

DSA portion at Awards Ceremony
ARLIS/NA, May 5, 2026

Rebecca K. Friedman, DSA Subcommittee Chair, 2025-26

Good evening, all. 2026 marks the 40th-year anniversary of the Distinguished Service Award since the 1st DSA winner was chosen and honored in 1986 (to Bernard Karpel, former Chief Librarian/Director at the MoMA Library in NYC).

I'd like to thank the other members of the DSA Subcommittee . . . (slide).

The last Canadian winner of the DSA was presented in Montreal in 1995, i.e. 31 years ago at the Sheraton Centre Montreal, a 10-min walk from here (Mary Williamson was the recipient, former senior librarian and fine arts bibliographer at York University in Toronto). We are so thrilled to be able to have selected a highly-deserving Canadian award winner to be presented in Montreal once again.

I would like to introduce Dr. Nicola Pezolet, Professor in the Faculty of Fine Arts and Chair of the Dept of Art History at Concordia University here in Montreal to introduce this year's DSA recipient.

Nicola Tullio Pezolet, PhD

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Dear colleagues,

It's a pleasure to stand among many art librarians—the people whose tireless work sustains so much of what we do, what we teach and what we value in our studios and in our classrooms.

It is also a true privilege to introduce this year's recipient of the ARLIS/NA Distinguished Service Award: Mr. John Latour.

Thank you Hélène Brousseau and Pamela Caussy for asking me to present our dear colleague and friend.

John Latour is a Teaching and Research Librarian at Concordia University in Montréal, a role he has held since 2018.

For many years before joining Concordia, he has built an exceptional career marked by sustained service to art librarianship and a truly deep and personal commitment to the arts community.

John Latour has also played key roles in major cultural and information institutions, including the Canadian Centre for Architecture and Artexxe. Alongside this work, he has maintained an active artistic practice—a truly generative combination that allows him to bridge research, teaching, and creative production. Students and colleagues like me rely on John not only for his remarkable knowledge of library resources but also of modern and contemporary Quebec and Canadian art, and the generosity and clarity with which he shares everything.

His scholarship and exhibition work, including *Who Was Who Was Who in Contemporary Canadian Art*, are truly original and timely.

As the current Chair of Art History, I am especially proud to note that John Latour is an alumnus of our department. His grad thesis on Canadian sculpture since the 1970s is on Spectrum in case you're interested!

His professional service is indeed distinguished. Mr. Latour has taken on multiple leadership roles within ARLIS/NA and was instrumental in sustaining intellectual exchange during your 2021 online conference. At Concordia, he is widely regarded as a trusted collaborator—someone faculty members and students alike turn to constantly and eagerly.

On a personal note, I can say with complete confidence that John is the kindest, most approachable, and most dedicated scholar and library professional I have had the privilege to work with in my career in Canada, the United States and France.

Please join me in celebrating and congratulating Mr. John Latour.