

THE SAXON STATE AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY IN DRESDEN AND THE FIELD OF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEVOTED TO CONTEMPORARY ART, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND INDUSTRIAL AND GRAPHIC DESIGN.

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Literature on art was first collected by the old Electors of Saxony who were keen and knowledgeable followers of the subject. This explains why art literature has always played a special role in the Saxon State Library in Dresden (SLUB – <http://www.tu-dresden.de/slub/>). This is reflected in its extraordinarily rich collection of art. It has been a library for special collections since 1966. In 1983 it was given the status of the “Central Specialist Library for Art and Music in the GDR”. This enabled it to continue to expand its rich stocks of art literature in more recent times. The lack of foreign currency was compensated by an intensive exchange of literature. The eighteen annual volumes of the “Bibliography of Fine Arts” which were edited by the library offered a rich volume of extra material.

After the reunification of Germany plans were made to include East German libraries in the programme of interlibrary loans sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). Because SLUB possessed an extraordinarily good stock of art books, it was assigned to the field of special collections (German: Sondersammelgebiet or SSG) devoted to contemporary art, including photography, industrial design and commercial art for which the Heidelberg University Library was responsible at the time. Since then SLUB’s stock of literature on contemporary art has grown annually at a rate of around 4,000 volumes.

This rich stock which now totals around 100,000 volumes is for the most part indexed in the SLUB Dresden WEBOPAC (<http://webopac.slub-dresden.de>). Since 1993, in order to enable researchers to have access to the stocks nationwide, all new purchases have been entered into the South West Consortium (Südwestverbund or SWB) and can be researched online in the Karlsruhe Virtual Catalogue (<http://www.ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de/kvk.html>). Starting in 1994 all new acquisitions have been made accessible with alphabetical subject series; and from 2000 onwards notations from the Regensburg Consortium classification (RVK) have additionally been made accessible.

SLUB’s comprehensive stock of exhibition catalogues and academic literature on contemporary art is further enriched by nationally significant stocks of special collections.

In this respect the collection of artists books which holds a unique assortment of periodicals and books containing original graphics which were published unofficially in the GDR is particularly worthy of note. The extremely rare small periodicals have since been digitalised with the support of the DFG and can now be accessed in the internet under <http://141.30.171.13/tud/templates/index.html>. This means that these much sought-after minor periodicals printed on vulnerable material no longer have to be loaned out.

A further collection which enriches SLUB’s stocks in the field of contemporary art is the Mediathek which contains remarkable sound and video documents on contemporary artists and multimedia art happenings.

The Deutsche Fotothek has been a department of the Saxon State Library since 1983. As one of the major public picture archives in the Federal Republic of Germany it is a significant addition to the field of special collections. The 2,000,000 picture documents (negatives, prints and slides) include countless photographic documents of important art and photography exhibitions as well as the estates of important photographers. Since 1991 the Fotothek has contributed to the “Marburger Index” project to make an inventory of cultural and art history (<http://bildindex.de/intro.htm>). Around 270,000 photos have been microfilmed and digitalised within the framework of the project which has enabled them to be published worldwide in this form for the first time.

An almost complete collection of children’s books from East and West German publishers between 1945 and 1990 offers a unique survey of the different developments in contemporary book illustrations in both German states, and is thus a further important addition to the special collections of contemporary art.

In order to cope with the flood of information and the increasingly multimedia character of contemporary art the DFG has been funding the construction of a virtual special library of contemporary art since 2001 (<http://vifaart.slub-dresden.de/>). The most important building block in ViFaArt will be the ArtGuide, a virtual catalogue for including and indexing internet sources. In order to facilitate the search for many young artists a data base known as ConArt (<http://vifaart.slub-dresden.de/csp/vifaart/conart/conart.csp>) has been added to ViFaArt. This lists around 11,000 data on contemporary artists,

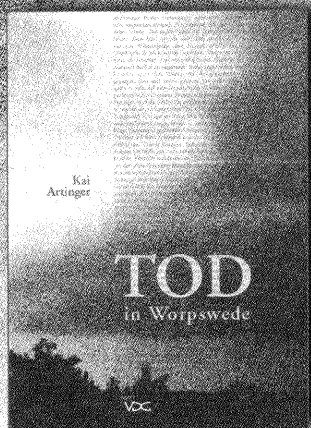
which have been taken from periodicals and articles. It is further expanded by a list of artists websites. The SSG-S delivery service, which users have been able to access by ViFaArt for one year now, is a further important addition to the virtual specialist library of contemporary art.

The addition of the ArtGuide catalogue of internet sources will mean that users will have a virtual catalogue at their disposal which, together with the WEBOPAC from the SLUB in Dresden and the ConArt index of artists (launched in 2002), will put research into contemporary art on a new level.

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