READING ROOM   A Catalog of New York City's Branch Libraries

The Center for Architecture to present
Reading Room: A Catalog of New York City's Branch Libraries - September 22, 2016 – January 7, 2017

This unprecedented five-year project presents all 210 locations of New York City's public library systems, photographed by Elizabeth Felicella

NEW YORK, New York, September 15, 2016 – The Center for Architecture will present *Reading Room: A Catalog of New York City's Branch Libraries*, opening on **Thursday, September 22 at 6:00 pm**. The exhibition, designed by LeClair Lucas, features the work of architectural photographer **Elizabeth Felicella**, documenting all 210 branches of New York City's extensive public library systems in more than 2,000 photographs. Felicella's subtle yet clear and technically accomplished photographs depict the libraries from varying vantage points – from full-scope exterior shots to intimate studies of window plants and pencil sharpeners – inviting the viewer to appreciate the intricacy, complexity, and vast scope of these vital and evolving public resources.

As Felicella states:

> I began by browsing: in the end, if I have come away with an agenda or a wish, it is that the branch buildings of New York City's public libraries be understood and maintained as a collection, a rare and living architectural legacy, all the more extraordinary for its mutations, planned and unplanned over the course of the last century. It is a collection that is part and parcel of the evolution of modern public life as we know it; places that reflect and shape our best and changing aspirations as a society and as individuals within it.

Felicella's unprecedented five-year project has received the support of prestigious organizations, including the New York Council on the Arts and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts. Portions of *Reading Room* have been shown at Art in General and at the Mid-Manhattan library. At the Center for Architecture, the entire collection will be exhibited for the first time, arranged in chronological order according to the date of each library's construction, thus charting the birth, growth, and ongoing evolution of New York City's extraordinary library system.

The exhibition is presented as part of the presidential theme of **Carol Loewenson, FAIA**, 2016 AIANY President, "Authenticity and Innovation," which explores the tensions and opportunities between new building uses and technologies and traditional materials and construction. According to Loewenson, "Libraries remain one of the most critical public institutions in our cities. Not disappearing with the advent of the digital age, they are, in fact, more important than ever in their support and enhancement of literacy, community, and cultural engagement."

Reading Room will be complemented by a symposium, "**The Reports of my Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated: Libraries for the Future**," to take place at the Center for Architecture on **Saturday, October 29, from 1:00-5:00pm**. The symposium will explore how libraries remain relevant and fulfill their missions while adapting to evolving needs and changing technologies.

Exhibition Opening
Wednesday, September 22, 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Free and open to the public
Members of the press are invited to the opening reception. Please RSVP to cschaulsohn@aiany.org

The Reports of my Death Have Been Greatly Exaggerated: Libraries for the Future
Saturday, October 29, 1:00 – 5:00 PM
Confirmed Speakers: **Barry Bergdoll**, Meyer Schapiro Professor of Art History, Columbia University; **Luis Herrera**, City Librarian, San Francisco Public Library; **Francine Houben**, Founder and Creative Director, Mecanoo, **Deborah Jacobs**, Director, Global Libraries Initiative, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; **Chris McVoy/Steven Holl, FAIA**, Steven Holl Architects; **Inga Saffron**, Architecture Critic, *Philadelphia Inquirer*; **Jeffrey Schnapp**, Faculty Director, metaLAB (at) Harvard and Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society, Harvard University; **Anthony Vidler**, Professor, Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture, Cooper Union.
Press members RSVP to cschaulsohn@aiany.org

Photography: Elizabeth Felicella
Exhibition Design: LeClair Lucas

Project supported by:

Graham Foundation

NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY. | Council on the Arts

Reading Room: A Catalog of New York City's Branch Libraries at the Center for Architecture is made by possible by the generous support of:

Sponsor:
Carol Loewenson, FAIA.

Photographic services provided by:

COLOR SPACE IMAGING , LLC

About Elizabeth Felicella
Elizabeth Felicella photographs architecture and landscape, with a particular interest in public space and preservation. She works on assignments and on long-term projects, which include a survey of the city's shoreline and an atlas of the periphery of Kennedy Airport. Represented by ESTO Photographics, her commissioned work appears regularly in the national and international design press. In 2013, she was the Brooklyn Library's first artist-in-residence, where she worked closely with the Brooklyn Collection and its photographic holdings.

About the Center for Architecture
The Center for Architecture is the premier cultural venue for architecture and the built environment in New York City, informed by the complexity of the City's urban fabric and in dialogue with the global community. The Center shares a home with the AIA New York Chapter and has the unique advantage of drawing upon the ideas and experiences of practicing architects to produce thought-provoking exhibitions, informative public programs, and quality design education experiences for K-12 students. It also leads New York City's annual month-long architecture and design festival, Archtober. The Center for Architecture's aim is to further public knowledge about New York City architecture and architects, foster exchange and collaboration among members of the design, development, building, scholarly, and policy sectors, and inspire new ideas about the role of design in communities by presenting contemporary and practical issues in architecture and urbanism to a general audience. http://cfa.aiany.org

###