



**A Look at Artists' Books: Developing Collections at The Met**  
**Wednesday, November 7, 2018**

**Accessing Collections and Library Resources at  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art**

**The Met Collection online**

The Met Collection database (<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection>) contains records for over 400,000 of the Museum's accessioned objects, including approximately 300 artists' books in the departments of Drawings and Prints, Modern and Contemporary Art, and Photographs. Searches can be filtered by artist, material, geographic location, etc. Artists' books in departmental libraries appear in Watsonline (see below), the online catalog of the Museum's libraries, rather than The Met Collection database.

**Thomas J. Watson Library**

Thomas J. Watson Library is the central research library of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Its collection of books and periodicals relating to the history of art is one of the most comprehensive in the world. The library contains more than one million books, periodicals, exhibition catalogs, and auction catalogs, including 20,000 periodical titles and 3,000 artists' books, as well as collections of autograph letters and files relating to individual artists and to the history of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Watson Library's collection is non-circulating. Items may be requested from within the library or remotely through Watsonline ([library.metmuseum.org](http://library.metmuseum.org)).

The artists' publications study collection in Watson Library is comprised of artists' books, zines, bookworks, artist magazines, pamphlets, and other related forms of artists' publishing. The collection, which is international in scope, also includes artist's files, reference books, dealer catalogs, pricelists, and journals to support scholarship and research on these important publications. Books are acquired through gift and purchase.

To find and request artists' books in Met Library collections, search Watsonline by title, author, or keyword. To browse a list of all artists' books in the libraries, choose "Material/Document Type" from the dropdown menu and search "artists books." Limit results by publication date, language, and other criteria by clicking the red "Limit/Sort Search" button. Click on titles to see individual records, and then the "Request this item" button to request titles for use in Watson.

To find resources in Watsonline about artists' books (e.g. exhibition catalogs, collection catalogs, dealer catalogs, scholarly works, periodicals, and more), follow the above instructions, but choose "Subject" from the dropdown menu instead of "Material/Document Type", and then search "artists books."

### **Access and Hours**

- No appointment needed for most items
- Visitors college age and older
- Visitors must register for a library card with a photo ID
- Public Hours: Monday-Friday 10 am – 5:15 pm, Saturday 10 am – 5 pm (Special Collections items, including artists' books, are paged Monday-Friday 10 am-5 pm; and Saturday 10am-1 pm)

### **Drawings and Prints Study Room**

The Department of Drawings and Prints has one of the nation's preeminent collections of works on paper. At present, the collection contains ca. 21,269 drawings, more than 1.3 million prints, and over 20,700 illustrated and artists' books.

In addition to an international collection of artists' books, the Department has a large selection of illustrated books published in Italy, France, Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, the United States and, to a lesser extent, Latin America, Russia, and Asia, which range in date from the mid-fifteenth century to the present. Many represent great works of literature, while others are essays, instructional treatises, guidebooks, or studies of history and art history, architecture, landscape design, and the decorative arts. A portion of these books are organized by subject matter, and include categories such as anatomy, architecture, calligraphy, children's books, costume design, emblems, fête, gardening, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century herbals, ornament, pattern books, perspective, textile patterns, trade catalogs, topography, and writing books.

### **Access and Hours**

Works in the collection of the Department of Drawings and Prints can be viewed by the public in the Drawings and Print Study Room, which is open by appointment Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 2:00–4:30 p.m. For those unable to come to the Museum, works can be found in The Met Collection online, which is accessible on The Met's website.

- By appointment only
- Visitors 18 and over with a form of ID
- Visitor Hours  
Monday-Friday 10 am–12:30 pm, 2 pm–4:30 pm
- To schedule an appointment, call the Department of Drawings and Prints at 212-570-3920. When scheduling your appointment, provide a list of the objects you are interested in viewing including the artist name, date, and accession number when possible. To survey the department's holdings, you may search the Collection Online ([metmuseum.org/art/collection](http://metmuseum.org/art/collection)) and filter by department. Please note that the Drawings and Prints department's extensive collection is in the process of being digitally catalogued. Some objects may not appear on the website; call the department for more information on these items.

### **Watson Library Care and Handling instructional video**

The staff of the Sherman Fairchild Center for Book Conservation, Thomas J. Watson Library, has put together a video, *The Care and Handling of Library Collections*, to assist our patrons in the care and

proper handling of library materials. You can view the video by visiting the library's homepage at [library.metmuseum.org](http://library.metmuseum.org) and clicking the "Handling Video" link at the bottom left of the page. Please follow the guidelines shown in the video and help us to preserve our collection for years to come

### **The Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History**

The *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* presents a chronological, geographical, and thematic exploration of global art history through The Met collection. It is a reference, research, and teaching tool conceived for students and scholars of art history. It is authored by The Met's experts, and comprises nearly 300 chronologies, over 1,000 essays and close to 8,000 works of art. It is regularly updated and enriched to provide new scholarship and insights on the collection. From 'metmuseum.org' choose "Art" from the main menu, then select "Timeline of Art History".