

## 2018 ARLIS/NA Ontario Travel Award Report

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I would like to begin by thanking the ARLIS/NA Ontario Chapter for providing me with a Travel Award to support my attendance of the 46<sup>th</sup> Annual ARLIS/NA Conference, Out of Bounds, from February 25<sup>th</sup>- March 1<sup>st</sup> 2018 in New York City. Receiving this grant made a huge impact on the costs I incurred from attending the conference and made my time there more enjoyable as a result.

My goals in attending the conference were to share my recent work as Learning Zone Librarian at OCAD University with a group of peers with related duties and interests and to collect inspiration from these same peers for the work ahead. In both of these goals, my time at the Conference was very successful. I was able to attend the conference from Monday February 26<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday February 28<sup>th</sup>, including attending 8 sessions, two meetings and presenting at two sessions.

### **Monday February 26, 2018**

#### **Session: “Zines: Exploring Projects and Perspectives Across Institutions”**

*9:45am – 11 am*

*Speakers: Becca Pad, Cristina Favretto, Katie Riel, Marta Chudolinska, Susan Thomas, Madeline Veitch*

*Moderator: Ashley Peterson*

The first session I attended was also my first presentation at an ARLIS Conference. The session, “Zines: Exploring Projects and Perspectives across Institutions” represented a range of work with zines (self-published and handmade publications) in academic libraries, including programming, collaboration, teaching, digital access and collection development. My presentation, “Creating Digital Access to the OCAD University Library's Zine Collection through Artstor's Shared Shelf”, was a detailed overview of the unique cataloguing system developed for the OCAD U Zine Library collection and the process of migrating the catalogue from a google spreadsheet to a publicly accessible collection on Artstor's Shared Shelf Commons (now called JSTOR Fourm). It was extremely meaningful to be able to share this work at the conference, since I have worked on this project since 2009, back when I was studying to become a librarian. Cataloguing the collection and making that catalogue publicly accessible online has been my primary goal since the beginning. Being able to present this work to my peers in the art library sector was extremely valuable and validating. Though I was concerned that my talk might be too specific and technical, the feedback that I received indicated that many attendees appreciated the thoroughness of my presentation. The slides and notes from my presentation are accessible at

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xUy935wZD3Tv0REXH3y1w5\\_VYNWVqDVx/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1xUy935wZD3Tv0REXH3y1w5_VYNWVqDVx/view?usp=sharing)

In listening to my co-presenters, I was inspired by Madeline Veitch, Research, Metadata, and Zine Librarian, who spoke about zine programming at SUNY New Paltz. Their Library loans out zine making kits and maintains a small suite of typewriters for use in the Library and for loan. They have a collection of 600 circulating zines. They discussed several zine events from recent years. I was particularly taken with the 24 hour zine challenge. The event starts with a one-hour

introductory workshop, followed by an open studio session of zine making. Participants hand in their zine pages at the end of the night. Library staff reproduce copies of each zine, which can be picked up the next evening at a zine reading and swap event. This event provides participants with a lot of motivation to complete their project and provides a rich opportunity for community building.

**Session: “Design Thinking for Libraries: strategies, tools and a case study”**

*11:15am – 12:15pm*

*Speakers: Rebecca Barham, Susan Smith, Deb Verhoff*

*Moderator: Jennifer Martinez Wormser*

From the session description: “design thinking is a series of overlapping processes including inspiration, ideation and implementation that can be used as a fresh approach to solve problems in libraries”. With the experimental and flexible nature of the space that I manage, I was interested to learn how I could incorporate design thinking practices into my work. Rebecca Barham and Susan Smith from University of North Texas outlined a range of activities to engage in new ways of thinking including visualization tools, empathy tools, mapping tools, brainstorming (including brain writing and reverse brainstorming) and rapid prototyping. I asked if they could recommend how to find time to fit this kind of engagement into established workflows and they recommended fitting it in during any small moment that is available, such as running a ten minute activity at the beginning of a monthly staff meeting.

**Session: “Pushing the Boundaries: Teaching and Learning outside the Classroom”**

*1:45 pm – 3:15 pm*

*Speakers: Larissa Garcia, Janine Henri, Kate Joranson, Ashley Peterson, Mackenzie Salisbury*

*Moderator: Anna Boutin-Cooper*

This was a great session on information literacy work within studio environments. Kate Joranson from the Frick Art Library at the University of Pittsburgh spoke about a series of drop-in sessions organized by the Library for Graduate students called Toolshops. The concept of Toolshops is to provide librarians and students with opportunities to explore metacognition – thinking about thinking. The Toolshops provide an informal environment where participants discuss various aspects of the research process including how to organize research, how to choose research tools, how participants move between analog and digital resources and tools, etc. They create a safe space to discuss research practices, since many graduate students find it awkward to admit what they do or do not know to their graduate advisors. Mackenzie Salisbury, Reference & Instruction Librarian, discussed a pilot of studio visits with MFA students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. They were able to incorporate a Google calendar into their Canvas learning management system, which allowed students to set half hour meetings and enter questions for Librarians when making the appointment. During the meeting, Librarians would assess the student’s current modes of research, offer supporting resources and afterward follow up through email with further resources and encouragement to the student to maintain communication when needed. Mackenzie noted that this pilot provided the opportunity to build relationship between students and librarians, and that entering the student’s studio space shifted the usual power balance between librarian and student and allowed more free discussion, in which the students used a language in talking about their work that they had not used in the library setting. Both of these speakers spoke to issues of scalability - that this level

of in-depth service was not necessarily possible on an institution-wide scale, but that providing high quality programming for a small number of students was still worthwhile.

### **Tuesday February 27, 2018**

#### **Session: “Thinking Outside the (Library) Box: Using Your Librarian Skills for the Public Good”**

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

Speakers: Nora Almeida, Sherry Antoine, Alice Backer, Jenna Freedman, Lia Friedman, Heather Hart, Jen Hoyer

Moderator: Sian Evans

This was a different type of session, with a range of librarian and non-librarian speakers engaged in library-related social justice work. Speakers represented various organizations, including AfroCROWD, Art+Feminism, Black Lunch Table, Interference Archive, and Radical Reference, providing sites for community discourse, collection of alternative publications and creating safe space to access alternative resources and ask research questions. The speakers spoke to their experiences working in these organizations and gave advice on engaging communities and working toward their benefit. I was particularly inspired by a suggestion to find opportunities to bring different types of people together to engage over a common issue who normally would not meet, such as different age groups or professions. In the context of my position at OCAD U, this would mean bringing together people studying different disciplines, or mixing undergrads with grad students, etc. Some of their suggestions echoed the principles that guide my work in the Learning Zone such as sharing resources and efforts across the community and to look to where there is a lack or need that can be filled. As with many discussions of activist work, concepts of burnout and self-care were discussed. AfroCROWD panelists Alice Backer and Sherry Antoine offered an interesting perspective and criticism of self-care: that the work itself was self-care, that preserving the knowledge of black artists for themselves and their communities was a deeply valuable act for themselves.

#### **Session: “Libraries Resist”**

3:15 – 4:30pm

Speakers: Anna Boutin-Cooper, Rebecca Clark, Rhonda Kauffman, Alan Michelson, David Pemberton, Rebecca Price

Moderator: Serenity Ibsen

The Conference was an interesting experience in resetting my perspective on the field of librarianship. Having worked in the same institution since graduation, my perspective going in to the Conference was closely honed in on my institutional context. At the Conference, I attended talks by librarians from small private colleges to large state universities, with a large range of institutional support and academic freedom. This session, highlighting ways that libraries have incorporated acts of activism into their programming featured a respective range of these supports or lack thereof, from explicitly political events such as film festivals, poetry readings, crypto parties, to more modest and subversive efforts like themed exhibitions of books and posters.

## Poster Sessions

I visited the many poster sessions on display. One that stood out for me was “**Living legacy: Controlled vocabularies, subject matter description, and Indigenous visual culture in libraries and museums**” by Michele Jennings, Art Librarian at Ohio University. The poster presented findings from Michele’s Library Master’s thesis at the University of British Columbia, in which they explored how subject headings and free text are used in Library and Museum contexts to describe images of Indigenous art and culture. Exploring the inherent bias of subject headings systems and the history of improper handling of Indigenous images in the Library and Museum context, this thesis provides a lot of helpful food for thought for library professionals hoping to engage with decolonization and Indigenization at their institutions. Full text of the thesis, entitled

“Image description and Indigenous cultural heritage collections: an empirical analysis,” can be found at <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/ubctheses/24/items/1.0355736>

## Wednesday February 28, 2018

### **Session: “Boundless: Digital Collections and Online Scholarship”**

9:45 am – 11 am

*Speakers: Selena Anders, Hannah Bennett, Alex Gil, Anne Higonnet, Jennifer Parker, Coral Salomón, Molly Schoen*

*Moderator: Diane Dias De Fazio*

This was a fascinating session on digital collections, particularly in how students can be involved in building them. Alex Gil and Anne Higonnet spoke about their experience teaching an Art History Graduate Seminar for Barnard students, who worked to create a digital edition of *Journal des dames et des modes* (1797–1804), centered on rare fashion plates held at The Morgan Library & Museum. Rather than writing research papers, students had to conduct deep research on the textiles in the images and distill their learning into text for the online resource. Students also had to source period appropriate maps and prints to provide context for the fashion images. This was a challenging but very rewarding experience for the students, who were not used to simplifying and summarizing their findings to that extent, or to putting out work that was accessible in the public sphere. Molly Schoen, Visual Resources Curator at the Fashion Institute of Technology discussed the creation of the Fashion History Timeline. This project involved undergraduate students in the fashion art history program who worked towards creating an open-access online research hub. The speakers for both of these projects acknowledged the intense time commitment and project management required to execute such a project. However, the benefits are huge, both as a unique learning experience for students with real-world impact and as a rich new resource for library digital collections.

**Session: “#artlibraries: Taking the Pulse of Social Media in Art Library Environments”**

11:15 am – 12:15pm

Speakers: William Blueher, Betsy Brand, Jennifer Ferretti, Viveca Pattison Robichaud, Anna Simon, Chantal Sulkow

Moderator: Giana Ricci

This session provided an overview of social media practices at various art libraries. My takeaways from this session was that there is a strong shift away from Libraries promoting their services on Facebook, with an emphasis on Instagram and Tumblr as sites with higher rates of engagement rates.

**Meeting: JSTOR Forum User Group meeting**

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Moderator: Hannah Marshall

I attended the Artstor JSTOR Forum user group meeting in order to learn about new developments in the platform as it is rebranded following the purchase of Artstor by ITHAKA, the non-profit organization that runs JSTOR. This was extremely relevant to my work since this is the platform used to catalogue the OCAD U Zine Library.

**Session: “Stimulating Creativity in Practice: Incorporating Creative Practice into the Academic Library”**

Speakers: Marta Chudolinska, Emily Coxe, Jane Darcovich, Ellen Petraits , Heather Topcik

Moderator: Ellen Petraits

The last session that I attended featured my second presentation at the Conference. This session was put together by members of the Stimulating Creativity in Practice Special Interest Group (SCIP SIG), which brings together Library professionals with a creative practice to share ideas and resources for incorporating creative practice into our library work. It was great to hear about the various ways that my peers in the field were working to engage with their communities, including themed book displays, crafternoons, and edible book events. My session “Creative Engagement in the OCAD University Library’s Learning Zone” discussed a range of creative programming that I have offered at the OCAD U Learning Zone in the past few years, including the Zine Library workshop series, collaborative zine publications produced with the OCAD U Zine Collective student group, Student-led Creative Workshops and various exhibitions. For those looking to formalize their approach to community engagement through creativity, I discussed the value of the *Impact of Libraries as Creative Spaces Report* commissioned by the State Library of Queensland in 2015. Creation of the report, published in 2017, included an extensive lit review and assessment process of thousands of creative library programs. The report features an evaluation framework with the following criteria, which each come with their own evidence-based impact factors: Accessing Resources, Idea Building, Civic Engagement, Community Development, Cultural Participation, Health and Wellbeing, Educational Attainment, and Economic Productivity. Those interested in exploring the report and other supplementary materials can visit

<http://www.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/manage/research/libraries-as-creative-spaces>. The slides and notes from my presentation are accessible at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cTK5PxKaeWnthNqiFbHZoDfgm-hyca77/view?usp=sharing>

## **Meeting: Research and Information Services Section**

Moderator: Alyssa Vincent

This was my first time attending a meeting of the Research and Information Services section. We discussed various ideas for how the group could meet and engage between conferences, and had a short, critical discussion of the article “Vocational Awe and Librarianship: The Lies We Tell Ourselves” by Fobazi Ettarh, published on *In the Library with a Lead Pipe* and the implications it raises for the field of librarianship.

(<http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2018/vocational-awe/>).

## **Thursday March 1st, 2018**

Since I was not able to register for any of the workshops or tours that were offered on Thursday, the last day of the Conference, I took the opportunity to use my last day in New York to explore a small taste of what the Big Apple has to offer for an artist and art-lover. I went to the Chelsea neighbourhood, where I visited various commercial galleries, as well as the one of the best shops for art publications, Printed Matter. I walked the High Line (an elevated railway line converted into a park with public art), visited the American Folk Art Museum (where I saw Henry Darger’s original manuscripts), walked through Central Park and finished off the trip with a visit to the Society of Illustrators, which featured an opening reception for their exhibition “The Art of MARCH: A Civil Rights Masterpiece” featuring original artwork from the March trilogy of graphic novels by Nate Powell, about Congressman John Lewis’s experience in the civil rights movement.

Overall, the Conference provided a potent injection of inspiration which will have an impact on my professional work for many years to come. Again, I am so grateful for the support of the ARLIS/NA Ontario Chapter in making this trip possible.