

Association of Architecture School Librarians 2015 Annual Conference Report

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The 2015 annual conference of the Association of Architecture School Librarians was held in Toronto, Ontario, for the first time since its inaugural meeting thirty-seven years ago. The conference was held in the center of downtown at the Sheraton Centre Toronto from March 17 through March 19, with forty-eight representatives from forty institutions in attendance. Among the attendees were architecture, art, engineering, planning, and fashion librarians, professors of architecture, archivists, catalogers, directors of visual resource and materials collections, and representatives of print and online publications. The weather was gorgeous for the duration of the conference – bright and brisk – and our Toronto-based hosts did a wonderful job of showing us their city.

As in the past, the 2015 conference program offered a balance of activities that included presentations, tours, and opportunities for networking. The conference kicked off Tuesday morning with a brunch featuring guest speaker Shawn Micallef, recent author of *The Trouble with Brunch: Work, Class, and the Pursuit of Leisure*. Micallef gave a lighthearted talk about Toronto, his adopted home, introducing projects that have sought to understand or explain the city's development in a meaningful way through unconventional means. His talk was followed by a presentation by Cindy Derrenbacher of Laurentian University, who introduced the life and work of Toronto-based architect Raymond Moriyama. The presentation provided a knowledge base that was useful in understanding many of the projects visited during the conference, including the Bata Shoe Museum, the Toronto Reference Library, and the Aga Khan Museum – significant, landmark buildings designed by his firm Moriyama & Teshima Architects. At the Bata Shoe Museum the group was met by partner Diarmuid Nash and an associate, who together gave an informative tour of the building and were able to speak about the project from a personal level – explaining key design decisions such as the selection of French limestone that echoes the texture of leather. Tours at the recently renovated Toronto Reference Library, originally completed in 1977, were led by Phyllis Jacklin and Ab Velasco. The five-year, \$34 million renovation had clearly produced a dynamic, well-used public resource that was bustling with activity. A major highlight was the addition of a Digital Innovation Hub, which offers digital fabrication tools and one-on-one instruction to patrons.

The second day of the conference began with the annual business meeting and a series of short presentations. There were product and resource updates from the Avery Index, the Built Works Registry, Echelle-1 Internationale, and On Architecture. The resources are at different stages of development, from well-established to newly formed, and it was particularly inspiring to hear Diego Grass speak about the early projects that led to the development of a resource that may change the way architecture students learn about buildings. Following were the popular lightning round presentations, which covered a range of topics that explored initiatives to increase engagement from students and faculty, introduced a new model for urban humanities supported by the library system, provided updates on material collections, and gave tips to aspiring librarians currently in contract positions. Afterwards, the group was shuttled to the Aga Khan Museum, completed in 2014, for self-guided tours and a lovely group dinner at Diwan Restaurant.

On the final day, the group was introduced to the relatively recent development of altmetrics, which measure scholarly impact through alternative venues such as social media platforms. Altmetrics and the development of ORCID identifiers will surely become familiar to librarians in support of their faculty and students. The panel was followed by another that explored the challenges faced by women in architecture and the importance of proactive initiatives that help to raise their profile. A participatory, concluding session followed, asking for attendees to share their conclusions from the previous days' events and brainstorm topics to explore in 2016. The conversation centered on topics including the state of institutional repositories for student and faculty-produced materials, misconceptions from faculty and students regarding the role of librarians (be they faculty, staff, etc.), and the growing significance of altmetrics. Afterwards, to conclude the conference, the group was treated to tours of Toronto City Hall, the Ryerson University Student Learning Centre, and the Ryerson Image Center.

This experience marked my first attendance at an AASL Conference, made possible thanks to the Frances Chen AASL Conference Travel Award. I'd like to thank the AASL Awards Committee for giving me the opportunity to meet so many wonderful colleagues, and to participate in the rich program made possible by the hardworking AASL conference organizers. Though the Materials Lab at The University of Texas at Austin does not have a traditional library, there were many strategies and concepts introduced at the conference that will help to make our resource more robust. Given my educational background in architecture rather than library sciences, the conference was especially eye-opening. I look forward to returning to the AASL Conference in the future, and hope to make it to Seattle next year!