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ALJ Special Issue editorial

Welcome to this special themed issue of Arts Libraries Journal. We have wanted to cover the theme of information literacy for some time, particularly within the field of art and design librarianship because we have felt it important to acknowledge some of the differences that we experience in this aspect of our jobs when compared to librarians working in other library and information sectors.

We all know that art librarianship is 'different' but sometimes it is difficult to identify and evidence exactly how and why it is different and what these differences are. Taking a critical look at how we develop and deliver information literacy can help us to achieve this and the selection of articles and reviews that we have commissioned and collated for this special issue highlights some of the specific themes and issues relating to information literacy (and indeed in other literacies) in art librarianship.

In doing this we present some of the current thinking, practices and strategies in the art and design information literacy arena commencing with a thorough literature review around the subject from Duncan Chappell of Glasgow School of Art. The practicalities of providing information literacy to studio based art and design students are addressed in two fascinating articles from Ashley Peterson (Tufts University) and Larissa Garcia (Northern Illinois University) and also from Ellen Petraits from Rhode Island School of Design. The ARLIS/NA information competencies are reviewed and discussed by way of a 'ten years on' reflection from Barbara Opar and this is complemented with a 50 year content analysis of literature around visual literacy from Alan Michelson. Amanda Meeks of North Arizona University writes an excellent article on teaching visual literacy in art and design librarianship while Leo Appleton and Elizabeth Staddon look at how specific strategies have been put in place at the University of the Arts, London to assist the development of librarians as arts educators. Annamarie McKie tells the story of her own professional development from arts librarian to educational developer at the University of the Creative Arts and the issue is rounded off with a current overview of Object Based Learning practices at University College London from Liz Lawes and Tabitha Tuckett.

Overall this collection of papers makes for excellent and interesting reading and we thank all our contributors and authors for keeping to their respective briefs and contributing such excellent articles. There is something to stimulate all those art and design librarians who are involved in teaching and learning and we hope that you will read the issue with interest and find something to take back to your own art and design library environments and your teaching practices.

Gustavo Grandal Montero

Leo Appleton