

Letter

Marburger Index

In your review of the *Marburger Index* (*Art Libraries Journal*, vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 37–41), there are some misinterpretations, which probably have been caused by the prospectus. This prospectus was written and printed by the publisher. I did not see it before publication – and I personally was not at all satisfied with it. May I therefore make the following points:

- 1) The *Marburger Index* covers art works in Germany only and it is inevitable that there has to be a bias towards German art.
- 2) The photographs of our collections were made for documentary purposes. This is why we include photographs from as far back as the 1850s, for these photographs show the state of objects at this date. We are neither museums nor animators but simply archives, offering our information to the public. And if we have – as we do – 2,000 photographs of Rhenish carnival orders (there exists a real industry of these objects of ‘applied art’) we have to include them in the *Index*. And if there are 100 photographs of the waste water system of Altenberg Cathedral, we have to publish them, since they could – and should – be of interest to someone in the world.
- 3) The sample fiche was one of the first to be produced by the publisher (Hartmann und Kraemer); the quality has improved since then and we have gained experience in typing the captions using a carbon ribbon.
- 4) Your objection to the topographical arrangement of the *Index* is a very basic one. The *Marburger Index* comprises early Christian art, applied art, architecture, painting, sculpture and all types of contemporary art. Some of these objects are connected with artists’ names – others are not. Some have an iconography, others have not (or at least cannot be classified in their iconography). The historian of applied arts is interested in ivory – for instance – and not in iconography, and so on.

Since we are not a research collection for our own purposes we are not allowed to give preference to one of these different viewpoints. The only things common to all the objects represented in our photographs are their topographic situation – the location – and the *numerus currens* of the negatives.

We had to choose topographical arrangement as it enables us to sell topographic sets: art at Cologne, for instance, or the holdings of the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne.

- 5) In a publication issued early in 1977 it is impossible to find photographs taken after 1976. But in the issues published in 1978 you will find all the entries for 1977, and in 1983, you will have a supplement with e.g. all the photographs taken after 1976 for Aachen, after 1977 for Cologne and after 1982 for Zingenheim.

And finally, the *Marburger Index* is a valuable acquisition for institutions that specialise in art history research and information. That is what it has been produced for.

Albert Schug

Stadt Köln, Kunst- und Museumsbibliothek

Printed in Great Britain by Upton Printing, 27 Highfield Road, Bushey, Hertfordshire, WD2 2HD.