



The Fine Arts Library Transformed

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Henri Zerner



Slide cabinets, Visual Collections, 1970s. Photograph by Carol Dirga.
13 x 18 cm. FAL Administrative Files.

SINCE I ARRIVED AT HARVARD IN THE EARLY 1970S, I HAVE SEEN THE Fine Arts Library transformed. We used to spend a good part of our lives in its basement with its vast horizon of slide and photograph cabinets, all gone. No regrets there as far as the slides are concerned. They were the plague of my life; someone else always had the crucial one you needed; they broke, they faded. But what is lost is the sociability that went with it, as we met in the bowels of the Fogg. And all the books were right there on the shelves. Browsing will perhaps be unknown to later generations. Surfing is a pleasure too, no doubt, equally useful and rich in surprises, ah! but browsing . . . was great.

Contributors

JAMES S. ACKERMAN is Arthur Kingsley Porter Professor of Fine Arts Emeritus, Harvard University.

GLAIRE D. ANDERSON is Associate Professor of Art History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

SUSAN ANDERSON is Curatorial Research Associate for Dutch and Flemish Drawings, Harvard Art Museums.

PERSIS BERLEKAMP, PHD 2003, is Associate Professor of Art History, University of Chicago.

FRANCESCA BEWER is Research Curator in the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Harvard Art Museums.

KATHRYN BRUSH is Professor of Art History, Department of Visual Arts, University of Western Ontario, Canada.

ELLEN P. CONANT is an independent scholar.

HARRY COOPER, PHD 1997, is Curator of Modern Art, National Gallery of Art.

JAMES CUNO, PHD 1985, is President and CEO of the J. Paul Getty Trust.

WALTER B. DENNY, PHD 1971, is Professor of Art History at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

EMINE FETVACI, PHD 2005, is Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Art and Architecture, Boston University.

SHIRIN FOZI, PHD 2010, is Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Art and Architecture, University of Pittsburgh.

WOLFGANG FREITAG was Librarian of the Fine Arts Library from 1962 to 1989.

JEFFREY L. HORRELL was Librarian of the Fine Arts Library from 1992 to 1998 and currently is Dean of Libraries at Dartmouth College.

ADEN KUMLER, PHD 2007, is Assistant Professor, Department Art History, University of Chicago.

MELISSA BECK LEMKE is Image Specialist for Italian Art, Department of Image Collections, National Gallery of Art.

MEGAN R. LUKE, PHD 2009, is Assistant Professor, Department of the History of Art and Architecture, University of Southern California.

KATHARINE MARTINEZ was the Librarian of the Fine Arts Library from 1998 to 2010 and currently is Director of the Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona.

CHRISTINE MEHRING, PHD 2001, is Associate Professor in the Department of Art History, University of Chicago.

JOHN E. MOORE, PHD 1992, is Professor of Art, Smith College.

ALEXANDER NAGEL, PHD 1993, is Professor of Fine Arts, New York University.

PETER NISBET is Chief Curator at the Ackland Art Museum, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

LISA PON, PHD 1999, is Associate Professor, Department of Art History, Southern Methodist University.

SCOTT REDFORD, PHD 1989, is Professor in the Department of Archaeology and History of Art, Koç University, Istanbul.

MELISSA RENN is Senior Curatorial Research Associate, Harvard Art Museums.

CLAIRE ROBERTS is Senior Lecturer in Art History, University of Adelaide.

WILLIAM W. ROBINSON, PHD 1996, is Maida and George Abrams Curator of Drawings, Harvard Art Museums.

ERIC M. ROSENBERG, PHD 1992, is Associate Professor of Art History, Tufts University.

JOHN M. ROSENFELD, PHD 1959, is Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Professor of East Asian Art Emeritus, Harvard University.

HAO SHENG is Wu Tung Curator of Chinese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

SEYMOUR SLIVE is Gleason Professor of Fine Arts Emeritus, Harvard University.

MIRIAM STEWART is Curator of the Collection, Division of European and American Art, Harvard Art Museums.

DENİZ TÜRKER is a PhD candidate in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University.

MICHELLE C. WANG, PHD 2008, is Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and Art History, Georgetown University.

HENRI ZERNER is Professor of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University.