



Slides by Florence Arquin from the "Arquin Slide Collection Digitization Project: Preserving the Heritage of Latin America"

## ARQUIN SLIDE COLLECTION DIGITIZATION PROJECT: PRESERVING THE HERITAGE OF LATIN AMERICA

FLORIDA ATLANTIC  
UNIVERSITY RECEIVES  
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE HUMANITIES  
GRANT OF \$231,588

**Emily Fenichel** and **Camila Afanador-Llach**, faculty in FAU's **Department of Visual Arts and Art History**, recently received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for \$231,588. The grant will support their project "Arquin Slide Collection Digitization Project: Preserving the Heritage of Latin America," which will make 25,000 slides depicting Latin America available to the public.

FAU's Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters is home to a unique collection of 25,000 images showcasing 1940s and 50s Latin American artists, architecture and culture and taken by renowned photographer Florence Arquin. Arquin was hired by the U.S. State Department in the 1940s as part of their Kodachrome Slide Project. She was paid to fly to Latin American countries and take pictures of culture, technology, agriculture and life in general. Among the photos are churches, buildings, landscapes and people, including Arquin's artist friends Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera.



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(continued)

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Image (l/r): Fenichel, Afanador-Llach

*"As a historian, I think it's fascinating that the State Department paid for this project with the aim of educating the American public about South America. It's also interesting to look at Arquin's interpretation of what was important to capture, which ranged from images of modern architecture, to colonial architecture, to images of her artist friends with their works."*

- Emily Fenichel,  
Department of Visual Arts  
and Art History (VAAH)



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The State Department's goal was to use the slides to create a series of educational presentations for institutions across the United States to further Pan Americanism. Unfortunately, Arquin's final project never came to be, however, because over the years that the project was being formulated, the conception of Pan Americanism gave way to the Cold War, and interest in South American culture waned. FAU purchased the collection in 1964, but they have never been made available to the public. Online access to the collection will serve as a powerful research tool for scholars throughout the world to study Latin America and the Caribbean.

*"Once we digitize the slides and create metadata, we envision that people will be able to search by country or town, or filter by terms that will depend on what we find during our analysis," said Afanador-Llach. "I look forward to using my research in user experience design to make sure that the interface is useful for anyone that is looking to our collection for their studies."*

Fenichel and Afanador-Llach started the application process for the NEH grant in 2018. The award will allow for digitization of the slides, creation of metadata to make the slides searchable, and for permanent maintenance of the collection at FAU.

This prestigious grant contributes to the College of Arts and Letters' Americas Initiative, and will form another important cornerstone for research on the Hemisphere from the unique vantage point of South Florida, the cultural and geographic nexus between North and South America and the Caribbean. To learn more about the collection and project, listen to Fenichel and Afanador-Llach on the college podcast **In Conversation: [fau.edu/artsandletters/podcast](https://fau.edu/artsandletters/podcast)**

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