

ARLIS/NA

ART LIBRARIES SOCIETY of NORTH AMERICA

2015: 43rd Annual Conference
Fort Worth, Texas | March 19–23, 2015

Public Librarians SIG Meeting

March 21, 2015

Submitted by Dayna Holz, Coordinator

Introductions

The meeting was led by SIG coordinator Dayna Holz, City College of San Francisco. In attendance were: Cathy Billings, Brand Library & Art Center (Glendale, CA); Sarah Burris, Bay County (FL) Public Library; Caley Cannon, Brand Library & Art Center (Glendale, CA); Suzy Frechette, St. Louis Public Library; Heather Lowe, Dallas Public Library; Billy Parrott, New York Public Library; and Jessica Pigza, New York Public Library.

Round Robin Updates

- Pam Eyerdam, Cleveland Public Library, sent announcements in absentia: Cleveland Public Library just opened its new Cleveland Digital Public Library center adjacent to the Fine Arts Department.
<http://www.cpl.org/TheLibrary/ClevelandDigitalPublicLibrary.aspx> The center will provide public access to state of the art digital equipment, the Preservation Department and an open classroom. Cleveland PL will also be one of 5 libraries to host the viewing of the Shakespeare's First Folio in 2016.
<http://www.craiscleveland.com/article/20150226/BLOGS03/150229867/folger-shakespeare-library-traveling-tour-of-first-folios-to-visit>
- Heather Holm, Dallas Public Library, announced that they have been expanding staff in the Fine Arts Department after major staffing cuts from 2008. She also described several innovative programs at the library designed to engage homeless patrons, including music and photography workshops.
- Cathy Billings, Brand Library & Art Center, announced that since reopening in 2014 after major renovations, staff spend about 70% of their time on programming. This year, they hope to spend more time on outreach to users in an effort to get circulation up to pre-renovation levels. While programming brings in many new users, some patrons have not returned and need to be reminded that the library is back in business.
- Jessica Pigza, New York Public Library Special Collections, is exploring new ways to do outreach to artists and designers (and student and faculty) to expand use of special collections for art and inspiration. She has been connecting with typography students, showing off some of the rare and historical resources available at the library. Jessica is also the author of *BiblioCraft: A Moderns Crafter's Guide to Using*

Library Resources to Jumpstart Creative Projects (Abrams/STC Craft/Melanie Falick Books, 2014) and hosts a series called Handmade Crafternoons at the library.

- Sarah Burris, Bay County Public Library, has been working on outreach to art patrons to build the circulation of art resources at a public library that doesn't have a dedicated art department. An increase in use will (hopefully) justify building the collections. Sarah is looking to expand art-related programming at the library; group members suggested looking at the Library as Incubator project and the Book to Art Club for inspiration and ideas.
- Billy Parrott, New York Public Library Art & Picture Collections, briefly described his collecting scope at the Mid-Manhattan branch, noting that they select art materials used by all 88 branches of the library. In 2017, the Mid-Manhattan library building will undergo major renovations. It's anticipated that the Picture and Art Collections will move to the Schwartzman Building (Research Library), where they began, to create a Visual Arts Center. 2015 marks the hundredth anniversary of the Picture Collection, and the Picture Collection Centennial exhibition is set to open in November.
- Suzy Frechette, St. Louis Public Library, reported on Fine Arts Room activities since its post-renovation reopening in 2012. The performing arts collections were moved to a separate department during renovations and now they concentrate on fine arts exclusively. Suzy noted that like the situation Cathy described at the Brand Library, circulation has not returned to pre-renovation levels and the librarians are under pressure to do more programming and increase use.
- Dayna Holz, City College of San Francisco, announced that she is no longer working at the Berkeley Public Library but will gladly continue as Coordinator of the SIG.

SIG Outreach and Communication

From last year's SIG meeting enthusiasm to develop and endorse a conference session, Dayna and Billy spoke on a panel to make ARLIS/NA members more aware of the work public librarians do in the art library field: "Library Services for Working Artists: Beyond Research to the New Frontier of Practice." The session, which took place the previous day at the conference, was well-attended and well-received.

The work to engage more public librarians through ARLIS/NA is ongoing and the group discussed outreach options and ways to use the SIG listserv to generate conversation and share information. Cathy suggested that SIG members use the listserv to send updates of what's going on at their libraries, perhaps with an organized mid-year Round Robin exchange. Sharing announcements and updates can be a vehicle for giving colleagues ideas for programs and initiatives to implement at their own libraries.

Acknowledging that there are more art librarians in public libraries than there are Public Librarian SIG members, the group decided to concentrate efforts over the next couple of years to seek out these librarians, make them aware of ARLIS/NA and the Public Librarians SIG, and create a list of institutional contacts for public libraries with significant art book collections. Heather volunteered to lead the effort and was dubbed the "Outreach Officer."