



Smithsonian Institution

Helena Wright

Helena E. Wright has worked with museum image collections for more than thirty-five years. Curator of Graphic Arts at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History since 1983, she also served as Acting Curator of Photography from 1994-2004. Her collaborations with Smithsonian Institution Libraries include the exhibitions and



associated websites [“Audubon and the Smithsonian”](#) in 1997 and [“Picturing Words: The Power of Book Illustration”](#) in 2005.

As a Smithsonian curator, Wright’s work encompasses research, collecting, exhibitions, and professional service. Her exhibitions at the American History Museum have included such topics as American papermaking, collotype printing, and women graphic artists. She has published catalogues for these exhibitions, as well as journal articles and essays on prints and photographs, print collections, and exhibitions. She is the author of *Prints at the Smithsonian: The Origins of a National Collection* (1996), and she served as guest editor for a special issue of “History of Photography” (Winter 2000) devoted to the Museum’s collection.

Wright’s professional affiliations span several disciplines, including printing and printmaking, industrial archeology, and the history of technology. She has served in various capacities for the Society for Industrial Archeology, the Society for the History of Technology, and the National Stereoscopic Association, as well as The International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage. Her research and publications center on prints, photographs and other pictorial media. She has focused on the production and reception of graphic work in the construction of a larger visual culture.

From 1968 to 1983, she was Curator of Prints, Photographs, and Manuscripts at the Merrimack Valley Textile Museum (now the American Textile History Museum) in Massachusetts. She is a *cum laude* graduate of Bryn Mawr College and holds a Master’s degree from Simmons College. She received a Fellowship for Museum Professionals from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1973, and was elected to Beta Phi Mu in 1975. In 1998 she received the General Tools award for distinguished service from the Society for Industrial Archeology. For more detailed information about Ms. Wright, click [here](#).