

Melbourne Art Library

Collection Development Policy – September 2020

Freedom, prosperity and the development of society and of individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

- Excerpt from the *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto*

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Mission Statement

Melbourne Art Library is an independent not-for-profit print book library providing an accessible and specialised art and design collection for the local community. It aims to connect the art-curious, and emerging and established arts practitioners with hard to access resources; fostering the dialogue, appreciation, and critique of art in Melbourne. The Library centres curiosity, collaboration, and experimentation.

Target User Group

The Library services all art-interested individuals in Melbourne. This may include emerging and established artists, arts writers, art historians, filmmakers, architects, and designers, and any other people interested in art and design.

The Library specifically caters for those who may not qualify for entry to other art libraries, be that on the grounds of student membership or research credentials. As an open-access library, Melbourne Art Library encourages collaboration and tangential research and exploration.

Scope

Collection Principles

The principle aim of the Library is to collect key texts on art practice in Australia, South-East Asia and the Pacific. While encouraging interdisciplinary thought, the collection focuses on content pertaining to Art and Design. Complementary to maintaining a local focus, the Library continues to collect theoretical and critical texts published for the broader international arts community.

While not intending to act as an archive, the Library collects ephemeral and unpublished material pertaining to the history of arts practice in Australia. This material is collected for reference rather than preservation.

The collection supports the interests of its users, and responds to trends in local discourse and to user suggestions. Collection selection decisions do not assume a position of education, acknowledging an interested and self-directed audience. The Library represents a breadth of perspectives.

Selection decisions show an awareness of other institution's collections and aims to provide access to typically hard-to-access resources.

Subjects

The collection encompasses art in all media, theory and criticism, including:

- Painting
- Drawing
- Architecture
- Film
- Photography
- Sculpture
- Design
- Print Media
- Digital Art
- Performance Studies
- Spatial Practice
- Museum Practice and Curatorship
- Art Conservation

Subjects that fall outside of the realm of 'art' but that are deemed to be key texts or useful resources as demonstrated by the user community are acquired.

The collection focuses on Australian, South-East Asian, and Pacific art and cultural activities, while continuing to collect theoretical and critical texts published for the international arts community.

The collection includes ephemera and documentation of artistic practice (exhibition fliers, catalogue essays, other published materials) related to Australian artists and visual art organisations.

Formats

Library materials collected include:

- Print materials (monographs, serials, pamphlets, exhibition catalogues, zines, newspapers, theses, folios, photobooks)
- Pictorial materials (posters and postcards relating to local exhibitions and arts practice)
- Audiovisual materials (DVDs and CD ROMS)
- Ephemera and manuscripts (as they relate to local exhibitions and arts organisations)

Independent and self-published material is actively collected. The Library acknowledges the prevalence of self-publishing in the art community and, on a local level, wants to support and encourage self-publishing activities. The Library actively acquires local zines and self-published artist books.

The Library will not actively acquire e-resources. The Library does not have the funds and infrastructure required to maintain digital subscriptions to databases or texts. However, the Library maintains and develops an online list of freely accessible e-resources.

The Library is a library first and an archive second. While collecting documentation and publications pertaining to local events, such acquisitions will be conscientiously assessed in regards to storage and conservation needs and potential access issues.

Languages

Titles are chosen for their importance regardless of language, yet English is preferred where available.

Publication Dates

Emphasis is given to the acquisition of current titles; however, appropriate earlier imprints are acquired, where they support the objectives of the collection.

Acquisition Methods

Selection Tools

Selection will be undertaken by the Library's staff. In addition to considerations of Subject, Format, Language, and Publication Dates, the following selection criteria are used to determine whether items are purchased or accepted for donation:

- Relevance and current community demand
- Accuracy of content
- Quality of presentation
- Authority and reputation of author, publisher, producer or illustrator
- Series already in the collection
- Cost

Purchase of additional copies of a title already in the Library's collection may be considered based on usage statistics. The Library will not hold more than five copies of the same title.

Selection lists may be developed through a variety of means, including consideration of catalogues and book reviews, through subscriptions, and from attendance at book fairs.

User-Driven Acquisitions

The Library accepts and encourages suggestions of titles from the public. These will be evaluated and assessed by Library staff in line with the collection principles and selection criteria.

Purchasing

Preference is given to the purchasing of material through local supply chains, where possible. Locally, items will be purchased through the most cost effective means, including collaboration with other institutions or via donation.

Where significant differences in costs occur between local suppliers and offshore sources, sourcing decisions will be considerate of budget constraints and value for money.

Gift Policy

Melbourne Art Library accepts and encourages the acquisition of material through donation.

The Library will accept or decline an offer of donation based on criteria set out in the Collection Development Policy.

Once accepted, donations become the property of Melbourne Art Library, and may be disposed of in line with the collection weeding guidelines.

The Library will not provide monetary valuations of any gifts.

Challenging Material

Intellectual Freedom

The Library collects materials, which represent a variety of opinions and perspectives. It upholds the principles of intellectual freedom enunciated in the "Statement of free access to information" produced by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA).

Process for Challenges to Material in the Collection

Any queries regarding the inclusion of material in the collection can be made in writing to the Library.

Collection Evaluation

The Library staff are responsible for collection development, collection maintenance, and for the frequent evaluation of the collection.

The Library does not automatically replace materials withdrawn from the collection for reasons of wear or poor physical condition.

Deselection

The withdrawing of items from the collection - weeding - should happen on a regular basis, but may be further driven by demands for space. The following criteria are considered when making weeding decisions:

- The content has been superseded by a new edition or by other works and the edition is no longer required.
- The title is no longer relevant to the needs and demands of the community, as determined through user data
- The item is worn, soiled, damaged, or in a condition which inhibits access to its content
- The format is no longer accessible

Deselected items may be disposed of through any means considered appropriate by the library staff. This may include sale of the work, donation, or recycling.

Review of Policy

This policy should be reviewed every two years and approved by the Committee.