

## **The City**

Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, is a city of islands. From the spire of the Frelsers Kirke (The Church of Our Savior), or the top of the Rundtårn (round tower), you can see all of the city below you, extending to the water of the Oresund Sea, which separates Denmark from Sweden.

This is a city which has been well designed, developed and preserved. On the main island of the city, there are no buildings taller than four stories, except for the spires of several historic buildings. There are bike lanes on the main streets, with many commuters using them. Public transportation is abundant and prompt. The royal family lives in the heart of town with no wall or fence surrounding the grounds.

There is a high regard for good design, which is evidenced in beautiful contemporary furniture, a design center, and good public signage. The country of Denmark has the second highest per capita income in the world (\$33,000 per year average), and an income tax rate of 51%.

The islands of the city are connected by bridges over the canals. Beautiful wooden sailboats lined the shores. A ferry to Malmö, Sweden docked in the center of town.

Libraries are given considerable support. We visited public, university, museum and Royal libraries. All seemed extremely well run and well utilized.

## **Pre-conference workshop**

The IFLA Art Section joined with ARLIS/Norden for a pre-conference which took place at The Danish Museum of Decorative Art (Kunstindustrimuseum) on Saturday, August 30, 1977. The Workshop was attended by 120 people. There were 5 papers presented which addressed the theme, "Art Libraries as Centers of Culture and Information."

The first was by Margrethe Tøttrup, Danish National Library Authority, Copenhagen. Her paper, "Internet and Copyright Regarding Pictorial Art - Seen in an International Perspective," gave a snapshot view of the legality of downloading and copying images off the Internet in several countries. Her paper can be found on IFLAnet at: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/IV/ifla63/63totm.htm>.

The second paper was presented by Jean-Paul Oddos, Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France. In his paper, "Le rôle des bibliothèques d'art dans la formation et l'information des jeunes artistes; le traitement de l'actualité," Mr. Oddos presented the concept of improving access to art information, including access to the artists themselves. You can find his paper at: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/IV/ifla63/63oddj.htm>.

The third paper, "The Research Libraries Group and Access to Art Information" by Katharine Martinez, Research Libraries Group, California, USA, was read by Jeannette Dixon in the author's absence. Ms. Martinez's paper was a thorough inventory of the many art related projects sponsored by RLG, including the latest REACH project which deals with creating a combined database of museum object information.

"Art in the Art Library: Small Faces of Library Products" by Kyoko Tomatsu, Library Point Co, Tokyo, Japan, focused attention on the graphic design of library accessories and supplies. Ms. Tomatsu's slides showed a variety of art libraries in Japan, which ranged in style from a small corridor with a few shelves of books, to the more traditional library with rows of stacks and reading tables. It is available electronically at: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/IV/ifla63/63tomk.htm>.

Josephine Andersen of the South African National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa, presented her paper, "Redressing Past Cultural Biases and Imbalances." She detailed some of the problems facing the people of South Africa, and how she has become involved in alleviating the wide-spread problem of illiteracy. She uses artworks in the Gallery to teach the students how to write. You can find her paper at: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/IV/ifla63/63andj.htm>

A sixth paper was not presented, but the text is available on the Web, "Memory of the World: Preservation and Access" by Abdelaziz Abid, UNESCO, Paris, France. The paper outlines the main features of "Memory of the World", a UNESCO Programme to safeguard endangered documentary heritage, democratize access to it, increase awareness of its significance and distribute, on a large scale, products derived from it. Available electronically at: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/IV/ifla63/63abia.htm>.

After a full day of papers, we toured the collections of the Museum of Decorative Arts, founded in 1894, with collections of European, Chinese and Japanese art and applied art from medieval times through the present. Chairs by Charles and Ray Eames found their place among other contemporary furniture. The rooms of Danish 17th century furniture and furnishings were extremely fine, and unusual to find in North American collections.

The librarians of The Decorative Arts Museum had created two very interesting exhibitions in the galleries to showcase some of the library collections. One exhibit featured the work of a local graphic artist who helped shape the look of signage in modern day Copenhagen. The other focused on the grotesque ornament, from Pompeii forward.

The final event of the day was a reception at the Royal Library. It featured a demonstration of their new Image Database, which they have made accessible over the Internet. The project is to digitize and catalog the photography collection of the Royal Library.

### **Open Session of the Art Section**

An Open Session was held on Monday, September 1, 1997 at the Bella Centre on the theme "Studying Scandinavian Art and Design at Home and Abroad."

There were 100+ librarians in attendance. There was no simultaneous interpretation but facilitators were available for French and Spanish during discussion. The following papers were presented:

1. "Promoting Scandinavian Design History" by Mirjam Gelfer-Jørgensen, The National Library for Art and Design, Danish Museum for Decorative Art, Copenhagen, Denmark. Ms. Gelfer-Jørgensen, in addition to directing the library of the Museum of Decorative Arts, is the founding editor of the journal, Scandinavian Journal of Design History, which is now 7 years old. She outlines the history of the journal, and points out some of the difficulties of the field, such as developing proper terminology across the different Scandinavian countries. Available electronically at: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/IV/ifla63/63gelm.htm>.
2. "Bibliografía sobre arte y artistas de los países Nórdicos a través de las monografías y catálogos de exposiciones en España" by Alicia García Medina, Instituto Patrimonio Histórico Español, Madrid, Spain. Ms. García Medina compiled a bibliography of Nordic art and artists published in Spain as monographs and exhibition catalogues from the 1980s until now. She focuses on the need for exhaustive bibliographic treatment, especially when converting library catalogues into a database providing concise and accurate information in line with the requirements of the changing information world. Available electronically at: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/IV/ifla63/63meda.htm>.
3. "The National Museum of Photography at The Royal Library, Copenhagen" by Ingrid Fischer Jonge, The Royal Library, Copenhagen, Denmark. This paper describes the establishment of this library, and some of the new digitization projects they have implemented. Available electronically at: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/IV/ifla63/63fisi.htm>.

### **Standing committee meeting**

The annual Standing Committee meeting was held on Thursday, September 4, 1997 at the Danish Museum of Decorative Art, Copenhagen. There are currently 21 members of the Standing Committee (SC). This is where the business of the Art Section is conducted. The SC meetings are open to all section members; 34 people attended. Plans for the forthcoming conferences in Amsterdam 1998, Bangkok 1999, Jerusalem 2000 and Boston 2001 were discussed. The Standing Committee agreed that greater use

should be made of the annual conference to exchange information formally about developments in different regions of the world. The incoming Executive officers will address this issue and schedule such a session as part of the proceedings during the Amsterdam conference 1998.

The following officers were elected for the period 1997-1999:

Chair

Jeannette Dixon, Hirsch Library, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Secretary

Geert-Jan Koot, Library Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Treasurer

Catherine Heesterbeek-Bert, Library, Musees Royaux de Beaux-Arts de Belgique

The Medium-Term Programme 1997-2001 was reviewed and revised.

The Goals for the new period are as follows:

1. To share information and expertise on art libraries' collections, publications, databases, networks, union lists and activities.
2. To extend the reach of the Section's effectiveness as an international forum of information for art and visual librarians by means of publications, conferences and personal contacts.
3. To provide information about the work of the Section to those concerned with the documentation of art and so to promote membership in the Section in order to increase effectiveness.

One new initiative is to investigate the possibility of creating an online database containing biographical information on artists born after 1950. Beth Houghton from the Tate Gallery, London, agreed to lead the project and propose the scope, size and format. Two examples of databases to examine are the card file of Danish designers, and the database of Japanese architects born after 1950. Beth will present a preliminary report to Amsterdam 1998.

A second project is to investigate the feasibility of creating a bibliography of thesauri used in art librarianship in as many languages as possible. Work will begin at the Amsterdam conference, and if deemed feasible, a questionnaire will be mailed to individual countries by the Bangkok conference in 1999.

A third project is to investigate the possibility of enhancing the **International Directory of Art Libraries** by adding email addresses when possible, and making links between the entries for individual libraries in the electronic **Directory** and their Websites where they exist; and to investigate making a link to national online directories which contain more information than that contained in the electronic **Directory** (preliminary report to Amsterdam 1998, if feasible initiated by Bangkok 1999).

#### **IFLA Art Section at the Amsterdam Conference**

The theme for the Art Section Workshop will be: *Art Libraries at Crossroads*. Some suggested topics are:

- Art libraries as signposts on the crossroads of information
- The identity of the art librarian in the information age: curator of books versus information specialist
- The virtual art library: visionary or reality?
- Cooperative efforts in structuring art information
- State of the art and future developments in art librarianship and art documentation

The Open Session theme is: *Bridging Cultures*. Some suggested topics are:

- Dutch art libraries abroad (e.g. Florence, Paris, Rome)
- Sources for the study of Dutch art abroad (e.g. Belgium, Eastern Europe, South Africa, Southeast Asia, USA)
- Cross-cultural influences (e.g. Japan-Netherlands)

Information about the IFLA Amsterdam Conference, August 16 - 21, 1998, can be found on the general IFLA.net website at: <http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/ifla/> or you can email the Conference Secretariat, Marita Kloosterboer at: [ifla@congrex.nl](mailto:ifla@congrex.nl).

Jeannette Dixon, Chair  
IFLA Art Section  
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