



REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings Central Plains Chapter,



Happy New Year, Central Plains! I have been thrilled to serve as Chair of our chapter this past year. It has been a true honor to work with you and represent the accomplishments of art library professionals in our region.

We've had another challenging but productive 2021. Even though we were still unable to meet in person, the chapter held two virtual meetings that gave us a chance to address chapter business, share new acquisitions, projects and programs, and discuss initiatives regarding DEI and chapter membership. Over the summer, chapter members participated in a survey that gave us valuable insight into what you hope to get out of membership and what you'd like to see at meetings. Our members also had the honor of forming the George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award Committee, with Andi Back leading the charge as Committee Chair. In addition, our members have been doing exciting work such as the *Missouri Remembers* project for which Amelia, Lora, M.J., Kris, Suzy, and Susan all contributed, as well as submitting our history to the 50th anniversary of ARLIS/NA to be celebrated at this year's conference.

For the fourth year straight, we were lucky to have our Secretary/Treasurer, Phil Jones handle membership, funds, meeting minutes, and the transition to a new management team. I'm grateful for our Communications Officer, Lora Farrell, who helped restore important missing ARLIS 2020 Conference content to the Society's website. Thank you to all of the chapter members who served in elected offices and on committees, attended meetings, and participated on the listserv. I appreciate everyone's perspectives and experiences, and look forward to continuing these discussions in the upcoming year.

The prospect of reuniting again safely is truly exciting. Although the chapter has rallied to share our work and gather virtually as a community throughout this pandemic, we've also learned how much we value meeting, connecting, and sharing in person. The conference to be held in Chicago will mark a return to in-person annual meetings, plus a virtual option to our chapter meeting for those unable to travel or who prefer that format.

It's been an honor to serve as your Chair in 2021. The new year is the start of a new committee term and I'm excited to be working with Andi Back as the Chapter Chair in 2022.

Best wishes,
Skye Lacerte
ARLIS-CP Chair, 2021

ARLIS/CENTRAL PLAINS 2022 CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Chair: Andi Back, University of Kansas

Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect: Megan Macken, Oklahoma State University

Communications Officer: Lora Farrell, Kansas City Art Institute

Secretary/Treasurer: Phillip Jones, University of Arkansas

Newsletter Editor: Amelia Nelson, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Past Chair: Skye Lacerte, Washington University in St. Louis

REPORT ON THE 2021 ARLIS/NA CONFERENCE, MONTRÉAL, CANADA

ARLIS/NA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Submitted by Lora Farrell, Catalog & Digital Services Librarian, Jannes Library, Kansas City Art Institute

The ARLIS/NA MOQ (Montréal, Ottawa, Québec) Chapter hosted the 49th Annual ARLIS/NA Conference online in 2021 as the nation and world battled the Covid-19 pandemic. The theme was “Convergence = Créativité + Collaboration” and the organizers put together a top tier online event with relevant and inspiring sessions using easy to navigate software that facilitated interaction. The conference software ShowCare used Zoom webinar and linked out to Sched for agenda customization.

The conference keynote speaker was Dr. Charmaine A. Nelson, Professor of Art History and a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in Transatlantic Black Diasporic Art and Community Engagement at NSCAD University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The title of Dr. Nelson’s keynote address was “Grappling with the Colonial Archive: The Production and Circulation of Information in Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Canadian Slavery.” Dr. Nelson noted that the primary archival record for enslaved people in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries provides very little information about these people as humans. We are left to imagine their humanity, as newspapers and other documentation, by design, reduced descriptions of enslaved peoples to their physical attributes as commodities. These omissions leave researchers to ask the question, “what is unwritten?” Asking questions about who these enslaved people were begins to humanize the enslaved. She also noted that there was slavery in Canada but some of the real history of slavery in the Canadian provinces has been replaced by the celebratory narrative of the underground railroad.

Additional sessions at the virtual conference addressed management of information and our ways of engaging with it. In the session “Re-Imagining Interactivity, Publishing, and Collaboration as Catalysts for Creativity, Engagement, and Inquiry,” Dana Ospina noted that in libraries we are often expected to do more with less. Ospina asserted that undergraduate scholarship is unfairly judged using the standards of professional publishing. She encouraged a culture that is tolerant of failure and one in which undergraduate publishing is encouraged and reframed in a new context that allows for differences between undergraduate and faculty level work.

In the session “Confluent Practices: Non-Traditional Research Methodologies in Art Librarianship,” Courtney Hunt and Michele Jennings presented “Reading Outside the Lines: Using the Writings of Artists to Understand Artistic Research Practices.” Hunt and Jennings based their presentation on their related paper ““My Work Is Work:” Artistic Research Practice and Knowledge Creation in the Work of Carmen Winant and Tomashi Jackson” which appeared in the Spring 2021 edition of *Art Documentation* (v. 40, no.1). They were two of five speakers who addressed artists’ research methodologies in this panel. The authors noted that traditionally artists’ research methodologies have been viewed through a library research lens which asserts an elitist and exclusive judgement that there is a ‘right’ way to do research. They examined the idea that research from an artist’s point of view is not always about filling an information need but can also be about inspiration, curiosity and motivations that are “subjective, personal and emotional.” (Hunt, 38) Another presenter in this panel included Olivia Piepmeier, author of *Comics and Critical Librarianship: Reframing the Narrative in Academic Libraries*.

Montreal organizers did not leave any experience out of the virtual conference, and events included the awards ceremony, party and recorded tours. The party was hosted using the virtual software ShowCare, with ‘tables’ that attendees could go to and join conversations. Seats at the tables included the names of those in that particular chat, and attendees could roam from table to table. Clicking on a table allowed you to join the conversation, with an interface of a typical Zoom with 6 or 7 attendees.

Some of the conference sessions were recorded and posted to the Kaltura Channel on the ARLIS/NA Commons. These sessions include “The Cataloging Manual Reinvented: The New RDA Toolkit and the 3R Project,” “Telling Stories with Library Data: Visualization Projects and Tools,” and “Collaborative Institutional Problem-Solving: Exploring DEI Initiatives and Five Case Studies Across Libraries and Museums.” The Kaltura Channel can be accessed through the ARLIS/NA webpage by clicking on Professional Resources and then [ARLIS/NA Commons](#). Users will need to be current ARLIS/NA members and will need to login to the site.

MESSAGE FROM THE ARLIS/NA CHAPTERS’ LIAISON

Submitted by Stephanie Grimm, ARLIS/NA Executive Board, Chapters’ Liaison, Art and Art History Librarian and Fenwick Gallery Manager, George Mason University, sgrimm4@gmu.edu



Happy new year, everyone! I’m happy to share updates from the ARLIS/NA Executive Board and the work we’ve been doing over the past few months, and some things to look for this Spring.

At this time, the **2022 Annual Conference in Chicago** is still set to be an in-person conference. The Conference Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) offered a virtual town hall on **Wednesday, January 19th from 10-11am (CST)** for discussion and a Q&A session for members. Topics included COVID-related guidelines and planning; a review of the program, events, workshops, and tours; anniversary-related celebrations; website features and updates; a call for volunteers; and the

registration process, and important dates. See ARLIS/NA President Mark Pompelia's email on ARLIS-L for more details. The conference website also has details on [COVID guidelines](#) (as of December 9, 2021).

The **Humanities Commons Implementation Task Force** continues its work on the back-end of ARLIS/NA's own instance of Humanities Commons, which will serve as the new repository for ARLIS/NA conference recordings and webinars, as well as host for constituent group blogs, discussion groups, and more. We anticipate offering a society-wide Town Hall or other information session to discuss the status of the ARLIS/NA Commons, likely in the coming months/ahead of the conference.

One of my major projects coming into the Chapters' Liaison role was the **Bundled Membership Program**, and making improvements to the system to better support chapter membership management. I'm happy to report that, thanks to our new membership database and the work of the team at McKenna, **chapters now have the option to set their own membership rates**—rather than the standard fee set when Bundled Membership was implemented. This will give chapters greater flexibility and control of their chapter finances. In the coming year, we will roll out the option for additional **chapter membership categories**, allowing for student, retired, or other special membership categories to take advantage of bundled membership renewal. Gaby Webster (Deputy Director, ARLIS/NA) and I will be in touch with chapters later this year to start work on this process.

There are also a number of issues and discussions related to **ethics, labor and professional standards, and DEI and anti-racism efforts**.

- The **Anti-Racism Task Force** is finalizing a report based on surveys collected this summer, along with next steps for the group and the Society. Look for more on that soon!
- The **Job List Task Force**, led by Amy Furness (Canadian Liaison, ARLIS/NA) is researching the implications of implementing salary transparency on the ARLIS/NA JobList, with the goal of making progress towards salary transparency on the JobList. We expect to hear updates from that group in the coming months.
- A **Paraprofessional Membership Category Task Force** was recently convened within the Membership Committee, and will be assessing the naming, eligibility, and pricing.
- Earlier this year, Amy Furness was also instrumental in helping to standardize **speaker honorariums** for non-conference speakers, at a new flat rate of \$300USD/person. Chapters can apply for special funding up to this amount for speakers at local events. There is also a new rate for commissioned blog posts or other writing. [See the ARLIS/NA Policy Manual, section J-14](#) for full details.
- The Executive Board also recently approved an amendment to the Society's policy manual **recognizing the rights of library workers to organize unions and collectively bargain**. See ARLIS/NA Policy [No. N-10: Statement on Organized Labor](#).

Over the summer, the Strategic Planning Refresh Task Force met to identify a revised process to improve the society's approach to strategic planning. As a result, the **Strategic Planning Committee** was established as an ad hoc group, replacing the former Strategic Directions Committee. The Strategic Planning Committee will have greater connectivity with the Executive Board, and the ability to develop, execute, and monitor progress on the strategic plan. The Committee will aim to execute this new strategic planning process in the next 12-18 months.

Finally, in the coming year I will be working with McKenna to start to review our current process and criteria for **annual conference site selection**. The goal is to investigate and potentially develop strategic approaches to conference host selection, which might alleviate the burden put on chapters to propose and organize annual conferences, while creating a more sustainable conference planning process

that continues to highlight the many diverse geographic, artistic, and cultural highlights of the society's chapters.

In case you missed it:

Earlier in the fall, ARLIS/NA completed its migration to a **new website and membership** management database. In addition to providing better reporting and data for chapter and society rosters, this also allowed us to build a more robust membership demographics form. By collecting detailed information about ARLIS/NA members, we will have a better foundation to support the society's DEI initiatives. Amy Trendler (Past President, ARLIS/NA) and Heather Slania (Education Liaison, ARLIS/NA) worked with the Anti-Racism Task Force to develop this more robust form. See the ARLIS/NA [Demographics Factsheet](#) for more on these efforts, and to submit any questions or suggestions.

Wishing you all a healthy and happy start to this new year!

MEMBER NEWS



New from the University of Arkansas

Submitted by Phillip J. Jones, Head Fine Arts Library

Planning continues on the renovation of the Fine Arts Center, which houses the Fine Arts Library. The building will probably close at the end of 2022 and reopen in mid-2024 in time for the fall semester. The evening classified position in the library has been vacant since mid-September. Phil hopes the position will be filled by January.



News from the University of Kansas, Murphy Art & Architecture Library

Submitted by Andi Back, Fine Arts and Humanities Librarian

After altered services during the pandemic, the Murphy Art & Architecture Library reopened study spaces, the stacks, and a range of services at the start of the fall semester 2021. Since then, the library has seen an uptick in circulation and instruction requests. Andi continues a hybrid schedule, with only three days on campus, but has enjoyed being able to work with patrons and offer course instruction in person once again.

MISSOURI

News from The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Spencer Art Reference Library

Submitted by Amelia Nelson, Director, Library & Archives

While the Covid-19 pandemic continues around the nation and globe the Spencer Art Reference Library was able to return to a semblance of normal with all staff returning to working on site in July of 2020.

Library and Archives staff focused on several large projects in 2021 that included:



Museum archivist, Tara Laver, served as co-curator for the exhibition, *Origins: Collecting to Create the Nelson-Atkins* (August 14, 2021 – March 6, 2022). The exhibition documents the decisions that were made to create the museum’s art collections as well as the personalities behind these decisions. Archival collections were key to telling this story and original and facsimile documents, and even a 1937 video, are included in the exhibition.

The library and archives conducted oral histories with the artists of KC’s Black Lives Matter murals. In the interviews, which are available both in the museum’s archives and in the library’s artist file collection, the artists share their inspiration for their mural designs, the process of executing the murals collaboratively with community members, as well as their reflections on the impact of this project on Kansas City.

Library staff, with project partners, continue to work on the *Missouri Remembers: Artists in Missouri through 1951* portal by creating artist records, maintaining the site and increasingly sharing this resource with teachers, researchers and collectors who can make use of the information.

And finally, the Spencer Art Reference Library is participating in a grant funded project to collaboratively preserve web-based art history resources called CARTA. Through participation in this initiative, the library is exploring how to effectively integrate web resources into collection development policies and practices.

OKLAHOMA

New from Oklahoma State University

Submitted by Megan Macken, Assistant Director, Digital Resources and Discovery Services



Megan Macken is now the Assistant Department Head, Digital Resources and Discovery Services, at the Oklahoma State University Library. This position includes supervision of the metadata and cataloging unit, supporting various digital resources, and continuing her role as liaison to Art, Art History, and Graphic Design. Megan is also co-editor of *ARLIS/NA Reviews*, and is always seeking volunteer book reviewers. New issues will be published on the ARLIS/NA Commons.

Submitted by Sara Mautino, Architecture Librarian



Sara Mautino is the new Architecture Librarian at the Oklahoma State University School of Architecture. She began managing the Cunningham Architecture Library and its merry group of student workers in September. She's fresh onto the higher-education scene after spending 7 years in elementary school and public libraries post-graduation with her MSLIS from Drexel. Sara hails from Oklahoma but has lived all over the US for the past 20 years as a military spouse. She's a life-long tortured KC Chiefs fan, an equally skittish OKState fan, and spends all her free time on her family's cattle ranch in rural Northeast Oklahoma where she wrangles more goats than cows.

