
Lehman Library

Collection Development Policy

**The Metropolitan
Museum of Art**

1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10028
[metmuseum.org/
lehmanlibrary](http://metmuseum.org/lehmanlibrary)

I. DEFINITION OF THE COLLECTION

The Robert Lehman Collection Library, located in the Robert Lehman Collection curatorial department, supports the study and exhibition of works of art in the Robert Lehman Collection, one of the most distinguished privately assembled art collections in the United States.

The Robert Lehman Art Collection spans seven hundred years of Western European art, from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries. The 2,600 works in the collection include paintings, drawings, manuscript illumination, sculpture, glass, textiles, antique frames, maiolica, enamels, and jeweled objects. The art collection is particularly strong in the field of Italian late medieval and Renaissance painting, notably the Sienese school, and also Italian manuscript illumination. It is also strong in several fields of the decorative arts: Italian Renaissance maiolica and antique frames.

While the holdings of the Lehman Library reflect the breadth of the art collection, special emphasis is on those fields that are its strengths (enumerated above). Current publications and antiquarian materials are collected extensively in these fields.

The history of the Lehman Library begins with the 1972 deed of gift of the private art library of art collectors Philip and Robert Lehman, which originally comprised approximately 5,000 books including monographs, exhibition and dealer's catalogs, museum and private collection catalogs, and 11,000 auction catalogs.

II. DEFINITION OF AUDIENCE

The prime constituency of the Lehman Library is the Robert Lehman Collection curatorial and research staff. [Requests for new acquisitions from the Lehman curatorial staff receive priority]. Through the circulation services of the Watson Library, the Lehman Library collection is accessible to all Museum curatorial staff and visiting researchers.

III. SUBJECT SCOPE

The Library's holdings reflect the scope of the Robert Lehman Art Collection.

Subjects collected comprehensively include:

- Art, history, and culture of the city of Siena, Italy, from the 12th to the 20th centuries but focusing primarily on the Republic of Siena (12th-16th centuries)
- Art historiography, including sources and documents;
- Art, architecture, sculpture, painting, drawing, printing, and decorative arts;
- Architecture, 12th-16th centuries
- Sculpture, painting, drawing, printing, decorative arts, 12th-mid-20th centuries, including artist monographs
- Conservation and restoration of Sienese art and architecture
- Antiques market in Siena, 19th and 20th centuries
- Iconography; hagiography of Catharine of Siena and Bernardino of Siena;
- City sections, districts, monuments, parks, squares, cemeteries, streets, bridges, walls, gates, and landmarks created during the Sienese Republic and their subsequent modification and restoration in the centuries following;
- History, including political and economic history, biography, and ecclesiastical history, 12th–16th centuries;



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- History, as it relates to medieval and Renaissance Siennese art and architecture, 17th century-present;
 - Suppression of monasteries in Napoleonic Italy and dispersal of illuminated manuscripts and artworks
 - Social history, including social life and customs, 12th-16th centuries;
 - Greater Siena province, where resources are scholarly and reflect the art, history, and culture of the 36 towns (Montepulciano, San Gimignano, Pienza...) and countryside of Siena province;
 - Guidebooks to art collections that are located in Siena province and include medieval and Renaissance objects
 - Italian Renaissance maiolica
 - Italian medieval and Renaissance manuscript illumination
 - Antique frames; Picture frames and framing

The following subjects, where relevant to specific artworks or genres in the Robert Lehman Collection, are collected selectively, with a preference for significant or key resources. [These subjects may also be collected by other libraries in the museum]:

- European painting, 14th-20th centuries
- Italian painting, 14th-15th centuries
- European drawing, Renaissance-20th centuries
- Venetian drawing, 18th century
- Italian Renaissance decorative arts (including textiles, furniture, small bronzes, medals and placquettes, and metalwork)
- Venetian glass, 16th-19th centuries
- Italian heraldry
- Italian ecclesiastical and monastic history providing context to specific artworks in the Robert Lehman collection
- Italian social and political history providing context to specific artworks in the Robert Lehman Collection
- Painted enamels, French, 16th -17th centuries
- Aquamaniles
- History of collectors and collecting

IV. CATEGORIES AND FORMATS

Monographs

- Monographic titles that fall within the parameters of its collecting scope are selected for their scholarly content.

Oeuvre catalogs

- Catalogues raisonnés of artists represented in the Robert Lehman Collection are collected extensively.

Collection catalogs

- The Library acquires catalogs of both public and private collections that have relevance to the Robert Lehman Collection.

Exhibition catalogs

- Exhibition catalogs from museums, art galleries, foundations and other venues are collected that have special relevance to artworks in the Robert Lehman Collection.

Auction and sale catalogs

- The Library collects select auction and sale catalogs as requested by the Robert Lehman Collection curatorial staff.

Guidebooks

- The Library acquires guidebooks to museums that may not have other published collection catalogs.

Conference proceedings, Festschriften, collected essays

- Published conference proceedings, Festschriften and volumes of collected essays are acquired if the scope of work falls within the Library's collecting parameters or as requested by the Robert Lehman Collection curatorial staff.

Periodicals

- The Library does not subscribe to periodicals held by Watson Library unless requested by the Robert Lehman Collection curatorial staff.

Reference Materials

- Art reference books collected may include:
- Guides to artist's monograms and signatures, hallmarks and other decorative arts identifying marks
- Guides to collectors marks
- Reference works on artists' techniques and materials

– General reference materials may include:

Foreign language dictionaries

Historical atlases

– Standard and specialized reference sources on heraldry

– Specialized reference works on religion (ecclesiastical history, monasticism, and liturgy)

Electronic resources

– The Lehman Library provides access to electronic resources via WatsonLine and the library portal. DVDs and other video formats are maintained but not collected.

Dissertations

– Unpublished dissertations that are not available electronically via WatsonLine are acquired as requested by the Robert Lehman Collection curatorial staff.

Microforms

– The Library does not collect microforms.

Offprints

– Offprints from publications not held by the Museum Libraries are added very selectively. Consideration is given to articles written by curatorial staff or devoted entirely to objects in the Robert Lehman Collection.

Special collections

– The Library actively collects antiquarian and rare materials in these subject areas:

– Art, history, and culture of Siena, Italy, 12th-20th centuries

– Antique frames; picture frames and framing

– Trade catalogs, 19th-20th centuries, all geographic areas

– Italian Renaissance maiolica

V. COLLECTING GUIDELINES

Chronological scope

The Library collects materials on art from the 12th to the 20th centuries.

Geographic scope

The Library reflects the scope of the art collection, which is predominantly European.

Gifts

Gifts to the collection are added using the same criteria with regard to their scholarly value as purchased materials. Gifts are accepted with the understanding that the library has complete discretion over the option to retain. The Library does not rely extensively on exchange programs to acquire materials.

Exhibition catalogs related to outgoing loans

The Library receives copies of catalogs of exhibitions to which art objects from the Robert Lehman Collection have been lent. Borrowing institutions are contractually required to supply at least one copy of the exhibition catalog to the curatorial department which is then deposited in the library.

Special exhibition loans (in-house)

The Library does not automatically receive copies of these exhibition catalogs. They may be purchased as requested by the Robert Lehman Collection curatorial staff.

Imprint

The Library collects in-print publications and antiquarian material.

Languages and translations

The Library acquires resources in all languages for those subjects collected comprehensively.

If a publication is available in more than one language, English is preferred. However, acquisition will not be delayed when a foreign language edition is published before an English language edition.

The Library collects exhibition catalogs from multiple venues in various languages. If a foreign language edition has different content from the English edition or if the English translation is poor, an additional copy in the original language will be acquired.

Multiple copies

In most instances the library acquires only one copy of any given publication. Added copies of selected titles may be acquired where heavy use is expected.

New editions and Reprints

New editions are acquired when they reflect significant changes and additions in comparison to the previous editions. The library acquires reprints only if the title is new to the collection or if acquiring a reprint better preserves the physical condition of the Library's original.

VI. RELATION TO OTHER LIBRARY RESOURCES

As an integrated member of The Metropolitan Museum of Art Libraries, Lehman Library complements the holdings of the Watson library. Lehman Library books are not eligible for InterLibraryLoan (ILL). However, scans from books are available through Watson Library Interlibrary Services.

VII. WITHDRAWAL

Decisions to withdraw specific items, like decisions to acquire new titles, are made within the context of the total collection policy, in order to maintain overall integrity of the collection. Weeding is essential for Lehman Library because of space limitations.

Considerations for withdrawing materials:

- materials outside of the scope of the library's current collection development policy
- excess number of duplicate copies
- obsolete materials

VIII. REPLACEMENT

Before printed material which has been lost or damaged is considered for replacement, a thorough search is done. The criteria to be considered for replacement include demand, whether there is alternative coverage of the topic in the existing collection and availability of an electronic version. Replacement copies may be ordered for badly damaged books when conservation is determined not to be appropriate.

IX. PHYSICAL CAPACITY

The physical capacity of the existing shelving in the Robert Lehman Library is approximately 20,000 volumes.