

# ARLIS/New York News

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

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Fall 2004

## From the Chair

By Judy Connorton



Since my last column, our chapter has sponsored two wonderful and well-attended events at various Queens College art venues on June 2 and the Cooper Hewitt Museum on July 9. You'll find write-ups on each elsewhere in this newsletter. In this column though I want to acknowledge and thank Alexandra de Luise and Suzanna Simor for coordinating our Queens College visit, and Stephen Van Dyk for planning our tour of the Christopher Dresser exhibition at the museum.

Now, as summer ends, your board is actively planning further activities for the next few months. The event in our immediate future is an art gallery tour on Saturday, September 18 that will take us to Greenpoint and Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Caitlin Kilgallen and Suz Massen are busily mapping out our tour to five galleries offering us an up-close look at what's happening on the current art scene in the city.

Book talks are in the planning stages thanks to Ken Soehner, and again you'll find details following. Many other good ideas for programs and events for the chapter have been flowing to the board from our activist membership and we appreciate them all. We've been discussing these suggestions at our recent board meeting and will certainly implement some after the first of the year. So keep those good ideas coming!

We're also working on assembling a slate for the 2005 ARLIS/NY board. Our election chair, Ken Soehner, is coordinating this effort. We'll elect a vice-chair, secretary, and member-at-large for advertising for the coming year, so take a few minutes to think about whether you'd be interested in any of the above or would like to nominate anyone else. If so, contact Ken by email or phone and let him know:  
ken.soehner@metmuseum.org or call 212 570 3937.

We'll announce the slate at our upcoming business meeting where Ken will open the floor to additional nominations.

Serving on the board for the past couple of years has been a great experience for me to work with wonderful colleagues who exemplify the best of our profession. I've come to know each of them so much better in working together on behalf of the chapter. I'd add that I think our chapter's procedure of electing a vice-chair to learn the ropes before taking on the leadership role and then having that person remain on the board as past chair provides a great opportunity to learn and contribute. It's been one of the better experiences of my professional life and I recommend it to you!

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you on October 14 at the Brooklyn Museum where Deirdre Lawrence will welcome us for a tour of her newly renovated library and for our fall business meeting and reception. Mark your calendars and look for our invitation and agenda to go out shortly.

That's it for now. Here's to an active and enjoyable fall season!

### Inside:

Upcoming Events	p. 2
Queens College Tour	p. 3
Pratt SILS in Florence	p. 4
Brooklyn Museum Renovations	p. 6
Member News	p. 7
And more!	

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## Upcoming ARLIS/NY Events

**Saturday, September 18, between 1 and 5 p.m.** ARLIS/NY invites its members to join our group for a **tour of selected art galleries in Greenpoint and Williamsburg, Brooklyn.**

Caitlin Kilgallen and Suz Massen are working on an afternoon itinerary that will take us to some of the most interesting galleries in these vital arts areas. Due to the logistics of guiding attendees along the gallery route, and mindful of not overcrowding the gallery spaces, we are limiting the group size to 30 members. (At this point we don't anticipate that we will be able to accommodate guests.) RSVP by September 13, 2004 to: Suz Massen, [massen@frick.org](mailto:massen@frick.org) (preferably); or call 212-547-0661. We will notify you if your "yes" response is received after the 30 slots are filled. If you don't hear from us, you are in the group.

We'll begin at the Brooklyn Artists Alliance in Greenpoint, at 1:00 p.m. (rain or shine!):

37 Greenpoint Avenue, 4th Floor (718-383-9621; [www.brooklyn.org](http://www.brooklyn.org))

(near the Greenpoint Ave. stop on the G train)

From there we'll visit the following galleries in Williamsburg:

Pierogi (<http://www.pierogi2000.com/flatfile/brooklyngravityracers.html>)

Joymore (<http://joymore.org/current.html>)

Black + White Gallery (<http://www.billburg.com/arts/detail.cfm?id=2362>)

Jack the Pelican (<http://www.jackthepelicanpresents.com>)

Travel directions available on request. Please allow enough traveling time to arrive promptly. Emergency contact that day: Judy Connorton's cell phone, 917-750-0536, or Caitlin Kilgallen's, 646-267-1683.

**Tuesday, October 5 at 3:30 p.m.** Ken Soehner has organized this event to take place at the Metropolitan Museum:

**Roger Kimball will make a presentation on his recently published book, *The Rape of the Master, How Political Correctness Sabotages Art*.** The Museum's Director, Philippe de Montebello, has stated, "Roger Kimball's brilliant book sets out to repair the damage inflicted on art history by the likes of Derrida and Foucault." Roger is a lively speaker and I know that his ideas and observations will spark some discussion. I have informed him that he will not necessarily be preaching to the choir. He is looking forward to meeting with ARLIS/NY, and I hope that you will be able to attend. Roger is Managing Editor of the *New Criterion*, an art critic and author of five previous books.

The talk will take place in the Douglas Dillon Board Room and there will be a reception to follow in the Terrace Room, adjacent to the Board Room. Casalini Libri has very generously offered to cover the cost of the reception.

R.S.V.P. to [ken.soehner@metmuseum.org](mailto:ken.soehner@metmuseum.org). On arrival, an admission button will be given to you at the Group Registration Desk in the Museum's Great Hall, and you will be given directions to the Board Room.

**Thursday, October 14 (3-5 p.m.)**

**ARLIS/NY will hold its fall meeting at the Brooklyn Museum.** Deirdre Lawrence will welcome us at 3 p.m. in the newly renovated library on the second floor and will provide a brief tour before the business meeting. A reception will follow. Come earlier to the museum to see the new front entrance and two major new exhibitions: "Great Expectations: John Singer Sargent Painting Children" and "Kehinde Wiley."

And save the date (still tentative):

**Wednesday, December 8. ARLIS/NY Holiday Party, at the Frick Art Reference Library.**

## ARLIS/NY Visits Queens College

By James Mitchell

They came by train, by bus, by taxi, and by car pool — it wouldn't surprise me if some flew in. More than a dozen members made the trek out to Flushing on June 2. After gathering over sparkling drinks in the Queens College Art Library and Art Center, on the sunny 6<sup>th</sup> floor of the Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library, Alexandra de Luise and Suzanna Simor led the group through the ARLIS/NA Members' Exhibition in the Art Center. Four of the artists were on hand to talk about their work: Sheila D. Fox (Suffolk Community College), Joy Kestenbaum (Purchase College), Robert Lobe (SVA), and Tammy Wofsey (Marymount Manhattan).

After a very quick tour of the Art Library, with its magnificent view of Manhattan and environs, and of the rest of the building, the group moved down to the ground floor for a guided tour of the Louis Armstrong Archives. This astounding collection has preserved and made accessible to the public Armstrong's possessions found in his Queens home at the time of his death. Included are hundreds of tape reels of Louis' recordings — indexed by Pops himself using an idiosyncratic method sure to either madden or enthrall any archivist — as well as extensive collections of photographs, scrapbooks, correspondence, manuscripts, and artifacts.

Next the group visited the Godwin-Ternbach Museum, nearby in Klapper Hall, and enjoyed a gallery talk by the Director, Dr. Amy Winter. In addition to viewing the exhibition "Memory & History: Prints, Collages and Mixed Media Installations by B. Amore and Pauline Jakobsberg," Dr. Winter graciously showed us the collections storage area, where many of their approximately 3,000 works of art are kept. Complimentary copies of some of the Museum's permanent collection publications were also given to the group.

After the tours, several members, joined by Queens College Library Director Sharon Bonk, had dinner at a fabulous all-you-can-eat Chinese restaurant in Flushing, the East Buffet and Restaurant (42-07 Main Street). The variety of dim sum, sushi, and wonderful desserts was an exciting event in its own right, and a great cap to the evening.

Our thanks to Alexandra de Luise, Suzanna Simor, and Mollie Moskowitz for planning and hosting this event!



Alexandra de Luise, Mollie Moskowitz, and Suzanna Simor, in the Queens College Art Library and Art Center.

Photo by James Mitchell.

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## Pratt SILS Program in Florence

By Faith Pleasanton

For two jam-packed weeks in early July, fifteen students joined Professor AnnaMaria Poma-Swank and Acting Dean Tula Giannini in Florence for the first graduate credit program held there by the Pratt Institute's School of Information and Library Science. Joining AnnaMaria were her colleagues from the Metropolitan Museum, and fellow ARLIS/NY members, Meg Black and Faith Pleasanton. Other participants came from museums, libraries, and universities across the country, including the New York Public Library, the Getty, Princeton, and two Canadian universities.

All students received working access to the major research libraries, including the Biblioteca Nazionale, Biblioteca degli Uffizi, the libraries of the Bargello, Museo degli Argenti, Museo dell'Opificio delle Pietre Dure, and the Laurenziana Library. At every institution, AnnaMaria had arranged for the directors or head librarians to greet the students and to introduce them to their holdings. These conferences were among the highlights of the trip, especially because the students engaged in fruitful dialogs and were able to ask questions freely.

Special tours and luncheons were also arranged, including a memorable outing to Bernard Berenson's Villa I Tatti, and Casalini Libri's headquarters in nearby Fiesole.

The group stayed together at the Bonifacio, a charming family run hotel with its own garden, off the via San Gallo, in a quiet area of Florence near San Marco.

Extensive tours of the city's major monuments, including the Corridoio Vasariano and the Studiolo di Francesco I in the Palazzo Vecchio, under AnnaMaria's and Tula's expert guidance, provided the background for the subsequent research in the city's libraries. The course work consisted of preparing a project paper, reviewing in depth twelve objects seen by the students during their visit. But it was not all work and no play: evening get-togethers in the Bonifacio garden, a new academy in the shadow of San Marco, were a welcome respite from the heat of the Florentine day.

Tula said: "What a special and unique experience we shared." And a graduate student from Princeton commented: "It was one of the best cultural experiences of my life."

Annamaria added: "I am very pleased that our course was so well received in Florence, and I am also very thankful to all my Florentine colleagues who helped us in every way, including free and priority admission."

The course will be offered again next year, for three weeks. For more information, see <http://rand.pratt.edu/~giannini/florence.html>.

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# ARLIS/NY Summer Visit to the Cooper-Hewitt Museum

By Alexandra de Luise

On Friday July 9<sup>th</sup>, a capacity crowd of 50 ARLIS/New York members were treated to a wonderful late afternoon at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, that combined learning, culture and entertainment. Two tours of equal length were given, one of the exhibition, “Shock of the Old: Christopher Dresser” delivered with style and wit by Stephen Van Dyk, the museum’s Chief Librarian, and the other of the museum’s Library, displaying highlights of their unique collection, expertly presented by Elizabeth Broman, Reference Librarian.

According to Stephen Van Dyk, “the museum and museum library were originally at the Cooper Union until the late 1960s when it moved to its current site in the Carnegie Mansion. Peter Cooper was an industrialist and inventor who made his fortune developing a steam power engine for locomotives. His daughter Sarah married Abram Hewitt who was in the iron business and also was mayor of New York City. They had many children, among them Eleanor, Amy and Sarah, who started a museum in 1897 at Cooper Union as well as the library and a school of design for women.”

The Cooper Hewitt Museum houses 250,000 objects of decorative arts, a Library, a prints and drawings collection, a Design Center and an Archives, containing the papers of many well known designers. The Library, known as the Doris and Henry Dreyfuss Memorial Study Center, is part of the Smithsonian Institute Libraries, and serves curators, researchers, the general public, and an ever-growing number of graduate students who are attending the Masters Program in Decorative Arts at Parsons School of Design. The Library consists of 60,000 volumes, including trade and auction catalogs, numerous journals, and a rare book collection, filling the stack areas leading from the red-carpeted reading room. The Library’s original mission, to be a teaching resource for the design students at Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Arts, continues to this day. Current students of the decorative arts are able to pull together a variety of materials from diverse collections for comparative viewing, studying, and reinterpretation.

Elizabeth Broman led members through a choice selection of 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and early 20<sup>th</sup> century books on display for our viewing, which included pattern and trade books, landscape gardening books, World’s Fair material, photography, rare architecture and ironwork books, children’s books, and pop-up books. She shared delightful anecdotes on the history and acquisition habits of its founders, which form the basis of this remarkable collection.

The exhibition on view, “Shock of the Old: Christopher Dresser” is the first full-scale show on the exuberant 19<sup>th</sup> century British industrial designer. Members were treated to a first rate tour by Stephen Van Dyk, and grateful for this private showing of an exhibit that was in its last few weeks of viewing before traveling to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Members learned that Christopher Dresser (1834–1904) was a tireless designer, working in multiple media simultaneously, including fabric and wallpaper design, furniture, glassware, and especially striking, metalwork and ceramics. He drew inspiration from many sources, including botanical and Egyptian motifs and Far Eastern influences, particularly from an extended visit to Japan. He perfected the art of mass production and product control to deliver uniquely designed objects to a growing British middle class. Who can forget Dresser’s cleverly designed toast racks that look as fashionable today as they must have more than 130 years ago!

The exhibit was co-curated by Stephen Van Dyk, who also described his role in the exhibition. The museum and V&A Publications have published a book with the same title as the exhibition, in collaboration with Harry Abrams.

Following the tours, members were drawn to the music coming from the museum’s huge garden, where a Friday party was taking place, a regular summer event. ARLIS members lingered in the sultry late afternoon sun, to reconnect, listen to music, and partake of a cash bar offering food and drink.

Heartfelt thanks go to Stephen Van Dyk, Elizabeth Broman, and Jennifer Cohlman for this wonderfully planned event, and board member Erin Elliott for organizing, in short order, the many planning details.



left: Elizabeth Broman.

right: John Maier and Eric Wolf.



Photos by Claudia Hill.

## Renovated Brooklyn Museum Libraries and Archives to Re-Open October 20, 2004

By Deirdre E. Lawrence,  
Principal Librarian/Coordinator of Research Services

The Brooklyn Museum Libraries and Archives have been completely renovated, providing a vastly improved storage space for the library collections and better space for researchers to work. The collections include the main Reference Library, the Wilbour Library of Egyptology, and the Museum Archives. These world-renowned collections now occupy approximately 7,700 square feet of space on the second floor. The Library space was completely redesigned by Museum staff architect Kenneth Kurtz working with Principal Librarian Deirdre Lawrence, Museum Archivist Deborah Wythe, and Preservation Associate Keith Duquette. The renovated space, which has been closed to the public for more than two years, will re-open by advance appointment starting on October 20, 2004.

For the first time in the history of the Brooklyn Museum Libraries and Archives, the library space is completely climate-controlled, stabilizing both the temperature and humidity, making it possible to better protect and preserve all of the research collections. The main Reference Library was last renovated in 1965. The Wilbour Library of Egyptology, formerly on the third floor, had not been renovated since it opened in 1934. The Museum Archives had previously been housed in a storage space in another location on the second floor. 900 units of Spacesaver compact shelving, a total of nearly 22,000 linear feet, were installed in the Library stacks, providing high-density storage for both Library and Archives collections. The compact shelving replaced wooden shelving installed in 1902 when the Library was first brought in to the then newly built Museum. To make way for the new compact shelving, the wooden stack shelving was donated to the Brooklyn Public Library where it lives in three of their Carnegie libraries. The Wilbour Library is currently housed in a separate section of the Library stacks. Plans are underway for the future installation of an updated Wilbour Library to return to the third floor in space adjacent to the Egyptian galleries.

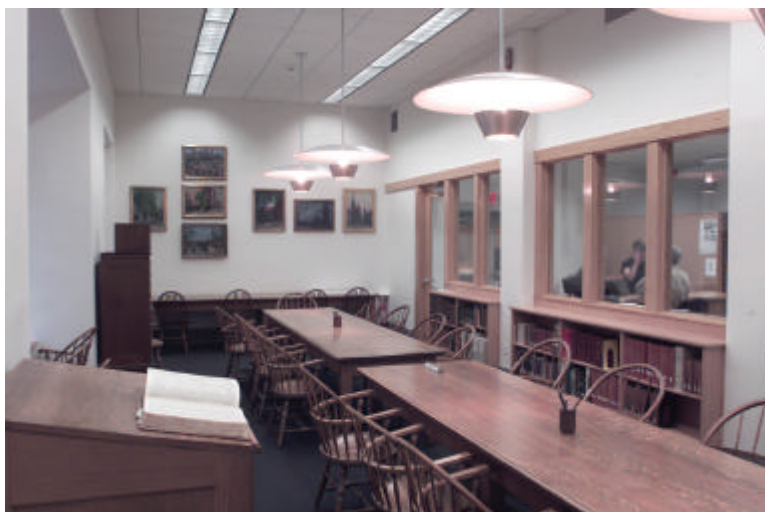
The public space offers a redesigned reference area and reading room. The reading room features nineteenth century oak reading tables, Windsor chairs and light fixtures from the 1930s, which were originally used in the first reading rooms of the Libraries, all of which provides a comfortable area for research in a wireless network setting. The reference area also offers three public-access computer terminals to search the Library's new online catalog.

This fall, when the Museum's redesigned web site ([www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)) is launched, the new Library online public catalog will be available on the Internet to the international research community. The online catalog will provide unprecedented access to the important body of research materials held in the Libraries and Archives. Approximately 97% of the research collection is represented in the catalog and records are being continually added for artists' files, auction catalogs, and all new acquisitions. With

additional funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the online catalog will soon be enhanced with digital images and finding aids to unique parts of the research collections held in the Libraries and Archives.

Since its founding in 1823 as the Brooklyn Apprentices Library, the Library collections have grown to over 275,000 volumes comprising the fifth largest art museum library in the nation. This non-circulating collection has been developed to encourage understanding of the Museum's encyclopedic object collections and art and cultural history in general from antiquity up to contemporary times. The main Reference Library collection is particularly strong in the arts of the Americas (North and South), Africa, Asia and Islam. Special collections include fashion and costume sketches, documentary photographs, rare and artists' books. The Wilbour Library of Egyptology is a comprehensive research collection on all aspects of Ancient Egypt with additional information on the art of the Ancient Near East. The Museum Archives contain approximately 1,600 linear feet of institutional records, curatorial correspondence, expedition reports and other related records dating to the founding of the institution. Starting in mid-October, researchers can request appointments by email to: [library@brooklynmuseum.org](mailto:library@brooklynmuseum.org)

The renovation of the Brooklyn Museum Libraries and Archives was made possible by the Booth Ferris Foundation and the Starr Foundation. Additional generous support was given by the Achelis Foundation, the Vincent Astor Foundation, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Mrs. Mildred Gralla in memory of Vice Admiral Arthur Robert Gralla, and other generous friends of the Museum. The Library's online catalog was supported by grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, and the H. W. Wilson Foundation.



The new main Reading Room.

Photo courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum.

## Member News

At the Frick Art Reference Library, **Rodica Tanjala Krauss** has been promoted to Head of Cataloging Projects. She will be responsible for the planning, management, and oversight of specially-funded library programs, and will assume cataloging for materials in Italian, Spanish, and other languages. Rodica has also recently published an article in *RLG Focus* Issue 69, August 2004, "Searching SCIPIO using RLIN21: A User Perspective."

Also at the Frick, **Christina Peter** has received a promotion from Cataloging Associate for Acquisitions, to Assistant Cataloger for Acquisitions. In this new position, she manages acquisitions activities for bibliographic material in all formats and languages, trains and supervises staff, monitors funds and approves invoices, monitors and evaluates vendor performance, and continues to serve on the Book Selection Committee. She also assumes cataloging responsibilities for books in Eastern European and Russian languages. In addition to holding a masters degree in English and Russian literature, Christina recently received a Masters in Library and Information Science from Long Island University. As part of her MLIS requirements, she completed a study tour of libraries in the Czech Republic and an internship cataloging Hungarian books at Columbia University Libraries.

**Barbara Rockenbach** is one of a select group of art history students who have organized the exhibition "Tracing Tony Smith's Tau" at the Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery at Hunter College. The College's announcement follows.

To commemorate the 20th anniversary of the sculpture's installation and celebrate its current restoration, "Tracing Tony Smith's Tau" revisits the evolution of Smith's great work from its inception in 1961–62 to its placement on Hunter College's West Plaza at 68th Street and Lexington Avenue in 1984. Once named "Master of Monumentalists" by *Time* magazine in a 1967 cover story, Smith (1912–1980) is recognized as one of the seminal artistic figures of his generation and a very influential Professor of Art at Hunter College where he taught from 1962–80.

Drawings and maquettes for both "Tau" and related sculptures will be shown and presented in context with his other major works. Curated by William C. Agee, Evelyn Kranes Kossak Professor of Art History at Hunter College, with the assistance of five Hunter MA graduate students and recent alumni of the Art History program, this exhibition aims to explore the artistic and historical context of this seminal work. The exhibition includes paintings, architectural renderings, sketches, photographs, video and models that depict "Tau" and work by the artist that informs this important sculpture.

The exhibition will be on view through December 4 at the Hunter College/Bertha and Karl Leubsdorf Art Gallery, Hunter College West Building, SW corner of 68th Street and Lexington Avenue. Gallery hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 1-6 pm.



Christina Peter, Rodica Krauss, and a guest, at the Cooper-Hewitt.

Photo by Claudia Hill.

ARLIS/New York News

Erin Elliott, ARLIS/NY Membership Coordinator

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Barbara Reed and Faith Pleasanton, leaving the Queens College campus.

Photo by James Mitchell.