



# I Love My Librarian!

2008 Award

## **Nominations for Arezoo Moseni**

Senior Librarian

The New York Public Library, Mid-Manhattan Library, The Art Collection  
New York, New York

### **Nominator:**

Pradeep Dalal

New York, New York

### **1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?**

I have known Ms. Arezoo Moseni for about four years. In the beginning she helped me with tracking books and references for my research on art and photography when I was a graduate student at the International Center of Photography. Later, after I graduated she invited me to submit a portfolio for consideration for an exhibition on the wall on the third floor. I did eventually exhibit at the Library and also had a public presentation with a curator as part of my exhibition.

### **2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.**

Ms. Moseni has helped me understand the complexities of surviving as an artist in New York by helping me find appropriate books and web sources, and more importantly organizing a valuable lecture series on careers and also on artists presentations. My exhibition at the New York Public Library resulted in a follow up exhibition at the Miami-Dade County Public Library. She made many helpful recommendations for public outreach for my show and helped me approach my art practice in a more professional way.

### **3. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?**

The NYPL is a very valuable part of my artistic practice. I come and look at many books for inspiration and ideas. Whenever I am stuck with a particular problem, I come and look at other artists work to help get me out of my rut. Ms. Moseni has contributed to my awareness of the larger art world by posting announcements for exhibitions in the city, and for alerting me about the latest books and videos that I might find useful. Recently she suggested a new DVD of the architect Santiago Calatrava. She is alert to new developments in the arts and is very generous in sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm.

**4. How does the nominee make the library a better place? Please be specific.**

The arts on the third floor is a terrific use of the library - I always look for new artists work as I get off the elevator. Ms. Moseni encouraged me to have the first public discussion of my work at the library. Many friends, colleagues, and the public had a chance to see my art work. As a result one high school student from Queens wrote a term paper on my exhibit and then invited me to speak at the career day at her high school. Ms. Moseni enables such rich sharing within the larger community that I would not have accessed by myself.

**5. How has the librarian made a difference in the community?**

Yes. I still use the extensive and up to date photography book selection at NYPL that Ms. Moseni has been quite instrumental especially with recent acquisitions. I now teach at the International Center of Photography and send my students to the library to do research and I too come and look for case studies for my classes and Ms. Moseni has been most helpful with pertinent recommendations.

**Nominator:**

Darcy Spitz

New York, New York

**1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?**

Four or five years. I'm a visual artist, and we met at an art opening where we both had paintings on display. I have always treasured the resources of the art collection at the Mid-Manhattan Library, and have visited on a regular basis for years. So it was a thrill to meet an art librarian who was immersed in both making art and making art accessible to the public.

**2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.**

Arezoo created several innovative and original programs at Mid-Manhattan Library, including Art in the Windows, which allows local artists to have a show in a small, but public place. Since I paint very small paintings, she selected my art for a showing. This was a great opportunity to get my art out in the public eye. She also originated other programs for artists -- "Art Wall on Third", "Artist Dialogues" and "Art Career Development Lectures," all of which are unique programs as far as I can tell.

**3. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?**

Arezoo is passionate about art, and shares her passion and knowledge about art history with the public through her library work. I admire someone who can talk about a subject without interjecting their opinion into the conversation. She presents information from an intelligent and thoughtful viewpoint and is optimistic in encouraging others to explore the art world. She offers many resources to artists not found elsewhere.

**4. How does the nominee make the library a better place? Please be specific.**

Arezoo created several original outreach programs, described above, that position the library as a resource for artists to come together, learn, exchange ideas and exhibit work. I don't know any other library that provides those resources.

**5. How has the librarian made a difference in the community?**

New York City is a mecca for artists, and Arezoo's programs have made the NYPL a place for artists to grow professionally, exhibit work that the public might never see otherwise and she provides information to the public about art in a highly accessible way. She is also an superb photographer, and is working on an ambitious program to photograph every inch of Manhattan. NYC is the land of the American dream, where

immigrants can create their own lives. As an immigrant from Iran, Arezoo embodies that dream and shares her optimism and enthusiasm for art with library patrons.

**Nominator:**

Stephen Spretnjak  
New York, New York

**1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?**

I met Arezoo Moseni approximately six years ago while conducting my research project that investigates poetic texts written by visual artists. I was spending about two hours a week going through the Library sources and met Arezoo as she was available at the information desk to assist patrons. She responded immediately with clear, intelligent, and articulate directions. She also took an interest in my project discussed possibilities. Later, I saw her at gallery openings and discovered that she is a visual artist.

**2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.**

I spend a great deal of time in the library so have witnessed Arezoo assisting patrons. She gives every patron her immediate attention, looks up their subject on the desk computer, asks clear questions, encourages, and directs to cross-subjects of interest. Her attention familiarizes the patron with the resources and educates how to navigate through and best use the system to their advantage. She also started a "Art On The Walls" project to exhibit works of art. It has made the environment a pleasant place to conduct research and to take that momentary break in thought to look at artworks. In my case, this type of stream-of-consciousness interruption allows for a brief slippage in intellectual thought ... that somehow generates a fresh approach to investigating the idea.

**3. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?**

Thanks to Arezoo's reorganization of the shelf system and placing paperback catalogues on the shelves, I have "discovered" many new artist/poets for my research archive. Many of the 400 artist/poets from Leonardo to present day, were found at this source. Many of these sources are not available at the Museum of Modern Art Library or the Getty Research Institute (although these have collections of artists' personal papers, diaries, journals, etc.). Arezoo became so interested in

my project, she invited me to present an artist/poet panel. I invited five artists to read their poems to slides of their artwork ... the room was packed to capacity. She also became familiar with my artwork and invited me to exhibit in the windows. I created a video work of my images and poetic text that was running on a 24 hour loop.. It was great to watch people interact ... stop in their tracks ... run into the library to learn more.

**4. How does the nominee make the library a better place? Please be specific.**

Arezoo has succeeded in her mission to make the library an excellent research environment. Her first big move was to reorganize the floor. She cleared shelves of material not related to the 3rd Floor subjects. she was allowed to break the rules and fill the shelves with non-hardcover books. All of a sudden, exhibition catalogues and paperback books were out of storage. She created the "Art On The Walls " program to display contemporary art. she created "Art In The Windows" to exhibit artworks three times a year in the street level windows. She created the artist dialogue series where an artist and writer discuss art live with library patrons. She created video showings from the archives of BOMB Magazine that feature recorded interviews with artists. She writes all the information printed for these events and submits all to the Library web site. These are very informative projects. Many patrons plan their visits to participate in the discussion panels, view new art, and research more on the topics. Many passers-by stop to view the windows then come inside.

**5. How has the librarian made a difference in the community?**

I think that the New York City community has greatly benefited from Arezoo's enthusiasm, intellect, and drive. She has insights that only an artist would come up with and generously shares them with the patrons. You have to understand that much of her time used to bring in projects is ... a labor of love. Her reward is the simple "thank you" received by the patrons after receiving guidance with their projects, or their excitement as they join the crowd to attend and participate in discussions.

**Nominator:**

George Stolz  
New York, New York

**1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?**

I have known Ms. Moseni for approximately six years. I came to know her by chance, in the course of researching in the library. She quickly and efficiently assisted me with my specific tasks, and in the process, via her comments and conversation, revealed herself to be extremely knowledgeable about art and at the same time deeply devoted to the library's role in society. All my contact with her since has only reinforced this initial, positive impression.

**2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.**

Initially, Ms. Moseni was of great assistance to me in completing my research for a book I was preparing to edit. Not only was she able to locate and make available the material I was specifically looking for, but in addition – and ultimately more important – she shared her own broad base of knowledge and professional diligence with me, enabling me to discover resources and material that I might not have encountered on my own.

Since then, Ms. Moseni has assisted me with other research, and on her own has continued to alert me to material and activities that might be relevant to my interests.

On a different level, I have found witnessing Ms. Moseni's vision for the library to be deeply inspiring in my own life. She is dedicated to human communication, whether via books, art, contacts, events or shared sources of knowledge. The positive effect on those around her is both practical and ethical.

**3. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?**

The New York Public Library has improved the quality of my life by making such a rich and varied repository of resources so easily and efficiently available to me. This has been of great service to me professionally, but at the same time has enhanced many aspects of my non-professional life -- my reading for pleasure, my impulses of pure curiosity, my civic activity, my children's education, etc.

Ms. Moseni has improved my quality of life by continuing to assist me with research and with the pursuit of various projects. She brings information to

my attention that I would not otherwise have encountered. Ms. Moseni has also improved my quality of life by inspiring me with a newfound respect for what libraries can do for others.

**4. How does the nominee make the library a better place? Please be specific.**

Beyond her diligence as a librarian -- and I have seen her patiently working with children, elderly visitors, non-English speaking visitors, etc- -- Ms. Moseni makes the library a better place by means of her selfless dedication to generating high-quality social and cultural activity at the library. For instance, without disturbing the more quotidian function of the library, Ms. Moseni -- entirely on her own initiative, yet without assuming any public protagonism -- has been able to organize art exhibitions, lecture series, talks with artists, etc. within library, despite the lack of infrastructure or support. All of these activities have maintained a truly remarkable level quality in terms of contemporary art world issues, aesthetic criteria and even relevance to the local community. Working with great subtlety and elegance, she exposes the full range of the library's daily visitors and users to the highest calibre contemporary art, and at the same has created a venue for debate and discourse within the local art world. That she has done this within the Art Library itself adds further luster to her achievement.

**5. How has the librarian made a difference in the community?**

Ms. Moseni works to generate communication, and to make that communication available to elements of the library's public. She organizes displays and exhibitions and events in such a way as to make them accessible -- literally and figuratively -- to the broadest possible public. She makes a point of including individuals and material with whom different sectors of society might be able to identify, and thus ensures that the events and exhibitions are made public to visitors who might not otherwise be exposed to such activity.