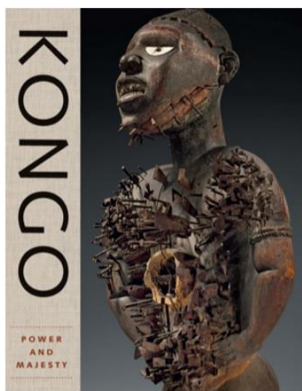


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ARLIS/NA ANNOUNCES 2015 GEORGE WITTENBORN MEMORIAL BOOK AWARD

OAK CREEK, WI (March 16, 2016) – *Kongo: Power and Majesty* by Alisa LaGamma, an exhibition catalogue published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was awarded the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA)'s 37th annual George Wittenborn Memorial Book Award at the Society's annual conference held in Seattle, WA, March 8-12, 2016. Established in 1980, the Wittenborn Award honors the memory of George Wittenborn, a premier New York art book dealer and publisher, and is given annually to North American publications demonstrating excellence in art publishing.

Kongo: Power and Majesty
Alisa LaGamma
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015



Kongo: Power and Majesty accompanies a pioneering exhibit on the art of the Kongo, curated by Alisa LaGamma and displayed at the museum in fall 2015. Praised for its variety of objects and widely discussed as a major new study of Kongo's history of art before, during, and after contact with Europe, the exhibition represented a high mark in the history of African art scholarship and the published catalogue matches its strength. The catalogue includes essays by Alisa LaGamma as well as several other esteemed scholars of African art and incorporates original research by the museum's conservators and research scientists. The rich bibliography, glossary of Kongo terms, chronology of kingship, and

particularly detailed exhibition object checklist further deepen the scholarly value of the catalogue, but the publication remains open, inviting, and accessible to a wide audience of scholars, students, and the general public. The text and illustrations are beautifully laid out, and the newly photographed images of the art objects usefully include multiple views of three-dimensional works and revealing detail shots. The catalogue is a beautiful object in its own right, constructed with the highest production standards for its cloth, paper, and binding. The Wittenborn Book Award committee praised the work's attention to detail, accessibility of the text, and the high aesthetic quality of the design, and particularly noted the strength of its interdisciplinary and international research, in which the history of art in the Kongo is considered through the lenses of anthropology, art history, history, and sociology. The title demonstrates the heights to which scholarship and publishing on non-Western art are rising, and the full virtues and pleasures a well-published museum exhibition catalogue can provide in 2015.

Mark Polizzotti, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, says "As the Metropolitan Museum's publisher, I take great pleasure in congratulating Alisa LaGamma on this remarkable achievement. I am particularly delighted to see *Kongo: Power and Majesty* honored

with the Wittenborn Book Award in that it represents the best of what The Met tries to achieve with its publications: a balance of scholarly excellence, accessibility, beautiful imagery, handsome design, and superlative production. In *Kongo*, LaGamma and her co-authors have brought to the fore an understudied aspect of African history. They present not only a rich and nuanced analysis of the Kongo's interactions with the West over four centuries, but also a compelling portrait of the region's artistic flourishing and the endurance of the creative spirit."

Kristen Regina, ARLIS/NA President and Arcadia Director of the Library and Archives at the Philadelphia Museum of Art says "Presenting the Society's Wittenborn award to an outstanding example of an exhibition catalogue like *Kongo* acknowledges the high caliber of the art research information that museum publications offer both to scholars and to the public. *Kongo* is a remarkable achievement for the curators, researchers, and publishers at the Metropolitan Museum, and we congratulate and thank them for their dedication to producing such high-quality scholarship in the field of art publishing."

The members of the 2015 Wittenborn Award Committee are: Karyn Hinkle, Northwestern University (chair); Elizabeth Berenz, Artstor; Karl-Rainer Blumenthal, Internet Archive; Alexis Burson, DePaul University; and Autumn Mather, the Art Institute of Chicago.

About the Art Libraries Society of North America

Founded in 1972, the Art Libraries Society of North America is a dynamic, international organization of more than 1,000 individuals devoted to fostering excellence in art and design librarianship and image management in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The membership includes architecture and art librarians, visual resources professionals, artists, curators, educators, publishers, students, and others interested in visual arts information. To serve this diverse constituency, the Society provides a wide range of programs and services within an organizational structure that encourages participation at all levels.

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