



THE IRREGULAR

June 2023

The Newsletter of
the Central Plains Chapter of
the Art Libraries Society of North America

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings Central Plains Chapter,



After meeting virtually for several years, the Central Plains chapter looks forward to an in-person meeting in November 2023 at the Nelson-Atkins Museum. Our chapter meetings historically centered on site visits of members' libraries. As Susan Craig told me recently, "Visiting regional libraries, museums, art sites, and hearing from local experts built a camaraderie that made the meetings attractive and fun. We not only looked forward to seeing each other and learning about collections that we could then direct our patrons to as resources, we found colleagues who shared many of the same challenges and who offered advice and guidance." Without this foundation the future of our chapter has seemed uncertain.

Our fall meeting will be an opportunity to reconnect, discuss options and engage in planning for the chapter's future. On the evening of November 2nd we will gather for dinner in Kansas City. Our chapter business meeting will follow on the morning of November 3rd, and afterward, thanks to Amelia Nelson, we'll have a behind-the-scenes look at the upcoming [Evelyn Hofer: Eyes on the City](#) exhibition.

Thanks to our chapter officers, Sara Mautino, Skye Lacerte, and our longstanding secretary/treasurer in his last term, Phil Jones. Phil's service especially has sustained the chapter through many changes and challenges over the past several years and is very much appreciated! Notable actions over the last year include a unanimous vote to donate a \$250.00 unrestricted gift to support the ARLIS/NA annual conference in Mexico City. Several of our members attended the conference, including Skye Lacerte who was selected by travel award committee members Andi Back and Amelia Nelson to receive the \$395.00 Susan V. Craig Travel Award. Chapter officers are eligible for conference travel awards, so please consider running this fall for a chapter officer position, especially if you plan to travel to the 2024 ARLIS/NA Annual Conference in Pittsburgh.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve as chair and look forward to lively conversation with you in Kansas City this fall!

Best wishes,
Megan Macken
AR LIS-CP Chair, 2023

ARLIS/CENTRAL PLAINS 2022 CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

Chair: Megan Macken, Oklahoma State University

Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect: Sara Mautino, Oklahoma State University

Communications Officer: Skye Lacerte, Washington University in St. Louis

Secretary/Treasurer: Phillip Jones, University of Arkansas

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

Past Chair: Andi Back, University of Kansas

REPORT ON THE 2023 ARLIS/NA CONFERENCE, MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

ARLIS/NA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Submitted by Skye Lacerte, Dowd Illustration Research Archive Curator Special Collections, Washington University in St. Louis

The ARLIS/NA Annual Conference was held in Mexico this year for the first time in ARLIS history. The milestone is in accordance with the theme of this year's conference, Transformation, as we embark on ARLIS/NA's next 50 years. The conference included numerous opportunities for exploring the art, culture, and history of Mexico City. Tours ranged from a day-long tour of Teotihuacán, a vast urban complex 30 miles outside Mexico City, active between the 100 BCE and 600 CE, to a bookstore crawl in Roma and Condesa.



Figure 1 Teotihuacán. Photo by Andrea Degener

women memory workers contributing to critical archival, curatorial, artist documentation, and publishing work.

There were four Central Plains Chapter members who presented at the conference. Andi Back spoke in the session, *Transformative Assessment: Keeping Collections Relevant*; Phil Jones participated in *No Limits: Transforming Restricted Access Collections in Art Libraries*; and Andrea Degener and myself presented in *Beyond Traditional Archives: New Methods and Perspectives* in which we spoke about expanding the traditional narrative of archiving Visual Culture.

As usual, the ARLIS conference planning committee knocked it out of the park with special events. We connected with colleagues at the Welcome Party on the Hilton Reforma pool terrace. The Convocation Reception took place at the Museo Franz Mayer where we enjoyed local food and drink in the open-air courtyard, and browsed their collection of decorative arts. The local guide was full of restaurants, museums and landmarks to visit during our visit. Mexico City offered its own

The conference organizers took great care in creating a robust program. Of the sessions I attended, I found a couple to be especially informative. In *Art Library Workers United: On Unionizing Art Librarians*, we heard from art information professionals who have been involved in successful unionization efforts at each of their institutions. *“The Visual in Black Life”: Perspectives in Black Memory Work*, featured varying perspectives of Black visual culture stewardship through the voices of four Black



Figure 2 Andrea and Skye's session. Photo by Jenny Akins



Figure 3 Convocation Party. Photo by Skye Lacerte

excitement with multiple political demonstrations and a nation-wide earthquake drill in the middle of the conference schedule.

In my opinion, the best part of the conference is seeing old friends and making new ones. As we get used to a new normal post-COVID, interacting with colleagues, personally and professionally, has become invaluable. I look forward to connecting at next year's conference in Pittsburgh.

FALL 2023 MEETING, KANSAS CITY

Mark your calendars for the Fall 2023 Chapter meeting which will be held in Kansas City at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. The meeting will begin with a group dinner on Thursday, Nov. 2 and continue with the chapter meeting on Friday, November 3, 2023.

MESSAGE FROM THE ARLIS/NA CHAPTERS' LIAISON

Submitted by Andi Back, ARLIS/NA Executive Board Chapters Liaison
Fine Arts and Humanities Librarian, University of Kansas



Greetings, Central Plains chapter,

I look forward to working with all of you as I step into my new role on the ARLIS/NA Executive Board as the Chapters Liaison. Below are some updates from the Executive Board and highlights from the past few months.

Many of our colleagues were recognized for their research and service during the convocation at the ARLIS/NA 2023 Annual Conference in Mexico City. Our own Central Plains member **Dr. Marilyn Russell received the Distinguished**

Service Award this year. The official press along with other award winners can be found on the [ARLIS/NA Press Releases](#) page.

The 2024 ARLIS/NA Annual Conference will be Pittsburgh, to be held April 1–6, 2024. The theme will be “Pop!”—in honor of pop art. ARLIS/NA’s new model of relieving the local chapter of some of the duties of hosting a conference is still in development but being utilized for 2024. Assistance outside of the membership of Ohio Valley is being solicited. Several locations for 2025 are under consideration. The annual conference for 2026 will be in Montreal.

The site of the upcoming [IRC Study Tour is Florence](#), October 23–27, 2023.

In March, ARLIS/NA released a [statement that supported the rights of workers to organize](#).

The executive board approved a **mission, vision, and values statement for ARLIS/NA**. A [formal press release](#) was sent out in April via ARLIS-L.

The board wrote a policy for **generating member data** which will enable chapter leaders to make member data requests. Development of the workflow is underway.

A new template has been developed for mid-year reports for the constituent groups of ARLIS/NA. The mid-year reports will be replaced with **goal-setting reports**. This will be due early summer, as opposed to mid-year. Chapters will be on a calendar cycle, so you do not need to submit reports at this time. In subsequent years we will announce these reports before groups hold their annual business meetings to allow them that time to discuss goals with members. We'll evaluate this process and see what other changes need to be made to ensure its success next year.

The **Compass Internship Award** (the diversity internship award), that resulted from the 50th Anniversary Task Force is moving forward.

The **Anti-Racism committee** concluded its initial work in the summer, to get a baseline look at antiracist and DEIA activities across the society. Future committees will continue the work and assess reports, programs, etc.

I appreciate the opportunity to work with all of you over the next few years and please reach out anytime with any questions or comments.

Warmly,
Andi

— ARKANSAS —

News from the University of Arkansas

Submitted by Phillip J. Jones, Head, Fine Arts Library

Parallel renovations are the big news of the University of Arkansas Libraries. The Fine Arts Library closed in December and is scheduled to reopen in mid-2024. About half the volumes were moved to storage; the remainder went to the main library, Mullins. All materials will continue to be available. Two of the four floors of Mullins Library are closed and should reopen in mid-2024.

— MISSOURI —

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

Submitted by Amelia Nelson, Director, Library & Archives

Retired head of the Library Services, Marilyn Carbonell, passed away on December 22, 2022. A celebration of life was held on May 5, 2023. The service was attended by several ARLIS/CP members as well as artists, friends and colleagues. Marilyn was remembered for her support of the arts, libraries and her love of Kansas City's local NPR station KCUR. You can read her obituary [here](#).



The Spencer Art Reference Library collaborated with the museum's development team, conservation colleagues and a local donor Linda Mitchell, UMKC Emerita Professor of History to conserve an item in the Karen Gould Collection of Medieval Manuscripts and Early Printed Leaves. The process was documented in this [video](#) which is being used by our development team to explain to donors why book conservation is such a time-consuming and expensive process, but also why it is so important to maintaining and preserving important collections.

Image from: *La Vie Mort et Passion du Bienheureux Saint Didier de Gènes Evêque de Langres*, Karen Gould Collection #51

News from Oklahoma State University, Cunningham Architecture Library
Submitted by Sara Mautino, Assistant Professor

Women in Architecture Collection Showcase



On April 11th the Cunningham Architecture Library partnered with the student group The Almighty S(he) and hosted a showcase to highlight our brand-new Women in Architecture Collection. The event was well attended by students, faculty, SoA alumni, and community members.

The new Women in Architecture Collection includes hundreds of books and resources by women and about women in architecture. The effort to build the collection was initiated after recognizing women make up 45% of the student population at the OSU School of Architecture, but only 22% of licensed architects in the US are women.¹ What are the driving forces behind the drop? The American Institute of Architects, AIA, released a report in 2021 titled “The Elephant in

the Well-Designed Room” that explores bias in the Architecture profession. Coupling that information with results from the Spring 2021 Campus Climate survey from the OSU Cowboy Data Round-Up² provides a glimpse of the lived experience of female students in the College of Engineering, Architecture & Technology. According to the data, 33% of women in CEAT personally experienced discrimination and ONLY 33% of women in CEAT believe all members of the college community at OSU are treated equitably, regardless of gender. An overwhelming majority of the women in CEAT also believe diversity and inclusion could be improved by providing and promoting resources devoted to diversity for the OSU community. As many other architecture libraries have recently discovered, there was a glaring absence of female representation in the architecture collection, and building the Women in Architecture Collection is one way to provide and promote resources devoted to diversity for the OSU community.



A small group of library faculty and staff members worked on a grant proposal to fund the collection. The grant was unsuccessful, however, Dean of Libraries, Shelia Johnson, elected to infuse the architecture library collection with materials for women and by women in architecture. Dean Johnson allocated \$12,000 of the Rosalinn Swinka Library Endowment to purchase materials. The addition of these resources ensures library materials represent women in the architecture profession.



The showcase was held to celebrate the culmination of over a year's worth of work to create this important collection. In addition to the display of 85 new titles we also created an exhibit of course projects by SoA alumnae who are now practicing in the field. The exhibit was built as an end-goal encouragement for the female SoA students currently working their way through the BArch program. The event also included two community-

participatory art activities and light refreshments. The creation of this collection is just the beginning, and we will continue adding items to the Cunningham Architecture Library that reflect and represent the students and community we serve.

If you would like to browse the collection online the link is: <http://bit.ly/WOMENARCH>

¹ Kendall A. Nicholson, "Measuring Progress on Gender in Architecture." ACSA, (June 2020), <https://www.acsa-arch.org/resource/where-are-the-women-measuring-progress-on-gender-in-architecture-2/>

² Cowboy Data Round-Up(CDR)"Campus Climate Survey - Students"
<https://ira.okstate.edu/cdr/cdrindex.html>

