



SPECIAL COLLECTION MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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Date: February 2025
Approved by: SMT
Type: Policy

Previous version: N/A

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1. Introduction

This policy supports the management and development of Leeds Arts University's Special Collection.

2. Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 This policy outlines how the Special Collection is developed to support and enhance learning, teaching and research across the University. It also provides guidance on what the Special Collection acquires and what it does not acquire, the methods by which it does so, and how the Special Collection is accessed and managed.
- 2.2 Curation and Library Services, being responsible for the Special Collection, seeks to ensure that the materials in its care are preserved, now and in the future, for use by the academic and wider community, to inform and enhance learning, teaching, research and knowledge transfer. Management of the Special Collection is responsive to the changing needs of the University, its staff and students.

3. Collection Overview

- 3.1 The Special Collection, held by Leeds Arts University at Blenheim Walk, contains approximately 2000 items dated from the early 20th century onwards, with most items dating from the 1990s to the present day. The Collection was developed by staff with an interest in print culture and artist publications, with the aim of providing students with direct access to artworks using or experimenting with the form of 'the book'. Items have been selected and preserved that may stimulate critical thinking and creative experimentation. The collection is now dedicated to the further purposes of practice-based research, teaching and learning by the academic and wider community. The Special Collection contains creative works by a wide variety of practitioners, from established artists to recent graduates. It is developed and augmented through donations and purchases.
- 3.2 The Special Collection is organised under the following categories, none of which are exhaustive:
 - a) Artists' Books: This category contains the more diverse array of formats and physical materials within the Special Collection, for example, handmade and printed Artists' Books; art writing publications; series of prints; posters; vinyl sleeves, folded paper artworks and sculptural books. This is also the largest of the three categories. Some prominent themes include Walking and Land Art, Surrealism, and works by artists and collectives associated with Leeds and Leeds Arts University. Discrete collections of Les Colman, Richard Long, Tauba Auerbach and Black Dogs artist collective are also held herein.
 - b) Photobooks: This category contains rare, limited or special edition photobooks. Fashion photography, political photography, street photography, fine art photography, and themes such as autobiography, migration and the tension between documentary and fiction are some things that can be explored through these books, which include work by Ed Ruscha, Christina de Middel and Viviane Sassen, among others.
 - c) Illustrative Books: This category contains rare, limited or special edition books where the illustrative content is foregrounded or interacts creatively with text. It includes comics; graphic novels; illustrated books; picture books; Artists Editions and other illustrated or graphic design books. Works by Glen Baxter, Julie Doucet and Tom Gauld can be found, among others.

- d) Zines: The library has lately begun to develop a zine collection containing work by Leeds Arts University students and practicing and professional artists.

4. Development Principles

The collection will continue to develop in line with its existing holdings. Material will be considered that meets some or all the following criteria:

- a) Is artistically innovative and presents an original interpretation in/of the artform.
- b) Complements and enhances understanding of Leeds Arts University's other art and library collections.
- c) Represents minority voices and experiences hitherto not included in the collection, in line with the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
- d) Emerges from or engages with pedagogical, creative or research practice including newly developing fields at Leeds Arts University.

5. Acquisition Criteria

In assessing acquisitions, the following criteria will be considered:

- a) Audience: The item must support pedagogical content and approaches offered at Leeds Arts University, while having sufficiently broad and enduring appeal to engage the wider community now and in the future.
- b) Legislation: Copyright, licensing and commercial exploitation are important considerations for Special Collections. Potential donors will have the option to retain or gift copyright to the University; either way, to consider accepting an item into the Special Collection the University will require a licence to use all material in its collection for educational and promotional purposes. Where relevant, donors must confirm that they have the legal right to the material and are able to make the donation and issue and assign the licence. Donations are recorded in writing, and will detail any obligations, licenses, access and legislation requirements. In the case of donated material that is temporarily closed to access, the worth of the material must be sufficient to justify the expense of their storage until they are available to the public. For purchases, proof of acquisition is evidenced by the invoice completed and paid in full.
- c) Dates: In line with the establishment of the Special Collection, material from the late 20th century onwards will be accepted and, in line with the establishment of the institution, material from as far back as the mid-19th century will be accepted, in some circumstances.
- d) Size: The size of the acquisition will be considered in the first instance to ensure the Special Collection has the resources to process and store the acquisition safely and appropriately. The space occupied by each acquisition must be justified in terms of its value to the learning community. The number of acquisitions from a particular source are also scrutinised with the aim of avoiding an imbalance of representation in the Collection.
- e) Format: The Special Collection mainly accepts paper-based books and artworks; however, a wide variety of materials are used in book arts and therefore are accepted to the Special Collection. Other accepted formats include audio-visual work stored on physical devices such as cassette, VHS, CD, vinyl.
- f) Storage and Preservation: Curation and Library Services aims to provide appropriate storage and access facilities for the Special Collection. The materials in the Special Collection must be kept in good enough physical condition to be preserved in good state and to allow public access them now and in the future.

- g) Ownership and Provenance: Materials that require complete closure cannot be accepted, nor can the University accept permanent loans, nor items without clear and authorised provenance.
- h) All zines must accord with the principles of our EDI policy whilst recognising freedom of speech

6. Exceptions

Items which do not match these guidelines may exceptionally be acquired. This may be done with the agreement of the Collections Librarian, University Curator and the Acquisitions Panel. Equally, the Special Collection reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to refuse items that meet the stated criteria.

7. Acquisition Procedures

- 7.1 The Special Collection is managed by the Collections Librarian. The Collections Librarian approves all new acquisitions but consults the University Curator and the Acquisitions Panel prior to approval of acquisitions of significant size and/or value or which deviate from this policy's criteria.
- 7.2 Donation or bequest: The donor or executor will be required to sign a deposit agreement detailing obligations, licenses, access and legislation requirements. Donors must confirm their legal right to the material. When assigning ownership of the records to the University, the donor (presuming they are the copyright owner(s)) will be asked to assign copyright or agree to license the copyright to the University. In any case of dispute between Leeds Arts University and another party as to the proper custodian of the records, the advice of an independent arbiter may be taken. Where there is an on-going relationship with a donor or depositor involving the transfer of more archives at a later date, the manner and timing of these transfers may be defined in the agreement form signed at the time for the first deposit.
- 7.3 Purchase: The Collection Librarian carries out all purchases for the Special Collection. Requests and recommendations can be made to the Collections Librarian, provided they meet the acquisition criteria. For purchases, proof of acquisition is evidenced by the invoice completed and paid in full. All of these processes are subject to the University's approved financial procedures and regulations.

8. Accessioning and Cataloguing

- 8.1 An Accessions Register records essential information about the nature and circumstances of each acquisition. Signed Donation Forms and agreements are retained alongside the Accessions Register. All new acquisitions are added to the Accessions Register.
- 8.2 Newly processed materials are catalogued via the library management system. Cataloguing priorities are reviewed as needed and resources allocated to minimise the amount of uncatalogued material held as far as possible.

9. Appraisal and Disposal

- 9.1 Curation and Library Services reserves the right to conduct appraisal and re-appraisal of its holdings acquired since the Special Collection's creation. This may be carried out as part of on-going collection review, or on an ad-hoc basis as required, and will be assessed against various criteria, such as material being deemed of low artistic value; low research value;

duplicate; more appropriately held elsewhere or where the material is severely damaged and cannot be conserved or restored.

- 9.2 If material is to be withdrawn, various options of disposal are investigated such as returning the material to the original owner or heirs (if the collection or item was a deposit as opposed to a gift), donating to another appropriate body or, as a last resort, secure disposal.
- 9.3 All appraisal exercises documenting the reasons for the disposal and the eventual disposal method are kept in perpetuity as part of the relevant collection files. If relevant, material which is donated to another appropriate body, is marked accordingly.

10. Access and Security

- 10.1 The Library aims to make the Special Collections as widely available as possible while balancing the operational demands of the University Library service.
- 10.2 The Special Collection can be searched via the library catalogue, which is open to public browsing. Requests to view the Special Collection's contents should be sent to the Library.
- 10.3 Materials are available for consultation, by appointment, in the Library's Study Rooms. Students and staff of Leeds Arts University make appointments via an internal booking system.
- 10.4 External querants, researchers and alumni should contact the Library on +44 1132028196 for further information.
- 10.5 Researchers requesting images of the material will be asked to sign a Copyright Declaration form agreeing limitations on the use or dissemination of said images.
- 10.6 Restrictions to access will normally only apply where the collections might be damaged or compromised and will be at the discretion of the Curation and Library Services team, e.g., photography might be prohibited for conservation reasons.
- 10.7 The Study Rooms are wheelchair accessible. Further assistance can be provided for readers requiring extra help to access the material by prior arrangement.
- 10.8 Those accessing the Special Collections are required to follow the rules of consulting Special Collections in the Study Room, available at the Library Information Desk.