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Janis Ekdahl, Former MoMA Library Director, Honored with the ARLIS/NA 2018 Distinguished Service Award



SALT LAKE CITY, UT (March 28, 2019)--The Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) is pleased to announce Janis Ekdahl as the recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Service Award. She is the 28th person to receive the society's highest honor. The Distinguished Service Award recognizes an individual whose exemplary service in art librarianship, visual resources curatorship, or a related field has made an outstanding national or international contribution to art information. Janice accepted the award at the convocation ceremony during the society's annual conference, held this year in Salt Lake City.

Janis Ekdahl's dedication to the profession is amply demonstrated by her many accomplishments and long association with ARLIS/NA. As a new librarian, she attended the society's first conference in New York City in 1973. She served on the executive board as eastern regional representative and as

president, assisted with annual conference and chapter meetings held in New York -- including coordinating exhibits for the 2018 conference -- and attended every annual conference but one. Janis's professional leadership also includes involvement in New York Archivists Roundtable, IFLA, College Art Association, and American Library Association, contributing her expertise as an advocate for art librarianship.

After several years at the Brooklyn Public Library, Janis' five-decade long career in art librarianship began at Vassar College where she served as director of the art library for ten years. This experience prepared her well for positions as assistant director and director of the Museum of Modern Art Library, where over the course of nearly twenty years she developed new standards for access to art information and built impressive collections of artists' books, ephemera files, and rare art serials. Her network of colleagues, artists, and museum professionals worldwide created new opportunities for collaboration and shared art resources.

Among Janis's research contributions is *American Sculpture: A Guide to Information Services* (1977), which *The American Art Journal* called "a must-have." In addition to writing book reviews, Janis has contributed articles to *Art Documentation* and other professional journals.

Although Janis retired from MoMA in 1993, she remained active in the profession by accepting a position at the Bard Graduate Center, where her impressive knowledge and experience was put to use in the collection development of the library. Today Janis continues to be a mentor offering advice and encouragement for art librarians beginning their careers.

As expressed in the many letters of nomination, Janis has given almost a lifetime of service to art librarianship throughout her stewardship of library collections, her contribution to the literature, her involvement with ARLIS/NA, and her enthusiasm for mentorship. The words of praise written on her behalf echoed the feelings of the committee: "Janis's service to the art library community has been tireless and unceasing, and I cannot think of a better recipient for this award." "Janis is the best public face that the profession of art librarianship could want."

For her contribution to art librarianship and to ARLIS/NA in particular, the society is pleased to honor Janis Ekdahl with the 2018 Distinguished Service Award.

The members of the 2018 ARLIS/NA Distinguished Service Award Sub-Committee were: Liv Valmestad, Chair, Maria Oldal, Katie Keller, Anne Haas, Sylvia Roberts, and Elisa Hansen.

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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