

The Arquin Slide Collection Digitization Project

Florence Arquin (1900-1974) was an author, educator, and documentary photographer. In the 1940s, the U.S. State Department hired her to travel and take slides of Mexico, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador. Originally intended to educate those in the United States about Latin America, the slides document indigenous life, colonial architecture, modern cities, and agriculture. Arquin's slides are a complex and fascinating look at Latin America in the mid-20th century.

Arquin sold her collection of 25,000 slides to FAU in 1964 – it is one of the University's original teaching collections. For many years, the slides educated both students and the South Florida community about Latin American art and culture but were eclipsed by digital images. The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded a Preservation and Access Grant (2019) to Professors Emily Fenichel and Camila Afanador-Llach to digitize the slides and to craft a website displaying Arquin's slides. This digital humanities project will make these slides a prominent educational collection at FAU once again and will broaden access to Arquin's work to researchers and educators around the globe.

This portion of the exhibition introduces viewers to the slide collection in two ways. The video takes viewers through the website currently being built with the support of the NEH Grant. It highlights the various ways educators and researchers will be able to interact with the digitized slides. A selection of Arquin's original slides are also being displayed on the wall using a slide projector – a nod to the collection's history. These images are drawn from Arquin's photographs of the modern art scene in Mexico in the 1940s and 1950s. Arquin knew many artists personally, including Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo, Jose Clemente Orozco, Wolfgang Paalen, Alice Rahon, Olga Costa, and Juan O'Gorman. She took portraits of the artists, visited their studios, and documented their works in progress.

Camila Afanador-Llach, MFA
Assistant Professor of Graphic Design

Emily Fenichel, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Art History