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# Nolen Library

## Collection Development Policy

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The Metropolitan  
Museum of Art

1000 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10028  
metmuseum.org

### I. MISSION

The primary mission of Nolen Library is to promote an understanding of The Met's collections and the broader history of art, through access to print and electronic resources for Museum staff, educators, and visitors of all ages and abilities. To further this mission Nolen Library creates and supports public and targeted-audience programs in collaboration with other museum departments.

### II. DEFINITION OF THE COLLECTION

The Library's holdings reflect the worldwide coverage of the Museum's collections across all times, cultures and media. In addition Nolen Library acquires and makes available a core collection of publications and electronic resources on the history of art. Particular importance is focused on collecting monographs on fine and decorative arts; artists' monographs; Met collection catalogs; and exhibition catalogs from leading institutions worldwide. The library's holdings of books, media, graphic novels and other published materials include a children's picture collection; and resources for educators, including teacher packets published by The Met, curriculum guides, and other publications designed for classroom use.

In collaboration with Thomas J. Watson Library, Nolen provides access to a broad range of online resources, including important works of reference, indices and full-text journals.

### III. COLLECTING GUIDELINES

#### Subject Scope

Nolen Library's holdings reflect The Met's encyclopedic collections, including material from all cultures worldwide, on art in all media, published in a range of reading levels. There are no chronological restrictions.

Principal topics collected follow the Watson Library Collection Development Policy. Nolen Library selectively collects on the following subjects: Archaeology, as it relates to objects in The Met and Met-sponsored activities; Museology and museum studies; K-12 Education; Gardens and garden history; Architecture; Design; Typography; Folk art; Conservation; and subjects that pertain to the collecting or creation of art. Nolen collects costume and fashion as it relates to iconography, style or interdisciplinary approaches to the study of objects in the Museum's collection. Peripheral areas such as social history, biography, literature, performing arts and religion are added on a highly selective basis. Works of a purely scientific nature are generally not added unless published by The Met.

#### A. Languages and Translations

English language is preferred. Publications in other languages may be acquired to support specific programs or exhibitions.

#### B. Imprint

The library collects only in-print and recently published titles.

#### C. New Editions and Reprints

The Library will acquire a new edition when it represents significant changes and additions over previous editions. The Library will consider adding a reprint when the title



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is directly related to The Met collection or exhibitions.

#### **D. Gifts**

Nolen Library accepts gifts and donations only when no conditions or restrictions are attached, and with the understanding that the Library has complete discretion over whether to retain the titles. Gifts to the collection are added using the same criteria as purchased materials. Nolen does not participate in any exchange programs. No appraisals are made for any purpose.

#### **E. Multiple Copies**

In most instances the Library acquires only one copy of any given publication. Added copies of selected titles, such as Met collection catalogs, may be acquired when heavy use is anticipated.

### **IV. CATEGORIES AND FORMATS**

#### **A. Monographs**

The Library selects current monographic titles based on scholarly content, presentation, appropriate scholarly apparatus and format. These may include catalogs of non-Met collections or catalogues raisonnés when they are the best resource available on a given subject or form part of a Met exhibition. The Library collects exhibition catalogs from other museums, art galleries, foundations and other venues are collected when they are germane to the programs, collections, and exhibitions of The Met or when they represent the best, most current resource.

#### **B. Periodicals**

The Library subscribes to a small selection of print periodicals on art, culture and art education. Access to journals in electronic format is provided via Watsonline.

#### **C. Non-Circulating Materials**

The Library maintains a stand-alone non-circulating collection of research tools and basic reference materials to augment and complement the core collection. Selected handbooks, dictionaries, and guides are integrated with their subjects e.g., mythology, decorative arts. Non-circulating items may include biographical references for artists, The Met Collections, dictionaries and encyclopedias, atlases, and foreign language dictionaries.

#### **D. Electronic, Digital and Media Resources**

Nolen Library provides access to electronic resources via Watsonline and the Library portal. Selected DVDs are collected when in scope. CD-ROMs are added to the collection only when they accompany a print publication. VHS cassettes are not collected. The library does not collect nor support obsolete media formats, including LP recordings. Criteria for acquiring media resources in any format include: accuracy and authority of the producer, distributor or performers based on recognized sources; artistic merit; appropriateness for intended audience; and availability of closed captioning. The Library acquires non-print materials primarily in English or with sub-titles when not in English. Instructional and “how to” media and language instruction media are not collected.

#### **E. Juvenile Materials**

Non-fiction juvenile titles are collected according to the subject scope described above. Picture books are collected based on the quality of illustration, relevance to The Met’s collections, and as they support library programming. All Caldecott Medal and Honor books are acquired. Juvenile materials are not limited by language, which may include Spanish, French, Italian, Mandarin, and Russian.

#### **F. Educator Resources**

Nolen Library provides a circulating collection of curriculum resources and other material to assist educators in planning class visits and in incorporating art and art history into their teaching. While many curriculum resources, lesson plans, and pre-visit guides may be downloaded from The Met’s website, the Library has a number of unpublished lesson plans and other teaching resources related to The Met’s collections and previous exhibitions. Non-circulating archival copies of teacher packets are maintained.

#### **G. Special Collections**

Nolen Library houses transcripts of Met Audio Guide tours.

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Graphic Novels and manga are selectively added to the collection based on relevance to The Met's exhibitions and collections, art history, and significance to the canon of sequential art.

## **H. Other Formats and Exclusions**

Nolen Library does not collect archives or archival materials, artists' books, zines, dissertations, ephemera, photographic collections, manuscripts, travel guidebooks, auction and sales catalogs, Festschriften, slides or microforms. Offprints, pamphlets or facsimiles are not collected unless published by The Met, directly related to Met collections and programs, or when written or edited by Met staff.

## **V. RELATION TO OTHER LIBRARY RESOURCES**

Nolen Library depends on Thomas J. Watson Library as the library of record for The Met. Nolen does not participate directly in Interlibrary Services.

## **VI. COLLECTION MANAGEMENT**

### **A. Withdrawal**

Decisions to withdraw specific items, like decisions to acquire new titles, are made within the context of the entire collection development policy, in order to maintain quality, currency, usefulness and the overall integrity of the collection. Weeding is essential and ongoing for Nolen to maintain a relevant and attractive collection. New materials supersede the worn and outdated; new editions supersede previous editions and the earlier editions are withdrawn.

Considerations for withdrawing materials:

- Materials outside the scope of the Library's current collection development policy
- Excess number or duplicate copies
- Physical condition is beyond repair
- Obsolete materials
- Unused materials with no historical or lasting value

In exceptional cases an item in obsolete format will be retained for its viable lifetime only if no copy is available in an alternative, supported format and its usage and subject matter are deemed essential programmatically and for its intended audience.

### **B. Replacement**

Lost, damaged, or missing program items are not automatically replaced but instead are re-evaluated based on the collecting guidelines cited above and on usage data.

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 items when conservation is determined not to be appropriate. Library titles in obsolete formats which are deemed relevant will be replaced in appropriate newer formats whenever possible, subject to cost, availability and technical viability.