

Internal Collection Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

The Collection Policy of the RMIT Design Archives (RDA) guides the acquisition, management, development and care of the Collection.

2 HISTORY OF THE RDA

The RMIT Design Archives came into existence in 2007. Building on the existing textile and fashion collections of the Frances Burke Centre, it has expanded its focus to include other collections representative of Victorian design from the 20th century to the present.

3 MISSION

- 3.1** To support the work of scholars by providing resources for research into Melbourne's designed environment, design professions and design practices.
- 3.2** To bring together objects from design practices in order to tell the story of Melbourne as a design city.
- 3.3** To become the foremost repository for design-related archives documenting the history and development of leading design practices in Melbourne and, as relevant, Victoria, from the 20th century to the present.

4 COLLECTION FOCUS

- 4.1** The RDA collects archives of Melbourne's leading designers in the following areas:

- Architecture
- Architecture and Design history
- Automotive design
- Ceramics
- Fashion design
- Gold and silversmithing
- Graphic / communication design
- Industrial / product design
- Interior design
- Landscape architecture
- Textile design

The RDA will review its focus for research, strategic collecting and documentation every three years, or, as required. Acquisition criteria will evolve and respond to core themes identified by the RDA in consultation with internal and external experts as required.

4.2 Significance

Acquisitions will possess historical significance to design in Melbourne and its region. This significance may relate to innovation, society, economics, technological or aesthetic excellence, relevance to the development of design practice in Melbourne or the design process of individual designers, or some other quality or characteristic.

5 COLLECTION POLICIES

5.1 Types of Acquisition

The RDA may acquire objects for its collection by donation, bequest, sponsorship, transfer, Cultural Gifts Program or other means.

5.2 Acquisition Categories

The RDA will collect those objects that can reveal and contextualise the design process itself. Objects may include but are not limited to:

toiles, patterns, plans, drawings, photographs, digital visualisations, as well as ephemera and other records of the life of a practice, for example, correspondence, notes, labels, swatches, photos, promotional materials, sketchbooks, scrapbooks and archives.

Objects that fall outside the RDA's policies may be approved in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Director.

5.3 Other Resources

Research will be supported by a reference library and files (ie media clippings, articles, pamphlets) assembled by the RDA relating to designers and design practices.

5.4 Three Dimensional Objects

Generally, the RDA does not collect three-dimensional objects. However, in some circumstances three dimensional objects may be collected for their display value and / or as a reflection of a major output of a designer's career.

6 ACQUISITION PROCEDURES

6.1 On receipt, the proposed donation (deposit) will be registered in the RDA collection management system and appropriate documentation undertaken and kept on file.

6.2 A deposit receipt will be issued to the depositor and until a Deed of Gift is finalised an electronic copy of the receipt will be kept on file.

6.3 The depositor will be invited to provide background information on the object/s to assist with assessment of the object/s significance, and /or notes may be taken by an RDA staff member.

- 6.4** Relevant RDA staff will meet as required to assess the significance of the object/s and consider the proposed acquisition against the collection policies, collection focus and requirements relating to storage, documentation, and fiscal and staff resources.
- 6.5** When a deposit has not been approved, the owner will be advised, and collection of the object/s arranged unless the deposit receipt specifies an alternative arrangement.
- 6.6** When a deposit has been approved for acquisition by the Director or authorised representative, the RDA will request the RMIT Copyright Service to create a Deed of Gift.
- 6.7** A finalised copy of the Deed will be retained by the donor and one held in RMIT's TRIM records management system in line with RMIT's contract management procedure.
- 6.8** In cases where the Donor owns copyright / IP in the object/s donated, the RDA will discuss the possibility of obtaining copyright / IP and reproduction rights with the Donor. Any resulting agreement will respect the integrity of both parties and enable the RDA to carry on its ordinary business with respect to publication, public relations, on line activities, etc.
- 6.9** Where a deposit contains personal, sensitive or health information of identifiable individuals, RDA staff will assess possible privacy compliance issues which may pose conditions for acceptance and/or access or redaction requirements. For example items such as: personal correspondence that contains home addresses, phone numbers or sensitive information of a confidential nature, photographs of identifiable individuals other than professional model shots or groups at public events.

7 TERMS OF DONATION

7.1 Proof of legal title

The RDA will only accept object/s from a Donor who, if required, is able to demonstrate a legal title and / or provenance to and of the object/s.

7.2 Transfer of Ownership

In signing the Deed of Gift, the Donor, as sole owner of the goods being donated, unconditionally gives and transfers to the RDA all legal rights and interest in the goods absolutely and in perpetuity. As the legal owner of the goods, the RDA may use the goods for the benefit of the RDA entirely at its own discretion.

7.3 Object Loans

No object/s will be accepted on an indefinite or long term loan.

7.4 No Commitment to Make Available or Exhibit

No commitment will be made by the RDA to permanently or temporarily display or use any donated items or to make them available to interested individuals or organisations at the request of the Donor.

7.5 Acknowledgement

Where appropriate and possible, in display and / or reproduction activities, the RDA will acknowledge the Donor using the Donor's preferred attribution as agreed in related copyright or reproduction permission documents.

7.6 Cultural Gifts Program

Under the provisions of the Cultural Gifts Program, the RMIT Design Archives is eligible to facilitate tax deductibility for donations. Any associated valuation fees will be the sole responsibility of the donor.

8 TEMPORARY DEPOSITS

The RDA or its officers shall not be responsible for the protection and safekeeping of object/s awaiting approval, or non-approved objects belonging to others, beyond the exercise of such precautions as are taken for the protection and safekeeping of comparable property of its own. No insurance coverage will apply for items that are housed temporarily on RDA premises.

9 COLLECTION REPORTING AND MANAGEMENT

All efforts will be made to maintain the collection in accordance with standards and conventions of museum preservation, handling, storage, record keeping and security.

10 DEACCESSION POLICY

10.1 Reasons for Deaccession

The RDA may dispose of object/s in the Collection because:

- they are not relevant to the functions and aims of the RDA
- they are damaged beyond repair
- the object/s is/are duplicates or inferior to other similar items in the RDA

The Director will authorise objects for deaccession.

10.2 Deaccession Procedures

At the discretion of the RDA, deaccessioned items will be:

a) returned to the Donor or the Donor's next of kin, if the Donor is deceased (with the exception of donations acquired through the Cultural Gifts Program to which point 'b' below will apply exclusively).

The responsibility for keeping the RDA aware of changes of Donor or next of kin contact details rests with the Donor. Attempts will not be made to locate the Donor or next of kin other than through the most recent contact details supplied; or

b) offered to a museum, educational or cultural institution by exchange, gift or sale; or

c) offered or sold to other interested individuals or organisations.

- 10.3** No person associated with the RDA is entitled to purchase an item being sold as a result of deaccessioning.
- 10.4** Items acquired with financial assistance from outside sources (ie public or private grants, donations from a Friends organisation or similar, or private benefactor) may require authorisation from the funding body prior to deaccessioning.
- 10 .5** Documentation will be kept of deaccessioning decisions and the object/s involved.

Approved May 2016 by:

Professor Harriet Edquist
Director
RMIT Design Archives