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Paula A. Baxter

# **International Bibliography of Art Librarianship**

An annotated compilation

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New York City, New York





## INTRODUCTION: USING THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography originated as one of several projects on the agenda of IFLA Special Libraries Division, Section of Art Libraries Chair Philip Pacey (1981-1985). A prolific writer himself, Pacey envisioned a published bibliography which would represent the most useful literature on art librarianship. The publication was planned as an international, comprehensive survey prepared for educational purposes. The author was commissioned in 1983 to produce an annotated bibliography, arranged by specific subject categories.

Art librarianship developed as a specialized branch of library science throughout the twentieth century, accelerating its pace in the 1960s. By the late 1960s and early 1970s, organizations and associations for art librarians sprang up, led by British librarians and their establishment of the Art Libraries Society (ARLIS). Other national groups came into existence, accompanied by official serial publications. With new forums for discussion of professional issues, the body of writings on art librarianship assumed greater depth and sophistication. The growing importance of international cooperation was confirmed in 1977 with the formation of a Section of Art Libraries within the International Federation of Library Associations.

Comprehensiveness in bibliographic documentation is a difficult, often impossible, goal. Some inevitable selectivity had to be exercised in compiling citations; 538 publications were chosen on the basis of their contents' practical, educational veracity. The selection was made by the compiler, with assistance from colleagues, but the resulting compilation reflects the judgment of the compiler solely. One important criterion for inclusion was the availability of materials. There is no educational purpose in assembling a bibliography of obscure, unobtainable literature.

The information-gathering process involved the consultation of various resources. Standard works, such as periodical indexes for U.S. and British library literature, were exhaustively combed. The RLIN database, bibliographic files on DIALOG, and even government documents, were used to locate other relevant materials. Bibliographies in library science books and key articles were scrutinized for leads. The professional literature columns in the IFLA Section of Art Libraries Newsletter proved invaluable. The compiler also solicited assistance through notices in art library society newsletter and direct correspondence with non-English speaking colleagues. Cooperation, under the umbrella of IFLA, has enhanced the range of citations included in the bibliography.

Publications included range from 1908 up to December 1985; the exception to this cutoff date is an important monograph on art library science published in 1986. Users of this bibliography will note the predominance of post-1960, English language materials; this accurately reflects the state of available literature at present.

Access to individual publications is through 34 subject categories; after much deliberation, cross-references have not been made for publications that may straddle more than one

subject category. Therefore, every care has been taken to make annotations as descriptive as possible. Use of these subject categories permits the reader to investigate specific aspects of art librarianship. At the request of several members of the IFLA Section of Art Libraries Standing Committee, an author index was included to facilitate access to writings of individuals.

The temptation to generalize about writing trends is irresistible. In many ways, the time frame of this bibliography encloses one epoch in the development of art librarianship. Post-1985 literature promises more depth and multilingual approaches to art library issues. British art librarians have contributed a solid foundation of philosophical writings. U.S. librarians have moved from analyses of problems in the field to pragmatic problem-solving. The recent proliferation of IFLA-sponsored conferences in Europe, Asia and Africa has generated important information from countries underrepresented in library literature. Canadian and Australian art librarians, in particular, have devised significant gains in national art documentation. Even though the United Kingdom and U.S. have originated much material, colleagues in France and the BDR have developed more sophisticated projects; their contributions to writing on art librarianship require increased dissemination. Therefore, the materials that appear in this publication are a historical grouping, or foreword, to the professional maturation of art librarianship.

The Bibliography may be of assistance to a variety of users: from the library school student to the practicing art librarian. Readers can use this publication as a self-educational survey of the profession or as a guide to an aspect of art library work. The size of certain categories in the list reveal much about needs in the field. Certain areas, such as special collections or physical facilities planning, require more substantive documentation. On the other hand, the field of visual resources has enough literature to generate its own bibliography of useful writings. More non-English language publications are needed, especially for potential dissemination to information centers in developing countries. Gaps in art library literature should be filled; perhaps, in time, we can look forward to collections of publications organized by country or specific language. This bibliography represents an attempt to gather the most important writings about art librarianship up to 1985; the following entries must be considered as a first edition of a list that will continue to grow and intensify.