
Microform Reviews

International Index to Art Exhibition Catalogues, 1895–1991. Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art; Lisse: MMF Publications, 1993. 864 microfiches, positive, silver-halide film. With accompanying 47pp. "Guide". Price: Dfl. 9995.

This microfiche set comprises the records maintained by the Library of the Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art in Amsterdam of its extensive collection of exhibition catalogues built up over a period of 40 years. The Library holds the most extensive collection of modern art documentation in the Netherlands and is one of a handful of major libraries in this field throughout the world.

The microfiche set reproduces the large format cards on which the Stedelijk Library recorded their exhibition catalogues. They comprise a series of indexes: to artists both in solo and group exhibitions, to exhibitions held at particular museums and galleries, to the subjects of group exhibitions, to travelling exhibitions, public and private collections, biennials, artists' groups, associations, prizes and finally a complete record of the Stedelijk's own exhibitions and those of its out-station, the Fodor Museum.

Each catalogue has been entered on a number of different cards, according to its nature: a solo exhibition appearing, for example, on the card for the artists concerned and for the museum or gallery holding the exhibition, and a group exhibition appearing under museum or gallery, subject, and possibly biennale and/or individual artists participating.

Details of the catalogues were hand-written onto the cards in the order in which they were received, i.e. generally, but not always, in chronological order. Brief information is given about each catalogue, sufficient to identify the exhibition, but these are in no way full bibliographical records. Titles are not fully transcribed – solo exhibitions often being described merely as "solo". Museum and Gallery names are often abbreviated. The opening and closing dates of the exhibition are given and illustrations, portraits of the artist, biographical details, and bibliographies noted.

Although the Stedelijk opened in 1895, the Library's development dates from the post-war period. The collection of catalogues is therefore strongest from the 1950s onwards although earlier material is present. Its collection contains excellent runs of catalogues from the major museums and galleries of the world but also

good collections from Dutch commercial and provincial institutions of catalogues which may exist in no other library anywhere. The subject scope is that of the Stedelijk itself – international modern art (with an emphasis on the art of the Netherlands).

The series of indexes answers the following questions:

1. What catalogues the Stedelijk holds relating to a particular artist.

In most cases a mixture of solo and group catalogues are listed, primarily in date order. In the case of more successful artists, solo catalogues may be listed first followed by group exhibitions. Although the indication of important (★) and minor (○) catalogues is very helpful here, the omission of title transcription for solo exhibitions is not, since solo exhibitions may be anything from a full-blown retrospective to a specific selection.

The "Guide" to the collection does not indicate *which* group exhibitions are listed under artist. On the assumption that not every artist participating in every group exhibition is cross-referenced in this way, it would be useful to know the criteria for such selection.

2. Which catalogues the Stedelijk has from particular exhibiting bodies.

This is useful for researchers tracing the exhibition history of a particular institution, or wanting an overview of events in a particular city or town at a given time. It may also be a more satisfactory way of locating a particular group exhibition, when the venue and date are known, than searching for such items by subject (*see below*). However, even this is not always straightforward.

Institutions are entered under place-names, which are in Dutch where there is a Dutch variant. Usually the Dutch is close enough to the vernacular to be recognisable to non-Dutch speakers, and a helpful list is given in the printed "Guide". However, not everyone will immediately recognize Aken (Aachen), Kaapstad (Cape Town), Luik (Liege) or Verenigde Staten (USA).

In addition, under major cities, the institutions are not arranged in one alphabetical sequence as elsewhere, but divided into Galleries, Museums