



RCA LIBRARY COLLECTIONS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The Library's primary constituency is the body of students, staff and researchers of the Royal College of Art. Our collections of books, periodicals, online and other resources are acquired, developed, managed, maintained and promoted with this constituency in mind. The Special Collections area of the Library, with its range of rare, unique or specialised materials, additionally supports the wider research community beyond the RCA.

The core aims of the Library's Collections Policy are:

To develop appropriate and regularly assessed collections that are responsive to shifts of emphasis in teaching and research at School and course level.

To support teaching, learning, research and administrative activities in the College.

To reflect the RCA's interdisciplinary approach to learning and teaching in art and design.

To optimise the range and level of resources available to students, staff and researchers.

To ensure that collections of resources are up-to-date, relevant and comprehensive.

To optimise the use of resources in terms of their arrangement, access, preservation, retrieval and promotion.

ACQUISITIONS

Selection of resources

Books and other resources are selected and purchased by three Librarians, and subject responsibility for the twenty-three courses offered at the College is shared between them.

Principal tools for selection are:

- Booksellers' and publishers' catalogues.
- Book reviews in key art and design periodicals.
- Suggestion slips and current awareness services from library suppliers.
- Visits by a specialist art and design book supplier's van every two months.
- Personal visits and contact with specialist booksellers.

Alongside these mechanisms, we have in place

- Suggestions forms, which are circulated to all courses at the beginning of each academic year and provided at the Library Issue Desk.
- An ILS User Group with staff and student representation from each School.
- Regular meetings with Course Directors to discuss course information needs.
- A regular "new resources list" which keeps students and staff aware of recent acquisitions.
- Responses to questions and comments about Library services in the annual ILS student survey, which can often highlight areas of resources in need of updating.

The Head of Information and Learning Services sits on the Academic Standards Committee and the Head of Information and Learning Services and the Library Manager sit on the Learning and Teaching Committee, so they are able to maintain an awareness of shifts of emphasis and proposed academic changes within courses.

We actively seek to exploit the expertise and knowledge of our academic staff, from their activities as practitioners and exhibitors, to alert us to lesser-known material. Recommendations from staff and students are encouraged. Material is often acquired as a result of specific information needs identified for course reading by academic staff. Generally, all recommended items are purchased. Sometimes they are rejected because they are too expensive, too specialist or they fall outside the subject areas covered by the Library.

Budget allocation

A defined amount within the Library budget each year is allocated to resource acquisition. This is divided up in a number of different ways – the regular selection of books and other material by Librarians; online resources; periodical subscriptions;

annual reference publications; one-off purchases of collections of books for specific areas of stock, such as Dyslexia information, illustrated children's books or computer software manuals, or to update provision for a particular subject area.

Suppliers

The Library uses a number of specialist suppliers, including a specialist in art and design resources and a supplier who offers processing. All suppliers chosen offer substantial discounts. Personal visits are made by Librarians to specialist bookshops to maintain an informed approach to buying material by smaller publishers and to ensure optimum currency and relevance of material. In the case of the item being out of print, a copy is sought from other sources, such as second-hand book suppliers' websites.

New subject area requirements

Library staff will respond to the emergence of new subject areas by researching appropriate resources. Consultation with academic staff is vital to ensure the Library has the necessary resources for students and staff. Sometimes a specific allocation of an amount in the annual book budget is made in order to build up resources in a new subject area.

Course reading lists

Departments are encouraged to send copies of course reading lists to the Library as early as possible, in order to ensure resources are available to students as soon as they are needed. Titles on reading lists that are not currently in the collection are checked for availability and considered for purchase, if necessary as multiple copies. Course reading lists are added to the Library Catalogue under Course Reading.

Purchase of multiple copies

Due to the high demand for recommended texts during dissertation research, it is sometimes necessary to purchase multiple copies of a book. The usual practice is to buy three copies: one for four-week loan, one for one-week loan and one for reference. In addition, a 'Purchase Alert' report from the Library Management System informs us when a number of users are waiting for a particular reserved item. At this stage we may seek to purchase additional copies to fulfil these reservations.

Occasionally duplicate copies of major works on or by a particular artist, designer or practitioner are bought in response to regular referencing by academic staff. Students are sometimes recommended by their tutors to buy particular texts themselves, because it is not appropriate for the Library to purchase multiple copies in the numbers required.

Donations

The Library welcomes offers of donations of books, documents, archival material and artists' books. At the discretion of Library staff these are added to the Main Library, Archive or Special Collections. The Library also welcomes offers of donations of films on DVD, provided they are Region 2 coded and are in good condition, and offers of

donations of periodicals in order to fill gaps in the collection. Potential donations to Special Collections are considered on a case-by-case basis using a range of criteria, including appropriateness to the RCA as an institution, and any preservation or storage implications. Acquisitions guidelines for each area of the collections are outlined on pages 13 to 14.

COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Collecting Levels

The Library seeks to maintain collections of at least 'instructional support level' for the core areas of art and design taught within the College. Our aim is to hold collections that are appropriate in level and scope for independent study. These include a range of basic monographs, key critical commentaries on related subject areas, and essential reference tools and bibliographic resources to accompany each area.

Staff and student research activity tends to be wide-ranging. Individual needs are responded to, after assessment of their wider relevance to the collection as a whole.

In response to emerging areas of research activity, the Library will often enhance specific parts of the collection.

While the Library aims to provide material in support of course-related teaching, learning and research, it also aims to achieve a consistent and steady growth across the range of art and design subject areas. Such material is often of relevance to a wide range of staff and students.

The Library also collects material on psychology, philosophy, science, nature, music, literature, travel and history, for context and visual inspiration. A particular section is singled out for attention each summer, and reviewed and updated as necessary.

While we collect material on art and design from all periods, our main emphasis is on contemporary art, design and critical theory. Unless particularly well illustrated, we concentrate on English language publications. We collect material, irrespective of format; subject content is the major consideration.

Gaps in the Collections

We seek to identify and remedy any 'gaps' in the collections, through formal and informal user feedback, regular review of subject areas and liaison with academic staff.

In addition, all inter-library loans are studied before processing, searches of the Library catalogue are monitored and key bibliographies are consulted as mechanisms for identifying particular gaps in the collections.

Reference materials

A Quick Reference section includes language dictionaries, subject dictionaries and encyclopaedias, directories of organisations and biographical information.

Certain items, because of expense, rarity or difficulty in replacing, are for reference only, though still housed within the sequence of loan materials.

Materials for loan

Most of the books held in the Main Library are available for loan. The majority of items can be borrowed for a period of up to four weeks. Items more heavily in demand have a one-week loan period. A borrower can renew an item once, for an additional similar loan period, provided it has not been reserved by another reader.

All items in Special Collections are for reference only and may only be consulted by appointment and within the controlled environment of the Special Collections and Archives Room. In exceptional circumstances, individual items may be issued on day release, at the discretion of the Special Collections Manager. Items designated Rare/Valuable may not be removed from the Library under any circumstances.

Periodicals

The Library provides a range of periodical titles reflecting current areas of study and areas of contextual interest to students, staff and researchers. They are a key way of finding out about current thinking and debate, as well as new trends in art and design. Within the scope of the collection, we take into account the increasing emphasis on research. Our aim is to have a long established run of the core art and design publications combined with a wide range of shorter run publications.

Periodicals are assessed in terms of:

- Significance to the art and design community.
- Quality of documentation.
- Visual quality.
- Relevance for staff and students.
- International importance.
- Current awareness qualities.
- Refereeing by an international panel.

Preference is given, where possible, to publications scanned by abstracting and indexing services.

Staff and students are encouraged to suggest new periodical titles. Our policy is to respond to suggestions by ordering a sample copy, which is displayed in the Periodicals Room, with a page attached for comments. Usually, new subscriptions are begun as existing subscriptions end. Major shifts in course emphasis generally

require a re-assessment of the periodical titles associated with that subject area. If necessary we will acquire back issues of periodicals.

Because of budget limitations, damaged stock will not automatically be replaced. If a newly-purchased issue is received in a damaged condition we endeavour to obtain an immediate replacement copy or a refund from our suppliers.

The current issue of a title is displayed and up to four years of back issues kept in the Periodicals Room. At the end of this time periodicals may be placed in storage or a decision taken to dispose of them. Stored issues can be requested at the Library Issue Desk. Regular collections are made to store rooms. Items collected are held for two weeks at the Library Issue Desk for viewing.

Periodical titles are for reference purposes and may only be viewed in the Library.

Photocopies may be made from periodicals, but users are required to adhere to the relevant copyright law relating to the reproduction of image and text.

Exhibition Catalogues

Exhibition catalogues are a significant resource for researchers and often contain information not available elsewhere. Frequently, they are the only source of information on young or unknown artists. Through a specialist art and design book supplier, we have established standing orders with approximately fifty art galleries and museums in the UK, Europe and the United States. Catalogues from these venues are received automatically during the course of the exhibition. Other exhibition catalogues, suggested by students and staff, are also considered for purchase.

Exhibition Catalogues are assessed in terms of:

- Status of the gallery and the publisher.
- Substance of texts.
- Availability of footnotes, bibliography and index.
- Quality of the illustrations.
- Other information on the artist.

Recorded material

Off-air recordings of television programmes

The College subscribes to an ERA licence, permitting us to record and hold copies of programmes broadcast on terrestrial television channels. The Library makes a range of off-air recordings of programmes of relevance to art and design, as well as contextual material, such as themed documentaries or series. These are catalogued and made accessible for searching on the Library Catalogue, by programme title, series title, and subject.

Recordings are held for a period of up to ten years, reflecting the usual life-span of the media. At that point consideration is given of the need for disposal.

Any recordings made held under the ERA licence may be copied, on request and by prior arrangement, for individual students, members of staff or for other institutions that also hold an ERA licence.

On request, the Library will endeavour to locate a recording of a programme that is not in the collection, providing that it is available from another academic institution holding an ERA licence.

Off-air recordings are for reference use only and must be viewed in the Library. However, students and staff can request a copy to be made for their own use by Audio-Visual Services.

Under normal circumstances, within the terms of the ERA licence, visitors are not permitted to view off-air recordings.

College-wide lectures

Recordings are made of college-wide lectures, and the Library normally holds these for two years in order to cover the total period of study for a particular cohort of students.

At the request of the Critical and Historical Studies department, recordings of lectures may be held for a longer period (e.g. ten years).

By prior arrangement, recordings of college-wide lectures may be viewed by visitors from other academic institutions.

Recordings of college-wide lectures are for reference use only and must be viewed in the Library. However, students and staff can request a copy to be made for their own use by Audio-Visual Services.

Pre-recorded films (feature/documentary/shorts and animation)

The Library holds a collection of commercially recorded videos and DVDs.

We welcome suggestions for new titles from staff and students. Suggestions can be requested via the Suggestions Form. As long as they conform to collection criteria most suggested items are purchased, subject to budget limitations.

The Library purchases films once a term, but will place orders in advance if suppliers indicate that a film is likely to be released in the near future.

All films purchased are Region 2 or 0 coded, to ensure that any borrower will be able to view the item with no loss of quality, colour and special features.

Pre-recorded films are available for one-week loan, with a week extension on request, provided the item has not been reserved. Because of copyright-related viewing restrictions they may only be borrowed by registered staff or students at the college.

Criteria for selection of pre-recorded films are:

- Fiction films (full length, short, genre, live action or animation) of note in terms of cultural significance, style and technical development.
- Early or breakthrough work of later established directors, cinematographers, art directors.
- Critically acclaimed art-house, low-budget and independently produced films.
- Critically acclaimed foreign language films.
- Documentary or campaigning films of note in terms of historical significance and technical development.
- Cult and experimental films including those of purely technical interest.
- Critically acclaimed television films or series of outstanding production quality or cultural significance.

College graduation show recordings

The Library receives copies of the Animation showreels and recordings of the Fashion Show.

These recordings are for reference use only.

Online resources

The Library subscribes to a range of online reference resources that reflect the areas of study and research at the RCA. They include both indexing and abstracting bibliographic databases which enable access to published material in the form of periodicals, books, exhibition catalogues, etc., and full-text reference works in searchable electronic format. Students and staff can access these resources either within the college or remotely, through an individual log-in system.

RCA Archive and other manuscript collections

The RCA Archive exists to collect, organise and preserve documents related to the history and activities of the College. These are catalogued and made available to support research into the life and work of the RCA. The archive contains published College documents and grey literature, including exhibition catalogues, prospectuses, annual reports, accounts and Convocation lists, together with collections of photographs, press cuttings and memorabilia. The RCA Archive also includes runs of RCA publications, such as the student magazine ARK (1950-78), the Inklings publications of the Illustration department, and the books of the Lion and Unicorn Press (1950-84).

In addition to the RCA Archive, Special Collections holds a number of discrete archives, usually reflecting the work of RCA-related individuals or organisations. They are preserved and catalogued as entities separate from the RCA Archive itself. Examples of archives held include the Henry Wilson Archive, the Sybil Pye Notebooks, the Henry Cole Travel Journal, and the Art and Architecture Archive.

Certain material will be added to the RCA Archive each year by default, including standard publications such as prospectuses, Show catalogues, Convocation lists, and student magazines, which are routinely collected; other departmental publications, which may appear irregularly, are collected on an ad hoc basis. The archive does not

attempt to collect the locally managed records of individual departments but staff are encouraged to advise the Library of any planned disposal of these in order for the Special Collections Manager to audit the material and arrange for transfer where necessary. On occasion, sets of papers relating to specific phases of College life will be transferred to the archive and such donations are always accepted if they pertain to College operations. Data on individual staff and students is kept by Personnel and Registry respectively, and the archive does not attempt to duplicate these records.

Other acquisitions come from offers made by those outside the College who hold related material they wish to donate, deposit or sell. Special Collections is pleased to consider offers of donations in particular. Each is considered on its merits and weighed against various criteria such as storage and preservation implications, congruence with existing holdings, and appropriateness to the RCA as an institution. Items which will be strongly considered for acquisition must satisfy a number of criteria from among the following:

- Fill gaps in, or strongly complement, existing holdings
- Relate specifically to the RCA or closely to significant figures from the College's history (staff, alumni, institutions)
- Take the form of unpublished/archival/manuscript flat material, including photographs and drawings
- Offered as a gift (donation), rather than on deposit or for sale
- Form a self-contained unit of papers
- Material which the College feels it has sufficient space and resources to store, preserve, develop and make accessible
- Have a clear intrinsic or extrinsic value

The RCA will not normally pay to acquire archival material. The RCA will enter into a clear agreement in writing with donors so that issues of copyright, confidentiality, ownership etc. are clear to both parties.

The Special Collections Manager will take the final decision on any potential acquisitions in consultation with the Head of Information and Learning Services and the Rectorate, if appropriate, and seek the advice of external experts, if considered necessary.

Among items which the College would not normally collect for the RCA Archive are:

- Current press cuttings (these are usually kept for a period by Media Relations and Marketing)
- Three-dimensional, museum-quality objects (the College lacks adequate resources to care for these)
- Paintings (collected separately, for the College Collection)
- College ephemera with little intrinsic value
- Examples of the professional work of staff or alumni (unless of exceptional intrinsic or extrinsic value)

Offers of personal or institutional archives will be considered on a case-by-case basis using the above criteria as a broad guide. Ultimately, each decision will be unique and will be affected by a number of variables.

Artists' Books

Special Collections holds a small collection of artists' books, comprising items produced by RCA staff, students and alumni, and a broader collection of the work of international artists. Books are purchased at the annual College Show, at artists' book fairs and from specialist booksellers and publishers.

As funds are limited, only a small number of books are added to the core collection each year. Wherever possible, acquisitions reflect the work of staff, students and alumni of the College. Each individual purchase is subjective, but various criteria, which make acquisition more likely, come in to play as follows:

- Connection to RCA – books produced by students as part of their studies, or produced by alumni, or staff
- Requested material – books recommended for purchase to support specific departments' courses
- Books which reflect typical interests of the departments who use the collection, e.g. examples of typographical experimentation, unusual printing and binding techniques
- Limited edition – generally those published in a run of fewer than 250 and not available in an equivalent mass-market edition
- Cost – usually not exceeding the current cap for individual purchases of artists' books (set at £100.00 per book for the academic year 2007-8)
- Reputable publisher – as a matter of course, the department has acquired a majority of Book Works publications, for example

Exclusions

Illustrated books
Fine-art prints

Colour Reference Library

The Colour Reference Library is the second largest collection of printed materials on the subject of colour in the world (after the Faber Birren Collection of Books on Colour at Yale) and contains books and journals on all aspects of colour in art and science, theory and practice. The collection also includes a wide range of swatches and charts of colour standards. The core of the collection was originally formed by RCA alumnus Don Pavey and was sold, divided and reunited on the open market before acquisition by the RCA in the 1970s.

The collection is essentially historical, and new publications on colour are not automatically added as many of these are routinely acquired by the main Library. When main Library stock is edited, any colour-related material will usually be retained for transfer to the CRL. On occasion, new books on colour may be added if they are particularly comprehensive, or specialised in format or content. Materials will also be

added where there is sufficient demand from students, or in response to specific requests from tutors.

Offers of donations of colour-related material are welcome and are considered on a case-by-case basis. Each offer will be weighed against a number of selection criteria with a preference for the following qualities evident in individual items offered:

- Complement existing holdings without duplicating them
- Offered as a gift (donation), rather than on deposit or offered for sale
- Items which the College feels it has sufficient space and resources to store, preserve and develop
- Have a clear intrinsic or extrinsic value
- Of a scarcity which makes them largely unavailable elsewhere

Special Collections books

There are a number of books which have been designated part of Special Collections as a result of their rarity, fragility or complexity of format. The subject matter of the books themselves is arbitrary, although there are strengths in architecture, botany and artists' monographs.

Certain types of publications are automatically held in Special Collections as follows:

- Monographs dated 1860 or before, and some dated between 1860 and 1920 which are not sufficiently protected by the 'Reference' designation
- Limited editions
- Items with portfolio-style presentations and other difficult-to-handle formats
- Items of intrinsic value (eg hand-coloured plates, elaborate binding, paper engineering)
- Items with extrinsic value: rare or of high market or insurance value, or of a scarcity which would make them difficult or impossible to replace

Image collections

The Slide Teaching Collection

The Teaching Collection is intended to support the Critical and Historical Studies college-wide lecture programme and other learning and teaching needs. The collection developed over several decades and grew through a mixture of commercial subscription schemes and manufacture of slides under a DACS licence in response to tutors' specific needs. By 2007 demand for digital images had replaced slide use, and in-house facilities to process slide film ceased. The existing collection remains open for browsing and loans, but new slides are no longer added.

Record of Student Work

The RCA has photographed graduate work in its annual shows as comprehensively as possible since 1979. The collection is held in 35mm slide format up to 2002 (and includes retrospectively acquired slides dating back to the early 1960s) and as born-digital TIFF files from 2003 (Nikon RAW/NEF format from 2007). The photographs

contain a mixture of installation views and details of student work across all practice-based MA courses. Digital images are made available on the College intranet via the Show Gallery resource and distributed under a Creative Commons licence. Digitisation of the slides for preservation, and to increase access, is ongoing.

Digital images are added every year: exhibited work from across the MA disciplines is photographed. The Fashion shows (static and catwalk) are included, as is the Curating Contemporary Art final exhibition. The outputs of theoretical courses are not generally photographed, nor are first-year works. Some MPhil and PhD work has been photographed by default, but it is not included as a rule. On occasion, where work is compromised by shooting in the galleries (eg the work of Photography students themselves, photographed under reflective glass) digital master files are obtained from students and uploaded alongside basic installation shots. These are distributed under an identical Creative Commons licence, with students' consent.

Product Information Service

Formerly, the Library maintained a collection of information about, and samples of, materials – the Product Information Collection. This no longer exists, but in its place a number of services are provided for users seeking information about products and materials:

- Library Intranet pages listing useful websites about materials.
- An online subscription to the company product and information database KOMPASS.
- Research skills training for students – through either the programme of workshops or one-to-one training.
- Negotiated access arrangements to product and materials collections at other institutions.

Access to external resources

The RCA Library is modest in comparison with libraries at other large higher educational institutions and there are limitations in terms of what it can provide. Aware of this, we are active in establishing and developing our relations with other higher educational institutional libraries, in order to facilitate access for our students, staff and researchers to a greater range of resources. We also endeavour to identify other reference collections of interest held by bodies such as local authorities, and business or charitable foundations that may be willing to provide pre-arranged access.

The RCA Library is part of a network of art and design libraries. We are members of the M25 Consortium of libraries - allowing research students' access to the resources of the higher education libraries within the vicinity of London. We participate in the SCONUL SRX and UKLibrariesPlus schemes, providing access and borrowing rights to our staff and students at other HE libraries. Students can borrow from Imperial College Library and Kensington and Chelsea public libraries. We are corporate members of the Royal Geographical Society and the British Film Institute.

The Library is an institutional member of The Art Libraries Society (ARLIS) and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP).

COLLECTIONS MAINTENANCE

Shelf-tidying

A shelf-tidying rota is place, ensuring that all areas of stock are neat, tidy and kept in classified order on the shelves on a regular basis.

Status change

From time to time the status of an item may be altered (e.g. its availability for loan, or its loan period). The following circumstances are the most usual:

Temporary reference for exhibition catalogues.

Temporary reference for items required for competitions.

Temporary reference for items at the request of an academic member of staff.

From time to time availability may be altered for specified items:

Requiring repair, rebinding and conservation.

Requiring re-designation as reference and therefore no longer available for loan. (This will often apply to items of significant cost to replace, but which do not fall within the criteria for reserve or special collections status).

Reserve stock

From time to time items may be selected from the Main Library to be considered for permanent relocation to reserve or Special Collections storage.

Replacements

If an item is identified as missing, lost or damaged it will be replaced after first making an assessment to decide if it is still required. If replacement copies cannot be obtained, records for missing items are deleted from the catalogue. Replacements are also acquired when later editions provide new information and commentary.

The Library maintains a "wants list" with a number of items for acquisition in order to:

- Replace missing items.
- Fill gaps.
- Replace badly damaged or deteriorating items.
- Acquire out-of-print material.

The "wants list" is regularly circulated to second-hand booksellers.

Disposal

The Library seeks to maintain a consistent approach to the disposal of materials, taking into consideration the need to retain certain verifiably under-used items because of their historic or contextual value. Much art and design material cannot be easily discarded for this reason.

The collection is regularly assessed and in particular we dispose of:

- Duplicates where it is no longer necessary to have two copies.
- Superseded editions of basic reference works.
- Foreign language versions of catalogues, when an English one is available and two copies are not warranted.
- Out of date and/or misleading technical material.
- Multiple copies (more than three) of printed material/grey literature in Special Collections

Loan Items

Items identified as not having been borrowed during the previous fifteen years (date-label, confirmed by online record), are considered for disposal. Once identified, they are removed from the open shelves and brought to the attention of the Librarian responsible for the particular subject area. Librarians assess them on an individual basis, determining whether they are of sufficient academic or historical interest to be retained in the loan collection, held in reserve storage, transferred to Special Collections, or disposed of.

Damaged Items

Items so damaged as to be impracticable to repair or conserve are considered for disposal. They are brought to the attention of the Librarian responsible for repair and conservation of stock.

Periodicals

Disposal is considered for all titles on the basis of sustained lack of interest. The Library attempts where possible to seek out other libraries or archives that may be interested in acquiring titles, as well as reputable second-hand dealers.

Where appropriate, the Library will attempt to locate specialist second-hand book dealers with a view to the removal of unwanted stock, give them to charitable organisations or, as a last resort, have them pulped.

Statistical Management of the Collection

The circulation system provides valuable statistical information in terms of the borrowing use of the loan collections. This shows trends of use, highlights underused areas and allows us to plan and develop the collections more easily.

PROMOTION OF THE COLLECTIONS

User education programme

The Library programme of user education (research and information skills workshops) helps to identify and promote the range of materials in the Library's collections to users.

Displays

New additions to stock, in particular current exhibition catalogues and new books by or about significant figures in the design field, are displayed at the entrance to the Library for the interest of students and staff.

Promotion through interaction with users at Library Issue Desk

Informal contact with users on a day-to-day basis in response to enquiries and questions at the Library Issue Desk provides opportunities to inform students and staff about new items which may be of interest to them. Reciprocally, it is also a means of receiving information about course needs and stock required.

New resources lists

Regular lists of new resources are posted on the Library catalogue and featured on the Library Intranet pages and sent to departments to alert readers to recently-purchased items.

Liaison with academic departments

Librarians communicate with academic staff both formally and informally in order to promote the collections. This includes attendance at regular course meetings.