

## Library Collection Development Policy

### Contents

Introduction .....	1
History of the Library.....	2
Users of the Library .....	2
The Policy .....	3
Method of Acquisition.....	5
Future Collecting .....	5
Disposal .....	5

### Introduction

This policy statement relates to The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 16 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JA, United Kingdom.

The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art (PMC) is an educational charity registered in Britain and administered by a Director and team of staff. The Director reports to the Board of Trustees, consisting of officers and faculty of Yale University and some independent trustees. There is an [Advisory Council](#), comprised of twelve distinguished representatives from the academic and cultural sector, who meet twice a year to make recommendations on the awarding of grants and fellowships.

PMC promotes and supports the study of, and research into, British art and is a member of the Association of Research Institutes in Art History. It has two complementary purposes: to contribute to the study and understanding of British art and to act as a research centre for scholars working in this field.

The library seeks to support PMC's mission by acquiring published material on British art and architecture, with particular focus on the medieval period to the present day. The collection's remit is broadly defined and adapts as the interests of those working in the field change. It encompasses art made in Britain or by British artists, but is not solely limited to art made, or artists from, within the geographical boundaries of the British Isles. The field of British art studies is understood to embrace a broad range of subjects and topics related to the artistic and cultural histories of Britain, past and present. The library strives to broaden the scope of research on British art, extending it to subjects, materials and debates that have been underrepresented not only within British art studies, but also within art history as a whole.

The purpose of this Collection Development Policy (CDP) is:

- to guide acquisition so that the collection develops in a comprehensive and consistent fashion.
- to assess the collection's strengths and augment holdings where there are areas of weakness.
- to enable users to understand how the library's stock is selected and to predict what types of material they should expect to find there.
- to assist potential donors with regard to determining whether PMC's library is an appropriate repository for relevant material.
- to connect library collecting with broader activities across PMC's work.

## **History of the Library**

PMC has collected library material since its foundation in 1970, absorbing books acquired by the Paul Mellon Foundation (1963–1970). The initial purpose of the library was to acquire material to help research PMC's Photographic Archive; early purchases were limited to monographs, catalogues raisonnés and collection catalogues. By the mid-1970s, it was decided to build up the collection and make it accessible to visiting scholars, and the collecting remit expanded as a result. From this point on the library aimed to purchase the majority of recently published books and exhibition catalogues on fine art and architecture of the British Isles, from the medieval period to the mid-twentieth century.

In the early 2010s it was decided to extend the collecting remit fourfold to include: art created up to the present day; the work of established living artists; British art beyond the geographical boundaries of the British Isles; and a broader subject remit to include other forms such as decorative arts and photography. Working within this expanded remit, the collection has grown enormously. As the field of British art changes and expands, rather than aiming for completeness, the library now focuses on acquiring publications that enhance key areas of the collection, as well as developing areas that have been previously under-represented.

As a result of the history of the development of the collection, the core subject strength is the history of sixteenth to mid-twentieth-century British art and architecture. This includes works on British artists, collecting and patronage, the Grand Tour, collections of British art, and the country house and garden. Current collecting concentrates on continuing these strengths while building on areas that are less strong. This includes acquiring material on British art and artists from the mid-twentieth century to the present day, especially those from a global majority background, and the history of photography and photographers.

## **Users of the Library**

The library is free to use and open to all. The primary use of the library collection is for research purposes. It is a reference resource and books may not be borrowed. Users of the library fall into the following categories: PMC staff; Yale in London students and visiting faculty; fellows of the PMC and recipients of grants; scholars and academics; students; curators and museum professionals; authors

and picture researchers; family historians; members of the art trade; artists; journalists; and private individuals.

The individual or short-term requirements of users will not affect what is purchased for the library without reference to this policy.

## The Policy

The following general limits are applied to the subjects collected. This reflects current and future collecting:

**Geographical Borders** – Primarily art made in the British Isles or by British artists but not solely limited to art made, or artists from, within the geographical boundaries of the British Isles. The British Isles encompasses: England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Material on the art of countries outside the British Isles will be assessed on its relevance and relatedness to the history and development of British art. We have a growing collection related to the histories and legacies of art and the British Empire and much of this material pertains to art made outside of Britain. Books and material on contemporary art also often exceed national boundaries. We are interested in developing a collection that supports the study of British art in expansive ways.

**Chronological Framework** – Works on all periods are collected but in practice, primarily works on the medieval period to the present day are sought.

**Subjects** – The overall subject collecting is outlined in History of the Library (above). The detailed breakdown of subject collecting is as follows.

*N.B. Terms used are taken from, and arranged by, the PMC library's classification scheme, a modified version of Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) (<https://udcsummary.info/php/index.php>). The initial numbers and headings relate to the relevant section of UDC. However, as a collection, we recognise that much practice does not neatly fit into these categories, or even actively challenges them. We make decisions on a case-by-case basis so that our collection remains relevant and up to date.*

06. Organisations. British collections (including public museums and galleries, private collections, and country houses) are collected comprehensively as are catalogues of British art in overseas collections. Only key works on museology are acquired.

7. The arts, recreation, entertainment, sport. Relevant reference works, especially dictionaries of artists, are collected comprehensively. Monographs and catalogues raisonnés and scholarly biographies of artists are also collected comprehensively. Works on artists working after 1950 are actively sought. Artists can be from any artistic discipline. They include, but are not limited to, painters, sculptors, craftspeople, garden designers, metalworkers and furniture makers. Designers, graphic designers and illustrators are collected with restrictions. The theory of art is collected with restrictions; emphasis is placed on publications that connect with key areas. Only key or survey works on art techniques are collected. The history of art is collected comprehensively from the post medieval period to the present day; for the pre-medieval period only key or survey works are collected. Works on art after 1950 are actively sought. Works on portraiture, genre painting, still life, sporting art and landscapes are collected comprehensively. Works on occupations and professions in the arts, studies on academies and societies, and histories of collecting and patronage are collected comprehensively.

71. Physical planning. Regional, town and country planning. Landscapes, parks, gardens. The history of town planning is collected with restrictions; works on the development of towns of historical architectural interest such as Bath, Dublin, Edinburgh and London are mainly collected; technical works or books on engineering are not collected. Garden history is collected with restrictions; the emphasis is on the sixteenth – early twentieth century. Horticulture is not collected.

72. Architecture. Only key or survey works on architectural theory and architectural technique and occupations and activities in architecture are collected. The history of architecture is collected comprehensively, as are works on domestic architecture (especially the history of the country house). Works on public, civil, industrial, religious and educational architecture are collected with restrictions. Vernacular architecture is not collected.

73. Plastic arts. Theory, technique and history of sculpture is collected comprehensively. Only key works are collected on the history of ceramics and metal arts.

74. Drawing. Design. Applied arts and crafts. The history of drawing and caricature is collected comprehensively. Decorative art and craft is collected with restrictions; works on the arts and crafts movement are collected comprehensively. Interior decoration where it relates to the country house or the Georgian and Victorian town house is collected comprehensively. Only key or survey works are collected on furniture history.

75. Painting. Works on the theory and technique of painting and histories of individual techniques such as watercolour, pastel and miniature are collected comprehensively.

76. Graphic art, printmaking. Graphics. Graphic arts are collected with restrictions; works on the history of printmaking are collected comprehensively. Graphic design is not collected. Works on nineteenth-century book illustration are collected.

77. Photography and similar processes. Photography is collected with restrictions; works on the history of photography and photographers are collected comprehensively. Technical books on photography are not collected. Works on photography and photographers working after 1950 are actively sought.

A few contextual works are purchased in other subject areas. Most notably this includes:

3. Social sciences. Relevant works on class, climate, colonialism, empire, consumer culture and costume are collected.

9. Geography. Biography. History. Works on the Grand Tour are collected comprehensively.

**Academic Content** – Books generated by original research are at the core of the collection. Some books aimed at the general reader are collected such as biographies and survey works. Apart from exhibition catalogues, books written from a critical perspective are normally acquired.

**Languages** – Most publications acquired are written in English; important relevant works in other languages, especially French, German and Italian, and some other European languages, where no translation is available, are also collected.

**Media** – The following media are collected: books; exhibition catalogues; published and unpublished dissertations; pamphlets; offprints (where the library does not hold the source periodical); auction catalogues (painting, drawing, prints and some decorative arts categories); and serials in key subject areas. Electronic and audio-visual resources, including e-books and e-journals are not acquired.

## **Method of Acquisition**

Most newly published materials (books, exhibition catalogues, auction catalogues and serials) are acquired by purchase using the library's budget. A small number of individual, out-of-print or second-hand publications are also purchased.

Items that may be received as gifts are: PMC publications; Yale Center for British Art publications; and publications supported by the PMC through the Grants & Fellowships programme. Donations of individual books from, for example, readers, authors or publishers are welcomed if they conform to this policy.

Donations or bequests of collections of second-hand material are considered for acquisition. Items within a donated collection that are duplicates, or outside the collecting remit of this policy, are not acquired. When deciding whether to accept a donation or bequest, a site visit is undertaken where an assessment is made of the content and a condition survey is carried out.

## **Future Collecting**

There are some sections of the library collection that are currently somewhat underdeveloped and these are to be built up in the next five years. Offers of donations of material in these subject areas – particularly books and exhibition catalogues – are welcomed.

- artists – post 1950, particularly those from a global majority background
- art history and historiography – post 1950
- photographers
- history of photography – up to the present day

## **Disposal**

The library does not generally dispose of material once it has been accessioned. Superseded editions of books are generally kept. Exceptions are: out-of-date reference books; serial publications with a short life span; damaged material that cannot be cleaned, repaired or rebound and duplicate materials.

Emma Floyd – September 2024

This policy will be reviewed every five years. The next date for review is September 2029.