

ARLIS/New York News

The Newsletter of the Art Libraries Society of North America/New York Metro Chapter

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Fall 2003

From the Chair

By Deborah Kempe



It's difficult to believe that the sticky, soggy summer of 2003 is long past, with the heat a distant memory -- along with the swimming, picnicking and the wearing of linen (at least for the sartorially and temperature-sensitive among us).

The highlight of my summer was travel to the fascinating city of Berlin to attend my first ever IFLA (International Federation of

Library Associations and Institutions) conference. Attending a conference with participants from 133 countries opened my eyes, ears, and mind. It was a refreshing perspective and I recommend that you attend this conference at some point in your life if you can swing it. Next year's conference will take place in Buenos Aires, followed by Oslo in 2005, where ARLIS/Norden will no doubt play a part. The two days of meetings planned by the Arts Section, along with tours of libraries and cultural institutions in Berlin, were stimulating and productive. Although cultural and economic differences remain, technology is easing communication and cooperation among libraries. It was exciting for me to meet international colleagues from libraries with important collections of auction catalogs, one of the topics of the second day's meeting. And Berlin is really the

place to see important modern architecture and urban planning on a grand scale. Not to mention Old Masters ... and Egyptian art ... and Greek reliefs... and notable Picassos

But back to New York, our own pretty fabulous city, with some pretty fabulous art of its own. We can look forward to seeing the latest exhibitions at the Fashion Institute of Technology at the Fall meeting on November 5. N.J. Wolfe and Greta Earnest and their staff at FIT will be our hosts; I am grateful for the opportunity to meet in such grand spaces.

The Board that never sleeps (your chapter's, of course) met in July to keep ARLIS/NY's house in order and to continue with ongoing events planning. I'm happy to report that our finances are sound, our membership higher than ever (181 and growing), and our list of future events is shaping up nicely. Soon the chapter will have an official letterhead and an updated web presence. Several chapter board members are serving on the planning committee for the 2004 ARLIS/NA conference in our home town. The program was firmed up over the summer and promises to be really solid and exciting. Stay tuned for forthcoming announcements of some of the expected highlights. Finally, elections for vacancies on the chapter board will take place this fall. I thank all candidates who have agreed to run and encourage those of you who may be interested in running for a future position to get in contact with any board member. Above all, stay an active member by attending our events. I hope to see you at one soon.

Inside: Trips to NY Botanical Garden and Dia:Beacon; Morgan Library renovation update; and more!

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Contributors

Sherman Clarke, Heidi Hass, Val Hoyt, Debbie Kempe, Suz Massen, James Mitchell, Jenny Tobias.

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Send renewals, changes of address, and contributions to Heather Topcik,

Membership Coordinator, ARLIS/NY, Bard Graduate Center, 38 West 86 St, New York, NY 10024.

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Advertising Manager: Faith Pleasanton, faith.pleasanton@metmuseum.org, 212-650-2857.

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ARLIS/NY Fall Meeting

WHEN: Wednesday, November 5, from 4:00–7:30

WHERE: Fashion Institute of Technology, 7th Avenue at 27th Street

TOUR 4:00–5:15. The event will begin with a tour by Valerie Steele, Director of the FIT Museum, of the two current exhibitions:

“Seventh Avenue: Fashion Walk of Fame” and “Dressed for Thrills: Halloween and Masquerade Costumes with Photographs by Phyllis Galembó.”

Meet for the museum tour at 4:00 in the lobby of the “E” Building of FIT, located on the southwest corner of Seventh Avenue at 27th Street; there will be a name badge at the security desk waiting for those who have registered.

MEETING 5:30–6:30. The fall meeting is the official business meeting of the chapter. At this meeting, you will receive reports on finances, membership, and future events, and the slate of candidates for election to board positions in 2004 will be announced. There will be an opportunity to nominate candidates at the meeting as well. This will also be an opportunity for those involved in planning the ARLIS/NA conference in 2004 to give you a preview of what promises to be an exciting and information-rich meeting. The Business Meeting will take place on the 8th floor of FIT’s David Dubinsky Student Center, the “A” Building on the northeast corner of Eighth Avenue at 27th Street. Those on the tour will be walked over to the “A” Building. If you are going directly to the Business Meeting, there will be a name badge at the security desk waiting for you.

RECEPTION 6:30–7:30. Following the meeting will be a modest reception and social hour allowing you to catch up with your colleagues.

PLEASE RSVP TO GRETA EARNEST BY MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3.

(email preferred) Please indicate whether you will be attending the museum tour and/or the business meeting.

Greta Earnest

Greta_earnest@fitnyc.edu

Assistant Director, Gladys Marcus Library

Fashion Institute of Technology, Seventh Ave. at 27th Street

Phone: (212) 217-5366

Electronic Resources Discussion Group

The Fall meeting of the Electronic Resources Discussion Group will be held Friday, November 14, at the Frick Art Reference Library (10 East 71st St.), from 3–5 pm. The topic this time will be “Periodical Index, Abstract, and Full-Text Databases.” Recommended advance reading is “The Artful Searcher,” by Gail Golderman and Bruce Connolly, *Library Journal* (Spring 2003), p. 34–39.

Light refreshments will be served. RSVP to Suz Massen (massen@frick.org; 212.547.0661) by November 7, 2003. Space is limited.

Symposium in Honor of Angela Giral

Documenting Architecture in the 21st Century: A Symposium To Honor Angela Giral on Her Retirement as Director of the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library.

Saturday, November 22, 2003. Avery Hall, Columbia University.

9:00 AM – 5:30 PM, followed by reception.

Speakers will include Hilary Ballon, Kenneth Frampton, Kevin Lippert, Reinhold Martin, Mary McLeod, Robert A.M. Stern, Anthony Vidler, and Wim de Wit.

RSVP by November 18th to mh932@columbia.edu or 212-854-4768.

Member News

On July 2nd **Heather Topcik** gave birth to her daughter, Vera Estelle Topcik. The newest honorary ARLIS member came in at 7 lbs., 14 oz.



Greta Earnest started at the Fashion Institute of Technology Library in August. She has been hired as Associate Professor in the newly formed position of Assistant Director of the Library.

Janis Ekdahl has been hired as the Interim Chief Librarian at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture. She will serve in this capacity three days per week.

Cheryl Wolf is serving as the Interim Reader Services Librarian at the Bard Graduate Center. She is working full time in this position until Heather Topcik returns from

her maternity leave in December.

Zimra Panitz started this August in her new position as Technical Services/Systems Librarian at the Visual Arts Library of the School of Visual Arts. From 2000 to 2003 Zimra was Assistant Librarian/Cataloger at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

SVA Library Director Robert Lobe happily notes also that they have recently changed their e-mail suffix for staff from adm.schoolofvisualarts.edu to sva.edu. All new e-mail addresses are listed in the chapter member directory at www.arlisny.org.

Paul Glassman, Director of the Library at the New York School of Interior Design since 1998, has been appointed Assistant Dean for Reference Services and Collection Development at Hofstra University. He will continue to teach the history of architecture at Yeshiva University and a course in art librarianship at Rutgers University.

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ARLIS/NY: Beacons of The Idea

By James Mitchell, Sherman Clarke, and Jenny Tobias.

On Saturday, September 13, approximately 50 ARLIS members and friends got up early and took Metro North to visit the area's newest major museum, Dia: Beacon. This outpost of the Dia Art Foundation opened this past Spring to house their permanent collection of works of minimalist, installation and related genres of art from the past 40 years or so. Everyone had a really great time. Even if you don't particularly care about those styles (I didn't think I did), you owe it to yourself to check out this important institution. Following are impressions and comments by three of us who went on the trip.

Michael Heizer's "North, East, South, West." Definitely the literal and conceptual anchor to the place. It was nice to get the docent tour, up close. I came back to these later and the gate was closed. Which was disappointing, but provided a different experience of their depth, since you couldn't see the bottoms.

Our guide said the pieces were planned, or at least finished, with the Dia:Beacon/Nabisco factory space in mind. Much of Heizer's work is in the works for a zillion years (especially the rocks?), so it may be that he "finished" them for the Beacon space even though the first inspiration was elsewhere.

Doesn't get much more monumental than this. Was surprised to learn that the forms are (heavy-handedly) symbolic. "The West is a trough and [] an arrow" for example. I always thought of minimal/monumental more as the thing-in-itself, freed from baggage. But hey. I'd also like to know why the bottom of the cone is flat and open. The trough/wedge/West, too. Now I wanna compare the work to the outdoor opposite he's working on out west. Video anyone?

Speaking of outdoors, I was eager to see what Robert Irwin would be up to with the landscaping. I know his work only from the Getty circle thing (and the tension between him and Richard Meier, from the video about making the Getty). With the rain that day and my unfamiliarity with Beacon it's kinda hard to tell, but at Dia Irwin seems to be much more contextual. Hard to tell what's landscaped in the first place (which is good, in my opinion). The stone grid in front is really cool. [Grasscrete] Maybe that's an off-the-shelf design but still cool. Grass grows through the grid in little tufts. Where people walk, the grass is worn down, defining the path. The other areas are transitional, both field and pavement.

In the immediately adjacent galleries, Fred Sandback's yarn pieces, all untitled (some from "Ten Vertical Constructions," though hard to say which). Were they the most minimal? (And easiest to trip over.) They seemed to do the most with the least. I mean, they evoked a physical presence with the least material means. Maybe it's just a gimmick after all?

Compared to the huge resources that went into Heizer's piece, Sandback does seem the most minimal in comparison. Less swayed by the vanity of making. I don't think a gimmick -- in fact it makes Heizer's seriousness look like the gimmick. "Loosen up," Sandback seems to say.

These, and a number of other works or similar works, had been seen at the 22nd Street facility. They were quite different there: more contained (duh?!), darker. The Beacon facility overall is quite playful, at least in the white galleries; less so in the brick-wall spaces.

Robert Smithson's "Map of Glass (Atlantis)", and mirror pieces with sand, gravel, etc. Little kids loved these. Big kids too. A lot of this stuff is pretty "fun." Pierogi 2000 in Williamsburg did his tree with mirrors in the mid-1990s; it filled the space, claustrophically. The Smithsons at Beacon seemed a little diminished by the grandness and finish of the building.

Richard Serra: Union of the Torus and the Sphere; and the four Torqued Ellipses. I loved walking quickly through these, disoriented by the shifts in space as it looms over you or falls away. A similar effect in Judd's Untitled (slant piece) of 1976: walk slowly toward what appears to be a low flat plywood wall set about 10 feet in front of the wall; as your perspective passes the top edge, revealing the slanted back side, it has the effect of running into a wall and falling off a cliff at the same time. This one worked better at Paula Cooper Gallery but is still wonderful.

Again the dialogue with enclosure is important. Compare these with the one at the NGA in Washington, which is dwarfed by its placement in a large courtyard. The late great Tilted Arc though made Federal Plaza claustrophobic in its shadow.

Gerhard Richter: Six Gray Mirrors. One of the most effective uses of an entire room. In fact, was this the only installation designed specifically for this room? Great too for reflections of the ARLIS crowd. Too bad about the no photography rule.

Our guide said they may open up more of the windows in that gallery so that specific sky patterns (clouds, for example, or flying objects) will be reflected.

Dia: Beacon, *continued*

Robert Ryman: white on white never seemed like just straight painting before. I'm sure I've seen individual examples at MoMA or wherever, where they fit into a different tradition. But here they make total sense within the Donald Judd serialist tradition. Is this whole museum telling a very specific story? Or a couple of different stories that were being developed within a certain scene and time? How specific of a story do you need to start a museum for it? (Modernism; folk art; America?)

Relatedly, how much context do you need to give such material. And isn't it fun to let it refer to all of them.

And of the Richters, seemed like his version of the Dia serial/minimal/installation idea.

Bernd and Hilla Becher: these seemed really out of place at first; actual representational art. The fact that work by the Bechers includes "real" objects is almost irrelevant. But they have a similar interest in seriality and suppression of of the expressive gesture. That's not all that they're about, but their inclusion here emphasizes certain things. So how many of these artists are being squeezed into The Idea?

Louise Bourgeois' little blobby biomorphic sculptures. I didn't like these, maybe because they didn't fit The Idea. (IDia?)

I keep wanting to call the place Be a Deacon. (Of The Idea.)

The museum occupies a former Nabisco factory, where boxes were printed; connected to their warehouses in Chelsea via rail (the High Line?), not far from Dia's main site.

A wonderful axis and "connection" to Chelsea. I found myself more interested in the structure and the transport link than the art that day. So many tantalizing hints of the structure's former life but one could only guess. [Apparently it needed to be well-lit so the box-pressers could check their work.] You can perceive the clear north-south thrust of the buildings, in triplicate halls, but how did stuff move around? I pictured flour going in one end and Oreos chugging out the other, bound for the meatpacking district. I'd commission an artist to work with the "archaeology" of the place and illuminate. Or just do a short history with plans and diagrams on the Web site.

Our docent mentioned that Judd was an early proponent of the use of former industrial spaces for the display of art, rather than architect-designed spaces which compete with the art works. Does this relate to the development of Soho as an art center? Does it relate to, or contrast with, the modernist interest in the beauty of functionalism? Discuss.

It depends ... An architect can be quiet or loud, as can an industrial building. I'm waiting for converted industrial buildings to be their own era in museum design. And then what will come next?

These notes don't do justice to how every work reminded me of others in the museum. There really is a coherent idea here, reflected in the open network grid of the facility. I kept backtracking, running back to the Judd room.

Altogether, visiting Beacon is like visiting old friends. Kitty Chibnik and I remarked about how we grew up on "this stuff."

ARLIS/NY Summer Meeting at the New York Botanical Garden

By Suz Massen

The summer meeting was held June 19 at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx. About fifty members attended the meeting, despite the damp weather. It did not stop many attendees from taking a self-guided tour of the garden grounds, which included sculptures on loan from the Museum of Modern Art and roses in their seasonal prime.

After the tour, attendees congregated in the LuEsther T. Mertz Library. John F. Reed, director of the Library, gave a talk on the institution's history. The LuEsther T. Mertz Library is one of the largest botanical and horticultural libraries in the world with a collection of over 300,000 volumes. The New York Botanical Garden staff and students as well as members of the academic community, research community, and the general public use the resources offered by the Library. The LuEsther T. Mertz Library reading room, rare book room, gallery, and entrance rotunda occupy the top floor of the Library Building, which was designed by Robert Gibson and built in 1900. These areas were renovated and opened to the public in May 2002.

Members of the Library staff lead tours of different areas of the Library. An overview of the rare books and folio room was given, which included an examination of several rare illustrated volumes. Highlights of the archives collection were shown in the reading room. Attendees also got to see the newly renovated compact shelving stack area that houses a large part of the collections. In the gallery, the exhibition "European Pleasure Gardens: Rare Books and Prints of Historic Landscape Design from the Elizabeth K. Reilly Collection" was on display, featuring that recent major donation.

Following the tours, a reception was held in the Library rotunda for John F. Reed, who retired this summer from his position as the director of the Library. Beverages and snacks were served.

ARLIS/NY would like to thank Octavo Inc. and Prestel Publishing for sponsoring the summer meeting. Octavo, a digital publishing and imaging company, also provided complimentary CD-ROM facsimiles of the book *Les Roses* by Pierre-Joseph Redouté to attendees in recognition of John F. Reed's service to the library community. A thank you is also in order for the LuEsther T. Mertz Library staff who were so kind to let ARLIS/NY use their facilities and give attendees tours of the different areas of the Library.

Morgan Library Expansion Project

By Heidi Hass

As many ARLIS/NY members know, The Pierpont Morgan Library closed to the public on May 4 of this year, to prepare for and undertake a major expansion project. The Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano has developed a comprehensive plan to expand and better integrate the campus of the Library. New facilities within the additional 75,000 square feet of space will include:

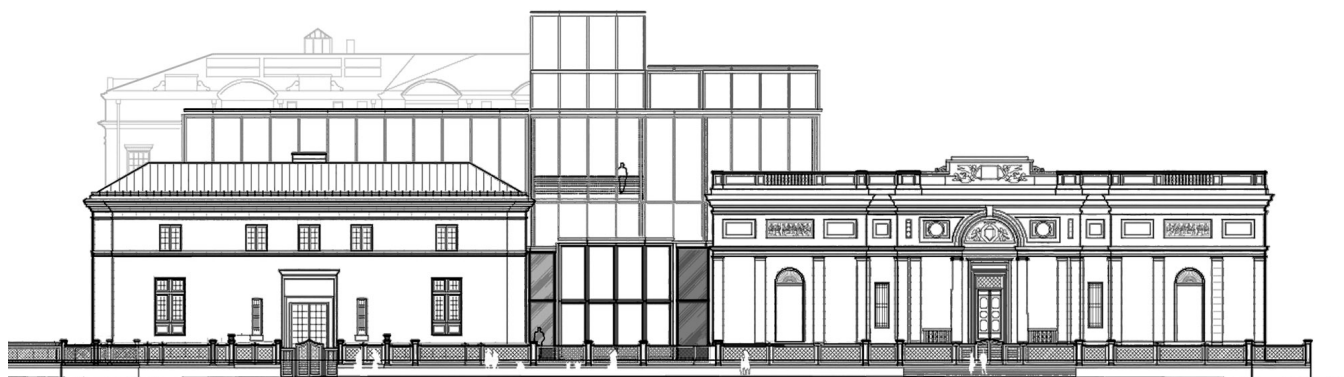
- a welcoming entrance on Madison Avenue
- a spacious central court, the heart of the public spaces
- improved internal circulation
- new and renovated galleries
- a modern performance hall
- a larger café and shop
- a new Reading Room
- much needed space for collections storage

The Library's three historic buildings are the original 1906 library designed by Charles McKim of McKim, Mead & White for Pierpont Morgan; the 1928 Library Annex, which has housed the main Exhibition Room and the Reading Room; and the nineteenth-century Morgan house, the former home of J. P. Morgan, Jr., familiar to browsers in the Library's gift shop and to members of the New York Catalogers' Discussion Group for its ornately decorated Conference Room. These structures will be joined by a new building comprising three pavilions, one each facing Madison Ave., 36th St. and 37th St. The Madison Ave. pavilion will contain the new entrance to

the Library, a new exhibition gallery, and on the top floor, a new Reading Room, with modern facilities, as well as an echo of the old Reading Room in a mezzanine gallery. Facing 36th St. will be a perfect cube, designed to showcase several of the Library's most spectacular treasures. And for 37th St., a more prosaic, but highly desirable feature — a protected loading dock — will allow the safe and convenient movement of art. Below street-level, a state-of-the-art raked auditorium will enhance the Morgan's extensive music and lecture programming. Finally, the storage for the Library's collections will be doubled in size, and completely re-vamped for efficient and appropriate housing of all of the Library's rare collections.

While the Morgan is closed, several traveling exhibitions will tour the country, including two shows centered on medieval & Renaissance manuscripts, and one of British drawings. New Yorkers can visit some old friends in their temporary digs at the Medieval Tapestry hall of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Stavelot Triptych, the Lindau Gospels, with both jeweled covers displayed, and several other treasures will remain there until the Library reopens in early 2006. Paintings on view at the Met include three Memling paintings and Perugino's *Madonna and Saints Adoring the Christ Child*, all of which were formerly hung in the West Room.

ARLIS/NY members will be glad to know that the Library has made provision for limited research on selected collection items to take place at an off-site location. This temporary Reading Room will be open in the near future; please go to the Library's web site at www.morganlibrary.org for updates.



View of the facade, facing 36th Street.

Image courtesy of The Morgan Library.

Robert Swank

ARLIS/NY notes with sadness the passing of Robert Swank, husband of Annamaria Poma-Swank, on March 14, 2003. Robert was a kind, generous, and talented person and will be missed by all who knew him. Robert was by Annamaria's side at many ARLIS events; he first met many ARLIS/NY members shortly after Annamaria began work at the Cloisters Library in 2000. The champagne we enjoyed at last winter's elegant holiday party at the Cloisters was generously provided by Robert. After moving from the Midwest in 2000, he approached New York with open arms and loved exploring all this city has to offer. Robert was a talented artist, draughtsman, and calligrapher. After retirement from his profession in design, advertising and the graphic arts, he continued to paint until the end. This spring Annamaria took his ashes to Florence, the city he loved the most, where they met and were married.

MMA Development has set up a memorial fund in the name of Robert Swank. These funds will be redirected to The Cloisters Library. Donation checks should be made payable to The Metropolitan Museum of Art and mailed to:

The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Development Office
1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10029
Attn: Corin Crucitti

(The memo portion of the check should say "in memory of Robert Swank," or the donor can include a note with this same information.)



Photo courtesy of Joy Kestenbaum.

Peter Ocker

ARLIS/NY extends its deepest condolences to the Ocker & Trapp family on the untimely death of Peter Ocker, who died on July 5th at the age of 39. Many of us know Peter as the president of Ocker & Trapp Library Bindery and the beloved son of Ralph and Christa Ocker. He was also the devoted husband of Paula and the father of Tiana, Martin, Alexandria, and Katrina.

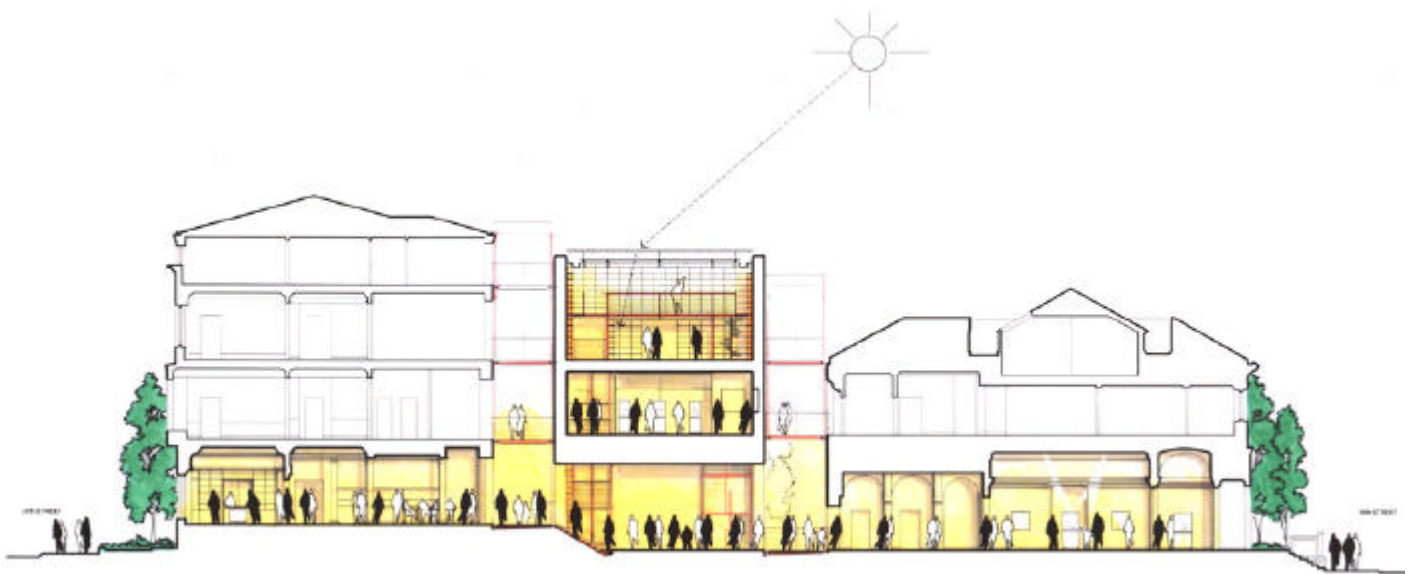
Peter was born in 1965 in Westwood, New Jersey. At the age of 15, after rising to the rank of Eagle Scout, Peter applied for vacation working papers from the Department of Education to work at the bindery on a regular basis. He attended St. Aquinas College and studied Business Administration. In 1989 he became Ocker & Trapp's plant manager. In 1990 he became a partner and in 1996 he was appointed President of the company. He was a member of the American Library Association, the Association of Graphic Communications, and a member of the Binders & Finishers section of the Library Binding Institute.

Those of us who work regularly with Ocker & Trapp and have visited their plant understand that it is a very special company, a family business dedicated to a high level of customer service. We have benefited from their infinite patience, attention to detail and love of their craft. We send our best wishes to Ralph and everyone at Ocker & Trapp during this difficult period.

Val Hoyt
Christie's Library

ARLIS/New York News
Heather Topcik, ARLIS/NY Membership Coordinator
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The Morgan Library cross-section plan of renovations, view from Madison Avenue. See article on page 6.