

SCOTTISH VISUAL ARTS GROUP

Report to Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries, Business Committee. 27 June 2002

1. General Information

The Scottish Visual Arts Group includes the membership of 31 libraries, comprising 24 full members and 7 corresponding members. A full listing of members is attached. Meetings are held twice yearly in June and November, but sub groups meet more regularly on a needs basis.

The Group has three office bearers; a chair or convenor, a secretary and a publicity officer. These posts are currently held by Wilson Smith, Edinburgh College of Art, Richard Baptie, Glasgow University Library and Jane Furness, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art Library, respectively.

A bank account holds a few hundred pounds earned from the income on a publication on photographic literature, produced by several members in 1996.

The Group provides an excellent platform for discussion, exchange of information on professional issues and visits to other institutions.

A directory of members is available online at http://scuri.ac.uk/about/svag_members.html This was recently up-dated and a short leaflet is available for conferences, seminars etc. There is also a discussion list used for correspondence, news and formal business.

2. Design and Artists Copyright Society Limited

SVAG has kept a watching brief on DACS, since the Group's establishment. There has been a general unease amongst Scottish libraries about the viability of this scheme and there has been a fairly united front against the proposals of DACS and their charging. This was questioned by the Art Libraries Society and has resulted in the reorganisation of DACS and a change of personnel at management level.

3. Artists' Books Database

SVAG made a joint application with Dundee Contemporary Arts through Robert Gordon University to the Arts and Humanities Research Board for funding to set up a pilot database of artists' books. An initial application was made in 2000, which was favourably received, indicating a further amended application in 2001 would be successful. Unfortunately, this too was unsuccessful.

Artists' books are difficult to extract from library catalogues as a separate category. Thus finding artists' books among ordinary titles, requires the user to be aware of what is available before searching. The pilot database would have been searchable by media, country of origin, date and artist, as well as the usual fields of author and title. The hope had been that the project would be extended to all SVAG libraries and artists' books collections in Scotland.

4. Visual Arts Research Institute, Edinburgh (VARIE)

The combination of research, curatorship and education between members of the VARIE (Edinburgh University History of Art Department, the Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh College of Art and the National Galleries of Scotland) make this an inspirational and innovative project. Up until recently VARIE's main outlet for disseminating research has been through hosting conferences, however the focus is shifting to the development of the VARIE network, through the initiation of collaborative research projects involving member institutions. The Institute is currently virtual, but it is hoped the move of the Medical School at Edinburgh University to the new Infirmary, will provide accommodation.

The emphasis on research, and therefore its impact on library use in Edinburgh, is of interest to SVAG members.

5. Art Libraries Society (ARLIS) Union List of Serials

ARLIS is a sister group to SVAG, comprising art librarians from the United Kingdom and Ireland. Many of our members are also members of ARLIS.

This Society provides outstanding professional development opportunities and has now, following the example of Scottish co-operation in UCABLIS, produced an online serials listing. They are particularly keen to include SVAG members' serials listings and SVAG has taken on a caretaking role to ensure these are provided.

The Scottish Visual Arts Group also provide an annual report to the National Co-ordination Committee of ARLIS, with two other regional art librarian groups (LALIC – Leeds Art Librarians in Co-operation and AVAIL – Audio Visual Art Librarians in Ireland).

6. *Union Catalogue of Art Books in Scotland*

Following the meeting of UCABLIS members held in June 2001, a sub group, comprising representatives from Edinburgh College of Art, Glasgow University, the National Galleries of Scotland, Robert Gordon's University and Edinburgh City Libraries have undertaken to establish a future for UCABLIS.

This has been a difficult but stimulating process. The final draft of the report, including recommendations and proposals, is now almost complete and it is hoped to present it to the National Library of Scotland in the autumn of 2002. The group is also keen to ensure that a copy is available to members of SCURL.

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