

THE ARLIS/New York News



Art Libraries Society of New York
a regional chapter of ARLIS/North America

Vol. 5 No.3 1982

Award Winners Cited

In what has become an eagerly-awaited annual event, ARLIS/New York members and their guests gathered at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on Tuesday evening, May 11, for the ninth annual awards presentations for New York City Gallery and Museum Exhibition Publications.

Framed calligraphic citations were presented for 1981 catalogs to:

THE CHARLES COWLES GALLERY, for "Laddie John Dill," "Nathan Oliveira," and "Manuel Neri," as examples of economical and creative design, using a small space to convey much information. Accepting were Mr. Cowles, and Karen Emberson and Mark Ratcliff, designers of the catalogs.

THE FITCH-FEBVREL GALLERY, for Erik Desmazieres: Etchings, 1972-1981, as an example of a scholarly catalog. Mr. Fitch accepted.

THE GALERIE ST. ETIENNE, for The Folk Art Tradition: Naive Painting in Europe and the United States, for its well-balanced summary. Jane Kallir, author of the catalog, accepted on behalf of the gallery.

THE HIRSCHL & ADLER GALLERIES, for America in Print, 1796-1941 and The Contemporary American Landscape, as examples of scholarly presentations with high quality design and reproductions.

THE RICHARD YORK GALLERY, for Ellen Day Hale, 1855-1940, for presentation of information in a scholarly and imaginative manner.



THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, for Arshile Gorky, 1904-1948: A Retrospective. Malcolm Greer, author of the catalog, accepted the award, saying that exhibition catalogs are still the main educational function of a museum.

THE WITKIN GALLERY, for its posters, Wright Morris and Robert Doisneau.

Annual Business.....

Mark your calendars now for the ARLIS/New York Chapter Annual Business Meeting, which will take place this year on THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16 at 6:00 p.m. in the Oak Room of the INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS, 1 East 78 Street.

After refreshments and business, there will be a tour of the new facilities of the Conservation Center. (For background reading, see Evelyn Samuel's article in the Summer 1982 issue of Art Documentation.)

 We hope to see everybody there! 

The other half of the May 11 meeting at the Metropolitan Museum was a talk on book auctions, given by the very personable Mr. George Lowry, of Swann Galleries, Inc.

Mr. Lowry introduced the subject by saying that auction houses are actually commission agents. Where do the rare books come from? The most traditional source is estates, but books also come from collectors, dealers, and from institutional consignments. When the books come in, they are cataloged by the staff of the auction house, and then offered by catalog for sale in specialized categories; such as art, architecture, magic, sporting, and "rare books." Generally, a category includes more than one collection of books.

Bidding on the books is done in person, by mail, by telephone, or through a dealer.

Auctions are governed by law, and are open to the public. Mr. Lowry stressed that one does not have to be a book collector to buy at auction.


Why should we as librarians be concerned about auctions? We support principal collections and research tools; we have to know the value of these tools and keep ourselves informed. Auctions are the only basic source of monetary information.

Another reason offered by Mr. Lowry was that we may be in the art field, but books in auction catalogs may not necessarily be categorized as "art" books. He cited an example of an 1855 Coast Guard catalog that had Whistler engravings. Books categorized by subjects totally unrelated to "art" may have enormous illustration interest for librarians. It pays to investigate!

Since nobody wants to bid in the dark, estimates are established, based on such factors as the condition of the book, its rarity, demand for it, prior sales experience; and, the most nebulous category of all, "instinct." Although care is taken in making the estimate, using American Book Prices Current as the basic tool for dollar information, mistakes can be made. Mr. Lowry cited the "two crazy people scenario," where two people will want a book so badly that they will bid the price up beyond all reasonable estimates. On a more serious note, he admitted that mistakes can be made through carelessness on the part of the auction house, and said that the informed dealer or librarian should know more than the auction house.

After this brief but informative introduction to auctions, it was time to put theory into practice. Mr. Lowry and his assistants distributed paddles and mini-catalogs, and invited us to bid against gallery estimates for five books that were coming up for sale the following week.

Although the five winning bids received unisex aprons as prizes, in a sense everyone who attended the meeting came away a winner, having learned a little more about this mysterious process of auctions. In fact, two of our members, Evelyn Samuel and Doralynn Pines, were so turned on by the experience that they decided to follow up by attending the actual auction the following week. For an account of their adventures, see their article elsewhere in this issue.

 Lorraine Weberg
Secretary, ARLIS/New York

THE ARLIS/NEW YORK NEWS

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at the galleries

MORRIS LOUIS, 1912-1962, A COMMEMORATIVE EXHIBITION. Sept. 9 - Oct. 2, 1982. Andre Emmerich Gallery. 11 il. (8 col.).

THE SCULPTURE OF PICASSO. Sept. 16 - Oct. 23, 1982. Pace Gallery. Essay by Robert Rosenblum. 72 p., 84 il. (some col.).

NEW YORK VISIONARIES: ISAAC ABRAMS...et al. May 18 - June 25, 1982. Graham Gallery. 15 p., il. (3 col.), statements by the artists.


CARVED AND MODELED: AMERICAN SCULPTURE, 1810-1940. April 20 - June 4, 1982. Hirschl & Adler Galleries. 111 p., 81 il. (some col.), extensive notes on each work.

ENGLISH WATERCOLORS. May 13 - June 4, 1982. Davis & Langdale Co. 24 p., 11 il.

AMERICAN ARTISTS ABROAD, 1900-1950. March 18, - April 24, 1982. Washburn Gallery. 12 p., 13 il.

AL HELD, PAINTINGS FROM THE YEARS 1954-1959. March 6 - April 3, 1982. Robert Miller Gallery. Essay by Irving Sandler. 16 col. pl.

BERTOLD LOFFLER (1874-1960), GRAPHICS AND DESIGNS. Jan. 6 - Feb. 5, 1982. Austrian Institute, 11 E. 52 St., NYC. 21 p., il. ("The first exhibition in the U.S. of one of the foremost representatives of Austrian design during the first quarter of our century.")

 Daniel Starr
Museum of Modern Art Library

Meeting: THE STUDIO MUSEUM

Lured by the exciting prospect of seeing the newest Museum space in New York City, ARLIS/New York members were richly rewarded on Thursday, October 14, when they met at the Studio Museum in Harlem. For most of our members getting to the Museum on 125th Street was an adventure remarkable for its convenience. The evening, which began socially over cider and cookies, included an informal but informative business meeting.

Chairperson Paula Frosch announced that a nominating committee has been appointed to select candidates for the available positions of Chairperson-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and two Members-at-Large. The committee, composed of May Castleberry, Pearl Moeller and Donya Schimansky, welcomes suggestions from the membership.

Cheryl Wachter, Dorothy Franco and Lorraine Weberg have been developing simplified indexing procedures and forms in order that the ever-expanding ARLIS Archive at FIT can be made more accessible in the near future. As reported in the last issue of the ARLIS/New York News, the ad hoc committee is eager to locate volunteers who are knowledgeable about or interested in microcomputers and/or word processors to assist in compiling the indexed information into usable form and updating it. Contact Cheryl Wachter at Time, Inc.: (212) 841-4252; or home: (212) 662-0090.

Professional Concerns Committee chair Suzanna Simor reported on the progress that has been made regarding the proposed Who's Who of ARLIS/New York members. They have contacted two computer services which could input, program, and manage the professional profiles of our membership. Of particular interest is a data base prepared by the Modern Language Association, and the committee's questionnaire has been submitted to the MLA for their review and response. (For full details, see Suzanna's report elsewhere in this issue.)

The Goldwater Library at the Metropolitan Museum of Art is open to college students as well as to more advanced researchers. The hours are 1:00 - 4:30, Tuesday through Friday.

Pursuant to this announcement, Christiane Collins proposed that the Chapter might wish to address itself to the difficulties which

already overtaxed art libraries are experiencing in serving independent, non-affiliated researchers.

Eastern Regional Representative Janis Ekdahl announced that the ARLIS/NA Headquarters would shortly be distributing the new national Membership Directory.

Hollee Haswell described the progress being made towards a second edition of the Directory of Art Libraries and Visual Resource Collections. At present she is compiling an amplified, corrected and more complete list of institutions across North America to survey. Clive Phillpot is coordinating the collection of this data for New York City and is soliciting help from Chapter members. (See notice elsewhere in this issue.)

After the business meeting, Program Chair Daniel Starr introduced Cheryl Lynn Bruce, Public Relations Coordinator of the Studio Museum, who outlined the 14-year history of the organization and described the tremendous growth which led to the Museum's expansion and gala reopening in June of 1982.

With a staff of 30 under the directorship of Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell, the Studio Museum is committed to supporting Black art and artists. The Museum sponsors community outreach programs and artists-in-residence as well as a full exhibition schedule. Shows by Sam Gilliam and the photographer Anthony Barboza opened in November. The Museum also publishes a Newsletter for its members.

Ms. Bruce conducted the group through the current exhibitions "Ritual and Myth, a Survey of African American Art" and "An Ocean Apart: American Artists Abroad."

Not formally trained as an artist or as an art critic, Ms. Bruce's observations were refreshing, provocative and insightful. The group, captivated by her enthusiastic commentary, didn't break up until 8:15.

Anyone interested in joining the Studio Museum, or in being included on their mailing list, should write to Ms. Bruce at the Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 West 125th Street, New York, NY, 10027.



Janis Ekdahl
Museum of Modern Art Library

Swann's Way

Raise your hand and you've bought a book. You'll have to add a ten percent buyer's premium, but the cost can still be a lot less than the prices in recent dealers' catalogs.

On the afternoon of May 20, Evelyn Samuel, Librarian of the Institute of Fine Arts, and Doralynn Pines, Acquisitions Librarian and Bibliographer of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Library attended a book auction at the Swann Galleries, Inc., at 104 East 25 Street. Just the week before, on May 11, Mr. George Lowry, President of Swann Galleries, had been the principal speaker at the annual ARLIS/NY awards ceremony at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Lowry held a mock auction where the "winners" were not necessarily the highest bidders, but those who came closest to the estimates set by the Gallery -- a sort of bibliophile's "The Price Is Right." Five titles were auctioned that evening. Prizes were unisex aprons.

Before visiting the Galleries we did some homework, checking the auction catalog against our desiderata files and card catalogs, but failed to give ourselves enough time to inspect the physical condition of the books on site. Besides hoping to make bargain acquisitions for our libraries, we were also eager to follow up the estimated prices in this more realistic situation.

Furthermore, having been lately brought up to date about the dangers of librarian burn-out, we thought it wise to head off any possible symptoms with a therapeutic change of pace. Although we are both content with our daily routines, why take chances?

As the bidding moved swiftly along, we recognized some familiar faces in the audience. Peter Kraus of Ursus Books attended in person, bidding only on very select and scholarly items, while Lucien Goldschmidt had sent a proxy.

Other dealers had also sent representatives to act on their behalf. Among the participants were a Mr. Brewer (Harvey, we presume) and Ars Libri, bidding enthusiastically.

ARLIS members may be interested to learn that the Stuart and Revett, which at our meeting won an apron for the bidder at \$1,250 was

actually purchased for \$1,600; and that the Flaxman Hesiod with the Blake engravings which had been estimated at between \$250 and \$350 fetched only \$170. We don't recall who acquired it, so we can't offer a follow-up.

Altogether more than 450 titles were sold. Some were purchased for well under the estimated price, while others came in at almost ten times their estimates. Three titles by Joseph Wilpert, for examples, Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms, Die Roemischen Mosaiken und Malereien der Kirchlichen Bauten and I Sarcophagi Christiani Antichi were hotly contested by a Westchester dealer and a Boston dealer. Consequently, they sold for \$2,200, \$2,400, and \$1,300 respectively. The set of A. Venturi, Storia dell'Arte Italiana, although not uniformly bound, brought \$2,700.

We agreed that most of the books in our libraries should probably be locked away permanently. Caveat Librarius!



Doralynn Pines
Evelyn Samuel

Volunteers Needed

As editor of the Directory of Art Libraries and Visual Resource Collections in North America, 2d ed., I need to identify those institutions that were omitted from the first edition. If you would like to work on the list of libraries for the New York City area, please contact me:

HOLLEE HASWELL

day phone - (914) 631-8200

evenings - (914) 762-7671

or by mail - P.O. Box 93

Irvington, N.Y. 10533

.....and did you know.....?

RICHARD ARNOLD, of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Library, had 13 sculptures and 1 painting on exhibit at Gallery 494, 494 Hudson Street, Greenwich Village, New York City, from September 6 through 26, 1982.

Update

Several months have passed since the Professional Concerns Committee last reported in these pages on the preparation of a directory and resource file for the Chapter. The project is alive and has progressed, so that an update for those who could not make it to the October meeting is in order:

We are now at the threshold of deciding how to computerize the directory. Prospects of finding a way to computerize which would give us the product and services we want at an affordable price seemed bleak indeed last Spring. We had no luck with commercial sources (ARLIS/NY is too small), and no offers or suggestions from the membership. Now, we are happy to report with cautious optimism, things are looking up.

The Computer Center of Queens College has expressed a willingness to assist with the project. If we accept the offer, programming would be made available to us, while for inputting we could either hire students or work with our own people who would be trained at the college. Maintenance and updating can also be arranged. Similar publications compiled at the center appear satisfactory.


Discussions of the project at Queens led to another potential source, the MLA Consortium. Since 1979, smaller non-profit organizations have been invited to share the benefits of the Modern Language Association's electronic data processing systems. Supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities and Mellon Foundation grants, at present some 30 societies (including College Art Association) use the services of computerized membership and subscription files; general administrative, accounting, clerical and other services; and the MLA bibliographical text processing system. The bibliographical file may answer our need and perhaps give us even more.

On September 30, I met with representatives of the Consortium, Mr. Hans Rütlimann and Mr. Mark Kemlot, at the MLA offices to discuss our goals and the Consortium's possible assistance. Tentatively, we agreed on general specifications for the directory (only minor modifications in our questionnaire were suggested), on format, and on spin-offs. In

three to four weeks (or, possibly by the time you read this), the Consortium is to give us a specific proposal for ARLIS/New York participation. The conditions, I should add, seemed very reasonable and the fees affordable. The Consortium, in fact, may be of interest to ARLIS/NA. Janis Ekdahl, our Eastern Regional Representative, will be informing Executive Secretary Pam Parry.

So, for the moment, we wait. If all goes well -- and we hope it will -- the New York Executive Board will soon be deciding on the project.

If you think you might like to actively participate before you get hit with the questionnaire, any of the Committee members would be happy to hear from you. There are five of us now: Paula Baxter, Evelyn Samuel, Donya Schimansky, Martita Schwarz, and myself. Come join us!

 Suzanna Simor, Chairperson
Professional Concerns Committee

Craft Gallery Opens

VANESSA LYNN, ARLIS/New York member and a former art librarian at Pratt Institute, last year stepped outside the traditional structure of our field to try something new. She opened an art gallery in New York City.


The Cooper-Lynn Gallery, two blocks south of Bleecker Street at 54 Seventh Avenue South, is a beautiful, airy, 1,000 square feet of exhibition space at the southern edge of Greenwich Village. With a lovely garden, ideal for openings and outdoor sculpture, the gallery offers a most unusual setting, in this city, for showing art. Even more unusual is the fact that the gallery is dedicated to showing the art of craft. That is, Vanessa handles the work of contemporary artists who work in traditional craft media -- specifically, clay, glass and fiber. The artists are individuals who, in her words, "are...exploring formal, philosophical or conceptual concerns usually associated with fine art media."

Why a gallery? For Vanessa, it seemed a perfectly logical step for an individual who began her life-long involvement with art as a painter and weaver. When she found her acad-

emic bent leading first to a career in art history and then art librarianship, she began to feel a certain discomfort about the distance she was putting between herself and art. While she is quick to admit that she misses her former proximity to the latest art literature, the challenge of her new venture gives her little time for regrets. She's too busy meeting and talking with artists in their studios, hanging shows, and working with clients.

And why a craft gallery? This decision was the most carefully deliberated. Although the course work for art history degrees leaves no room for an academic approach to craft, Vanessa always followed this field with unabated interest. As recent trends in fine art moved toward an anti-object esthetic, the growing craft movement in this country offered art viewer and collector a palpable alternative. New skills and new talent have literally exploded the possibilities for the artist working in clay, wood, fiber, glass and metal. The esthetic excitement within the field has finally caught the interest of critics, collectors and museums, who once banished these media to the realm of "mere decorative arts." As proof: the Whitney Museum mounted a major exhibition of six American ceramists in December 1981.

New York City, contemporary art center of the world and bastion of 19th century art historical elitism, has been much slower than the rest of the country, or Europe, to admit the individual working in these craft media to the heady ranks of "artist." But here, too, the climate is finally changing. Vanessa believes that the New York art scene is ready for a sophisticated gallery devoted to the work of rising and established artists working in clay, fiber and glass.

 Joanne Polster
American Crafts Council Library

final notes

ELECTIONS -- This year's Nominating Committee, chaired by Pearl Moeller, has been hard at work, and their slate of candidates will be announced at the annual business meeting on December 16. Nominations from the floor are both welcomed and encouraged. This year, every single office is open for election, so don't be shy!

RENEWALS -- Renewal forms for 1983 will be winging your way shortly with the ballots. Remember -- your Chapter dues are needed to support not only Chapter activities, but such essentials as refreshments at the meetings and this newsletter. Our dues are minimal, compared to other professional organizations, and it's easy to let it slip your mind. The easiest way to remember is to fill out your renewal form as soon as you get it.

THANK YOU!!! -- And, last but certainly not least, the New York Chapter extends its gratitude to the following members who made donations to the Chapter by contributing more than the minimum dues for 1982:

GABRIEL AUSTIN	MICHAEL KOLAKOWSKI
ALLAN CHAPMAN	RICHARD MARTIN
CHRISTIANE COLLINS	MARJORIE MILLER
MARY COPE	CELINE PALATSKY
CONNIE CORSON	DONYA SCHIMANSKY
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