

EDITORIAL

It was October 1995 when I wrote to Philip Pacey, the editor of *Art Libraries Journal*, for the first time. My intention was to introduce the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kunst- und Museumsbibliotheken (AKMB) – the ‘Working Group of Art and Museum Libraries’ – that had been established some months before. An important part of the AKMB’s activities was to publish a journal for German art and museum libraries, the *AKMB-news: Informationen zu Kunst, Museum und Bibliothek*, and one of our most shining examples always was (and still is) the *Art Libraries Journal*. To inform our subscribers of the current international discussion we wanted to publish a regular note of the current contents of the *Art Libraries Journal* in our journal, and so we asked Philip Pacey for his permission. I neither expected such a quick reply nor such a positive one when Philip gave his O.K. and, far beyond it, offered the opportunity of a special *ALJ* issue devoted to Germany. We appreciated this opportunity very much and so, here we are, with many thanks for the generous confidence in our work and all the valuable support.

Since it was a very good experience to commence activities at an international level in this way, we then endeavoured to be really international. Martina Büsse joined me and we planned to reflect not only on the situation in Germany but also on the different German speaking countries. Thanks to the kind collaboration of colleagues from Switzerland and Austria, this issue can be used as a small guide to the art libraries’ scene in the German speaking countries. Although the *Art Libraries Journal* is happy to publish material in German, Philip agreed with our proposition that we should use this issue to address ourselves to its predominantly English-speaking readership, while at the same time publishing the same material, in German, in a special issue (vol. 2 1996, no. 3) of the *AKMB-news: Informationen zu Kunst, Museum und Bibliothek*. The parallel issues in English and German will be almost identical with some exceptions: for example, we have been very grateful for Gillian Varley’s kind acceptance of our invitation to introduce ARLIS/UK & Ireland in an article for the *AKMB-news*.

May we be allowed a brief note on the form and language of this issue? We are aware of the fact that some serious mistakes (of the sort that embarrass English teachers) may slip through (thank God! school time is

long over now). For the translations we had very valuable help from professional translators or native English speakers (Madeline Ferretti, Christine Pearce-Jahre, Ingrid Rückert, Renate Rissmann). As they have not had a chance to edit all of the texts and to see the ultimate versions of their articles, all remaining mistakes belong to us only. We believe it is more important to start with good communication between colleagues, one way or the other, than to worry overmuch about impeccable grammar. Mainly for the atmospheric flair we decided to print the abstracts of the articles simultaneously in German and in English. At this point we do not want to miss the opportunity to thank all contributors, translators and our editorial team for all their kind support.

Concerning the contents of this issue, for a while we thought about what subjects would really be interesting for art librarians all over the world. As the situation in the German speaking countries, and even in Germany itself, is very different, we decided to offer different approaches. Jeanette Pacher from Austria and Nikolaus Meier from Switzerland outline the particular situation of art libraries in their countries. Thomas Lersch gives an account of the AKB (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kunstbibliotheken), an association of the seven major German art libraries and the forerunner of the AKMB. Of particular interest is the article by Ulrike Schäme on art libraries in eastern Germany as it reflects a unique German historic experience, the separation and re-unification of our country. Another important subject is the presentation of the newly founded German association of art and museum libraries, the AKMB, Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kunst- und Museumsbibliotheken. The chairwoman of the AKMB, Monika Steffens, and her colleague, Margret Schild, introduce this association which has been desired by many librarians for a long time.

Some additional articles will complete this picture. As some new art institutions with libraries worth mentioning have been established, we decided to introduce these new libraries in Austria, Switzerland, and Germany, in short profiles. Another focus is placed on the particular activities of design libraries in Germany, which is a very active group of libraries. Finally we thought it worthwhile to mention vocational training for librarians and the possibilities of becoming an art librarian. As the idea of

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international cooperation is one of the main reasons for making this issue, we thought it useful to introduce two institutions which dedicate their work to foreign cultural relations and cultural exchange.

Even though our own journal is published in German (a language not spoken very much internationally), we would be very pleased to find new subscribers abroad. For 1997, we are planning issues on book conservation and restoration, and on non-book collections in art and museum libraries. If you should ever be interested to join, you can send your order to the Erasmus bookshop, Amsterdam, who will handle our international subscriptions (address: Erasmus Bookshop, Postbus 19140, NL-1000 GL Amsterdam, Tel. +31-20-627 59 52, Fax: +31-20-620 67 99, E-mail: erasmus@erasmusbooks.nl). More information is also available via Margret Schild (address: Theatermuseum/Library; Jägerhofstraße 1, Hofgärtnerhaus; D-40479 Düsseldorf; Tel. 0211/89-96116; Fax: 0221/89-29045; E-mail: schild@rz.uni-duesseldorf.de).

But more important than subscribing is reading. We really hope that you will enjoy this issue.

Martina Büsse and Lutz Jahre,
Guest editors of this special issue