

LIBRARY RESOURCES

MUSEUM LIBRARY

Collection Development Policy Statement – VMFA Library

I. Mission

The collecting interests of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts – present and future – inform the collection development policy that governs the selection and acquisition of the holdings at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Library. The general Museum collection is encyclopedic, including all art forms from ancient to contemporary art. The scope of VMFA Library's collection development policy also embraces the philosophy that the study of the arts is inseparable from the humanities; that a solid collection of works on geography, history, religion, philosophy, archaeology, iconography, sociology, and arts law is necessary to provide the context in which art is created, acquired, and understood. VMFA Library's primary focus is to acquire materials necessary for support of the research needs of the Museum staff, including the curatorial, conservation, exhibition design, publications and education departments, subject to budgetary constraints. Additionally, VMFA Library endeavors to meet the research needs of the national and international scholarly community and has as a key part of its mission the provision of public service to the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

II. Areas of Specialization

Areas of specialization include African art, American art (Mr. and Mrs. James W. McGlothlin American Art Collection), American and English silver (Rita Gans Collection), Asian art (Weedon Collection; John and Adrienne Maxwell East Asian Collection), British art before 1850 (Paul Mellon Collection), the decorative arts, including Arts and Crafts, Art Deco, and Art Nouveau (Sydney and Frances Lewis Collection; Carol Brandt Collection), Fabergé, German Expressionist art (Anna Fischer Collection), Indian art, numismatics (St. George Tucker Collection), and Western European art (Pinkney Near Collection).

III. Levels of Collecting

There are five basic levels in the scope of coverage:

1. Minimal: general reference works acquired on occasion
2. Cursory: one comprehensive monograph on a major artist/topic; most minor artists/topics not represented
3. Moderate: major artists/topics in some depth; only basic coverage of minor artists/topics
4. Research Level: major artists/topics collected comprehensively, including rare materials; minor artists/topics represented in some depth
5. Exhaustive Coverage: all published material on the artists/topics, including rare materials. This level of coverage is present in all areas of great strength in the Museum collections, whether it be specific artists, objects, or art movements.

African Art: Research Level

American Arts:

Ancient: Moderate
Decorative Arts: Research
Painting, Sculpture & Prints: Research

Ancient Art:

Cycladic: cursory
Greek: Research Level
Roman: Research Level

Asian Art:

East Asian (Indian, Islamic): Research
Himalayan: Research
South Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Korean): Research

Byzantine & Medieval Art: Moderate

European Art:

Decorative Arts: Research Level (including books and serials whose graphic design and/or artistic merit is of primary importance, not necessarily the content)
Art Nouveau: Exhaustive Coverage
Art Deco: Exhaustive Coverage
Arts and Crafts: Exhaustive Coverage
Painting, Sculpture & Prints: Research Level

Modern and Contemporary Art:

American: Research Level
German Expressionism: Research Level

Numismatics: Moderate Level

IV. Types of Materials

Languages Collected: Primarily materials in English, Romance, and German languages. Where the illustrations, design, or other decorative factors are of major importance, the language of the text is secondary.

Formats Collected: Monographs (including rare books), exhibition catalogues, portfolios, handbooks of museums and private collections, conference proceedings, dictionaries, directories, indexes and abstracts (both online and in hard copy), auction catalogues, periodicals (including rare serials), auction results (primarily online), CD-ROM's and

occasional DVD's. VMFA Library is the repository for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Archives and also houses thousands of vertical files on Virginia, national, and international artists.