**ARLIS/UK & Ireland Conference 2021:**

**Reframing Art Libraries – from Challenge to Opportunity**

**Call for Papers**

We’re excited to announce that **ARLIS UK & Ireland** will hold its first virtual Annual Conference from **Wednesday 21 – Friday 23 July 2021** via Zoom. In the interests of opening the conference up to wider participation, for the first time the ARLIS/UK & Ireland conference will be free for all who want to take part.

In the past decade, the importance of museums, libraries and archives within the UK and Ireland and beyond, has been highlighted and debated as a result of rapid social, political and technological change.

The experiences of 2020 have highlighted longstanding issues of inequality. We have experienced enormous, dramatic and global changes in our social and political climate due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the worldwide Climate Emergency. ARLIS 2021 seeks to address and discuss ways in which art, design and architecture libraries and archives are responding to these challenges in a creative and innovative way, the nature of critical librarianship in this climate, and the future for art librarianship in the light of these developments.

The ARLIS 2021 Conference Working Party is therefore seeking contributions which actively engage with these key issues.

We welcome and encourage presentations which reflect and address the challenges faced by art libraries and those who work in them in a time of unprecedented change, involving new ways of learning and working and critical approaches which discuss practical and imaginative responses to these issues.

We invite proposals for presentations from those engaged with any aspect of arts librarianship or archival practice, and at all career stages, including students and those at any stage of qualification, or none. We are also interested in hearing from those who work in related fields, and researchers, artists and makers, activists and thinkers, advocates and self-advocates, as well as cross-disciplinary proposals that are relevant to the profession.

We are actively seeking engagement in the ARLIS 2021 conference from those whose voices might have been excluded from the dialogue in the art library world, due to the structural racism, LGTBQ+ exclusion, transphobia, ableism, classism, and class-based disadvantage which exist in all areas of arts librarianship. Conversations within a specialist sector can become insular, and we especially welcome contributions from these under-represented voices.

The opportunities an open virtual event offers are significant and exciting, and the range of debates and participants will, we hope, reflect the wide scope that this online format encourages.

ARLIS UK & Ireland will offer training and support for Conference participants for presenting effectively online, tailored specifically, as required, to individual need. Further details will follow.

This conference will be an inclusive, safe space for discussion for all, with a Code of Conduct in place.

* **What are we looking for?**

The conference will offer a programme of keynote presentations by invited speakers and contributed papers/presentations.

**Themes** we are interested in focusing on at the conference include:

* **Critical approaches to art and design librarianship.** Disrupting the ‘status quo’ to bring about social justice in library and archival collections, decolonisation initiatives or embedded equality, creative pedagogical work, and non-traditional conceptions of information literacy. How are art and design librarians challenging and interrogating knowledge canons in their collections and actively working towards change in their collections and practices, particularly in the light of the events of 2020: addressing bias in subject indexing, for instance? How can we work collaboratively with organisations active in these issues?
* **Open access/digital approaches and initiatives in the art and design library**. In a time of increasing physical distancing between user and materials, how are art and design libraries and archives responding practically to the opportunities and challenges of digital provision and open access to research materials? How are we developing art and design-related digital/online projects that promote wider access for users through information literacy approaches, and rethinking collections in light of open access initiatives and digital metadata developments? And how can art librarians address the digital divide and digital poverty, and bring the digital to those who may not have internet access?
* **Art and design publishing and libraries in the 2020s.** How are art libraries responding to the changing context of art and design publishing, particularly in relation to ever-shrinking budgets and new demands on our resources? How have art and design publishing and libraries in 2020 become more diverse and inclusive? How have initiatives to decolonise the curriculum, the global health crisis and the climate emergency affected the publishing context for art and design? This may include issues around self-publishing, institutional or specialist publishing, and more informal approaches to the sourcing of art and design material.
* **Future approaches to art and design librarianship.** How has our practice been transformed as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, issues of sustainability and in relation to changing access and digital contexts? How will what we have learnt inform our future practices? What direction will art librarianship take in the future, and how do we ensure our relevance in the context of funding crises and increasing digital provision? Is the art and design subject specialist perhaps an endangered species?

Over the two and a half days, the contributed sessions we will be hosting online will be a mix of:

* **Lightning talks** (**10 mins)**
* **Short presentations (20 mins)**
* **Longer presentations (30 mins**)

There will be 5 or 10 minutes built in after each presentation, depending on its length, for questions and discussion.

Please specify what kind of session you would like to offer in your submission. We will be flexible and suggest alternative timings for presentations/talks if we feel it is more appropriate, in order to accommodate a wide range of voices. We welcome submissions in a range of formats, which might include in-conversation sessions, dialogues, panel presentations or demonstrations of projects, or any other format which will suit the online context, as well as speaker presentations of papers.

* **How do you submit a proposal?**

All proposals should include:

* Title of the paper
* Presenter(s) of the paper
* Type of proposal: Lightning talk (10 minutes), 30-minute presentation or 20-minute presentation
* Paper abstract (500 words maximum for presentations, 300 words maximum for lightning talks)
* Presenter’s name, pronouns, email address, and professional or organisational affiliation (if any)
* Short details of speaker’s bio (150-200 words maximum)

Please send your proposal by email to: [arlisconference2021@gmail.com](mailto:arlisconference2021@gmail.com)

Closing date: **Midnight Sunday 7 February 2021.**

All submissions will be acknowledged and responded to, and we will notify successful presenters by **26 March 2021.**

The Conference Working Party will give feedback and may suggest amendments to proposals – we are keen to offer guidance and support to potential presenters.

Submissions will be reviewed by the Conference Working Party according to the following selection criteria:

* Relevance to conference themes
* Speaking from a perspective which has traditionally been marginalised in the art and design library community and that enhances equity and diversity
* Interest and freshness of approach
* Quality of content/information
* An approach that provides or enhances knowledge, expertise, ideas and inspiration

While proposals will be judged on their own merit, we’ll also be looking at how the papers fit in with the range of other proposals to enable us to deliver a varied, coherent and dynamic conference.  If a paper has previously been delivered elsewhere, a significantly different version may be submitted for the ARLIS UK & Ireland Conference 2021.

For more information or questions about the Conference, you are welcome to contact the Conference Working Party directly: [arlisconference2021@gmail.com](mailto:arlisconference2021@gmail.com)

We are Leo Appleton (Co-Chair), Jane Bramwell, Klara Finnimore, Cathy Johns (Co-Chair), Chris Jones, Carla Marchesan, Amy Page, Amy Straker, Hollie Woodward.

Further information about the Conference Working Party can be found on the ARLIS website: <https://arlis.net/>