

Collection Subject statement: History of Art and Architecture

Last Reviewed: April 2025

Most of the History of Art and Architecture materials at the University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS) can be found in the Frick Fine Arts Library. This departmental library primarily serves the History of Art and Architecture Department and the Studio Art Department on the Pittsburgh campus. Relevant holdings can also be found in regional campuses as well as specific department whose collections include fine arts or are fine arts adjacent, such as the collection of Japanese prints in the East Asian Library or archives of artists and artistic testimonies in ULS Archives & Special Collections.

Notable highlights of the History of Art and Architecture collection include artists' books (one of the biggest collections in the United States), zines, high-quality facsimiles of medieval manuscripts and Japanese woodblock prints. The collection also includes a vast selection of materials on the themes of printmaking and the art of the book in general, reflecting a long-lasting interest for these disciplines in the Studio Art Department. Collections are located within the Frick Fine Arts Library, in the Archives & Special Collections stack at Hillman Library (artists' books), at LCSU, and in regional libraries.

Collection Purpose/Audiences

The main purpose of the collection is to support undergraduate and graduate's curriculum, including but not limited to the History of Art and Architecture department and the Studio Arts department. It is also an important resource for faculty of all departments interested in incorporating visual literacy in their teaching and for interdisciplinary instruction and programming.

The collection supports teaching, learning and research (internal and external). It can also be used for curation exercises and display purposes, for instance through collaborations with the University Art Gallery, the museum studies program, and the ULS Archives & Special Collections department. It also fosters curiosity, creative inquiry, and critical thinking.

Guiding Principles and Areas of Focus

History of Art and Architecture materials are typically purchased from university presses, exhibitions and museums catalogs, local artists and organizations, and publishers and vendors specialized in artists' books and underground press (typically printed matter).

Current collecting practices follow the established strengths of the existing collections. To stay relevant and up to date, the addition of new classes to the curricular and new research interests at the University of Pittsburgh, as well as the academic world, is closely monitored.

Collection Scope

Most of the History of Art and Architecture holdings are in English, but the collection also comprises a significant selection of materials in traditional languages of the literature of art history such as French, German, Italian and Spanish. Specialized publications in Chinese and Japanese are part of the collection. Since illustrations are essential in art libraries practices, the language of publications is often of less importance so materials from all over the world may be collected.

Publishing in the arts is heavily weighted in print, largely due to image rights issues. Many art and art history books are not available electronically. For this reason, the print format is generally preferred for acquisitions.

The collection features a varied type of materials, including monographs, local, national, and international exhibition catalogs (including those for international biennials and triennials), museum and private collection catalogs, catalogues raisonnés, facsimiles of medieval manuscripts, artists' books, zines, reference materials, dissertations, and serials.

The collection includes a wide selection of peer-reviewed journals and trade publications in both print and electronic formats, discoverable through databases.

The archival holdings of the Frick Fine Arts Library include two fully processed archival collections, Art Subject Files and Artist Files, as well as two unprocessed collections, Auction Catalogs, and Exhibition Catalogs

The collection covers art and architecture worldwide, from Antiquity to the present time. Its goal is to reflect a full variety of artists, cultural expressions, media and topics.

Library of Congress Classification

N - Visual Arts

- NA – Architecture
- NB – Sculpture
- NC - Drawing. Design. Illustration
- ND – Painting
- NE - Print Media
- NK - Decorative arts
- NX - Arts in General

T - Technology

- TR - Photography

Connections & Collaborations

The ULS collaborates with many university partners who make an important use of the art and architecture collections such as University Art Gallery, the History of Art and Architecture department, the Studio Art department, and the English department. It is part of several collection development consortia such as EAST (Eastern Academic Scholars' Trust), NERL (Northeast Regional Libraries Consortium) and HathiTrust. It participates in resource-sharing initiatives through OCLC Interlibrary Loan (ILL), RapidILL, and PALCI (EZBorrow).

Subject Experts

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- Regional campus contact: David Kupas (dmk24@pitt.edu)
- East Asian Library contact: Hiroyuki Good (hng2@pitt.edu)

Sources of Information

<https://library.pitt.edu/frick-fine-arts-library>

<https://www.haa.pitt.edu/>

<https://www.studioarts.pitt.edu/>

<https://analytics.pitt.edu/#/site/u/views/PittAcademicCourses/Courses?=null&:iid=2>