing and everything to do with *The Yellow Book*. Before the 5th volume was released, disaster struck on April 5, 1895 when Wilde was arrested and eventually tried on a criminal charge of committing indecent acts. The subsequent scandal also brought down Beardsley. The notoriety spread over into *The Yellow Book* and an angry public made the association between the two for the following reasons:

- Beardsley had done his most famous drawings for Wilde's *Salome*
- Both were published by the Bodley Head
- Both affected a public façade of dandyism

Ultimately, *The Yellow Book* and its art editor could never shake connection to Wilde. Crowds threw stones at the Bodley Head sign and windows. Several of Lane's respectable – and mediocre – authors urged him to not only withdraw Wilde's books on the Bodley Head list, but to sack Beardsley for good measure. Publisher John Lane did just that by telegram. He later mourned that Wilde's trial "killed *The Yellow Book* and it nearly killed me."

So we have Beardsley – not quite 23 – embittered and miserable; seeking solace through alcohol. No sexual deviant, no friend of Oscar Wilde, but extremely unpopular and embarrassed by his dismissal from *The Yellow Book* via telegram supposedly for his questionable taste in art.

In January of 1896, Beardsley and Arthur Symons' emerged in the rival periodical, *Savoy*. With a narrower literary spectrum than *The Yellow Book*, it was accompanied by some of Beardsley's most inspired illustrations.

Beardsley and Symons teamed up with a new publisher, Leonard Smithers, who supported the unconventional and avant-garde with the profits from erotica and pornography. In addition to contributions from George Bernard Shaw, W. B. Yeats, Max Beerbohm and Havelock Ellis, it contained the first part of Beardsley's erotic serial, *Under the Hill*, which, although never finished, remains a minor masterpiece of the period. But by this point Beardsley was a dying man, and with him *The Savoy* also expired 8 months later.

In the end, *The Yellow Book* accomplished neither of its attempts at becoming fully "modern", nor fully "respectable" in its outlook. While Harland as literary editor did not bow to fads or narrow aesthetic lines, part of the downfall of the quarterly was its heavy reliance on the stable of writers who were associated with the Bodley Head publishing house.

And while the Wilde trial brought it a notoriety that one could not have imagined, it also spelled the demise of the quarterly's style and panache that was brought to it by its young artistic editor, Aubrey Beardsley.

In many ways it was no different than many of the other literary magazines of its day – filled with critical essays, solemn stories, and erotic-mannered drawings. All of this was seemingly done in a mannered style that was seemingly very risqué, but the public in some ways had already moved on.

While much of its literary content may have been representative of its time, its visual contributions – particularly those by Beardsley were defining moments in British visual history. His strong linear qualities, impish characters, and bold compositions clearly have influenced generations of artists and illustrators.

In summary, *The Yellow Book* straddled two artistic phenomena – both the Aesthetic Movement and Art Nouveau – and has been claimed by both. It perfectly reflected its own era and thus it has remained alive today as a metaphor of decadence and downfall.

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NB: To access full-text online versions of *The Yellow Book*, please consult the Internet Archive:
<http://www.archive.org/>

Compiled by Edward Lukasek

April 7, 2010

Member News: Congratulations to Margaret Culbertson and Jon Evans

On June 1, 2010, Margaret Culbertson will become the Director for the Bayou Bend Library. The Bayou Bend Library will be a division of the Hirsch Library and will be located in the new Lora Jean Kilroy Visitor and Education Center. The Bayou Bend library collection will be moved from the Hirsch Library during the next few months under Margaret's guidance and is scheduled to open to the public in September 2010.

Jon Evans will succeed Margaret as the Library Director for the Hirsch Library. A new reference librarian will be hired to replace Jon in his current role.

To read the MFAH's announcement about the Bayou Bend Library and the Lora Jean Kilroy Visitor and Education Center, go to:

<http://www.mfah.org/info.asp?par1=3&par2=351&par3=&par4=&par5=0&par6=3&action=&curpage=&lgc=1>

Congratulations to Margaret Culbertson and Jon Evans on their new positions at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston!

New Archive in the Wittliff Collections

Susan Frost donates Hugo Brehme collection

Our deepest thanks go to Susan Toomey Frost for generously donating her Hugo Brehme Collection to the Wittliff Collections in November. The comprehensive archive, comprised of over 1,800 Brehme postcards, maximum cards, black-and-white photographs, and hand-tinted photographs, took Frost 15 years to build. In addition to her donation of the photographs, Frost gifted an extensive library of books, periodicals, and travel ephemera related to the artist. The Hugo Brehme Collection is a valuable addition to the Wittliff's holdings and greatly enhances the Southwestern & Mexican Photography Collection. Considered to be the leading expert on Brehme's work, Frost's previous scholarship includes the monograph *Colors on Clay*, recipient of the Texas State Historical Association's best illustrated book published in 2009 on Texas history and culture. Read more about Frost's work with Brehme's photo postcards at <http://www.io.com/~reuter/brehme.html>.

HUGO BREHME (1882-1954) was born in Germany and studied photography in his native land. While in his early twenties, he traveled to Mexico where he began a life long engagement with the country. Brehme captured images of the people and places of Mexico, and he opened his first photography studio in Mexico City in 1912. Identifying himself as a fine-art photographer, Brehme created real photo postcards that were printed on photographic papers with a variety of tones and finishes, giving each image a richness and complexity. His postcards include scenes of Mexico City, Xochimilco, Veracruz, Taxco, Cuernavaca, Puebla, and smaller towns; the volcanoes Popocatepetl, Ixtaccíhuatl, and Pico de Orizaba; archaeological sites and artifacts; and portraits and scenes of the daily life of the Mexican people. Brehme was also an astute businessman and a savvy entrepreneur. He introduced the photographic Christmas card to Mexico, as well as the souvenir booklet of multiple picture postcards that became popular with collectors and which tourists could tear out and mail. Brehme influenced many early Mexican photographers, including Manuel Álvarez Bravo, and he is known internationally for his iconic images of Mexican scenic landscapes and life. He became a Mexican citizen before his death in 1954.

Submitted by Carla Ellard

Written by Shin Yu Pai and Carla Ellard, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University-San Marcos

Open House at the Amon Carter Library and Archives

The Amon Carter Library and Archives hosted its first open house event on April 1, 2010. We had about ninety guests representing diverse areas of the community ranging from those who did not know about the library and archives program to regular researchers and colleagues. Visitors enjoyed seeing a wide range of material that staff assembled in the reading room. Guests also had a special opportunity to peruse the library stacks, which are normally available to staff only.

The library and archives also administers the museum's Davidson Family Fellowship designed to support advanced research on the collections. This year's award has been accepted by Timothy Andrus, Ph. D. student at Virginia Commonwealth University. His topic is "Stuart Davis's *New Mexican Landscape*: Putting the American Scene in Perspective."

-- Sam Duncan, Library Director, Amon Carter Library & Archives

Poster Session presented by Tara Spies at the Boston ARLIS/NA Annual Conference



At the recent ARLIS/NA conference in Boston, I presented a poster session titled *Using Emerging Technologies for Target Marketing Art & Design Reference and Instruction*. My poster covered how emerging technologies including blogs, wikis, photo editing applications, and web based chat applications can be used to create different types of information and communication platforms to target market my art & design instruction, reference, and research services to Art & Design faculty and students as the Art Librarian at Texas State University – San Marcos. Using these emerging technologies, I created different tools to promote my services including flyers, my blog called *Art & Design Inforama* at <http://artinforama.blogspot.com/>, library instruction class outlines, a personal chat widget for answering art research questions, and embedded library instruction class outline web pages in faculty's class course management sites. Some of the applications and social networking tools that I use are free or open source.

As part of the instruction librarian team, I use an open source wiki tool powered by MediaWiki to create the class outlines that I use on the projection screen when I teach the instruction sessions. The wiki allows for fast and easy editing of the content to customize our class outlines to the instructor's class or assignment. I can then take this wiki content and add it to, or we call "embed," it in the instructor's course management site, or what our institution calls TRACS site, for the class, if the instructor wishes. This allows students to access the class outline with all of its information and links after the class throughout the rest of the semester. I also "embed" a web based chat widget into their TRACS site which gives the students or instructor a live, direct way to contact me with library or research related questions. This widget is also embedded on the Art & Design Research Guide that I maintain on the library's website.

I had a well attended poster session. Several attendees had questions and discussions that covered topics including copyright, technical issues, and both open source and fee based applications. I enjoyed the informal poster session format, and especially how it seemed to encourage questions and discussions with colleagues.

--Tara Spies, Reference/Instruction Librarian and Art Librarian, Texas State University – San Marcos

Publication Announcement - American Art Museum Architecture: Documents and Design

I am pleased to announce that my book, *American Art Museum Architecture: Documents and Design* will be published in July 2010 by W.W. Norton & Company. The book explores the architecture, evolution and history of the American art museum through in-depth case studies of six important museums through analysis of the institutional history, collections and buildings of these museums. The case studies are:

- The Frick Collection
- The Menil Collection
- The Whitney Museum of American Art
- Georgia O'Keeffe Museum
- The Museum of Modern Art
- The Art Institute of Chicago

The case studies are followed by two synthetic chapters addressing additions to museums and designing for contemporary art. The book is illustrated with over 160 images drawn from the archives of the various museums being discussed.

For more information, go to W.W. Norton & Company webpage:

<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/American-Art-Museum-Architecture/>

-- Eric Wolf, Head Librarian, the Menil Collection