

**ARLIS/NA Annual Conference
Denver, CO, May 1-5, 2008**



I See What You Mean, 2005
originally uploaded to Flickr by [bizzybOt](#)

This year's conference in Denver provided an excellent opportunity to connect with art and architecture librarians from all over North America, some of whom I met last year in Atlanta, and to attend business meetings as well as sessions in a variety of topics.

My sessions started on an excellent note with the opening plenary delivered by [Lawrence Argent](#), who took us through his design and construction process for his piece *I See What You Mean*, a 40 feet tall blue bear outside of the Denver Convention Centre. This public art project was first inspired while Argent watched his son play with a small plastic polar bear figure and eventually would become a huge undertaking that involved sophisticated CAD and fabrication challenges that required him to work with numerous contractors and consultants. Argent also talked about other public art commissions he has won in and around Denver. His approach to art as the conceptual creator and project manager for his works was extremely interesting and inspiring. photo: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/bizzybOt/2417380039/>

One of the best sessions I have attended at a conference was *Mile High Planning – New Directions in Urban Renewal and Sustainability Planning* with **Peter Pollock** (Ronald Smith Fellow at Lincoln Institute of Land Policy), **Peter Park** (Denver City Planning Department) and **Rebecca Price** (Architecture, Urban Planning and Visual Resources Librarian, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor). The issues presented by Pollock and Park, although specific to Denver and Colorado, are current and relevant issues to students and professionals in urban and regional planning elsewhere in the United States and Canada. Pollock started by discussing the need for a “sustainable code” to

respond pressing issues that states like Colorado are dealing with, such as the growing number of amenity cities, the merge of urban regions into mega-regions, population growth and the consequences these bring to the development. Park talked about *Blueprint Denver*, an integrated Land Use and Transportation Plan, that includes channeling growth to areas that can take it, areas of growth, and leaving other areas as areas of stability. Denver is focusing on transit oriented development and density increases to reduce congestion and improve quality of life of its residents. Price closed the session sharing with us useful multidisciplinary resources to respond to the particular research needs for planning, including government and municipal documents, statistical resources, newspapers, maps and GIS, business and many more.

During the Diversity Forum we were inspired by **Trevor Dawes** presentation. Starting with examples of ways in which we respond to diversity issues, Dawes talked about what diversity means, the importance of embracing it in the library, our communities and even from a business perspective. He offered a variety of recommendations to increase awareness and better serve diverse populations.



Daniel Libeskind, [Denver Art Museum](#), 2006
originally uploaded to Flickr by [anyme meme](#)

I was able to visit the [Denver Art Museum](#) twice. I visited part of their permanent collection on contemporary art and the exhibition *Gee's Bend: The Architecture of the Quilt*, an exceptional collection of quilts made in an isolated farming community at a bend in the Alabama River. Sunday night, during *A Big DAM Party!* I continued my visit through the Hamilton Building, the 2006 expansion designed by Daniel Libeskind, and was also able to catch up with librarians I met last year in Atlanta. The last session I attended before the party, *Icon or Enclosure? The Architecture of the Denver Art Museum*, greatly enhanced the experience. **Alan Michelson** (Head, Architecture and Urban Planning Library, University of Washington) talked about the design history of this museum, the first designed in 1971 by Gio Ponti, and the controversies both buildings caused when they opened. **Brit Probst**, principal for Davis Partnership Architects, discussed the challenges encountered during the construction of such an unconventional building and **Heather Nielsen**, head of Community and Family Programs for the museum, shared with us how the

unique spaces in the Hamilton building have provided opportunities for new and innovative programs and exhibitions that are highly interactive.

As a member of the Public Policy Committee, the Diversity Committee and the Canadian chapter I was happy to have the opportunity to meet with these groups to hear news and reports for the past year activities as well as making plans for the coming year. I was disappointed to have been unable to join the Northwest chapter meeting due to a scheduling conflict, and would like to thank the chapter for its assistance which made my trip to this conference possible.

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