# Collection Management Policy for Art

**Section 1: detailed description of the collection**

**Section 2: acquisition priorities and factors governing acquisition decisions**

**Section 3: retention and preservation policy**

## 1 Detailed description of the collection

* 1. **Purpose and description**

The Art collection primarily supports teaching and research in the UCL History of Art Department and the UCL Slade School of Fine Art, as well as interdepartmental Film Studies programmes.

* 1. **Readership and access**
     1. The main readership of the Art collection is UCL students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and UCL staff. There are also a significant number of affiliate students and intercollegiate students taking History of Art courses taught at UCL. Alumni users and Slade Summer School students are also welcome.
     2. Access is consistent with that to other UCL Libraries and collections. Academic staff and researchers from other institutions are welcome to make use of the collection at any time.
     3. Access by undergraduate and taught postgraduate students from other institutions is restricted: University of London students are given reference access (temporary variations to normal access policy apply April-June) but those from other universities are excluded except during UCL vacation periods. MA Modern and Contemporary Art students registered at Christies Education also have reference access to the collection.
  2. **Description and holdings**
     1. **Number of volumes**

The Art collection currently contains in excess of 28,500 printed volumes. A further significant quantity is housed in the offsite Stores.

* + 1. **Coverage**

The current Art collection exists as a result of the merger of art historical material already housed in the Main Library with the departmental library of the Slade School of Fine Art. Film theory is an integral part of the collection; UCL was the location of the first Film Studies course in Britain (at the now defunct Slade Film Unit) under the direction of Thorold Dickinson. This component of the collection continues to grow in support of the MA Film Studies (now part of the Centre for Multidisciplinary & Intercultural Inquiry) and other widespread inter-departmental teaching of the subject.

**1.3.2.1 Monographs**

The Art collection is predominantly print based monographs and within this there is a concentration of exhibition catalogues. Broadly, the collection contains material relating to the history and theory of international Fine Art practice and Film (see **2.4** for a detailed breakdown of subject specialisms within the collection). The Fine Art material constitutes the bulk of the collection, and is arranged with sections of general art theory, followed by chronological periods in art history subdivided into geographical areas, and photography. There are smaller sections of applied arts, performance, and art techniques. The Film material is arranged into sections of general philosophy and theory, genres, the cinema of different countries, and individuals in film (directors, producers, etc.).

Most volumes are available for loan, but due to the high value and rarity of much of the material in the collection, there is a significant proportion of reference only items. The print collection is supplemented by a small but growing number of e-books.

* + - 1. **Periodicals**

The periodical collection consists of over 160 titles, approximately 90 of which are current subscriptions. These follow the same subject focus as that of the monograph collection, with titles spanning the history of art, film and photography. Increasingly, titles are available electronically but many contemporary art titles are only available in the printed format.

* + - 1. **Databases and indexes**

The Library provides access to all the key abstracting, indexing and full text databases in the subject area: Art Source (including Art Full Text and Art Index Retrospective); Art, Design and Architecture Collection (including International Bibliography of Art, ARTbibliographies Modern, Design and Applied Arts Index, Arts and Humanities Full Text); Oxford Art Online (including Grove Art Online, Oxford Companion to Western Art, Encyclopedia of Aesthetics, Benezit Dictionary of Artists, and Concise Oxford Dictionary of Art Terms).

Dedicated Film resources include Film Index Online, comprising FIAF Index to Film/TV Periodicals, the BFI Film Index International, and the AFI Catalog. Several interdisciplinary resources such as JSTOR, Scopus, Web of Science and ProQuest Historical Newspapers also include significant art and film theory content.

The Library also subscribes to the image databases, Bridgeman Education and the Art Museum Image Gallery. Multimedia resources include the BUFVC’s Box of Broadcasts, the JISC MediaHub, and the BFI’s Screen Online.

* + - 1. **Other resources**

The collection includes approximately 700 audio-visual items relating specifically to Art in DVD, VHS and audio CD formats. This includes interviews and documentaries, artists’ film, sound works, music by artists and music which has influenced artists or played an integral part in art movements (such as Minimalism, Noise and Musique Concrete). There is also a large collection of feature films by international directors.

* + 1. **Current location**

The open access collection of printed monographs, periodicals and audio-visual material is held in the South End of the Main Library, Wilkins Building. The general collection of feature films on DVD is held in the Main Library self issue room.

* + 1. **Material held offsite**

There are further substantial holdings of lesser used Art monographs and pre-2000 issues of print periodicals in the Stores at Wickford. Such material is available for next-day consultation on request.

* + 1. **Special Collections**

Some fragile, rare and expensive material (such as artists’ books and rare exhibition catalogues) is classified as Art Rare and is held in Special Collections. There are also holdings of pre-1850 publications. The Small Press Collections (comprising of the Poetry Store, Little Magazines and Alternative Press publications) also contain a significant amount of material of relevance to Art.

* + 1. **Relationship to other collections in UCL**

The Art collection maintains a close relationship with the Architecture and Town Planning collections held at the Bartlett Environmental Studies Library. Prior to the union of Architecture and Planning and the opening of the Environmental Studies Library, all architecture materials were housed with Art; most of this has been transferred to Wates House. Some architecture material remains in Art; the focus of the Bartlett is on the modern period whereas the Art collection is largely historical. There is also a distinct crossover between the subjects of land art and public sculpture with environmental design and architecture, and in this area the two collections also complement each other.

Other collections which complement Art are The Institute of Archaeology Library (prehistoric and classical art, museum studies, conservation); The School of Slavonic and East European Studies (Eastern European art and cinema); Anthropology (cultural and media studies, gender studies etc.); Philosophy (aesthetics); History and Ancient History.

* + 1. **Relationship to collections outside UCL**

London is one of the art capitals of the world, with rich resources and many art schools, each with their own fine libraries. The University of London includes specialist libraries at the Courtauld and the Warburg, as well as material in the Senate House library. The Tate Gallery has an excellent library and archive focused on British art; the Victoria & Albert Museum is home to the National Art Library; the nearby British Library contains much art. While basic material for the study of art is widely held, each library is different with its own character, strengths, and special collections.

1. **Acquisition**
   1. **Responsibility for selection**

The Subject Librarian for Fine Art, History of Art and Film Studies undertakes selection of material within the framework of the Collection Management Policy, in close liaison with the academic departments. Recommendations for purchase are encouraged and welcomed from staff and students. Final responsibility for selection lies with the Director of Library Services.

* 1. **Subjects collected**

Books and periodicals are bought primarily to support the teaching of the Slade School of Fine Art, and the History of Art and Film Studies departments. Therefore, the collection concentrates on art history within a chronological span from c. 1100 to the present in relation to the art of the western tradition and its global encounters. There is an emphasis on some areas of academic importance: students at the Slade School of Fine Art require a comprehensive overview of contemporary practice and Modern art history and theory within which they can site their own work in a global context. To this end, international art exhibition catalogues constitute a major part of the collection. Visual, cultural and critical theory in relation to art practice is also important.

The History of Art department has a long-standing commitment to critical theory, undertaking research and teaching surrounding topics such as phenomenology, film theory, psychoanalytic theory, materials and conservation, sexuality, and Marxist and feminist traditions of art history. Other specialities include Medieval art and architecture, early Modern Europe, the Italian Renaissance, Dutch genre painting, 18th-21st century British art, 18th and 19th century French art, post-colonial art, 19th-21st century American art and culture, Modernism and the European avant-garde, photography, and globalisation in contemporary art.

The history and theory of film is taught across a range of departments (History, Ancient History, SELCS, Anthropology etc.) all of whom utilise the material held in the Art collection. The course programme of the MA Film Studies (part of the Centre for Multi-disciplinary & Intercultural Inquiry) covers a wide variety of world cinemas and historical moments in film. Specialisms include: the French New Wave, genres of Italian cinema, Nordic cinema, Spanish film, Argentine cinema, Russian cinema, documentary, and political film.

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of teaching and research in the History of Art and Fine Art Departments and the span of subjects which have an influence on the history of art and contemporary practice, materials on topics which fall within the areas of politics, history, anthropology, the built environment, and geography are also frequently purchased as a result of academic requests.

**2.3 Priorities**

The priority is to acquire material in support of taught courses, undergraduate and postgraduate, within UCL. For History of Art and Film Studies (which is entirely postgraduate), this involves acquiring sufficient copies of texts on reading lists and any secondary supporting material. As teaching in the Slade is not based on reading lists, priority is for material which will directly support key topics taught in the History and Theory component, and students’ studio practice. The interests of research students and staff will be supported as the budget allows.

To maintain the collection as a research resource for all levels of study it is essential to acquire a body of material which is representative of trends and movements within contemporary art. To this end, standing orders have been established to ensure collection of core material. This includes publications from significant museums and galleries worldwide.

Every effort will be made, budget allowing, to accommodate requests for resources, both print and electronic, from the academic departments.

**2.4 Levels**

Materials for use by taught undergraduate and postgraduate students, research students and academic staff are all collected.

**2.5 Language**

Material in English will normally be collected, but important works in other western European languages may also be collected. Due to the global nature of contemporary fine art, exhibition catalogues in other languages (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean) may also be included in the collection.

**2.6 Format and medium**

Material in the subject area is predominantly available only in print format. Where possible and appropriate, monographs are purchased in electronic format. Audio visual formats are also purchased.

**2.7 Collaborative collecting agreements.**

There are no formal schemes in force. Informally, there is collaboration within the London Art History Libraries Forum (LAHLF) which includes representatives from academic and other institutional libraries with a specialism in art history (e.g. University of the Arts London, Tate Library & Archive, The British Library, The National Art Library).

**2.8 Multiple copies**

Multiple copies of core texts are bought as required. These will be drawn either from History of Art reading lists or suggested by Slade lecturers in support of key topics being taught. Occasionally, certain texts will prove particularly relevant to Fine Art students and the level of demand for these will inform additional purchasing.

**2.9 Donations**

Donations will be accepted for the Art collection subject to the criteria outlined in the Library Services Donations Policy.

**2.10 Exchange and deposit arrangements**

There are no exchange and deposit arrangements in place.

**2.11 Material not collected**

While no category of material is rejected as a matter of policy and there is no formal upper limit on the cost of any one item, those items which otherwise fit the collection profile but are deemed to be too expensive may be excluded.

**3 Retention and preservation policies**

**3.1 Review of the collection**

The open access Art collection will be reviewed annually for decisions on retention, relegation to Store and disposal. These decisions are the responsibility of the Subject Librarian for Art, although the advice of members of relevant UCL departments may from time to time be sought.

**3.2 Use of open access space**

The open access collection of print monographs and exhibition catalogues is heavily used by a diverse UCL community and grows quickly due to the relative unavailability of electronic resources in the subject area.

Browsing of printed material is an extremely important element in art research; therefore, as much material as space allows is held on open access. As well as accessing scholarly information in traditional ways (library catalogue etc.), artists use the collection to seek inspiration and stimulus in relation to their practical work. Finding information in serendipitous ways is an important and valid research method and the open access collection must be as wide ranging and comprehensive as possible to support this. Therefore, representative examples of key periods in art history or the work of individual artists may be retained to maintain a comprehensive open access collection. Key print volumes may also be maintained on the open shelves due to the importance of access to the high quality reproduction of images.

Priority is also given to items required for teaching purposes, and all items listed on reading lists will be held on the open shelves. Otherwise, material is retained according to usage.

The current two years of journals will be kept on the open shelves where back copies of that journal are also available electronically. There are a number of exceptions to this rule: where the journals have a very high image to text ratio, a substantial ephemeral content not reproduced electronically, or where images have not been reproduced for copyright reasons.

**3.3 Relegation**

The selection of items for relegation to storage is based on the combination of a number of criteria, including level of usage, relevance to current teaching, and volume of material in a given subject area (see **3.2**). Any material may be relegated at the discretion of the Subject Librarian.

Pre-2000 back copies of journals are relegated to Stores following the same criteria as titles also held electronically (see **3.2**).

**3.4 Retention and disposal**

Art historical material rarely becomes obsolete and will generally be stored rather than disposed of; earlier editions of monographs often contain texts which remain relevant. Duplicate copies of less used items may be disposed of, as appropriate. Because art materials can be very unpredictable in relation to future study, the presumption is that relevance will be ongoing. Unlike many other subjects, art books and exhibition catalogues are often published in limited runs and tend to increase in value, particularly as they go out of print, and will be retained as long as they are relevant to the criteria laid out in **2.3** and **2.4**. Research level material will be retained.

**3.5 Preservation**

The Library’s collections are preserved according to the principles set down in the Preservation Policy, accessible on the web with all public policy statements from UCL Library Services. The preservation of digital materials is dealt with by the Digital Curation Strategy.

**This policy will be reviewed periodically by the Subject Librarian, in consultation with the relevant departmental library committees, and adjusted as required.**

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