

TheMedium

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President's Column

Dear ARLIS/NA Texas-Mexico members and friends,

Like a number of you, I attended the 44th annual Art Libraries Society of North America conference last month in Seattle. This conference was somewhat different in that it was the third joint conference hosted by our society and the Visual Resources Association. What remains constant for me is the sense of rejuvenation that I bring back from each conference, returning prepared to pursue new challenges, question old paradigms, and recommit to existing initiatives.

Among the new challenges that awaits our chapter in the coming year is the opportunity to travel to Mexico City in October for our annual chapter meeting. I'm so thrilled that we chose "the road less traveled," not only to visit a place that we have yet to experience as a group, but also to connect with art information professionals in Mexico with whom we have much in common and from whom we have much to learn. I'm particularly pleased to be working with such an excellent conference planning team, including Craig Bunch, Fernando Corona, Lauren Gottlieb-Miller, Joel Pelanne, and Elizabeth Schaub. We'll be looking to expand our group to include more Mexican colleagues in the weeks ahead to make this a truly joint affair. We recently conducted our first meeting and look forward to sharing more details very soon. We hope that you'll set aside October 12-15 on your calendars for a singular experience in Mexico City that will feature stunning art libraries and cultural institutions, a rich program of presentations, and fine food, all mixed with our special brand of Tex-Mex hospitality.

We look forward to seeing you in one of the world's great cultural destinations – Mexico City!

All the best,

Jon Evans
President, ARLIS/NA Texas-Mexico Chapter
Chief Librarian
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



(Photo taken at the ARLIS/NA Texas-Mexico Chapter Meeting in Seattle, Washington)

ARLIS/NA Chapters Liaison Report

Hello Texas-Mexico Members!

Some of the following topics have been updated a bit since my last newsletter column. The Executive Board is happy to learn about your upcoming fall conference in Mexico City, which should prove to be a great opportunity on many fronts. We are happy to lend support and look forward to hearing how the event will shape up as the work of the conference planning committee gets underway. As always, I may be contacted anytime (rfriedma@princeton.edu) should you have an ARLIS/NA-related question or need the Board's attention.



Core Values, Strategic Directions and Action Scorecard

ARLIS/NA and the Strategic Planning Committee have now finalized and made official the Society's new core value and strategic directions statements. A detailed Action Scorecard will ultimately be made available to members on the ARLIS/NA website to keep track of and quantify activities happening in all units of the Society and for all of us to assess our progress towards our goals in the coming year. The goal would be to review our overarching themes regularly and adjust as needed.

Seattle Conference

The Seattle joint conference with the Visual Resources Association, with some cross-listing of content from the Association of Architecture School Librarians conference was a super, jam-packed event with attendance at 813, including close to 200 first timers! The Getty and Kress Foundations, respectively, funded grants to allow delegates from 17 countries to attend, which definitely enriched the experience for all who were there. Kudos goes to the host chapter for an excellent, information-rich conference and to all conference organizers and volunteers. Four sessions, available in English and Spanish, are now available for viewing via the ARLIS/NA Learning Portal: <https://www.pathlms.com/arlisna>.

Chapter Archives

ARLIS/NA formed a Documentation Committee last year to oversee the policies and procedures related to Society documentation, including oral histories and electronic records. There was some discussion during the committee's meeting in Seattle about chapter archives. At the moment, chapters deal with records on their own in various ways, with the exception of annual reports, but I will be looking into this more fully to see if some standardization can be established and if chapters ought to be contributing to the Society's archive at the University of Illinois.

Chapter Success Book & Leadership Institute

This ARLIS/NA manual serves as a guiding document for chapter leaders on all aspects of running a chapter, and is due for an update. I will be working on revising the document this year, and welcome your feedback. New officers, in particular, please let me know if there is specific content lacking that would be helpful to include. On the topic of leadership, I and other Society leaders participated in the second annual ARLIS/NA leadership institute held at the Seattle conference. The session was led by Shelly Schnupp, Associate Director of the Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I was sorry to learn that there wasn't room for chapter leaders to attend. I will be posting some of the helpful documentation that was distributed at this event in Seattle to the chapter leaders' portion of Basecamp shortly.

Rebecca Friedman
ARLIS/NA Executive Board, Chapters Liaison
Assistant Librarian, Marquand Library of Art & Archaeology
Princeton University

Lois Swan Jones Award Recipient Report



I'd like to thank the award selection committee and the chapter for this awesome opportunity to come back to Seattle. Granted that the first time was a one week graduate school orientation for the University of Washington online MLIS program, but I still felt an urge to return.

After spending almost all of last year's conference at the registration desk, I was excited to get back in there and experience the conference and see Seattle. But I wasn't quite done with the registration desk, I volunteered for the first shift Tuesday morning. My two hours consisted mostly of directing members of the Woodland Park Zoo to the other registration desk on the floor and checking in members of the executive board before their all-day meeting. After that, I was free to roam around the city. My roommate and I were staying in the Hotel Max where we took daily advantage of their awesome breakfast, free coffee, and later that evening, complimentary beer in the lobby.

Later that day I attended the Pioneer Square tour led by Alan Michelson of the University of Washington. While the tour started at Pioneer Square, Alan took us around the whole neighborhood, including the Gold Rush museum and describing nearly the complete architectural history of Seattle. He knew the story of almost every building we passed. Luckily we had sunshine for entirety of the three hour tour. Outside of the tour and my trips back and forth between hotels, I experienced Seattle via excursions to Pike Place Market for breakfast, lunch, dinner, drinks, shopping, and everything else.

I didn't have the chance to see the exhibitions at the Seattle Art Museum during the Welcome reception, so I returned on Thursday morning. I had only ever seen two smaller Kehinde Wiley paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and had no idea of the scale of most of his works. Seeing *A New Republic* was truly breathtaking. My favorite works of the exhibition were the icons, especially St. Gregory Palamas, the painting of the figure holding a copy of *'Icons and Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church'*. I also encountered the world's best security guard. He told us stories of going to Vancouver, unruly guests, working at SAM and people thinking they can touch the art. Especially the Duchamp. Fingerprints everywhere. But back to the conference...

The most important and helpful part of the conference were the two workshops I attended on Wednesday. The first was the Career Development workshop led by ArLiSNAP and VREPS. We received invaluable tips for carrying out job searches including sharing places to find job listings, how to communicate with and use references, and resources for maintaining relevancy in the field. More importantly we focused on persistence and maintaining positive outlooks and an open mind.

The second workshop was the first meeting of the year-long career mentoring program. The theme for this year is leadership, and we spent time brainstorming qualities of a good leader and what we strive for in our careers. Before the workshop we were asked to create SMART goals (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevancy, Timeframe) to focus our objectives and gain perspective. The mentees completed exercises and received advice on how to approach our positions as mentees vis-à-vis communication, expectations, and support. During the second half of the workshop we met with our mentors to get to know them and edit our goals. My mentor, Yvette Cortes, and I discussed a plan for future meetings, establishing agendas, and goal-setting. The Committee members will be in touch with us all year providing readings and advice.

During the rest of the conference, I attended the session on web archiving, new voices in the profession, the poster session where I got a volunteer opportunity, and sat in and took notes for the Documentation Committee. I met with colleagues from Houston and new friends and colleagues in New England, and got so much encouragement and understanding regarding my quest for employment. I had a remarkable time and hope to see all of you in New Orleans!

Sarah Long

ARLIS/NA Annual Conference: Public Sculpture In Seattle

Public Sculpture in Seattle

It is always a treat at a conference to get out of the hotel and explore a city you have never been to before. Seattle was particularly rewarding in this regard, and I only wish I had had more time for such exploration. If one does not mind a little rain, one discovers great public sculpture outside in Seattle.

Olympic Sculpture Park

Walking distance from the Westin is the Olympic Sculpture Park, maintained by the Seattle Art Museum, right on Seattle's beautiful waterfront with great views of various islands and ferries. The park itself is beautifully landscaped on various levels with large works by such important artists as Richard Serra, Ellsworth Kelly, Alexander Calder and Louise Bourgeois. A guide and map is available from the Seattle Art Museum [here](#).



Alexander Calder, The Eagle, 1971 with the Space Needle in the background. Photo: Eric Wolf

Barnett Newman's Broken Obelisk at Red Square, University of Washington

Houstonians and other Texans might find themselves missing Barnett Newman's Broken Obelisk at the Rothko Chapel during its treatment at its original fabricator's shop back in Connecticut, so our conference in Seattle was timed perfectly. As many ARLIS members will know, the piece was editioned and there are three of them:

at the Rothko Chapel in Houston, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and on the campus of the University of Washington in Seattle. The trip to campus was extra special, as I got to explore the campus (designed by Frederick Law Olmstead of Central Park and Golden Gate Park fame) during the height of Cherry Blossom season. Newman's sculpture is well sited at UW and its installation contrasts greatly with that of its sister in Houston (in its reflecting pool); Seattle light and atmosphere also give it a different aspect. But seeing Broken Obelisk here was like being reunited with an old friend who I was missing.



Barnett Newman, Broken Obelisk, 1967, Red Square, University of Washington, Seattle. Photo: Eric Wolf

And There is More

Unfortunately, I did not get to see all of the great public sculpture in Seattle. On the list was a trip to Volunteer Park, but, alas, with all the great programming at the conference, I did not make it. But that is what colleagues are for: Lauren Gottlieb-Miller, my coworker at the Menil Collection did make it there and was able to see not only great sculpture by Isamu Noguchi, but great views of Mount Rainier and the Space Needle. So I only scratched the surface of great public sculpture in Seattle and must return.



Isamu Noguchi, Black Sun, 1969, Volunteer Park, Seattle. Photo: Lauren Gottlieb-Miller

Eric M. Wolf
Head Librarian
The Menil Collection

ARLIS/NA Annual Conference: Graphic Novels SIG

The Graphic Novels Special Interest Group (SIG) met in the Baker Room of the Westin Seattle on Wednesday March 9, 2016, 11AM-12:30PM. I am the coordinator for the Graphic Novels SIG which I started in 2013. The room was pretty small and arranged in a one-round table fashion. We ran out of chairs for the attendees that starting arriving and had to ask for more. We started the meeting with two presentations.

The first presentation, *User Needs for Art Library Comic Collections*, was by my new co-coordinator for the SIG, Andrew Wang. Andrew is a library assistant and library school student at Indiana University. He talked about a study that he did assessing the different needs of professors and students that use the comics collection at Indiana University. Through interviews with the faculty and students he gleaned ways that the librarians could assess their collections and ultimately increase its usage.

My presentation titled *Graphic Novel/Comic Collections and the Opportunities They Present for Unique Collection Development, Collaboration, Outreach, and Events* covered how creating an isolated graphic novel collection can provide opportunities for collaboration and outreach to faculty, students, and others. I talked about how a graphic novel collection in a university library serving 37,979 students can increase usage and help to promote the library, exhibits, and events. The collections development of the graphic novel collection at Alkek Library at Texas State University is unique because when the titles are processed or bound they are handled in specific ways to preserve the integrity of the art. I also made an eight page book out of one sheet of paper and passed out folded copies of it to all attendees. It included photos that I had taken and used for my presentation as well as summarized points.

The attendees had many questions for both Andrew and I. Both of the presentations complimented each other. His was a research study and mine was about the practical side of creating a graphic novel collection, the processes involved, and the outcomes. Other items on the agenda included the new ARLIS/NA Graphic Novels Special Interest Group Facebook Group. The group is open to the public to encourage maximum discussion and already has 100 members. We also talked about ways to encourage publishers to apply for space in the ARLIS/NA exhibition area and inviting artists to talk with us at our meeting next year at the ARLIS/NA conference in New Orleans.

Both Andrew and I have put our presentations on our Graphic Novels SIG Google Drive. Links to them with the meeting minutes have been emailed to all attendees and the Graphic Novels SIG listserv. I also told the group I would put a copy of my eight page book on our Google Drive and directions of how to fold it to make it into a book. Links are also included with this article. Directions for how to make it into a book are [here](#).

Links:

[Graphic Novel/Comic Collections and the Opportunities They Present for Unique, Collection Development, Collaboration, Outreach, and Events Presentation](#)

[Graphic Novels SIG Presentation, small 8 page book](#)

[Directions for how to fold the small book](#)

Tara Spies Smith

Research, Instruction and Outreach Librarian, Art & Design Subject Librarian

Alkek Library, Texas State University

ARLIS/NA Annual Conference: Book Arts Tour

On Wednesday, March 9th, fifteen eager book arts lovers set off on a wonderful day-long adventure to visit Bainbridge Island, led by Jane Carlin (Library Director at University of Puget Sound) and Sandra Kroupa (Book Arts Librarian at the University of Washington). Following a pleasant walk from the hotel, we took the Washington State Ferry across Puget Sound, with lovely views of the Seattle skyline in the rear view mirror as we journeyed to Bainbridge Island. Our first stop in the quaint village of Winslow was new Bainbridge Island Museum of Art (BIMA). While the museum (and cafe and museum store) were all fabulous, the focus of the trip was to visit the artists' books collected by museum founder Cynthia Sears.

The book arts reading room boasts magnificent exhibition space with shelves lining the room (including an exterior exhibition wall that allows you to see through and into the room). Central in the space is a conference style table that features shadowbox type exhibit area beneath the surface. Cynthia Sears, an strong advocate for book arts, gave an inspiring talk about her journey with artists' book and shared with us several works that held special meaning for her. Oregon book artist Laura Russell talked about her art and shared a number of her pieces with us as well. Following our time at BIMA, we traveled by private coach to visit Cynthia's private residence for a delicious catered meal and a chance to meet with several book artists in the region, including Catherine Michaelis, Mare Blocker, and Mark Hoppmann. Each of the artist's talked about and exhibited their work during the visit. On our return to the town of Winslow, we explored many wonderful galleries and the Bainbridge art scene.



Seattle Ferry to Bainbridge Island



Cynthia Sears at BIMA



Laura Russell at BIMA



Tour group in the BIMA artists' books gallery



Exploring amazing artists' book in the collection



BIMA artists' books gallery



Exhibit tables in the BIMA artists' books gallery



Lunch conversation with book artist Mare Blocker

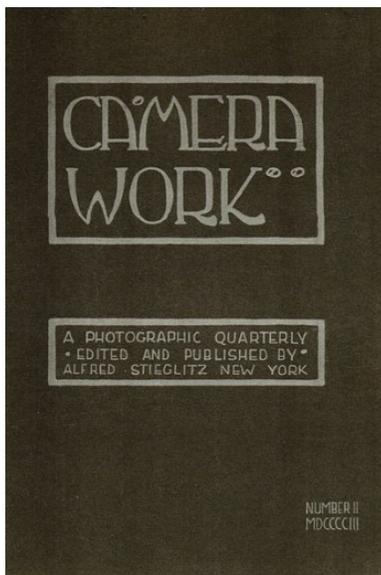
(All photos by Sha Towers)

Sha Towers
Art Liaison Librarian/Director of Liaison Services
Baylor University

ARLIS/NA Annual Conference: Seattle Public Library Special Collections

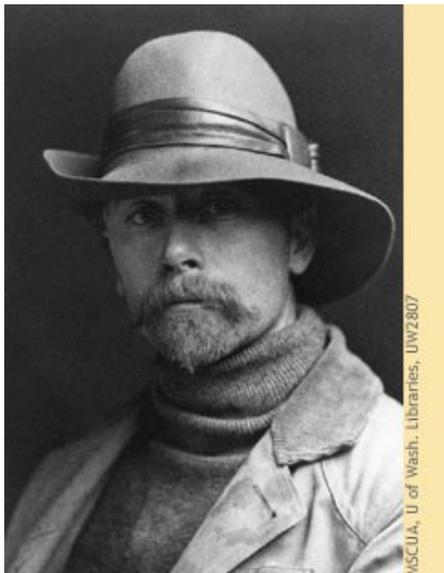


Amongst the many treasures held by [The Seattle Public Library's Special Collections](#) are the publications [Camera Work](#) by Alfred Stieglitz and [The North American Indian](#) by Edward S. Curtis. The library is fortunate enough to have sets of both series and was pleased to share them with visiting ARLIS/NA members. The tour was led by Cornish College of the Arts Librarian and photo history instructor Bridget Nowlin. Bridget explained that between 1903 and 1917, Stieglitz published Camera Work as a quarterly journal designed by Edward Steichen (perhaps not surprisingly, 68 Steichen images were published during the run – more than any other photographer!). Stieglitz regarded Camera Work as the unofficial organ for the Photo-Secession Group and represented the photogravure plates of aspiring photographers from around the world for the purpose of promoting soft-focus, heavily manipulated images as a modern art form as potent as painting and sculpture for the first time. As the movement evolved, the use of nonmanipulated camera images were presented as well as a trend toward forms of found abstraction. The gravures usually were printed on delicate Japanese tissue, mounted on textured papers, and individually tipped into the magazines in a portfolio format separate from explanatory texts.



50 issues containing 473 photographs were published before Stieglitz could no longer afford the high cost of publication. Individual issues as well as entire runs are now extremely scarce and sell for thousands of dollars each.

Edward Sheriff Curtis (1868-1952) published *The North American Indian* between 1907 and 1930 with the intent to record traditional Indian cultures. The work comprises twenty volumes of narrative text and more than twenty-two hundred photogravure images which are a time-consuming combination of photography and etching. Each volume is accompanied by a portfolio of large photogravure plates.



SPL Librarian Joseph Bopp began our overview by stating that Curtis attempted and achieved the impossible with *The North American Indian*. By ruining his finances, his marriage and his health, he created an irreplaceable photographic and ethnographic record of more than eighty North American native nations. He

hoped to complete the study in five or six years within a budget of \$25,000. But in fact, completion required more than thirty years, one and a half million dollars and the assistance of a vast array of financial patrons, researchers, master craftsmen, interpreters, tribal elders, and medicine men! The substantial costs and demands of being in the field with all those specialists mentioned above plus film and still cameras, and sound recording equipment paled in comparison to the cost of actually making the photogravure plates, pulling the limited edition prints, and binding the books and portfolios for publication. Curtis' photographs are obviously suffused with nostalgia for the vast frontier of the American West and he has been criticized for romanticizing an idealized Indian way of life, while ignoring the very real plight of the native peoples being forced to relinquish vast tracts of land to live in ghetto reservations.

Jade D'Addario, the Digital Projects Librarian at SPL who is involved in the online [Edward S. Curtis Digital Collection](#), pointed out that Curtis often posed his subjects in archaic or ceremonial garments they did not ordinarily wear and photographed them engaged in activities they no longer practiced such as being warriors. Despite this, his monumental work does give us a glimpse into a traditional way of life facing eminent extinction.

Edward Lukasek
Catalog Librarian
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Hirsch Library

News: Museum Libraries, Hirsch Library Exhibition

Everything and Everyone: Artists' Books Published by the National Museum of Women in the Arts from Renée and Stan Wallace (currently on display at the Hirsch Library of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston until July 9, 2016) is a new exhibition that brings a close focus on a uniquely delightful section of the Hirsch Library's rare book holdings.



Shadow Play by Ann Kresge ; poems by Melinda Kennedy

Artists' books, which came to prominence as a medium in the mid-twentieth century, are best described as works of art that are conceived and executed by their makers as books. To make a book is to claim power over objects by giving physical embodiment to ideas. Artists' books take this concept a step further, as every aspect and creative choice behind an artists' book can be alive with meaning. To "read" an artists' book is to reckon not only with text, but with structure and form.



Goldilocks by Nicole Vanasse

The National Museum of Women in the Arts, located in Washington, D.C. is the only major museum in the world dedicated exclusively to celebrating women's achievements in the visual, performing, and literary arts. Every year, the Library Fellows Program at the NMWA (established in 1989) meets to review and discuss proposals from artists for the production of a limited edition artists' book.



Day By Day by Natasha Guruleva and Olga Nenazhivina

Renée Wallace began serving as an NMWA Library Fellow after encountering Audrey Niffenegger's monumental work *Three Incestuous Sisters* and falling in love with the artists' book's ability to provide a means of direct and palpable communication between artists and their readers. The publications featured in this exhibition are selected largely from a gift of artists' books published by the NMWA and given to the Hirsch Library by Renée and Stan Wallace in 2011. These works provide a cross-section of the many forms and creative possibilities of the artists' book.

Joel Pelanne

Catalog Librarian

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Hirsch Library
