

Art Collections in Germany

A Study Tour for North American Librarians at the invitation of the Goethe-Instituts in North America

In September, 2008 the Goethe-Instituts in North America invited a group of leading art librarians from North America to Germany for a study tour to explore some of Germany's top libraries with significant art collections. Institutions in Munich, Weimar and Berlin were chosen to receive the North American guests. Throughout the trip the North American delegation was offered a behind-the-scenes look at some of Germany's leading digitization and preservation projects, along with an extensive overview of the art collections at each institution.

The following, are two reports from two of the study tour participants outlining their impressions from the study tour. A complete overview of the itinerary and participants can be found at the end of the report.

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Prefatory remarks:

I would like to heartily thank the Goethe-Instituts in North America, and its very able representative, Shawn Whatley, for inviting me on this study tour. It was revelatory for me as I had never before visited all but one of the libraries on the tour. My notes below record what I heard and observed at each location. What they do not record systematically is the various insights and "aha moments" I experienced during the trip and since my return. The trip was invaluable. Furthermore, my fellow librarian traveling companions were the best colleagues one could ever have, and all of our creature comforts were provided for to perfection. Again, thank you. SMA

Day 1 (a.m.): Bibliothek des Zentralinstituts für Kunstgeschichte (ZIKG)

Very productive meetings were held with Prof. Dr. Wolf Tegethoff, Director of the ZIKG; Dr. Rüdiger Hoyer; Library Director; and Dr. Carola Wenzel, Associate Library Director. I was most interested in gaining information on the topics below.

Facilities:

The tour of the library focused on facilities needs: growth space for collections, conference and class room space, and office space for scholars.

Organization:

There are 50 institute employees. There are 26 employees (38 including student assistants) more or less to staff the library. Therefore, the library is too small for departments and every employee has more than one specialty. For example, catalogers also act as reference librarians. It is a very flat organizational structure. The ZIKG is greatly restricted in what it may or may not do with human resources because it is a German governmental institution. The ZIKG depends on student employees to provide modern library services. The student employees normally work 10-20 hours per week.

There is no separate IT department. Some IT work is done in-house and some is out-sourced. An External specialist does all the programming. ZIKG depends on the State of Bavaria for the infrastructure.

Acquisitions:

Acquire 10,000 titles per year, and of these, 100 items may be of an antiquarian nature. The British book market is almost inaccessible due to the high prices. Acquisition of material documenting contemporary art is growing on an international level. Dr. Hoyer and Dr. Wenzel make the selections. Visiting scholars have some impact on acquisitions. For example, at the moment two Kress Fellows in residence are working on German topics.

A "New Acquisitions List" for the ZIKG can be found on the website – in German – "Neuerwerbungsliste." The ZIKG relies on specialized book dealers for acquisitions. Dr. Hoyer travels and visits booksellers elsewhere in Europe, especially Paris. Vendors employed include Erasmus in Paris and a bookseller in Moscow who deals on the Internet and sends a list to the library every week. The ZIKG continues to have an exchange program, but it is not efficient. Dr. Hoyer will provide a list of vendors. (I need to follow up on this.)

Question of "European Art" – the ZIKG cannot expand into "world art" but would like to develop collections in a more limited way toward Turkey and the Islamic world in particular. To do this, it would need language expertise, and staff would need to learn the book markets for this part of the world. It was also seen as a political question as well.

Staff Development:

There is no formal internal training; however, external programs are available through the Bavaria State Library and the Bavaria Library School.

Day 1 (p.m.): Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

At the Bavarian State Library we were greeted by officials and presented with a sophisticated PowerPoint overview of the institution's "Three Pillar Profile." In the past the library has been a treasure house of cultural heritage, currently it is a multi-media information provider, and in the future it will be a center of innovation.

It considers peer institutions to be all those who see a future for libraries: The British Library, Stanford University Library, the University of Michigan Libraries, the National Library of Singapore, and the State Library of Berlin.

Of all readers, 68% are students. Between 2002 and 2007 use increased 107%. A big jump occurred in 2006 when the hours of the library were extended. In the past the library sought to get rid of students; now it wants to attract them. To do this the hours were extended; the library opens at 8 a.m. and remains open until midnight. (I was particularly interested in a self-service reserve readings area that could be used as a model for the Research Library at the Getty Villa.) It is a library of

last resort for university libraries in Germany. The main building houses 43% of the library's collections while 57% are on off-site storage.

Digitization Strategy:

The Bavarian State Library sees as its audience all researchers worldwide. Therefore, its goal is to digitize the complete holdings in the next 20 years. There have been sixty boutique digitization projects since 1997. Now, using equipment known as the ScanRobot, the library has begun mass digitization. The equipment was demonstrated for us. It uses a cradle to support the book being scanned, two digital cameras both pages of an opening in a book, and puffs of air to turn the pages. Conservators have determined that it is safe for rare books, and, in fact, we saw some being scanned.

The financial strategy to accomplish digitization is to seek third party funding for digitization of medieval manuscripts, incunables, and 16th C books; and to allow Google to digitize one million 17th C – 19th C books.

The library downloads its metadata to WorldCat and has established a presence on Second Life.

Day 2: Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek

Of all the libraries we visited on the tour, the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar was the most awe inspiring. This library, a public circulating library since the 18th C, was devastated by a fire in September 2004. Since then, phoenix-like, the historic building has been rebuilt, fire and water-damaged books have been salvaged and conserved, and 70% of the rare books that were completely destroyed by the fire have now been replaced.

Dr. Michael Knoche, the director, was our tour guide, and his tour focused primarily on facilities. We were able to have a close look at the new building that had been inserted in a courtyard in the center of the original facility, and we visited the underground state of the art storage vaults that connect, by going under a roadway, the new part with the original facility. The book tower of the original facility suffered the fire damage, and we were able to see that it has been completely restored.

I was particularly interested in the public nature of the library going back to the 18th C. A log book of library circulation from the 18th C shows that from 30 to 40 women checked out books from the library on a regular basis. Who these women were remains to be investigated.

Day 3: Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

We were greeted at the Berlin State Library and given an introduction to it by the Director General, Barbara Schneider-Kempf, Dr. Jutta Weber, head of the Manuscript Department, and Gerd-Josef Bötte, deputy director of the Department of Early Printed Books. Due to the division of Berlin following World War II and reunification in 1992, the library is on two sites. Its budget is 50 million Euros and collections amount to 10 million books. The site we visited houses manuscripts and rare books while the second site functions more like a public library. We also learned that during the Second World War, about one-third of the collection was carried off to Poland and Russia and was lost.

Dr. Weber and Mr. Bötte provided a "show and tell" of highlights from the manuscript and rare book collections. The Manuscript Department houses 18,500 occidental manuscripts, 40,000 oriental manuscripts. It also includes more than 4,000 incunables and broadsides. At this site the library houses three million titles printed before 1946. Of these, 250,000 make up the rare book collection of the

Department of Early Printed Books. Particularly fine 16th C Venetian imprints from the press of Aldus Manutius (The Aldine Press) were shown to us.

A major portion of the site we visited is currently closed for extensive renovation. The number two person overseeing the construction project gave us an incredible behind the scenes tour of the construction site. The totally renovated building is scheduled to reopen in 2010.

Day 4: Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin

Dr. Moritz Wullen, Director of SMB Art Library, provided tours of curatorial departments, including costume and prints, book arts, graphic design, architecture, and photography. Dr. Joachim Brand, the chief librarian, focused his tour on the art library. These facilities are a part of the Prussian Museum Foundation. They have separated the art library from special collections, i.e. the curatorial departments. Increasingly the SMB Art Library and the curatorial departments must support exhibitions. Dr. Wullen sees a future in collaborations with other libraries and museums.

Currently, the general library, which Dr. Brand equated to the ZIKG in Munich, is undergoing a retrospective conversion project to enter the library's holdings into OCLC WorldCat. Other challenges include technology and trying to buy what was lost in the war.

Curatorial Departments:

Each department is staffed with one curator and two assistants. Each has its own physical space. (This is the SMB equivalent of a special collections department in North America.) All collections are "European" collections.

Ornamental prints collection – has a printed catalogue.

The architecture collection covers the 15th C to the 21st C, but it is especially strong for the 20th C. Only works on paper are included, e.g. architectural drawings. Contemporary material is collected but nothing digital. (The same holds true for the graphic design department.)

The Photography collection includes books, documentary photography and is in topographical order, especially architectural photography; fashion photographs are being cataloged in the "Museum Plus" system.

Poster collection – 20,000 European posters

Exhibitions:

"Mathematics and the Arts" (recent)

"Africa Seen through Colonial Eyes" (2012?)

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With the support of the Goethe-Institut and Bibliothek & Information International, I was part of a study group of art museum libraries which visited German libraries September 15-20, 2008. I found the tour highly informative, both about commonalities with American museum and art libraries and differences with them.

The Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte library has a deep and rich collection of recent creation and of impressive size in its areas of specialty. (It is about the size of the libraries at the Art Institute of Chicago, but with a narrower collecting policy). The activities underway through arthistoricum.net were particularly impressive and extensive. As in the US, information technology is expensive and not always implemented as one would wish. It was apparent that institutional cooperation in these areas is in its infancy, but throughout the trip I found librarians to be aware of the necessity for cooperation in solving these problems. The use of electronic resources has not reduced the incoming flow of print material. Space for readers and for collections appear to be universal issues on both sides of the Atlantic. I was pleased throughout the trip to see the focus of the various libraries on service to the reader and the general accessibility of collections and circulation services.

The Bayerische Staatsbibliothek is in effect a national library. Their extremely aggressive approach to digitization—to have the entire collection digitized within 15 years—was quite an astonishing goal. At the same time, the great increases in attendance in person in the past half dozen years indicate that the library serves many audiences.

In Weimar, the Anna Amalia Bibliothek was a delight. I had of course heard of the fire, but did not have any knowledge of the collection otherwise. The Baroque spaces were beautiful, but so were the newly-constructed areas. The space on the top floor memorializing the fire was particularly moving. Again, I was surprised to learn that so much of the collection circulates. And we were fortunate enough to have time to visit the Bauhaus Museum. This was particularly interesting to me as we have a significant Bauhaus collection at the Art Institute, in both its German and American incarnations. (I subsequently was able to visit the Bauhaus Archiv in Berlin after the conclusion of the group trip.)

At the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin the examples of manuscript and rare printed books were most impressive. I was particularly interested in the collection of materials on Berlin Dada (we have a Dada and Surrealism collection) and of East German imprints. We were given an extensive tour of the architectural work in progress and I look forward to seeing the completed reading rooms on a future trip to Berlin.

At the Kunstbibliothek I was pleased again to see such an open dedication of time and service to readers. The research collections on costume, ornament, and architecture were known to me through published catalogs and exhibition documentation, but I did not realize that there was also a general reference art library. In all cases in Munich and Berlin the specialized libraries seem to supplement those of the universities located nearby.

German colleagues commented candidly on the problems of space for collections, staffing issues, and public demand for services, as well as shortages of acquisitions funds—all very familiar. It was apparent that common bibliographic systems and union catalogs are still a work in progress in Germany, but the focus on creating digital resources has provided opportunities for these and other libraries across Germany to cooperate.

All in all, I found the trip highly informative and useful. The scheduling and planning by the Goethe-Institut was careful and detailed, with good pacing, good food, and a very manageable group size. Our hosts were most generous with their time and eager to share information about matters large and small. I see several opportunities for future contact, and even for future projects and interactions with German libraries.

I am grateful to the Goethe-Institut and Bibliothek & Information International for the opportunity to participate in this event.

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Tuesday 16 September

Landed in Munich and participated in optional visit to Alte Pinakothek and Pinakothek der Moderne.

Wednesday 17 September

Group visit to Bibliothek des Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte

Dr Rüdiger Hoyer and colleagues gave us a tour of the library and discussed with us many issues including national and international cooperation efforts such as the artlibraries.net initiative based in Germany, in which the National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives participates. The funding of the library, its support of research fellows from across Germany, and future directions in collecting policy, were among the topics forming part of the discussion.

Group visit to Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

Dr Stephan Schwarz and colleagues showed us around the library and gave us a glimpse of the many treasures in the collection. We visited the digitization studios to see the digitization robots in use, a first-time experience for me. Discussions covered many topics including copyright, lending policies, and pressures on the use of the reading room by students.

Group dinner with Martina Bartel and Grit Fiedler from the Goethe-Institut.

Thursday 18 September

Travelled by train to Weimar.

Group visit to Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek.

Dr Michael Knoche showed us the new and old libraries, and talked about the devastating fire of 2004 and the subsequent efforts to restore the library building and collections. We toured the exhibition on bookbinding. The design of the new library in relation to the provision of user services was especially interesting.

Participated in optional visit to the Bauhaus Museum and the Church of St Peter and St Paul (Cranach altarpiece).

Friday 19 September

Travelled by train to Berlin.

Group visit to Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

Gerd-Joseph Botte and colleagues discussed current and future reorganisation of the collections and reading rooms, and showed us a superb selection of works on paper, both manuscripts and published materials, from the collection. We were also given an extensive and fascinating tour of the construction site for the new building on the Unter den Linden site.

Made optional visit to the exhibition Babylon: Mythos und Wahrheit, at the Pergamonmuseum.

Saturday 20 September

Group visit to Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin

Dr Moritz Wullen and colleagues gave us a tour of the library and the exhibition Proportion, Number and Weight: Masterpieces from the Art Library's Architecture Collection. The subjects of how the library services and collections relate to those of the various state museums, as well as to plans for the Humboldtforum, were discussed amongst others. The strength of the collections in architecture, decorative arts and fashion was very noteworthy.

Lunched with the group and with Hella Klauser of the German Library Association.

Made optional visit to the Bode-Museum and the Alte Nationalgalerie.

Travelled by air to Frankfurt for return journey.

Overall the study tour was an excellent opportunity to explore the state of German art libraries first-hand, to appreciate the richness of the collections, and to meet and speak with fellow-professionals working in German libraries. I was able to gain insights at many levels: for example into the overall disposition of art libraries in Germany, with particular parallels between the federal/state relationships in Germany and the provincial/state relationships in Canada; and, at the other end of the spectrum, into improved ways of delivering services for scanning and photocopying. I was fortunate indeed to be travelling with a group of experienced and thoughtful fellow-librarians whose insights and questions helped to extract the maximum value from the visits that we made.

I would like to express the most profound thanks and appreciation for this fruitful and thought-provoking professional experience, to the Goethe-Institut, and in particular to Shawn Whatley who masterminded the tour and steered the group through the itinerary so efficiently.

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I am pleased to submit a brief report regarding my recent trip to Germany organized and sponsored by the Goethe Institut and Bibliothek & Information International. I have organized my impressions around five themes, with some concluding remarks.

Organization of trip

I appreciated the hard work that went into planning this trip, and the ease with which it unfolded reflected the organizational skills needed to pull it off. The travel agent in Toronto handled all the travel arrangements easily and efficiently.

The information distributed prior to our trip very clearly defined our itinerary, and helped me decide what I needed to do to augment the rest of my stay in Berlin. Once we started the trip, I found things very well run and Shawn's ability to respond to unexpected delays or changes was handled nicely. And of course, we never skipped a meal.

The duration of the trip was fine and could have possibly included an extra day or two, but given everyone's schedules, that might have been difficult. I did appreciate the chance to get to Germany and was able to add another week in Berlin onto my itinerary, which was welcome.

Library facilities

I was struck overall by the up-to-date state of all the facilities we visited. It is clear that government support for libraries is high in Germany. In particular, the Anna Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar and the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin appear to be models for their success in augmenting older facilities with the latest in library architectural design. As someone who spent 7 years planning and building library spaces in New York, I found the attention to detail and respect for the program of each facility notable. These kinds of site visits are of vital interest to library administrators.

Technology

I was somewhat surprised at the differing use and availability of the latest in technology from library to library, however. Some institutions seem to be embracing digital technologies at levels not found in others. I had expected the same high degree of technology to be present across the board, on the same level as facilities noted above.

Staffing

It appears that German libraries and librarians enjoy a high quality of professional training, and that, unlike their counterparts in the United States, most seem to have a doctorate. I realize that we were meeting leaders in the field of librarianship in Germany, but the high level of competency and knowledge of whatever topic we were discussing nonetheless impressed me. Casual observation of other staff indicated that staffing levels also seem above average, at least compared to comparable American libraries.

Programs/outreach

Every library appeared to be enjoying a great deal of success in reaching its local constituency, whether specialized like the art libraries in Munich and Berlin, or the great national libraries in Munich and Berlin. Again, the level of government support in recognizing that role seemed evident. The length of time open to public for use seems to far exceed what I have experience in the US, for example.

Conclusions

I am very grateful to have been included on this study tour; not only did I learn something new, but it also gave me a chance to further cement my relationships with counterparts at other art libraries—sometimes a trip like this is just what it takes to develop new projects with colleagues. Thanks for giving us the opportunity to not only learn but also share.

PROGRAM:



ART COLLECTIONS IN GERMANY

STUDY TOUR FOR ART LIBRARIANS FROM CANADA
AND THE USA

AT THE INVITATION OF THE GOETHE-INSTITUTS IN
NORTH AMERICA

PARTICIPANTS:

Susan Allen, Associate Director, Chief Librarian – Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Jack Perry Brown, Director, Ryerson & Burnham Libraries, Art Institute of Chicago

Joanne Déry, Head Librarian, Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal

Jonathan Franklin, Chief, Library, Archives and Research Fellowships Program, National Gallery of Canada

Milan Hughston, Chief of Library and Museum Archives, The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Kenneth Soehner, Chief Librarian, Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Arrival in Munich according to individual travel arrangements

Accommodation:

Hotel Erzgiesserei

Erzgiesserei Straße 15

80335 München

Tel: 089.12 68 2 0

Travel by train S8 from Munich Airport to Hauptbahnhof (Central Station).

Transfer to U1 to Stiglmaierplatz (Direction: OEZ – Olympia/Einkaufszentrum)

Optional visit to Neue Pinakothek and/or Alte Pinakothek

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Tour and activities at the Bibliothek des Zentralinstituts für Kunstgeschichte

Contact at ZIKG: Dr. Rüdiger Hoyer

10:00 – 13:00 ZIKG program (entrance Meiserstraße 10)

Lunch

Tour and activities at the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

Contact at BSB: Dr. Stephan Schwarz

14:30 – 17:30 BSB program (entrance Ludwigstraße 16)

Dinner with Martina Bartel and Grit Fiedler, Coordinators, Library Services
Goethe-Institut Headquarters, Munich

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Train to Weimar – ICE 882 München 8:20 – 11:02 Fulda

ICE 1547 11:15 – 12:51 Weimar

Accommodation:

Grand Hotel Russischer Hof

Goetheplatz 2

99423 Weimar

Tel: 036 43 77 4804

Tour and activities at the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek

Contact: Dr. Michael Knoche

14:30 Anna Amalia Bibliothek program (entrance – Studienzentrum - Platz der Demokratie 4)
Visit to the Rokokosaal, Bauhaus Museum

Group dinner with Dr. Knoche (schedule permitting) at Osteria Bertagnolli

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Train to Berlin – IC 2353 Weimar 8:59 – 11:22 Berlin Hauptbahnhof

Accommodation:
Hotel Tiergarten
Alt-Moabit 89
10559 Berlin
Tel: 030 399 896

Tour and activities at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin
Contact: Gerd-Joseph Bötte
14:30 – 17:00 Staatsbibliothek Program (entrance Unter den Linden 8)

Evening free

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Tour and activities at the Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin
Contact: Dr. Moritz Wullen
10:00 – 13:00 Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin Program (entrance Kulturforum
Potsdamerplatz Matthäikirchplatz 6)

Wrap-up group lunch with Hella Klauser (German Library Association)

Free time

LH 193 18:05 – 19:15 Frankfurt (most participants)

Accommodation (Soehner, Déry, Allen, Whatley)
NH Hotels – Frankfurt Airport
Mörrfelder Straße 113
Kelsterbach (Frankfurt)
Tel: 06107 9380

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Departure to North America for most study tour participants