

TheMedium

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President's Column

I find hard to believe that it has been nearly four years since I started my current position at the Architecture & Planning Library at the University of Texas at Austin.

It was just a few months later that I was lucky enough to attend my first chapter meeting in Guadalajara where I met chapter members beyond Austin. Although I was born in that city, I never lived there so this was the first time I really spent some time in my birth town. I got to explore Guadalajara with fellow chapter members and it was what could be called "the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

I have since attended chapter meetings in McAllen, Houston and Fort Worth and each has offered great opportunities to visit new places and to spend time with colleagues across Texas. I am certainly drawing inspiration from these meetings for the 2012 Annual ARLIS/NA Texas-Mexico Chapter meeting. The dates have just been set; we will meet Thursday, November 8 to Saturday, November 10 in Marfa. Updates will be shared with members via the listserv and once a full schedule is put together, it will be posted on this site.

If you haven't done so, I encourage you to watch the latest [video message](#) from Deborah Kempe, ARLIS/NA President. She gives an update on the planning for next year's ARLIS/NA Annual Conference, which will take place April 25-29, 2013 in Pasadena, California. Deborah also touches on the executive commitment to strengthen communication and her goal to make ARLIS/NA a more outward looking organization. She informs us that negotiations for the renewal contract with our management company, TEI, are well underway including the search for a new ARLIS/NA Association & Conference Manager. You can find contact information for Deborah and other executive board members [here](#).

As always, please feel free to contact me.

if you have any questions or comments.

Martha González Palacios

2012 President, Art Libraries Society of North America, Texas-Mexico Chapter

News From the ARLIS/NA Chapter Liaison

Hello Texas-Mexico Chapter!

I thought I'd share some of my notes from the Toronto conference, especially items that relate to chapters.

a) The Executive Board continues to work with VRA on an agreement about future joint conferences. It will be more like a template for how to arrange matters, and less a strict schedule of having one every set number of years. I feel that a set schedule is quite limiting and puts a great deal of pressure on chapters who are interested in hosting a conference, so I am pleased that we're looking at a more flexible plan.

b) At the chapter chairs meeting, we agreed that it was important to have a set time for chapter business meetings during the conference. The Pasadena team is well aware of this issue, and I've also shared it with the Executive Board.

c) The membership committee is interested in working with chapters on recruitment strategies, particularly when it comes to ways of reaching out to students. Special regional events can be a draw for those chapters that cover a large geographic area. I can certainly see that being the case with the fall meeting in Marfa that Martha Gonzalez-Palacios is planning for your chapter. I will be coordinating with Rina Vecchiola on this issue.

d) Several chapters have started using Paypal to collect dues, and that seems to be working well. TEI can only collect chapter dues if all chapters agree to participate, so Paypal is a more viable option.

e) Just a reminder that chapters are encouraged to use the gotomeeting software that TEI has in order to hold online meetings. I can find out more details for anyone who is interested.

That's all for now! Feel free to contact me at lbliss@rohan.sdsu.edu if you have any questions.

Happy spring,

Laurel Bliss
ARLIS/NA Chapters Liaison
Fine Arts Librarian
San Diego State University

2012 Lois Swan Jones Travel Award Winner Conference Report

My conference participation at the 2012 annual conference of the Art Libraries Society of North America in Toronto, Ontario began in earnest at the joint meeting of ARLIS/Ontario and the Canada chapter of the Visual Resources Association held on Thursday, March 29 in the Alsop building at Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCAD-U). Invited to speak to the groups on utilizing social media in the library, I spoke for approximately a half hour from a prepared outline. My goal was not to explain why libraries should use social media—the topic was justified by my invitation to speak upon it, but how to use it, which outlets, etc., using Rhode Island School of Design and other schools as examples. Making use of a live Internet connection, I guided the audience through the basics of Google (how search results display, incorporating meta tags, map results, etc.) to the Yelp online user-reviewed business directory, publication platforms including the use of blogs and micro-publishing outlets such as Twitter, and finally Facebook as a culminating destination spot for many different source items such as RSS feeds, photographs, events, etc. The presentation was videotaped and I received very positive results afterward along the lines that the audience felt they could see themselves adopting social media in their libraries and that I explained how things worked in order for them to understand both the strategic reasons for doing so as well as some of the technical details so it would not be such a daunting mystery, such as HTML code. I'm very pleased to have had this experience with ARLIS/Ontario and VRA Canada.

The above presentation conflicted with my original plan to attend the ARLIS Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgendered-Queer (LGBTQ) Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives.

On Friday, March 30 I chaired the Materials Special Interest Group. I tried to organize MATSIG to be held off-site at the materials library at Studio HoK, a well-known design firm in downtown Toronto, but staff shakeups there left it impossible to schedule. With an audience of just eleven people, it was only 25% of the audience that had gathered the previous year at the joint ARLIS/NA-VRA conference in Minneapolis. However, this group presented a critical difference in that there were almost no lurkers: nearly everyone had begun to amass a materials collection in some way or other. Because of this, the round of introductions was very illuminating. Also on the agenda were the issues surrounding the lack of a single taxonomy for materials description, collecting materials versus purchasing them from a consultancy such as Material Connexion, the services and products offered by Material Connexion, further development of the MATSIG blog, material|resource, and the creation of a resource page to be handed out to newcomers to materials collections. I will try to organize the 2013 MATSIG gathering on the campus of Art Center in Pasadena, home to one of the most extensive materials collections, the Color Materials Trends Exploration Lab (CMTEL).

On Friday evening I attended the Opening Plenary presentation by Diana Thorneycroft. An artist from Winnipeg, Thorneycroft stages and photographs dioramas that address and expose social issues from current or recent Canadian history. Most often these are done with humor and even dark humor, the latter of which ultimately led the artist to difficult topics that could no longer be dealt with humorously. The presentation thus

ranged from being lighthearted to disturbing, which was an unanticipated trajectory and perhaps led to some audience discomfort. Immediately following the plenary address, then-President and ARLIS-TXMX's own Jon Evans took the stage to present an illuminating history of ARLIS/NA upon the occasion of its fortieth anniversary, leading to the 40th Anniversary Celebration in the foyer immediately outside. Although in a cramped and crowded space, it was nevertheless the first opportunity for most attendees to greet each other and raise a glass of complimentary champagne. I spent the remainder of the evening reconnecting with colleagues from the Texas-Mexico chapter, as well as those from New York and New England chapters—my previous and new homes.

I was very pleased to see on Saturday morning the expansion of the poster session offerings, allowing many interesting and worthy projects and initiatives to be highlighted in a casual and approachable forum. There was literally something for every possible interest. I was able to stop at four: number 7 "Digital Images in Teaching and Learning at York University", number 8 "In the Studios: Research Instruction for Art and Design Students", number 12 "Public Domain and Creative Commons-Licensed Image Resources", and number 19 "What is a QR Code?". The digital images session addressed the concern that digital images acquired at great expense through purchase and/or subscription are underutilized and that this is a widespread problem, including at RISD. The research instruction for art and design students session was especially relevant for me as a librarian at RISD as the speaker's strategy of visiting students in the studio, participating at critiques, etc. is exactly what we are encouraged to do. The session on the public domain and creative commons as a source for images underscored the increasing difficulty in acquiring digital images from a single source: today's student and professor must become aware of these two sources as part of their understanding of the legal landscape when using digital images, and the librarian plays a critical role to educate image users to become sensitive to all the various concerns. The session dealing with QR (Quick Response) codes was helpful in that, while we are already using them at RISD, I benefited from hearing different ways and different destinations for the codes to connect patrons with library resources and services.

Immediately following those poster sessions I attended the Exhibits Opening Coffee that was generously sponsored by Erasmus Amsterdam/Paris and the ARLIS/NA membership. This coffee break coincided with the opening of the exhibitor hall and was a fine introduction to an important part of the conference experience: personal contact with vendors and distributors. It also provided a more practical forum after the previous night's celebrations for members to greet each other and network.

Of the late morning sessions, I was drawn—pun intended— to "Colouring with Artists: Librarians Coordinating and Facilitating Information Creation and Appropriation in the Studio." My position at RISD places me on the periphery of the research and instruction services but I do have a role to play in terms of liaising with cognate departments within the school. While not quite an embedded librarian—others occupy that space, I am increasingly aware that outreach must take on a different and expanded form. I was especially interested in the paper presented by Paul Dobbs and Greg Wallace at Massachusetts College of Art and Design that dealt with a participatory exercise teaching the ethics of image appropriation. Starting with fairly simple concepts and exercises, the "game show" becomes increasingly more intricate and complicated, using contemporary examples that made headlines at the time.

Like many other conference attendees, I then attended the ARTstor User Group Lunch. This well-attended event was devoted nearly entirely to the promotion of the Shared Shelf service from ARTstor. Previously

known as ARTstor Hosted Collections, Shared Shelf is a means to ingest locally created digital image content that is then served alongside ARTstor content, providing users with a one-stop search portal. This has long been a desire on the part of visual resources librarians, as most patrons are not willing to search a handful of different image databases when they prefer to search just one. However, where Hosted Collections was free, Shared Shelf has a complex and complicated equation based on number of assets, not size. This strikes me as odd and expensive, given the low cost of server space, especially since it had been a free service that suddenly exploded into costs that run into the tens of thousands of dollars—and without warning. Many schools had to give up their hosted content. Others had to scramble to pay for an entirely new and persistent expense stream. Still others are now weeding their digital collection since each asset now has a defined cost. I do not know if Shared Shelf is in the future for RISD: I cannot discount the general happiness of those who no longer have to maintain their own local digital asset presentation system (after they've gotten over the sticker shock) and in a school without strong centralized instructional technology support, I may have to examine Shared Shelf in the near future, if nothing else than to play it on the radar of the RISD library director.

I then attended the meeting of the Visual Resources Division. In addition to general news, announcements, and updates, I was asked to participate on a panel discussion regarding the continued conversation of the collaborations between ARLIS/NA and the Visual Resources Association. This topic both preceded and continued after the joint conference the year before in Minneapolis and is now part of a process that will soon see an agreement of memorandum of understanding regarding future joint conferences. The other panelists spoke to their own experiences of collaboration, such as the Summer Educational Institute for Visual Resources; mine was the experience of having served on both VRA executive boards that organized the first joint conference in 2002 in St. Louis and the second joint conference in 2011 in Minneapolis, noting the difficulties in doing so, the challenges and successes, lessons learned and lessons forgotten, etc. It was a fruitful conversation and perhaps not surprising given that the group were VR professionals within ARLIS, that by the end of the discussion, everyone—from seasoned members to new—wondered why the two groups haven't merged! With the current ARLIS/NA president-elect being one of them, this conversation may just not fizzle.

Following the coffee break sponsored by Worldwide Books, I then presented in the session, "Marketing Librarians, Practice, and Spaces in the 21st Century" with a paper on the RISD Material Resources Center. This paper was slightly modified from a paper presented at the 2011 annual conference of the Southeast College Art Conference (SECAC) held on the campus of the Savannah College of Art & Design. The other two papers dealt with contemporary approach to branding and the development of a digital library multimedia creation services unit at the University of Calgary. A healthy amount and distribution of questions was afforded to each speaker, though the paper on branding assumed a corporate approach and this led to some contesting of the major tenets. Although this session was well attended, I was disappointed that my paper was scheduled in a session opposite others that were very appealing: digital humanities and social media. I'll have to follow up on that content through the proceedings.

While interested in the metadata session that followed, I instead chose to attend the "Promotion and Teaching with Visual Special Collections" that was sponsored by University of Toronto Mississauga Library and supported by the ARLIS/NA Alternative Voices Fund. In the RISD library one of my closest partnerships is with Special Collections, so I was pleased that all three papers presented strategies and projects that further integrated content from their respective special collections. I was especially interested in the efforts at Johns

Hopkins University to develop visual literacy with rare books since visual literacy is at the heart of our instruction efforts and this paper presented a new avenue to pursue.

I skipped Convocation in order to have dinner with former colleagues but was able to attend the Convocation Reception at the spectacular new Frank Gehry Building at the Art Gallery of Ontario that was sponsored by the Libraries of the Art Gallery of Ontario, OCAD University, Ryerson University, University of Toronto, and York University. The event description urged attendees to eat beforehand or after, but there was no shortage of delicious edibles. The program at the reception featured welcoming presentations by President Evans and from OCAD University President Sara Diamond, herself a performance artist who is an advocate for libraries. It was a splendid evening.

On Sunday morning I chose to spend time in exhibits and reconnect with colleagues I'd not yet seen as well as make a few new introductions. During the late morning session slot, my first two attempts to join sessions were thwarted due to overcrowding, so I wound up attending "Remix, Reuse, Rework: Fostering Learning Beyond the Classroom" and am so glad I did. Wow! Each of the three papers presented topics that are easily among the most current and contemporary developments of instructional technologies. The first paper presented an architecture-based app that utilized data layers and GPS to deliver scholarly content via smart-phone or smart device based. It felt like a tech commercial that had finally been realized. The second paper explored what works, and sometimes what doesn't work, in the traditional use of memes, mash-ups, and remixes. And the third paper presented Mimi, a homegrown educational software suite. This last paper was of particular interest since RISD has its own semi-homegrown educational platform called Digication and I could compare the two, especially since Mimi was developed at another art school. This session was easily one of the best, most exciting—and entertaining—session I'd attended anywhere in some time.

In the afternoon I attended the session, "Urban Mapwork: Art, Libraries, and the City," mostly out of a general curiosity but also because I'm interested in the ways that new technology tools are harvesting and finally using all the different layers of data that are available. The first paper compared public art projects in two dissimilar cities and how libraries can help researchers develop the sense of the constructed environment. The second paper presented the Digital Maps Collection at the University of Toronto, which was truly fascinating. But it was the last paper that was most interesting: dealing with locative media to map archaeology data and reconstructions, joining traditional scholarly discourse with emerging interactive technologies. This is exactly the sort of thing that I think we will see more of and that librarians can play an important role.

The remainder of the afternoon was filled with closing ceremonies. The closing plenary presented a straightforward yet gorgeous summary of library architecture from throughout Canada, which appeared to be far more ambitious than anything we have in the United States. Following that feast for the eyes and mind, the Oxford University Press Launch of Benezit Dictionary of Artists Online was truly impressive in its multi-layered and interactive interface: users are presented with image and text resources in a deeply intuitive manner that found a very happy audience at ARLIS. Then the Exhibits Closing Reception sponsored by OUP immediately followed, which continued the pleasant mood from the Benezit debut. I did not have any meetings that night save for attending the informal gather of the Summer Educational Institute at the nearby Marriott. As a charter member/founder of SEI, I was very pleased to discuss current SEI practices and outlooks, curriculum design, etc.

Looking back during the writing of this report, the 2012 annual conference of the Art Libraries Society of North America in Toronto was a very rewarding experience, both for my handful of commitments and presentations and for the programming where I was able to sit and learn from others. The social events ranged from the top notch in elegance to scrappier affairs that were equally engaging. And the backdrop of Toronto served as a perfect context for currency and diversity among the membership and its endeavors. At this point in my career, I find ARLIS/NA to be an indispensable organization and the conferences to be always unique, one never like the other. So I'm especially grateful to the ARLIS/Texas-Mexico Chapter, where I still maintain a membership from two thousand miles away, and its Lois Swan Jones Travel Award program, for selecting me as the 2012 recipient and ensuring my ability to attend the conference and have such a successful and enriching experience.

Mark Pompelia
Rhode Island School of Design

Art of the Book Exhibit: Rare Books from the Alkek Library Collections

April 9 through June 30, 2012, Curated by Selene Hinojosa, Collection Development Librarian, Alkek Library, Texas State University-San Marcos

My intention with the "Art of the Book Exhibit: Rare books from the Alkek Library Collections" exhibit was to highlight the unique and beautiful books which belong to the Alkek library's collections. Over the years, faculty has requested the library purchase books which are virtually works of art, but hardly ever get seen outside of the class or the library.



ART OF THE BOOK EXHIBIT AT ALKEK LIBRARY, TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY - SAN MARCOS

Several months ago, I was asked if I would formulate some kind of exhibit for our large, four-sided exhibit case on the first floor of the Alkek building. I had never worked with this case. Usually it was reserved for campus groups or classes (like our interior design graduates final projects) who had 3 dimensional objects along with 2 dimensional pieces to display. Not only did they need something in the cases for the month of April, but they needed something to remain through June. I felt obliged to help out, and tried to think of books large enough to fill the enormous case, and might not be needed or used by the students during the rest of the semester. The Alkek library's Special Collections material contained many large books, which also didn't normally check out. In the end, not all of them were from Special Collections. Several large, beautiful art books were in our circulating oversized book area. They seldom checked out, because they were just too big to carry away.



ONE EDITION OF 99 COPIES OF *BOLOM CHON* AND OTHER ARTISTS' BOOKS IN THE ART OF THE BOOK EXHIBIT.

The library has also been the repository of several beautiful limited editions, handmade books, along with the many oversized, art plate books of famous artists or works of art. These books have been purchased by the library, or donated to us, and in some cases, the provenance of how they became part of our collections is lost in time. While perusing the shelves, I found some beautiful, old, oversized Mexican landscape painting books. I asked how they came into the collection. Nobody knew. It was also clear, that no one had seen them in many, many years. One of the books was issued in 1910, in commemoration of the centennial of the Mexican republic. We had another new book, issued to commemorate the Mexican Bicentennial in 2010. In all, we used 6 books from Mexico, located on one side of the case, and dedicated it to the Mexican republic.



OVERSIZED AND HANDMADE BOOKS FROM MEXICO IN THE EXHIBIT DEDICATED TO THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC

The exhibit is intended to showcase what the Alkek Library owns, along with our awe and respect for the beauty and art of books.

Selene Hinojosa

Collection Development Librarian

DON'T LET BOOKS LEAN!, or, the Enduring Technology of the Book: Notes from an ARLIS/NA Conference Workshop

The participants at the March 30 workshop held in conjunction with the ARLIS/NA annual conference in Toronto surely walked away from the experience with an arsenal of information about what causes books to break down and the myriad of enclosures available for protecting them. "Protective Boxes, Slipcases ... and More," taught by sage book conservator Betsy Palmer Eldridge and hosted at the Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild, informed the group about a range of often interacting mechanical, chemical, and environment factors that can lead to book damage. Woven throughout the presentation were in-depth dicussions and demonstrations of a catalog of protective enclosures, one of the most prevalent methods for preserving compromised material. The workshop ended up serving as a kind of antithesis to the many sessions addressing digital projects and themes presented at the main conference. Books still form the bedrock of most art library collections, and it was gratifying to be reminded of their "objectness" (and attendant vulnerabilities to physical attrition) and also of their lasting effectiveness as a form of information technology provided they receive even a modest amount of care. As a final exercise, students bound and stitched a small pamphlet—a perfect closing to this revelatory workshop.



BETSY ELDRIDGE SHOWING A COPY OF HEDI KYLE'S *PRESERVATION ENCLOSURES*

Workshop Notes

DON'T LET BOOKS LEAN!: the worst thing you can do to a book is allow it to lean, which places uneven stress on the binding structure, accelerating its breakdown. Another ingenious shelving tip: shelve books an inch back from the edge of the shelf to allow forefinger swiping for signs of insect activity.

Opening a book from the back: The kindest thing you can do for a book is open it from the back since the rear part of the book is not used as much as the front.

A book's cover: Eldridge stressed the importance of the cover as a kind of protective shield encapsulating the text block: keeping the cover on the book should be the first preservation step. A simple and effective treatment is tying the book up with cotton string or webbing. Another method is adding a Melinex (polyester) dust cover/jacket. Eldridge reminded her students that paper acidity can damage not only the pages in a book, but equally its cover.

Squares: the square is the board cover, which is commonly slightly larger than the text block in a hardback book. An advantage of this design is that there is an open channel around the text block, which can aid with water drainage. Paperback books commonly have squares exactly the same size as the text block.

Hollow and closed back books matrix:

	TIGHT BACK	HOLLOW BACK
TIGHT JOINT	All Pre 1850: 17th, 18th and 19th centuries	1850-1950 (late 19th century)
GROOVE JOINT	RARE: English Library Binding	All case bindings from 20th century

The problem of light: it's not the amount of light, it's the *kind* of light. Ultraviolet wavelengths, i.e. lower end of the visible spectrum, cause problems. Fluorescent tubes emit lower wavelengths in the photochemical ranges, which are particularly damaging to paper while incandescent light sources are more neutral. UV filters should always be used in book storage areas with fluorescent lighting. Eldridge commented that if a plant is flourishing in the same room as where books are stored, it's usually a bad environment for books.

Slipcases: do a great job of holding the fore edges of a book together, but there is a problem of friction on boards as the book moves in and out of the case and also spine exposure. The Ascona slipcase is particularly good for books with no "squares," i.e. with boards exactly the same size as the text block. One example is featured [Worldcat holdings](#); see also: [Hedi Kyle archived workshop held at Syracuse University library](#).

The knitting needle treatment: Eldridge reminded students of the tried-and-true technique for repairing loose hinges developed by Carolyn Horton and published in her 1967/1969 publication *Cleaning and Preserving Bindings and Related Materials*. A good explanation of the technique is [here](#).

Microclimates: putting a book inside a sealed environment is okay as long as it is a *dry* environment.

Tissue guard sheets: I brought up the issue of tissue guard sheets and their prevalence in illustrated books to protect an illustration from bleeding over to the opposite page. Betsy recommended removing them as any transfer protection they may have served is now obviated.

Cradles: use cradles to support fragile books when open; a good and inexpensive cradle (and one she used at the workshop) is a simple bath towel with the edges rolled to accommodate the size of the book.

Water damage: the best preventive measure you can take in terms of water risks is knowing where the water comes from and where it is going. Clay-coated paper is especially vulnerable to water damage. Flash freezing is currently the best treatment for water-damaged books; water is frozen and then can be sublimated/vacuumed out. Know the location of the closest book freezer. Another effective method is wrapping a book in a single fold of craft paper to allow air circulation; fan books out to dry. You typically have 48 hours before mold starts growing. Another treatment is paper towels sprayed with alcohol: the alcohol aids evaporation and kills mold. 70% humidity and 70 degrees temperature: ideal environment for mold growth.

More about water (understanding precipitation): Eldridge cited the example of a stack of ten pancakes and that stack's ability to absorb syrup. Once the pancakes have reached their capacity, what is left is precipitate. Applied to level of water in the air, the precipitate is what is left when the air has absorbed all the water it can. The precipitate is what the mold needs to start flourishing.

Plasticizers! certain chemicals are added to plastics to make the pliable; the problem is that these chemicals evaporate over time and leave the material brittle.

Anything is better than nothing: throughout the presentation, Eldridge reminded the group that "anything is better than nothing," underscoring that any level of preservation treatment does some good.

Original Program Description

Protective Boxes, Slipcases... and more

Friday March 30, 2012 1:00- 5:00pm @ Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild.

Workshop Leader: Betsy Palmer Eldridge, Book Conservator

Description: At the heart of every library is the basic problem of preserving its book collections. This workshop will look at a wide variety of solutions for protecting book materials - from catalogues and exhibition announcements to books - from the simple to the complex, from the standard to the unusual, from the traditional to the new. Examples will be shown and the pros and cons of each discussed. Participants will make a paper slipcase for the paperback, Margaret Locke's "Bookbinding Materials and Techniques, 1700-1920," as a hands-on, take-home example. This information will be both interesting and useful for anyone working with books.

There's A Lot of Good Art Outside Texas: Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art Review

It was my pleasure to visit the recently opened [Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art](#) in Bentonville, Arkansas, as well as the Fred R. Jones Museum on the University of Oklahoma campus in Norman and the Gilcrease and Philbrook museums in Tulsa while on a trip sponsored by the Amon Carter Museum. It was a special treat to visit these museums with others interested and knowledgeable about art.

By now the whole world knows that there is a brand new museum called Crystal Bridges, located in out-of-the-way, Bentonville, Arkansas, conceived by Wal-Mart heiress, Alice Walton, and richly endowed by the Walton Family Foundation. Admission to the museum is free. Bentonville, Arkansas, is the home of Wal-Mart headquarters and the five-and-dime store, now the Wal-Mart Museum, where Sam Walton started the business which became the largest retailer in the world. Incidentally, Bentonville is named after the nineteenth century's Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri. He was the great uncle of the 1930s regional artist, Thomas Hart Benton. Wal-Mart's success story had depended heavily on its location in small towns. Crystal Bridges' location seems to say that America's small towns are no less deserving or receptive of fabulous art than its urban centers. Indeed since its opening in November, 2011, Crystal Bridges has had 800,000 visitors, an attendance record to be envied by other institutions.

Crystal Bridges is a serious museum with a serious collection. Museum Director, Dan Bacigalupi, led the tour for the Amon Carter visitors. The scope of the collection is American art from its beginnings up to the present time. Many early works are, not surprisingly, portraits. There's a wonderful Charles Wilson Peale portrait of a younger than usually portrayed, George Washington, around 1780-82, with his hand on a cannon (watch out, you Brits!). There are wonderful early portraits of native Americans by Charles Bird King, and an enigmatic, but outstanding portrait of Robert Lewis Stevenson and his wife by John Singer Sargent.

You can see Asher Durand's *Kindred Spirits* depicting poet William Cullen Bryant and painter Thomas Cole atop a cliff in the Adirondacks overlooking a pristine America. Now considered a gem of the Hudson River School this painting's purchase for \$35,000,000 from the New York Public Library caused a firestorm of resentment and talk of the state losing its patrimony. (Incidentally, I saw maybe thirty Asher Durand's on the second floor of the New York Historical Society several years ago. It couldn't hurt to spread some of them around the rest of the country to be enjoyed by others.) Perhaps because of this or perhaps not, Crystal Bridges has entered into joint use of collections with financially troubled institutions such as the Fisk University collection in Nashville, Tennessee, and the Randolph-Macon Museum in Lynchburg, Virginia.

In case you wondered where the original *Rosie the Riveter* was, the one by Norman Rockwell, she takes up a whole wall in the Crystal Bridges Museum. And she's not the cutey pie depicted on stamps and so often in feminist literature telling us "she can do it." This Rosie has attitude! The collection goes right up to the present day with a disturbing Kara Walker, *It Was a Warm Summer Day in 1863*. One of Ms. Walker's black felt silhouettes of a hanging woman is in a black and white painting of a race riot. The list goes on and on with Andy Warhol and Jeff Koons, indeed anyone you ever heard of and many you haven't.

One of the most interesting rooms was better for history than for art. Called The Arkansas Traveler, it traces the stereotype of Arkansans as ignorant, whiskey drinking, coonskin wearing louts who lay about while a hole in the cabin roof goes unrepaired. The myth goes all the way back to the presidential election of 1840 when William Henry Harrison defeated President Martin Van Buren (Tippecanoe and Tyler too). The Arkansas Traveler, a consummate hillbilly, is celebrated in song, play, joke, politics, and art. Could it still be in people's minds when a new museum with an almost endless budget competes away from the usual art cities?

All of this is in a beautiful 120 acre pastoral setting of native plants with walking trails, ponds, streams and wetlands. Crystal Bridges Museum itself is built over small bodies of water. The grounds abound with first-rate sculpture. There's James Turrell's *Skyspace, the Way of Color*, works by Dan Ostermiller, Robert Tanen, and Andre Harvey who gives us is a lifelike hog, not a razorback.

The museum is approached by a winding trail weaving through the woods. There the visitor is met by a life-sized, barren tree, made of stainless steel, by sculptor Roxy Paine, the only decoration to mark the entrance. No recumbent lions recalling ancient times, no name in Roman fonts, just a curving driveway to deliver the patron to an outside porch? loggia? entrance way? which walks you to the elevator taking you down to the galleries and main part of the museum. Israeli born Canadian citizen Moise Safdie is the architect responsible for this masterpiece. You have to see for yourself for full appreciation of the result. But if nicknames express fondness, it's worth noting that the museum is already being called "The Armadillo". And it has a non-circulating library whose catalog may be accessed at <http://crystalbridges.org/library>

Gwen Dixie
Librarian
Dallas Public Library

There's a Lot of Art in Texas: A CASETA Symposium Report

The Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art, CASETA, marked its tenth anniversary in 2012, holding its annual symposium in the art city of Ft. Worth. Though small in numbers, the organization always provides scholarship, information and the chance to see a variety of what's for sale in the field of early Texas art at its art fair.

Andrew Walker, new Director of the Amon Carter Museum, welcomed members to the conference with a speech stressing the importance to museums of collectors, Collecting for Social Purpose. Committed collectors often recognize outstanding art before museums become interested. They can be more freewheeling. Collectors preserve local history. Hopefully the best of these collections end in museum collections. Museums have obligations to preserve locally. Changing taste and space considerations sometimes require de-accessioning. Mr. Walker gave as an example of this, artist Joe Jones, a Missouri regionalist of Depression years who glorified workers and painted them realistically. Jones' work can be seen at the Amon Carter and Crystal Bridges Museum. But it has recently been de-accessioned by the Whitney and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Mr. Walker said that de-accessioning is ethical as long as it is done responsibly and the procedure is transparent. Interestingly, the collector who bought these de-accessioned items was in the audience.

Some of the other presentations were:

Professor Emeritus Jack Davis of the University of North Texas sharing his scholarship on Women Artists in the 1936 Texas Centennial Exhibition. Unsurprisingly these women did not receive equal billing with the men in catalog, exhibit space or location of art. Most of these women artists were well educated and all were committed to art of the highest quality, often modernist. Their careers and work showed that women did not just teach art education and art appreciation, but could hold their own as artists with the men. Professor Davis discussed Coreen Spellman, Ella Mewhinney, Martha Simkins and Florence McClung. He also included lesser-known women such as Edith Brisac and Marjorie Baltzel.

J. P. Bryant, Houston, owner of the Torch Collection, the largest collection of Texana in the world, took a text from Proverbs 27:17, "Iron sharpeneth iron" to describe the relationship among three El Pasoans. Tom Lea artist, Carl Hertzog printer, and Jose Cisneros self-taught graphic designer and artist, worked together for four decades making mostly books but also other designs like the seal for The University of Texas at El Paso. They worked all together, two together and separately, but each enhanced the work of the other. In a talk titled "Iron Sharpens Iron", Mr. Bryant noted the extreme attention to details including fonts, book cuts (in which text appears next to appropriate illustration), book coverings, completely factual drawings, and of course, art, made for a literary magic which likely will not be matched again. In commenting on the work of these three men Mr. Bryant quoted Michelangelo, "Trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle."

Austin College Professor and former State Historian, Light Cummins, gave a full and well-researched biography of Dallas sculptor, Allie V. Tennant Southwestern Regional Sculptor, which traced the sculptor's work from Beaux Arts student at the Art League in New York, to classic garden statuary, to professional and

fully formed modernist in Dallas. (ARLIS Texas/Mexico members, she did the famous Tejas warrior atop the porch of the Hall of State in Fair Park Dallas, which you saw in 2008.) In latter years Tennant influenced local art by serving on committees and boards including the institution that became the Dallas Museum of Art. Mr. Cummins brought a larger than life-sized black basalt sculpture of a cat, made by Tennant, which had not been seen for forty years. Called Pretty Boy Floyd, this stray wandered up to the sculptor's studio and stayed to be sculpted into her favorite work of art. Professor Cummins will soon publish a complete biography of Tennant.

Mary Bones, Curator of Art at the Museum of the Big Bend, has researched an almost forgotten summer art school held at Sul Ross State University in Alpine. In a talk called *The Lost Colony: Texas Regionalist Paintings, Rediscovering an Artistic Past*, she described a successful summer art school with plein aire painting trips and instruction that existed from 1932 to 1950. No one knows exactly why it began or ended. Many well-known Texas artists taught here including Xavier Gonzalez, Otis Dozier, Coreen Spellman, William Lester, and "the dean of New Orleans painters," Paul Ninas. Part of the success of this undertaking was the outstanding physical beauty of the area which drew both students and teachers. "The Big Bend country is the most paintable place I have ever worked," said one, Mrs. Ruth Lovelady, a 1940 Art Colony student.

CASETA is not all given over to Texas landscapes and themes. An outstanding overview of Houstonian, *Dorothy Hood: Pioneering Texas Modernist*, was given by Curator Deborah Fullerton of the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi. Hood moved with her Bolivian composer husband to Puebla and Mexico City where she knew Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros, and Kahlo. Pablo Neruda arranged her first one-person exhibit. Hood's abstract work using staining, veining and pooling would have been as at home in New York as Texas.

A panel discussion by representatives of major Texas art dealers who took part in the weekend's Art Fair ended the meeting. They agreed that the market for Texas art was good despite a general economic downturn. Several collection suggestions were offered, from particular artists, to paper art, which is less expensive (though not listed in any index databases), to condition issues, to sending mistakes to Heritage Auctions. But the general guide to new collectors was to buy what you like, not name or deal; study hard; and narrow down to some type of scope, a theme, region, or time. Then it becomes a collection.

If you are interested in a fuller discussion of this organization or event go to: www.caseta.org

Gwen Dixie
Librarian
Dallas Public Library

News: ARLIS/Texas-Mexico Chapter Member 2012 Award Winners

Chapter Member and Head Librarian at the Menil Collection in Houston, Eric M. Wolf, won the [Worldwide Books Award for Publications](#) for his book *American Art Museum Architecture: Documents & Design*.

Assistant Librarian at the McNay Museum in San Antonio and chapter member Craig Bunch won the [H.W. Wilson Foundation Research Award](#) for the second year in a row for his work on his *Collage and Assemblage in Texas: The Interviews*.

Congratulations to our chapter award winners!