

Modeling Collaboration: A Case Study in Joint Stewardship

JENNIFER GRAY, SHELLEY HAYREH and PAMELA CASEY

Abstract: In 2012 Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library at Columbia University and The Museum of Modern Art in New York co-acquired the extensive Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, thus entering into an unprecedented collaboration across domains. This endeavor included navigating the complexities of joint stewardship when the two institutions—a museum dedicated to mounting exhibitions and a research library dedicated to access and scholarship—have different mandates and systems for sharing information. The collaboration also realized an ambitious exhibition agenda that produced four Wright exhibitions in four years, including *Frank Lloyd Wright at 150: Unpacking the Archive* (MoMA 2017), a show that took the archive itself as its point of departure. Processing a collection that is simultaneously being mined for exhibition purposes has had particular challenges, such as the reconciling of item-level cataloguing with higher level processing practice. Yet both institutions have been driven by the common goal of making Wright’s archive more visible and accessible, and to generate new scholarship on this canonical figure. The successes and challenges of this experiment offer one model for how archives, libraries, and museums can collaborate to facilitate cross-disciplinary projects.

About the Authors:

Jennifer Gray (PhD, Columbia University) is Curator of Drawings and Archives at Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University. She studies modern architecture, with an emphasis on how designers and activists used architecture, cities, and landscapes to advance social and spatial justice at the turn of the 20th century. She also is interested in contemporary social practice and questions of critical heritage. Most recently she produced the exhibitions *Frank Lloyd Wright tra America e Italia* at the Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli in Turin, Italy, and *Frank Lloyd Wright at 150: Unpacking the Archive* at The Museum of Modern Art, as well as the accompanying publications. Her work has been published elsewhere in journals of architectural history and experimental preservation, and she is developing a book project, tentatively titled *Liminal Spaces*, that explores activist architecture in Chicago circa 1900. She has won several awards and fellowships, including a grant from the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

Shelley Hayreh joined Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in 2010. In her role as Archivist in the Department of Drawings and Archives, she oversees the physical and intellectual management of over two million drawings, photographs, letters, and manuscripts related to architecture. During her time at Avery, Shelley has served as a key organizer and principle cataloguer of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation Archives, which was jointly acquired by Avery Library and the Museum of Modern Art in 2012. She also is responsible for the hiring, training and supervising of graduate processing assistants for the department. Outside her work at Avery Library, Shelley processes the papers of noted German-American historian Fritz Stern, whose work focused on the rise of National Socialism in Germany during the early 20th century. Shelley graduated from University of Michigan’s School of Information in 2010. During her

graduate studies, Shelley was a graduate student processor for the Michigan Historical Collections at the Bentley Historical Library.

Pamela Casey is Architecture Archivist in the Department of Drawings and Archives at Columbia University's Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library. Pamela previously worked as Archivist at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal and as a researcher and editor for architects and architectural historians in Canada and the UK. She holds an MLIS from the School of Information Studies at McGill University and an MFA in Writing from Columbia University. She has taught academic writing to architecture students at the Pratt School of Architecture in New York, and creative writing to undergraduates at Columbia. Her role at Avery focuses on outreach to faculty and students, processing photography collections and visual materials, and planning for future architectural born-digital collections.