

It is surely one of the ironies of history that the 'Latin American' states, comprising territories conquered and colonised by 'Latin' Europeans which subsequently achieved independence under rulers of European descent, were subsequently relegated, by the growth to dominance of the U.S. and its 'Monroe Doctrine', to become (according to some definitions) part of the 'Third World'. It was perhaps less ironic than inevitable that the Caribbean islands, whose indigenous people perished under the impact of the European conquest and were replaced by slaves shipped from Africa, would become an outpost of the 'Third World' in the West: such was the price to be paid for decolonisation and rejecting white rule. Yet what could have been more ironic than Cuba's becoming a bastion of Communism on the doorstep of the U.S?

Geographically speaking, it makes no sense at all to categorise Latin American and Caribbean arts as 'non-Western'; on the other hand; their manifold distinctiveness tends to be perceived by Westerners as exotic and 'other': like non-Western arts, and indeed like much Western art which is the work of ethnic and other 'minorities' and 'outsiders', they have been marginalised and neglected by the Western art 'establishment'. With this issue, which includes a second, and final, selection of papers presented to the IFLA Section of Art Libraries at Havana last August, the *Art Libraries Journal* once again disassociates itself from narrow, racist, and overly élitist approaches to art, and calls on art librarians to use the power of art libraries to promote an unprejudiced, all-encompassing appreciation of human creativity.

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Of course it is easy to make grandiose statements of principle, less easy to live by them. This issue of *Art Libraries Journal* employs the term 'non-Western', on its cover, in the title of an article, and in this Editorial. It does so with the best of intentions, yet, while the issue was still in press, I came upon an excellent and important essay, on 'Eurocentrism in the study of dress', which very properly points out that 'The prefix *non*' gives the term 'non-Western' a 'built-in negative', and that with regard to the study of dress,

the negative prefix, as in non-Western, implies clothing traditions that have fallen short of the [Western] standard

of modernity and sophistication.'

It is of some but only little comfort that the authors were themselves unable to entirely avoid use of the term 'non-Western' (with and without quotation marks) in the remainder of their text.

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As stated above, it is easy to make grandiose statements of principle, less easy to live by them. The *Art Libraries Journal* aspires to an ideal of internationalism which it constantly falls short of. It ought *not* to favour the English language; yet in preparing this issue, I reluctantly, and against my own better judgement, decided to publish the IFLA papers in English only, despite having some Spanish texts to hand, in order to make room for two additional and (I think) complementary contributions. Then there is the question of price: a journal which seeks to maximise its benefit to an international community should set its price at the lowest level possible, to ensure that as many libraries in as many countries as possible can afford to subscribe. It may be that the *Journal* is already over-priced, yet its publisher, ARLIS/UK & Ireland, recently voted in subscription increases to come into effect in 1996. (There is some good news. ARLIS/UK & Ireland has also committed itself to investigate ways and means of enlarging the scheme by which free copies of the *Journal* are supplied to libraries who are genuinely unable to subscribe). Arguably, an international journal should be published by an international body, and its editor should be chosen regardless of his or her country of residence. The *Art Libraries Journal* is a compromise: though it is as international as I can make it, I sometimes feel that it is being held back by forces of gravity emanating from its local base. Yet it is that base which made and makes it possible.

References

1. Baizerman, Suzanne, Joanne B. Eicher and Catherine Cerny. 'Eurocentrism in the study of ethnic dress'. *Dress* vol. 20 1993 p.19-31.