

In March 2000 the Finnish Art Libraries' Working Group (the Finnish section of ARLIS/Norden) was awarded a magnum of sparkling wine at the annual meeting of the Finnish Research Library Association. This prize marked recognition of an achievement about which far too little is known outside the Nordic countries – the Baltic Project, in which Finnish art librarians have successfully established working links with their counterparts in the three Baltic republics: Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.

It has been part of the Working Group's plan of action since 1992 to establish contacts between Finland and these countries, and to encourage the Baltic art libraries to set up co-operative networks internally, between each other, and with other surrounding Nordic countries. Ever since the first exploratory visit, to Latvia in 1994, increasing numbers of art librarians from Finland have become involved in the project, with 19 delegates joining the third tour, to Lithuania in 1999.

The three study trips introduced key Baltic art libraries to the Finnish visitors, and provided the opportunity for seminars in which both hosts and guests could present the work of their libraries and discuss common problems. The visiting team also had the opportunity to describe the benefits of their co-operative work with other Nordic art librarians through ARLIS/Norden.

The impetus is continuing – Estonian art librarians have paid a reciprocal visit to Helsinki, and the library of the University of Art and Design there has trained art librarians from Estonia, Latvia and other countries as a part of the European Union-financed TEMPUS project, 'Development of Library Management in Art and Music Universities'. Estonian art librarians now have their own art libraries society; the Latvians are contemplating the creation of a similar association. A joint seminar on practical art library issues such as cataloguing, acquisition and electronic reference is being planned as you read this Editorial.

Art libraries in other countries also have a chance to help. The funding situation for Baltic art librarians is bad, and members of ARLIS/Norden were recently asked through their newsletter whether they had unwanted stock which could be useful in art libraries in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. Readers of the *Art Libraries*

Journal who are able to set up exchanges with Baltic colleagues abroad, or to donate research material, are similarly encouraged to investigate doing so by approaching suitable libraries. The addresses of art libraries in all three countries and their contact details, originally published in *ARLIS/Norden Info*¹, are updated here.

This first *Art Libraries Journal* of 2001 has become something of a 'special Baltic issue' in celebration of the Baltic Project. Published here is a lively description of what the project has achieved and what is planned in the future, written by one of the organisers, Eila Rämö, Information Specialist at the University of Art and Design in Helsinki. This is followed by contributions from each of the three Baltic countries, outlining art librarianship activities in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, and contributed respectively by Aivija Everte, Mari Sibul and Laimė Gabrielė Lukošūnienė.

The second half of this issue moves to other topics. Two of the articles are about indexing: one on indexing visual images by Margaret Graham from the Institute for Image Data Research at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle in the UK, and the other by Eberhard Kasten, from the Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon team in Leipzig, describing the history and current programme of this key bio-bibliographical reference work.

Gry Kjaer-Larsen describes the Museological Library in Sorø in Denmark and the growing international interest in the subject of museology.

Finally there is the concluding part of Betty Jo Kish Irvine's report on art libraries in China, in which she discusses the cataloguing and classification systems, computer applications and networking, the public services available, and the physical layout of the thirteen libraries she visited in 1999.

References

1. *ARLIS/Norden Info* supplement to nos. 3/4 1997, p.12-19 (Latvia and Estonia) and *ARLIS/Norden Info* no. 1 2000, p.4-5 (Lithuania).