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Letter from the Chair

Jessica Cline, Supervising Librarian, Picture Collection, New York
Public Library

It is my privilege to welcome you to the ARLIS/NA New York Chapter Newsletter. In this tumultuous time for libraries and cultural institutions, we are more united than ever in supporting each other's efforts and needs with clarity, community, and friendship.

My first experience with the New York Chapter, as a library science student at Pratt Institute, was when I was fortunate enough to be awarded the Celine Palatsky Travel Award to attend the 2004 Annual Conference in our hometown. I still remember hearing Christo and Jean-Claude present on their artistic accomplishments during the conference's keynote lecture. I was in awe of the many art library workers drawn together in common interest and goals, sharing their practices with this great community. In this tradition, we are pleased to share a reflection in the following pages from this year's Celine Palatsky Travel Award recipient, Lorenzo De Los Angeles, as well as reports from other members who presented at, contributed to, or attended the Annual Conference.

Looking ahead, and fresh from this year's virtual Annual Conference and our super fun Pizza Party & Spring Meeting, there is still much to celebrate together. Library reopenings and staffing changes, as well as concerns with organizational structures, cataloging practices, and funding, are all topics dominating our recent conversations. These gatherings solidify the importance of the New York Chapter as a much-needed resource for support, learning, and community. We have been bringing our colleagues together to enjoy an exciting roster of site visits to libraries, museum collections, and artist studios in the first six months of 2025. It was a great pleasure for me to meet many you in February with our first programmed outing to NYPL's Picture Collection. We still have

so much more great programming planned for you in the months ahead, and the second half promises as much momentum as the first. I am so grateful for the efforts of the Executive Board, which is busy planning for the Fall Annual Business Meeting, a Chapter Symposium for November, and the year-end Holiday Party. We have also created a By-Law Committee to continue past ARLIS/NY Executive Board efforts to keep our By-Laws current with best practices and hope to share updates with you all soon. It is truly an amazing, dedicated team. Keep an eye on our Instagram account, @ARLISNY, the chapter website, and your inboxes for everything to come. ☺

Member Updates

Compiled by A.M. LaVey, Librarian for Ukrainian Visual Culture, The Ukrainian Museum

Alex Austin published "Queer Zine Archive Project," *ARLIS/NA Multimedia & Technology Reviews* (June 2025). doi:10.17613/83bj5-6ks19

Johanna Bauman published "Line & Thread: Prints and Textiles from the 1600s to the Present," *Library Exhibitions Review* 3 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.17613/wmgye-3tx68>

Ann Bell will serve as the 2025 coordinator of the Fashion, Textile and Costume Special Interest Group.

Claire Charvet co-curated, with Sarah Fischer, *A Changing Wind: The Dance Legacies of Yeichi Nimura and Lisan Kay Nimura*, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, June–August 2025.

Samie Konet published "Museum of Looted Antiquities," *ARLIS/NA Multimedia & Technology Reviews* (June 2025). <https://doi.org/10.17613/87qyg-82r44>

Leo Krakowsky published "Digital Transgender Archive," *ARLIS/NA Multimedia & Technology Reviews* (June 2025). doi:10.17613/t5gy3-h2822

A.M. Lavey published "Igor Savchenko and Contemporary Belarusian Photography: Reimagining the Visual," *Library Exhibitions Review* 3 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.17613/x29gw-wne03>. Lavey served as the discussant for "Polish and Ukrainian National and Diasporic Literatures and Arts," North East Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies Conference, New York, April 2025. Lavey presented "Balanchine, Robbins and Linked Data: Cooperative Cataloging and the NACO Choreographic Works Project," Program for Cooperative Cataloging Conference, Library of Congress, April 2025. Lavey co-curated, with Bogdan Horbal, *Tatlin and Constructivism*, New York Public Library, January–May 2025.

Bridget O'Keefe published "Archive of Destruction," *ARLIS/NA Multimedia & Technology Reviews* (June 2025). doi:10.17613/3anns-ken88

Morgan Vö published "The Polonsky Exhibition of The New York Public Library's Treasures," *Library Exhibitions Review* 3 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.17613/yt4q8-93g60>

Emily Walz presented "Figurative Anxieties: Saint-Cloud Cane Handles, Chinoiserie," and "Things," at CAA 2025. Walz chaired "Expanding the Practice of Research: Transdisciplinarity in Art and Art History" for the CAA Committee on Research and Scholarship and co-chaired the Committee's annual meeting alongside A.M. LaVey. Walz presented "Anna Atkins: Beyond Botany, Past Pictures," New York Public Library, May 20, 2025.

Mackenzie Williams published "Becoming Bohemia: Greenwich Village 1912-1923," *Library Exhibitions Review* 3 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.17613/pet14-rec53> ☺

Tour of New York Public Library's Picture Collection

Bridget O'Keefe, Assistant Librarian, The Museum of Modern Art

In the early evening of February 10th, ARLIS/NA New York Chapter members assembled for a tour of the [Picture Collection](#) within the [Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs](#) of the New York Public Library. Picture Collection Supervising Librarian and Chapter Chair, Jessica Cline, provided an exclusive look at the encyclopedic trove of pictorial knowledge that has been feeding the visual appetites of artists, designers, and inquisitive researchers for the past century.

The group traversed the marble, hallowed halls of the Stephen A. Schwartzman building to Room 119, home of the enchanting Picture Collection. The collection is arranged spatially and temporally to encourage play, experimentation, serendipitous discovery, and social engagement—encapsulating a reference desk, open shelving, circulating images, an alphabetical subject arrangement, and a table with chairs. The kaleidoscopic collection contains over 1.5 million images that have been clipped from magazines, books, newspapers, and postcards; mounted onto archival paper; and neatly housed in manila folders. Cline detailed the fascinating history and panoramic scope of the collection, and its mission to address questions where answers can only be seen. Anything with a visual presence has a heading. Popular subject matter among contemporary researchers include: witchcraft, UFOs, the apocalypse, abandoned spaces, selfcare, fog, moss, parking lots, and banal objects. Next, Cline presented a show-and-tell of collection highlights, including clippings of corporate offices à la *Working Girl*, images of wind, FSA photographs, as well as “rear views” —a folder that Walker Evans photographed when commissioned for a feature in *Vogue* in celebration of the NYPL's centennial.¹

Cline charted the evolution of what Joseph Cornell referred to as the “needle-in-a-haystack department,” which has been tended to by intersecting communities of librarians and patrons since its inception in 1915.² The architect behind this culturally-responsive model of democratized access was Ramona Javitz, the “key philosopher of the image” and superintendent of the Picture Collection from 1929 to 1968.³ While studying art in Europe, she visited state picture collections in Italy, Austria, Poland, Germany, France, and England. Javitz returned to the United States with a mission to diversify the canon, to champion accessibility, and to document contemporary American life. She developed the Index of American Design, a Works Progress Administration Federal Art Project that hired hundreds of unemployed artists to create watercolor renderings of rural and urban America. From 1934 to 1941, WPA workers also were hired to clip, mount, catalog, rehouse, and reclassify pictures in the collection.⁴ She forged a professional partnership with Roy Stryker, head of the photographic section of the Resettlement Administration who hired several photographers to document the conditions of American life during the Depression. Stryker donated duplicate photographs to the Picture Collection, including 40,000 images which may have been suppressed by Congress. Javitz requested that the subject content should be assessed as soon as the images came in to enhance discoverability and “...to impress upon him the importance of the gathering of data with each picture.”⁵ Javitz also assisted Arturo Alfonso Schomburg in building what would later become known as the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, through requesting FSA photographic documentation of African American life in the United States.

Born in Minsk and trained as a visual artist, Javitz built a service model that was attentive to a more eclectic, diverse, and contemporary user base. In 1937 she stated, “Too much knowledge is expected of the user. It is not popular, live, nor flexible enough to keep pace with technological, scientific, and news developments.”⁶ The



Snapshots of the visit to the Picture Collection at the New York Public Library. Images courtesy of Rachel Garbade.

Picture Collection was interpreted as a living archive, an organism that shifts, adapts, and realigns itself in response to an evolving culture and intellectually dexterous body of researchers. Javitz revised cataloging practices to discard bibliographic hierarchies and to create subject headings that reflect contemporary vocabularies and the nomenclatures of artists. She imagined and built a browsable space and method of non-bibliographic subject arrangement to empower researchers to explore the collection without mediation on the part of the librarian. Javitz also transcended the language barrier that hindered foreign and non-English speaking researchers, through implementing a policy that invited patrons to draw or describe their requests on a call slip. This sophisticated system was utilized to record desired subjects.⁷

Javitz's philosophy for the collection is grounded in the belief that an image can embody a multiplicity of meanings, and that different interpretations are assigned to a picture by the patron in the moment of encounter. This concept was illustrated in an interactive activity coordinated by Cline, inspired by the book *Interview* by Hans-Peter Feldmann and Hans Ulrich Obrist. In the 2009 text, Obrist posed questions in writing, which Feldmann responded to with an image. We put this exercise in verbal-visual communication to the test—each attendee was assigned one of Obrist's rather abstract questions (i.e. *How do you define sculpture today?*) and set loose among the stacks to retrieve a pictorial answer through consulting the collection's 12,000+ subject headings. Dispelling the trite myth of the prim, tedious and humorless librarian, interpretations were witty, clever, ironic, literal—and ultimately, unexpected. Images were displayed with their respective prompts, depicting anything visually conceivable, from witches on water skis to swanky metropolitan apartments. Each picture was then shifted counter-clockwise and placed in juxtaposition to a new prompt. Inviting new meanings and significations, this activity effectively demonstrated Javitz's mission for pictures to "be put to diverse ends by users indifferent to either the author or the librarian's intention."⁸

Dorothea Lange once said that the Picture Collection is the only place where she can see inside her head. In the digital age, the Picture Collection offers the same peace of mind and unfettered creative potential. Images at the Picture Collection are sourced, historically authenticated, and free from algorithmic bias. Since the Collection's founding, it has foregrounded the needs of artists. Joseph Cornell would visit when collecting disparate objects in the construction of collages and assemblages. Diego Rivera consulted materials when

creating the controversial Rockefeller Center mural, *Man at the Crossroads* (1932–33). Andy Warhol borrowed images that served as fundamental visual references, which he notoriously never returned.

NYPL's Picture Collection currently offers an [Artist Fellowship](#) and has an [Instagram](#) account that is run by a different artist each month. Cline has heeded the precedent that Javitz has set for the collection in the digital age, with a mission "to create digital presence for what is analog."

As it stands, the Picture Collection is open to researchers. ♡

1. Diana Kamin, "Circulating Collection Style: Pictures as Documents at the New York Public Library," essay, in *Picture-Work: How Libraries, Museums, and Stock Agencies Launched a New Image Economy* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2023), 61.
2. Ibid. 69.
3. Ibid. 28.
4. Ibid. 48.
5. Anthony T. Troncale, "Worth beyond Words: Romana Javitz and the New York Public Library's Picture Collection," The New York Public Library, <https://www.nypl.org/about/divisions/wallach-division/picture-collection/romana-javitz#16>.
6. Kamin, 34.
7. NYPL's picture collection has inspired artists from Andy Warhol to Dorothea Lange | artsy, July 13, 2018, <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-inside-little-known-image-library-inspired-artists-century>.
8. Kamin, 33.

Tour of *Puerto Rico in Print* at Poster House



Snapshots from the tour of *Puerto Rico in Print* at Poster House on March 27, 2025. Images courtesy of Jessica Cline.

Member Reports from the ARLIS/NA 53rd Annual Conference

ARLIS/NA Annual Conference Reflection

Olivia Buck, Digital Media Librarian, Juilliard School

For those who are already well established in the ARLIS/NA conference circuit, consider this a small disclaimer: my write up for this year's conference skews very early-career—it may be earnest and filled with reflections that are probably self-evident to those who have been in the field for some time. But for emerging professionals like myself, participating in one's first conference feels like an unofficial defining moment, marking a transition from student, fellow, or intern to peer, colleague, or coworker—someone beginning to take up space in the rich discursive circles of our field.

This year's Annual Conference offered a generous and accessible entry point into that field. The virtual format played a huge role in reducing some of the traditional barriers that contribute to making conferences feel intimidating or out of reach for many—*especially* the financial ones. With so many of our art and academic institutions facing slashed budgets for professional development (not to mention larger structural threats), ARLIS/NA's commitment to a digital model this year felt pragmatic and principled—an act of inclusivity over convention.

Beyond this access, the digital space enabled a disciplinary and spatial fluidity that is enormously difficult to achieve to the same extent in-person. Attendees explored inner workings of art libraries from all over the world (Montreal, Los Angeles, Fiesole, Providence, etc.) through virtual tours and discussions. Panels brought together professionals from geographically disparate places, covering topics ranging from instruction and collection development to digital publishing, accessibility, and innovations in data management. This thoughtful curation gave form to the conference's theme of building inclusive community, transforming what might otherwise feel like a series of Zoom sessions into something more deeply connected.

Hopefully, no matter the career stage or level of past participation, the novelty of ARLIS/NA's first virtual conference offered a type of renewal—a lens through which to engage with the field and reconnect with peers across distances in ways that may have felt unexpected or new. In that sense, this year's conference didn't just remove barriers for first-time participants or early career professionals—it widened the frame for everyone.

"Leading from Where You Are: Mid-Career Perspectives on Leadership Across Academic Arts Librarianship"

Lauren Gavin, Art & Architecture Subject Librarian, The New School

I had the privilege of co-moderating the panel "Leading from Where You Are: Mid-Career Perspectives on Leadership Across Academic Arts Librarianship" with Heather Koopmans at the ARLIS/NA Annual Conference. The panel was a collaboration between the ARLIS/NA Academic Library Division and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Arts section. Leah Sherman, Michelle Demeter, and Stephanie Jacobs also contributed to shaping and organizing the panel. Our superb panelists were Sarah Ward (CUNY Hunter College), Maggie Murphy (UNC Greensboro), Courtney Stine (University of Louisville) and Jamie Vander Broek (University of Michigan). The session asked speakers to address questions and provide individual strategies, challenges, and opportunities faced in mid-career leadership roles.

The first question posed to the panelists was “In your opinion or experience, what is the difference between being a leader and not just an employee or manager?” All the panelists shared that leadership is not defined by titles, organizational charts, or hierarchy. Rather, they defined leadership as the ability to model values, build relationships, create space for others, and influence stakeholders, whereas being a manager or employee was defined by administrative duties and delegating tasks. Some of the leadership qualities mentioned were facilitating conversations, providing constructive feedback, respecting input, giving credit to others, taking accountability, and leveraging privilege. Panelists also shared their own pathways to leadership and finding their leadership style.

Panelists were then asked, “How can informal leadership approaches foster and/or embed equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism in the workplace or profession?” Panelists shared that equity work can thrive in informal leadership positions because it can create space to question norms and build new structures. Approaches mentioned were creating mentoring relationships, revising information literacy curriculum, Wikipedia editing, and expanding access to alternative publishing. Lastly, the panelists were asked “How can arts librarians hone their leadership skills and approaches?” Many of the speakers suggested traditional pathways to leadership like mentorship, getting involved in organizations through leadership roles or participation, and taking advantage of training programs. Other approaches mentioned were embracing curiosity, being reflective, and finding leadership through creative problem solving. The session concluded with a vibrant Q&A from the audience.

“Art & Design School Landscape & The Role of the Library”

Caitlin Kilgallen, Director, School of Visual Arts Library

The Art & Design School Library Division is one of four Divisions within ARLIS/NA. Its purpose is to support library staff working at institutions that train and educate artists and designers. I am the co-moderator for the Division along with Rick Seiber of Moore College of Art & Design. In the fall of 2024, Rick and I submitted a proposal for a Roundtable Discussion at the 2025 ARLIS/NA Annual Conference. The idea for the roundtable came from a series of informal topic-based discussions. Those meetings offered a place to come together and discuss issues and challenges and seek support and feedback from fellow art and design school members. A roundtable seemed like a way for us to take the success of those meetings to a bigger platform.

We called our Roundtable Discussion “Art & Design School Landscape & The Role of the Library.” Our goal was to explore the future of art and design schools, with a specific focus on the vital role that libraries play in demonstrating the value of an arts education. We wanted participants to engage in conversations around several key themes: showcasing the intrinsic value of art and design programs, building strategies for leading library teams during challenging times, and supporting and maintaining staff morale and engagement. We hoped to aid attendees in developing narratives that articulate the library's contributions to student success and institutional value, ultimately reinforcing the significance of library services in the broader context of art and design education. Furthermore, we wished to establish an environment where community and support are emphasized and attendees could openly and effectively share struggles and successes. Once the proposal was accepted, we were excited and nervous. We went from “Yay” to “Wait, what have we done?” It can feel like a battle just to keep up with the everyday workload and the increasing demands on librarians. Not to mention we certainly aren’t experts. There was definitely some imposter syndrome happening! But we forged ahead. We created a poll to gauge interest in various topics that we deployed during the annual meeting for the division. We decided to combine some of the related topics in order to manage breakout rooms and report back within the hour time frame. The topics were:

1. Supporting DEI
2. Telling a story of value/Demonstrating value of A&D schools
3. Staff morale & self-care

Our biggest fears were: “What if no one shows up?” “What if no one talks?” Those anxieties drove us to create an elaborate document of prompts, subtopics, and personal anecdotes to fill in the anticipated awkward silences. All our concerns were for naught. There was a robust turnout. The discussions flowed and were lively. Rick and I managed the breakout rooms and other Zoom logistics confidently. I hope we were able to foster camaraderie, support and connections. Library workers are an incredibly generous and supportive community!

I want to encourage everyone to get involved. No matter what point you are in your career. No matter if you think you don’t have time. No matter if you feel you aren’t knowledgeable or experienced enough. Push yourself out of your comfort zone and get involved. You will be greatly rewarded!

“Beauty, But Not Everyone Sees It: The Problem of Hidden Archives of Women Artists”

Linda L. Smith, Moving Image Archiving and Preservation Graduate Student, New York University

While creating my poster “Beauty, But Not Everyone Sees It: The Problem of Hidden Archives of Women Artists,” I wanted to show how two women, whose archival collections I had worked on, were overshadowed in the historical record. Instead, I discovered that they talked about their success and achievements happily, without comparing themselves to even the closest people in their lives.

The first archival collection I worked on in the fall of 2023 was a photographic collection from Vava Sarkis Khatchaturian, a painter whose husband (Sarkis Khatchaturian) was also a painter. While processing the collection and gathering initial information, I discovered that Sarkis was much more recognized than his wife, chiefly because of his restoration of ancient temple frescoes in India. Vava does not even have her own Wikipedia page and she is mentioned on Sarkis’s page only by her maiden name (Vardanoush Sarian), which I rarely saw anywhere else. Fast forward to the spring of 2025, when I completed an internship at the Shigeko Kubota Video



*Vava and Sarkis Khatchaturian,
New York, 1946*

Left: Nam June Paik and Shigeko Kubota in their Westbeth studio, 1974. Photo by Tom Haar.

Right: Vava and Sarkis Khatchaturian in New York, 1946. Image courtesy of the Krikor and Clara Zohrab Information Center, c/o the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America (Eastern), New York, NY.

Art Foundation. Again, throughout my research and even within the collections of her art, I saw Shigeko consistently overshadowed by her husband Nam June Paik, the even more well-known video artist. She is not mentioned on the Smithsonian American Art Museum's finding aid for the Nam June Paik Archive Collection, neither as a collaborator nor as his wife.

Incensed by these shortcomings in the online record, I proposed this poster. Yet, I found myself having a hard time reaching a conclusion. While researching these women, I would only get so far before hitting a wall. With a deadline looming, I ultimately decided to delve back into the archival record for both women, where I discovered that they both saw their lives through a different lens than I had, not through omission to the art historical record, but rather through one of success and, even joy. In an oral history interview she did with Columbia University Libraries' Armenian Oral History Archive, Vava noted that she and Sarkis had a happy life together, surrounded constantly by friends and fellow artists. She also described herself several times as successful, noting that she was able to exhibit her paintings across the globe in over thirty exhibitions. While she and Sarkis never had children, she referred to their works as their children and said that that was better, since the paintings had the chance to live forever. Similarly, Shigeko noted that she felt her opportunities as a female artist improved greatly when she moved from Japan to America and noted that when she saw what Nam June was doing with video art, her first thought was, "Well, I can do that, too." Shigeko's craft also took her around the world and allowed her to capture diverse locales and opinions, in a style that combines documentation and artistry.

This discovery helped me see that both perspectives are "right": these women were prolific and deserve as much recognition as their husbands, *and* they lived lives full of creativity, love, and adventure that they could look back on fondly. This project was a reminder to check biases and look for the multiple angles to the story that the record tells. Through that, more of us will be able to see more inherent beauty within archives.

"Collecting Without a Center: Archiving the Afghan Diaspora"

Sophia Tarin, Evening West Side Librarian, School of Visual Arts Library

During the Annual Conference's "New Voices in the Profession" session, I discussed my work with the Afghan Visual Arts and History (AVAH) Collective, an independent, international curatorial initiative that explores the intersection of art, history, and visual culture in the region of present-day Afghanistan. Through film series, talks, workshops, publications, and social media outreach, AVAH documents Afghan artistic and cultural production across time and geography. I've been involved in creating opportunities for community exploration, developing a participatory archive, and contributing to our forthcoming book on collecting.

In March, I hosted my first AVAH event at the New York Public Library (NYPL), a project brought to life with the help of the wonderful Hiba Abid, the library's Curator for Middle Eastern and Islamic Collections. Our attendees—AVAH members and Afghan-American artists based in New York City—dove into Afghan periodicals, prints, and books, with a special focus on the 1960s issues of *Zhvandūn* magazine.

I actually stumbled upon *Zhvandūn* while working as a Research Associate at NYPL's Gregorian Center and, ever since, I have been slowly pouring over those 1960s issues from the ReCAP Shared Collection (held by Princeton). These issues are particularly valuable for two reasons: their photographs and documentation of 1960s Kabul culture and their accessibility. To my knowledge, the library's shared collection provides the sole publicly accessible, nearly complete run of the magazine's 1960s issues, making it a unique and vital resource for scholars

of Central Asia and members of the Afghan community. While the Afghanistan Center at Kabul University (ACKU) provides some digitized 1960s issues and the Library of Congress has digitized its 1970s holdings, the true treasure for scholars and historians lies in the pre-1970s period, a pivotal time when Afghanistan was actively constructing its national identity. My fascination with this topic developed after taking Professor Cristina Pattuali's Artist Archives': Rome/New York course at Pratt Institute, which whisked us away to Rome for a week of archival site visits. The Museu Arquivo de Fotografia Histórica's work in documenting photography's role in Italy's nation-building resonated deeply. After that course, I attended a 10x10 Photobooks discussion, "From Magazine to Japanese Photobook," where Ivan Vartanian and Maggie Mustard explored the pivotal role of Japanese photography magazines in the country's early history. It struck me then that Afghanistan's narrative, mirroring Japan and Italy in the late 19th and early 20th century, awaits a similar, in-depth examination.

The magazine proved to be a goldmine for our attendees, who eagerly sat and transcribed its articles out loud for everyone. Hiba Abid suggested incorporating the NYPL Picture Collection folders on Afghanistan as a complement to the magazine volumes and it significantly enriched the experience. My aim was to not just display materials, but also to build awareness of these collections and empower attendees to access these resources for their own research. Hiba discussed available fellowships, and every attendee left with a comprehensive folder for starting research at NYPL, containing a list of all viewed items (with call numbers and barcodes), pamphlets on the Picture Collection and Gregorian Study Rooms, fellowship information, and, of course, an NYPL pencil!

At the session, I mentioned other ongoing projects from the Collective including a film program with Cinelogue and expressed my strong interest in collaborating with institutions holding materials from Central Asia or Afghanistan. Having taught creative writing as an Adjunct, I'd love to co-teach workshops or help organize public programming around these collections. I highly valued the opportunity to discuss these ideas at the conference and found the post-talk questions and comments particularly helpful. ♡



Top: Attendees reviewing visual materials from the Picture Collection's folders on Afghanistan.

Bottom: Sophia explaining the information contained within the attendee folders. Images courtesy of Sophia Train.

Celine Palatsky Travel Award Recipient

Lorenzo De Los Angeles, Reference Assistant, Frick Art Research Library

I am very grateful to have received the Celine Palatsky Travel Award this year to attend the ARLIS/NA 53rd Annual Conference! The conference's theme, *Together: Activating Community*, resonated deeply with me in relation to how our current divisive political environment is posing challenges to the welfare of libraries and library workers. I felt a strong sense that the speakers and the attendees appreciated having a forum to share these concerns in a direct and constructive manner. For example, in *Diverse Collections, Inclusive Futures: Transforming Library and Archival Practices*, Pamela Caussy led a presentation titled "DIY DEI: How Small Steps Can Lead to Big Changes" in which she discussed how diversity, equity, and inclusion can play a role in highlighting historical biases and preserving historical information in library collections. Similarly, the opening keynote by Tia Blassingame addressed how the personal notions of race have deeply informed her work as an accomplished artist, curator, printmaker, and educator.



Another recurring conference subject that I found fascinating was the presence and role of artificial intelligence and how it has infiltrated information literacy, critical thinking, and learning. The ARLIS/NA Diversity & Inclusion Committee moderated a talk with Dr. Alex Hanna titled "The AI Con: How to Fight Big Tech's Hype and Create the Future We Want." There was an enthusiastic response during the Q&A and in the Zoom chat that illustrated how much uncertainty and difference in opinion there is over this constantly evolving interdisciplinary system.

While I did miss the opportunity to meet and socialize with colleagues directly, I appreciated that the organizers thoughtfully explored an all-virtual format this year in order to make the conference more accessible to those with financial constraints and those who are unable to travel. Due to the virtual nature of the conference, I was able to attend more sessions than I would have in person, which felt like a success!

Each of the sixteen sessions I attended were interesting and unique in various ways. For example, The Longstitch Book Workshop was my first serious foray into bookmaking, and I was pleased with the results. The tour of Casalini Libri located in Tuscany, Italy provided insight into the daily operations of a major supplier of materials for art libraries. Library Collections and the Spaces They Inhabit featured lightning talks that covered a variety of topics that I have explored recently, from off-site storage solutions to resources for disaster planning and response.

I also came away from the conference with a wealth of information in the form of links to resources. I have continued to process what I learned at the conference through my professional and artistic career, feeling motivated and inspired knowing that we are all in this together, in an active and vibrant community. Thanks again to the New York Chapter and especially to the Celine Palatsky Travel Award Committee (Jessica Cline, Ann Bell, and Flannery Cusick) for granting me this opportunity! ♡

Post-Conference Pizza Party & Spring Meeting



On May 20, 2025, members gathered at Vig Bar to toast their accomplishments at the ARLIS/NA Annual Conference! Because the conference was held virtually this year, our parent organization generously funded this gathering to ensure our community could still connect in-person. Images courtesy of Rachel Garbade.

Report of the Re-Imagining Cryptography and Privacy (ReCAP) Workshop at City College

Sal Tuszynski, Access Services Clerk, Pratt Institute

On June 3rd and 4th, I attended the Re-Imagining Cryptography and Privacy (ReCAP) Workshop at City College. This workshop was open to social scientists, humanities scholars, community organizations, and technologists. The free registration and breakfast brought in an expansive range of attendees across a variety of backgrounds and professions. The focus of this year's ReCAP Workshop was Re-Imagination: identifying the aspects of cryptography and privacy technology production that contribute to marginalization, and solidifying approaches, ideas, and designs that center marginalized voices, resist toxic aspects of technology production and work toward dismantling systems of marginalization. The thirteen presentations across the two-day workshop were split into three categories: Privacy and Systems of Power, Privacy Applications & Infrastructure, and Community Voices. There was also space for more informal discussions in an open session titled Open Problems & Emerging Work.

One session that was particularly engaging was titled, “Between Safety and Surveillance: Third-Party Device Monitoring and Student Privacy,” given by Sam Hafferty and Nitya Nadgir, Emerging Scholar research fellows at Princeton’s Center for Information Technology Policy. This session addressed the rise of third-party software companies that monitor student activity online. These companies’ tools offer insight into student activity on school-issued devices, raising both praise for safety benefits and concerns over privacy, censorship, and equity. The talk walked through a technical analysis of the information flows of two products: Bark for Schools and LanSchool Air. On a Chromebook managed via Google Workspace, the researchers simulated student behavior and tracked network activity. They then analyzed how these tools collect, share, and present student data, and explained how the interfaces offer access and control to teachers. I was particularly taken by the class aspect of their talk. The researchers noted that while some wealthier students tend to have access to the internet outside of school devices, many students rely on their school devices, which are installed with the third-party monitoring software, for all internet activity. This creates a disparate rate of surveillance and teaches young people they must resign to having all of their online activity surveilled. They closed the talk by discussing how they want to support school leaders with tools to vet their third-party educational technology vendors and work with families to understand how these products work.

Another session that I found interesting was titled, “No One Marches Randomly: A Holistic Rebuild of Protest Mobility Models During Internet Shutdowns,” given by Cora Rowena Ruiz, a Ph.D. student in Electrical Engineering at CUNY. This talk examined the dynamics of internet shutdowns, such as where and how shutdowns occur and their impact on communities. I learned that while sometimes they are due to extreme weather events, many internet shutdowns are deliberate acts to control information and quell dissent. In total, there were 296 recorded shutdowns in 54 countries in 2024, and seven of those countries had never implemented shutdowns before. The researcher then introduced the concept of mesh messaging, which uses Wi-Fi or Bluetooth to allow people to communicate despite an internet shutdown. She went on to discuss why currently available mesh messaging applications fall short. She showed that these underperforming mesh networks are often evaluated in simulators, which give a false sense of functionality because they do not accurately represent how protesters move—often ignoring social, physical, and geospatial factors. To combat this, the researcher shared her approach to developing mesh technology grounded in crowd science and firsthand documentation. She is interviewing civilian demonstrators, journalists, and organizers to see what they want and need in a mesh network. I found this work to be incredibly important given the rise in both naturally occurring and controlled internet shutdowns and I believe more effective mesh technologies could have relevance in both crisis and everyday situations given the centrality of the internet to just about every facet of daily life.

The topics of privacy and surveillance are very relevant to libraries and library workers today. At my place of work, Pratt Institute Library, my coworker Harsh Taggar has spearheaded a data retention project to more regularly delete emails with sensitive patron information. This effort reflects what I learned from multiple sessions at the conference: user protocols should be the most important part of a privacy plan. While some platforms offer privacy, it is better to secure information with safe plans and practices and not simply rely on the security touted by the platform. Furthermore, academic libraries, in particular, have strong ties to database companies in order to provide researchers access to information. As Sarah Lamdan discusses in her book *Data Cartels: The Companies That Control and Monopolize Our Information*, these database companies mine, commodify, and sell data and informational resources, which perpetuates social inequalities and threatens the democratic sharing of knowledge. It would be pertinent for staff at academic libraries to examine their data retention policies and general privacy protocols to minimize database companies surveilling and profiting from faculty and student research. This workshop provided me with tools to engage with patron privacy within an academic library environment and piqued my interest to conduct further research on database companies and their surveillance work with the US government. ♡

Visit to Andrew French's Studio

Kait Astrella, Levy Fellow in Manuscript Cataloging, The Morgan Library & Museum



Snapshots from the visit to Andrew French's studio. Images courtesy of Ann Bell and Joey Vincennie.

To walk around New York is to wonder what is going on through every window. June's Friday the 13th was a lucky one for New York Chapter members, because we found ourselves on the other side of a remarkable window – the defining feature of Andrew French's northlight photography studio off Union Square West. French arranged stools for us, salon-style, in the center of the space, facing his floor-to-ceiling bookshelves. Light poured from the slanted panes. Later, French showed us a chocolate-colored Polaroid of his original skyline view, before luxury apartments obscured the Empire State Building. The light from these windows is a necessary material condition for shooting, so much so that French looked into compensation from the city in case recently installed scaffolding would have obstructed the window. Thankfully, there was still light enough.

French set up his desktop to present a slideshow about his life and work. He was extremely warm and enthusiastic about having librarians in his space, because he first became interested in photography as a kid in the stacks in Rockford, Illinois. His slides began with Dewey number 779, his happy place at the library. After graduating from Eastern Illinois University with a degree in special education, French came to New York in 1981 with a duffel, camera bag, and banjo. Initially he wanted to do theater, but after working as an assistant in commercial photography in Rockford, he knew he could find similar work here.

French called photographers whose work he admired and asked if they needed assistants. When Ruth Orkin picked up the phone, she replied, "I don't use assistants." But French got her attention when he complimented the soundtrack of *The Little Fugitive*, a film she made with her husband, Morris Engel. After attending a lecture she gave, he offered to make her lunch a couple of days per week if he could also work with her. Shortly after, he shot a picture of her on a bicycle for a *Harper's Bazaar* profile.

French went on to assist more than 70 photographers, including Mary Ellen Mark and Ilse Bing. His time in the industry shooting portraits and lifestyle traces the history of photography, art, and media in New York from the 1980s onward. When French first began working, he met Alex Liberman, artist and editorial director of *Condé Nast*. Liberman looked at his photographs and said "room for growth." This conditional appraisal still got French promotional work at *House & Garden*.

During our studio visit, he showed us work: a series of designers with their dogs for *Vogue*; an assignment (a ridiculous one, he felt) to shoot “the most beautiful women” in Cuba, for which he shot ordinary people; a portrait of Dexter Scott King and Martin Luther Scott King III for *Esquire* in which the chiaroscuro makes their lineage apparent. He often pointed to the gray wall behind us, to indicate when an image was lit by daylight and had been shot there. He described his affinity for these warm and rich 8” x 10” chocolate-colored Polaroids. Every image was a story.

After the slideshow, French spontaneously pulled favorite books and passed them around. The books ranged from instructional – *The Art and Technique of Color Photography*, with technical notes at the back – to a small monograph about the legendary photo agency *Magnum Photos, 60 Years*, which cheekily contains no photos at all. Among his favorite places to look for books are [Dashwood](#), the online shop [Josef Chladek](#), and [High Valley Books](#), an apartment in Greenpoint that takes shoppers by appointment. Prompted by a book about the film *White Mane*, he recommended the sites [Art of the Title](#) to watch opening credit sequences and [FilmGrab](#) to browse stills. During the question-and-answer session, a member asked for general photography book recommendations and French suggested *On Photographs* by David Company, *Mirror and Windows* by John Szarkowski, and *The Family of Man* by Edward Steichen and Carl Sandburg.

A member also asked if French had been approached by a museum or archive interested in acquiring his papers or collection, to which he answered, “So far, not yet.” But French is working and teaching a new generation of photographers at the International Center of Photography and New York University. They frequently visit NYPL’s Picture Collection for inspiration. French asks his students to learn by being out in the world and doing, just as he did at the start of his career. At the end of our salon, French fixed his iPhone to a tripod and set a timer so that he could join us for a photograph. We arranged ourselves for the portrait next to the now familiar, bright window behind us. ☺



Snapshots from the visit to Andrew French’s studio. Images courtesy of Andrew French and Joey Vincennie.

Note from the News Editor

Rachel Garbade, Assistant Archivist, The Museum of Modern Art

Thank for reading the Summer 2025 issue of *ARLIS/NA New York News* cover to cover, so to speak! As some of you may know, the News Editor position is typically slated for two years. In theory, I could have cycled off at the end of 2024. But, I found myself pulled to give it another year. It is such a joy meeting members, working with them on edits, encouraging students to send in submissions, and more. This issue, I also had extra help from Linda Smith, who graciously volunteered to lend a hand with editing! I find these moments of connection with our contributors – of all ages and professions – to be quite gratifying. So, here I am, clocking in for a third year on the job and at the end, now, of the fifth issue I've edited. I hope you all enjoy these fruitful pages!

As always, this issue highlights Chapter events and conference reports. Our Programming Coordinator (Joey Vincennie) and Programming Committee (Alex Austin, Jessica Cline, Hannah Fountain-Pileggi, Rachel Garbade, Bridget O'Keeffe, and Sherri Machlin) pulled off a packed start to the year. Together, we organized tours of NYPL's Picture Collection, Hunter College's Zabar Art Library, the Whitney Museum of American Art's Library, an exhibition at Poster House, a studio visit with Andrew French, and a pizza party! Along the way, our parent organization, ARLIS/NA, hosted their Annual Conference virtually; on these pages, you'll find synopses and reflections from attendees, panel participants, and one poster contributor. And, lastly, I'm pleased to share a thoughtful report from City College's ReCAP Workshop. It's a packed issue!

I am wishing you all a happy and safe summer! If you have an idea for a future submission, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at rachel.garbade@gmail.com. Thank you so much! 💜

The New York Chapter of the Art Libraries Society of North America, an organization that fosters excellence in art librarianship and the visual arts, meets several times a year either virtually or in-person for professional development opportunities, networking, or tours of the various relevant institutions in the New York City metropolitan area.

Chapter programs are great opportunities to meet fellow art library and visual art information colleagues from the area. Members typically include but are not limited to art librarians and visual resource curators, both active and retired, from academic, museum, public, and other special libraries, as well as specialized book dealers and graduate students in library and information science from the New York City area.

To learn more, become a member, or donate to the New York Chapter, please visit our website at arlisny.org, reach out to us at info@arlisny.org, or follow us on Instagram.



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