

Content Guidelines: Extraordinary Collections

Objective

To provide exceptional examples and context of books as objects. These collections showcase material that demonstrate the physicality and format of the printed book and fine artistic expression.

State Library's [Content Strategy](#) provides a decision-making framework for collections, including Extraordinary Collections.

Description

State Library has a strong tradition of Extraordinary Collections that demonstrate the history of the book, showcase technological advances in printing and represent the rendering of fine techniques. The Australian Library of Art builds upon this legacy and includes the following component collections:

- **Australian Art Research Collection** - exceptional examples of the book as object
- **Artists' Books Collection** - vibrant, diverse collection reflective of current practice
- **History and Art of the Book Collection** - art, craft, history, impact of the printed book
- **Lindsay Collection of Pat Corrigan** – closed collection relating to the Lindsay family

Intent

In building Extraordinary Collections, fine examples of publications are actively sought for the History and Art of the Book Collection. The Artists' Book Collection is grown to reflect the diversity and excellence in practice of Australian book artists. Selective acquisitions are made for the Australian Art Research Collection and the Lindsay Collection of Pat Corrigan is a closed collection.

State Library is committed to the principles of freedom of expression and supports the rights of all people to access information and ideas.

Content selection

Three criteria are used to assess all State Library collections: content, impact, and viability and accessibility.

These criteria inform a range of collection tasks including selection, description, preservation, storage, digitisation, discovery, access, engagement and deselection. Decisions, including what content we accept, decline and exclude are informed by these criteria. The three criteria must be considered collectively within the context of the collection's intended purpose.

These collections are built upon a history of collecting exceptional examples of books as artefacts. Development of these collections will be curated and representative. High public appeal, research value and accessibility are key factors in selection for the Extraordinary Collections.

1. Content

An assessment of content looks at beneficial or important qualities of an item or collection. The following factors may contribute to that overall assessment:

- level of historical and cultural significance
- provenance
- uniqueness – (to State Library’s collection and other institutions)
- representation – ability to provide new information above what is currently in the collection
- artistic merit
- research value
- aesthetic properties
- artists’ book considerations:
 - standing in the artists’ book canon
 - emphasis on Queensland artists
 - the work successfully addresses the form of a book or is successful not as a book
 - text is presented and used in an interesting way
 - the work is well designed, constructed and finished
 - the printmaking/image creation/binding/book structure technique is an extension to that in works already held in the collection
 - the work marks a milestone in the development of artist’s books as a genre
 - the artist is a significant creator of artists’ books or other forms of art
 - the work shows an interesting collaborative process
 - the work addresses a topical subject.

2. Impact

The following factors contribute to determining the extent of an item’s benefit to users:

- ability to enable, establish or grow connection with diverse audiences and communities
- level of current and anticipated usage

- interpretive potential for engagement (physical and online)
- ability to meet needs of target audiences
- ability to support government strategies and priorities
- potential for re-use and creation of new knowledge.

3. Viability and accessibility

Consideration must be given to the following issues that may impact State Library's ability to make collections accessible and realise public benefit:

- physical condition
- copyright status
- Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property rights (ICIP) considerations
- access restrictions that limit access, usage and engagement opportunities
- cost of acquisition and maintenance
- level of description provided or required for discovery and access
- level of arrangement and ordering required
- preservation requirements (physical and digital)
- storage requirements (physical and digital)
- risk of loss if not collected.

Australian Art Research Collection

Overview

The James Hardie Library of Australian Fine Arts, re-named the Australian Art Research Collection in 2006, was donated as a collection to State Library in 1988 under the then Taxation Incentive Scheme for the Arts.

Since that time the collection has been further developed by State Library. The collection was developed as a comprehensive art research collection containing books, including variant editions, exhibition catalogues, ephemera, posters, manuscripts, private press publications.

In 2018 the scope of the collection changed to focus on items which provide exceptional examples of the book as object. Published or unpublished material which provides necessary context for the collection items may also be collected.

Target audience

The target audience includes artists, curatorial and arts industry representatives, art historians, researchers, students of art, and booklovers.

Collecting intentions

This collection is developed through selective acquisition.

- Items related to the Australian artists and Australian private press publications are selectively chosen
- The collecting focus will be on exhibition quality items which provide exceptional examples of the book as object
- Material which supports research into these items, on the part of the public and also staff curating exhibitions and events

Material related to Queensland artists and galleries is collected as part of the John Oxley Library Collection. Other Australian art books may be considered for the State Reference Library Collection.

Material not collected

The following items are generally not collected in the Australian Art Research Collection:

- Serials and out of print books not deemed to be exceptional examples of bibliographic and printed material
- Original artworks
- Manuscripts and personal papers

Deselection

In exceptional circumstances items may be identified for de-selection and withdrawal if they are assessed to be outside the scope of requirements articulated in the Content Guidelines, including items which have aged and/or deteriorated beyond salvage, repair or reproduction. The withdrawal process is managed in accordance with our Content Withdrawal Policy.

Artists' Books Collection

Overview

State Library holds a nationally recognised collection of works of art that use the form or concept of a book. State Library has one of the largest publicly available collections of artists' books in Australia.

Target audience

The target audience includes artists, curatorial and arts industry representatives, secondary school students, teachers, art historians, researchers and booklovers.

Collecting intentions

This collection is developed through highly selective acquisition with a focus on exceptional examples of exhibition quality items, with a secondary consideration an educational one for the many students who use the collection, expanding their concept of what can be done with forms and materials in the creation of artists' books. Artists' books are selected with an emphasis on Australian works, particularly Queensland works, and a selection of international works that set them in a context.

Deselection

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History and Art of the Book Collection

Overview

This is a collection that showcases and preserves the art, craft, history and impact of the printed book.

Target audience

The target audience includes artists, curatorial and arts industry representatives, art historians, researchers and booklovers.

Collecting intentions

This collection is built upon a history of collecting rare and exceptional examples of bibliographic and printed material, often with the generous support of individuals and businesses. The collection is developed through selective acquisition.

- Items are selectively chosen covering private presses, fine bindings, and works exhibiting various examples of typography, papermaking, printing, binding, marbling and other book-making technologies.
- The collecting focus will be on exhibition quality items which provide exceptional examples of the book as object.

Material not collected

The following items are generally not collected:

- Serials and out of print books not deemed to be exceptional examples of bibliographic and printed material
- Family bibles

Deselection

In exceptional circumstances items may be identified for de-selection and withdrawal if they are assessed to be outside the scope of requirements articulated in the Content Guidelines, including items which have aged and/or deteriorated beyond salvage, repair or reproduction. The withdrawal process is managed in accordance with our Content Withdrawal Policy.

Lindsay Collection of Pat Corrigan

Overview

The Lindsay Collection of Pat Corrigan is a collection of published books and manuscripts relating to the Lindsay family of Australian artists and writers. The core of the collection was donated by Mr Patrick Corrigan AM in 1992 and 1997. Since that time the collection has been further developed by State Library as a research collection relating to the Lindsay family. Many of the books contain annotations and additional material such as letters, photographs and press clippings. This is a closed collection.

Deselection

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Approved

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State Librarian and CEO

1 September 2025

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