

EDITORIAL

This issue of the Art Libraries Journal is largely concerned with national art bibliographies and bibliographic control, or in other words, with the ways in which different countries are meeting the challenge of recording, collecting, and making available the publications, documents and media which provide and preserve information about each country's art.

Several of the contributions to this issue are the texts of papers presented to the IFLA Section of Art Libraries as part of its programme at the IFLA Conference at Chicago last August, a programme which was devoted to 'Universal Availability of Art Publications'. A theme of the conference was the necessity for a universal whole to be composed of local, national, regional parts. Some years ago, writing under the title 'Towards total provision of visual arts literature' Trevor Fawcett shared with us this vision:

Supposing that each country developed its own rational system of coverage, supposing also that each system was reasonably compatible and that universal access became a reality, then something like total provision would result¹.

We are still a long way from achieving this objective, but the essays in this issue demonstrate that the crucial first requirement, that different countries take care of the documentation of their own artistic life and tradition, can be and is being tackled and in different ways. The problem of national documentation will not be the same in any two countries; the inevitable development of a variety of solutions extends the range of options available. One option which should not be overlooked or dismissed where it may be feasible and appropriate (in developing countries, for example), is that of *not* treating art as a separate entity but instead, of ensuring that it is comprehensively represented in an integrated national library and information system (the NATIS concept), reflecting and encouraging awareness and exploration of the place of art in a wider culture and way of life and in its manifold inter-relationships with other 'subjects' and activities. This, after all, is the ideal, from which specialisation is forced to diverge (and to which, unless it loses its way, it strives constantly to return) by practical necessity.

Interspersed among the other essays are

two which focus on national art library associations, ARLIS/ANZ and ARLIS/Norge. This is entirely appropriate; such associations cannot avoid concerning themselves with the documentation of their nation's art; they cannot be expected to tolerate any absence or inadequacy in terms of either documentation, availability, or bibliographic control; nor will they condone lack of cooperation or coordination between those libraries and institutions upon whom crucial responsibilities fall by virtue of their collections and role. ARLIS/Norge has been concerned to ensure the continuing publication of the *Norsk kunsthistorisk bibliografi*; since Valerie Richards wrote her paper on ARLIS/ANZ, an ARLIS/ANZ conference has been devoted to the theme of the bibliography of Australian art². The existence of a national art library association is a virtual guarantee that the nation concerned will take good care of the documentation of its own art and will contribute to the universal availability of art publications.

With this issue the Art Libraries journal has a new look as well as a new editor. While the Journal will continue to be published by ARLIS/UK and Eire it will try harder than ever to fulfill the role of an international forum which is its *raison d'être*. To this end, we have enlisted the help of Alexander Ross who has accepted an invitation to serve as Reviews Editor (North America), and it is hoped to appoint Deputy Editors from different parts of the world in addition to making occasional use of Guest Editors. The former Advisory Board is disbanded; because of its international composition it could never hope to meet, and not all members were forthcoming with advice. What we did not want was a list of names spuriously authenticating the Journal's international status, which must be determined rather by the range and quality of its contents. Advice will always be welcome, from wherever it may come, and we will actively seek advice through the IFLA Section of Art Libraries and its Standing Committee, a body representative of art librarians and art library associations worldwide, which *does* meet.

The question of languages is not an easy one for an international journal to resolve. With this issue we announce our intention of

EDITORIAL

publishing articles written in German and Spanish (as well as English and French) in their original language, with English summaries. Whether this declaration of intent becomes much more than a symbolic gesture will, of course, depend on whether contributions in these languages are forthcoming; while it is our expectation that English will remain the principal language of the *Journal* this formal recognition of other languages spoken by many art librarians represents the ideal to which this *Journal* aspires. It is our wish and intention to simulate the opportunities to travel and to meet our colleagues which too few of us are able to benefit from; to simulate, above all, those international occasions when different languages *are* a problem but at which it is a spirit of confraternity which prevails; to foster a shared 'language', springing from an international outlook and way of thinking, in which chauvinism has no part.

References

1. Fawcett, Trevor. 'Towards total provision of visual arts literature?' *Art Libraries Journal* vol.2 no.1 Spring 1977 p. 4-10
2. ARLIS/ANZ News no. 15 1983 (special conference issue).

Forthcoming issues of the Art Libraries Journal

Summer 1986

This issue will include a major essay on co-operation between art libraries by Wolfgang Freitag, and a survey of the literature on design in developing countries, by Victor Papanek. The 'Bibliographies Update' feature will resume publication in this issue.

Fall 1986

A special issue on 'Artists and Libraries'. In the growing literature of art librarianship there is room for more 'user studies' and little has been written about the library and information needs of artists. This issue, in which we hope to include contributions from artists, will attempt to fill the gap. Contributions and/or suggestions are invited.

Winter 1986-87

Papers received by the IFLA Section of Art Libraries at the IFLA Conference to be held at Tokyo in August.

Spring 1987

Following the IFLA Section of Art Libraries meeting to be held at Amsterdam later this year, this will be a special issue devoted to 'Art libraries and art librarianship in the Netherlands', guest-edited by Jochen Becker and colleagues.