

Essays in the History of Art Librarianship in Canada

Essais sur l'histoire de la bibliothéconomie d'art au Canada

PROSPECTUS

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Context

Art libraries have now existed in Canada for more than a century; however, the story of their founding and development is, for the most part, unrecorded. With this proposal, the National Gallery of Canada Library has taken the lead in promoting research in the history of art libraries in Canada.

Following a session on Canadian art libraries at the 1999 Vancouver conference of the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA), Canadian members recognized the need for a new publication. The *History of Art Libraries in Canada* project was endorsed by ARLIS/Canada in October 1999, at a national meeting held at the National Gallery of Canada. Jo Beglo (Bibliographer, National Gallery of Canada) assembled an editorial team with representation across the country, and the research phase of the project was set into motion.

In 2001, the need for a Canadian publication was reiterated when a long-awaited two-volume *International Dictionary of Library Histories* (Chicago; London, 2001) appeared with a scant account of Canadian art libraries in one paragraph and a single line devoted to the National Gallery of Canada Library, Canada's national art library. To bring our history to light, a new publication, *Essays in the History of Art Librarianship in Canada* offers a remarkable roster of contributions based on scholarly investigation by Canadian authors.

Objective

The objective of *Essays in the History of Art Librarianship in Canada* is to capture the facts of our history, establish a chronology, and provide sources for further research. An anthology of essays accounts for the development of art libraries and art librarianship across the country, situating libraries within their historical and regional contexts. It brings together information which is now scattered, not only in published and unpublished documents, but also in personal memory stores. It documents the history of art libraries in Canada, and serves as an authoritative reference source.

Results

Work on *Essays in the History of Art Librarianship in Canada* is well underway. A call for papers, posted across Canada in September 2000, received an enthusiastic response. The table of contents now includes more than twenty essays, based on abstracts received from all regions of the country. A number of the essays have been completed, with first drafts submitted for editorial review. Each essay will be translated and published in both official languages.

Photographic illustrations are also integral to presenting the history of art libraries in Canada. Each essay is accompanied by documentary photographs, many of which are drawn from archival sources. This visual narrative enriches and illuminates the text.

Based on the results to date, it is reasonable to expect a substantial volume based on original research, which will provide a long needed reference tool and make a lasting contribution to the profession of art librarianship in Canada.

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