

National Gallery of Australia

Research Library

Collection Development Policy

2008

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA RESEARCH LIBRARY

## COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY

### 1. Introduction

The Research Library's collections have been built over the years since the *National Gallery Act 1975* was enacted.

The *National Gallery Act 1975* s.7(2) empowers the Gallery

- (d) to collect, and make available (whether by hire, loan, sale or otherwise), information on the visual arts;
- (da) to make available (whether for reward or otherwise) services in relation to the visual arts (whether with or without the supply of goods), including the carrying out of investigations and the giving of advice;
- (f) to arrange for, or to assist in, research into matters pertaining to the visual arts.

Acquisitions for the Library collection closely follow the Gallery's collecting policies and exhibition program. The collection policy is based on the Director's *Vision Statement* released on 12 October 2005 and the National Gallery of Australia's *Acquisitions Policy* published in 2006. It is also mindful of the 1966 *Lindsay Report* which placed emphasis on modern art worldwide, the whole of Australian art and works of art in southern and eastern Asia and the Pacific Islands. The *2006 Acquisitions Policy* also focuses upon filling major gaps in the Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Pacific and Asian collections and the modern European and American Collections.

The *Research Library Collection Development Policy* addresses building on existing strengths, filling gaps in these areas, and extending the collections to include the extensive number of electronic publications now available for scholarly research. All languages are collected with a preference for English, if available.

The Library will continue to evaluate the collection policy against changing circumstances. We welcome comment about the directions set out in this document.

### 2. Scope

One of the principal responsibilities of the Library is to collect, maintain and preserve the history of visual arts. The Library houses the most comprehensive collection of visual arts literature in Australia and documents the history and development of our nation's art and culture.

It is fundamental to this purpose that the Library continues to build on its considerable strengths while ensuring the long-term preservation of these holdings.

Through consolidation, we ensure the growth and development of a collection of world-wide breadth. We also make a significant contribution to the arts and cultural heritage of the nation as well as the research needs of the National Gallery's professional staff and visiting scholars.

The collections of the Library support the requirements of the National Gallery's curatorial, education, conservation and research staff, and the work of visiting scholars. The Library's mandate extends as well to the national and international scholarly communities, and to a varied clientele of museum professionals, students, artists, journalists, collectors, dealers and the general public. The collections emphasise advanced research, but user needs are supported at the general inquiry level.

#### 2.1 Library material collected includes:

- print materials (monographs, serials, deluxe editions, rare books and serials, newspapers, auction sales catalogues, exhibition catalogues, catalogues raisonnés, theses and ephemera);
- manuscripts and private archives;
- pictorial materials (posters, photographs);
- electronic resources (full-text databases, reference materials, digitised materials);
- microforms;
- audiovisual materials (cassettes, film and video recordings).

### 3. Existing Collections

Notable and existing strengths in both breadth and depth as a national resource are:

- Australian art, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art;
- Contemporary art internationally with emphasis on exhibition catalogues and art movements relating to the Gallery's art collection;
- catalogues raisonnés and museum collection catalogues;
- Asian art with a growing emphasis on southeast Asian art, Indian art and textiles;
- Pacific arts;
- Photography including a collection of 19<sup>th</sup> Century photographic technical manuals;
- Decorative arts;
- Visual arts relating to the National Gallery of Australia's Ballets russes collection;
- French salons publications;
- The Library of Adrian Feint, 1894-1971 (Australian) is held as a formed collection, representative of the period.
- Museum practice and curatorship;
- Art conservation;
- Art librarianship and libraries.

### 4. General Collection

The Library's general collection comprises books, journals, catalogues raisonnés and exhibition catalogues on major and specialist art collections within the Gallery, supported

by a full range of published material on art history, conservation and museum methodology.

The general collection has had a strong emphasis on collecting research materials supporting works on paper, Asian textiles, nineteenth century decorative arts and the Ballets russes. The monograph collection is predominately in English but a number of other languages are well-represented including French and German. Recently, there has been an increased focus on Asia and the Pacific.

Collection intentions relating to the National Gallery of Australia's *2006 Acquisitions Policy* include:

#### **4.1 Australian Art**

The Library has a unique responsibility to collect materials in every format documenting, in depth, all aspects of the development of the visual arts in Australia. These include published monographs and serials on paintings and sculpture, prints, posters, illustrated books, drawings, sketchbooks, scrapbooks, photographs and other photomedia, and decorative arts and design. Selective representational collections of artist's formed libraries will be acquired. The Library will collect a maximum of two copies of Australian publications, with the second copy designated not for loan. Printed materials from New Zealand include the visual arts and design and are collected comprehensively.

#### **4.2 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art**

The Library aims to collect printed, audiovisual and digital materials across all regions, styles, media and themes in support of the National Gallery of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections.

#### **4.3 Asian Art**

The Library is giving priority to publications about Asian art, liaising closely with the curatorial staff in pursuit of comprehensive collections in some areas and selectivity in others. Primary areas for acquisition of library materials include Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent and include both art history and contemporary art. The Library will build on its strength in publications on Southeast Asian textiles and sculptures. Special emphasis is being placed on developing the collection in photography from the Asia-Pacific region. Publications on Chinese, Japanese, and Korean art will be collected selectively.

#### **4.4 Pacific Arts**

Acquisition of materials on Pacific arts has been through gifts such as the Douglas Newton bequest supplemented by purchasing. In support of the National Gallery of Australia's acquisitions policy, the Library will collect printed, audiovisual and digital materials about the traditional Polynesian Maori art of New Zealand; the traditional Melanesian art of New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Vanuatu; the traditional Polynesian art of the Pacific Islands and island nations such as Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Rapa Nui, the Marquesas Islands, Tahiti and Hawaii; and the traditional art of the islands of Micronesia. Publications on contemporary art of the Pacific region will also be collected.

## 4.5 European and American Art

The Library collects widely in both European and American art providing an international collection of contextual and supporting material in the visual arts. Particular areas of strength for art research include catalogues raisonnés, comprehensive biographical and art reference publications, and serials.

Supporting the National Gallery of Australia's collections and exhibition program, the Library is focusing on all media in modern and contemporary European and American visual arts with particular emphasis on French Impressionism, School of Paris, Dada and Surrealism, the Russian avant-garde, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Minimalism and Conceptual Art.

## 5. Archives

The Archives in the Research Library are of national importance. The Library actively seeks and collects personal papers and manuscripts of significant Australian artists, galleries and key art professionals. This research archive underpins the nation's most comprehensive collection of Australian art.

The Library's archives include letters, diaries, notebooks, speeches, lectures, drafts of books and articles, photographs, drawings, catalogues, minute books and financial records. Such material is catalogued by our archivist, stored professionally, and made accessible by appointment.

## 6. Ephemera

Our institutional archival collections focus on the National Gallery of Australia, its history, collections, research interests, and affiliated personalities. Collecting the ephemera created by the National Gallery is a priority and includes exhibitions held before the building was opened.

The Library's ephemera files are extensive, including over 38,000 artists and art organisations in the Australian Art and Artists files and over 100,000 in the International files. The Library actively seeks all Australian print ephemera in the visual arts. This includes pamphlets of less than 8 pages with contextual information such as biography of the artist, exhibition themes or a detailed price list of works of art. We also actively collect posters, handbills, invitations, cards, menus and documentary photographs.

## 7. Electronic and Audiovisual Resources

Physical format electronic resources are those that are published on a physical carrier and include both analogue electronic resources [cassette tapes and videos as well as digital resources [CD-ROMS, DVD]]. Online resources are digital resources published on the Web.

Digitised resources are created as a result of digitisation programs to enhance access to existing collection material. In 2006 the Research Library, with the National Library of Australia as a project partner, digitised 98 interviews on cassette tapes. These interviews were conducted by James Gleeson with Australian artists in the late 1970s. The Library has created a website with some audio excerpts of these interviews and transcripts. This will be further developed as permissions are granted from the artists or their estates, and as digital asset management strategies develop. The Library will explore the possibilities of collecting other oral histories of prominent Australian artists.

The Research Library intends to work with the National Library of Australia to select and archive online publications that fall within Australian visual arts. These will be preserved in PANDORA, Australia's Web Archive.

## 8. Relation to other Cultural Institutions' Collections

As a relatively young institution, the Library complements and collaborates with other major Australian art research libraries including all of the Gallery, State and Museum Libraries as well as the research libraries of the Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and the Australian War Memorial. The National Library of Australia's *Collection Development Policy 2007* includes a specific reference to the National Gallery of Australia Research Library: 'The National Gallery of Australia collects in the area of fine art, including Australian. The Library (NLA) acquires Australian pictorial materials for their historical and documentary value and if there are items of mutual interest on offer from private collectors or dealers, consultation takes place. The Library (NLA) also donates ephemeral material to the Gallery's Research Library for its specialised and comprehensive collection of printed materials.'

## 9. Virtual Access to the Collections

As well as collecting visual arts literature in its many formats, the Library aims to ensure all holdings are accessible through its catalogue. The Library's holdings are recorded on *Libraries Australia* to provide the widest access to our resources on the Web where most people start their search for information. The holdings are also recorded on *World Cat*, the largest global network of library content. The Research Library proposes to join *Artlibraries.net* a virtual catalogue for global art library holdings including the National Art Library of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Metropolitan Museum, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, the Union catalogues of the French National Museums, the Getty Research Library, Rijksmuseum Research Library, Amsterdam and many other significant art libraries.

Visibility of the special collections in the Library is created through a progressive program of documenting artists' files, archives and oral histories in the catalogue on the NGA website.

## 10. Public Access to the Research Library Collections

The Library has a separate *External Access Policy* which has been developed to ensure our services are provided at a high level to the Gallery staff and, through reference and

interlibrary loans services, to all Australians and to scholars worldwide. It is available to professional researchers who have begun their research elsewhere, and who have appropriate documentation indicating their affiliation and reasons for using this library. It operates as a 'library of last resort'. External readers must agree to the *Regulations Governing the Use of Collections, Facilities and Services (National Gallery of Australia Research Library)*. For reasons of security, space and resources, external access is by Readers' Cards which must be produced upon entrance and signing of the register.

*Approved by the National Gallery of Australia Council, December 2008.*