

COLLECTION POLICY

Fashion Institute of Technology Library
Special Collections and College Archives

Karen J. Trivette, MLS, Associate Professor and Head of Special Collections and College Archives, is the ultimate arbiter for appraisals. Special Collections Associates will accept and deselect material under her guidance.

MISSION

The unit of Special Collections and College Archives (SPARC) in the Fashion Institute of Technology Library acquires, preserves, and provides access to a wide range of primary research materials in their original formats, including archives, scrapbooks, oral histories, sketches, illustrations, monographs, journals, and other items. Unit personnel are committed to supporting research of FIT students and faculty as well as designers and researchers from the apparel and textile fields and other industry professionals.

AUDIENCE

Materials from these collections are used by the approximately 700 researchers SPARC accommodates on an annual basis. In 2010, Unit staff provided more than 750 linear feet of material to researchers from all over the United States as well as Canada and Europe. SPARC's patronage is diverse; patrons include fashion historians, students, faculty, museum professionals, fashion designers, and costume designers.

SPARC is visited most frequently by university students and faculty representing institutions such as FIT, New York University, Columbia University, Parsons the New School for Design, Bard (College or Graduate Center), University of California, Riverside, University of Wisconsin, and University of the Arts, London. At FIT, the collections are used as teaching tools and are integral to the curricula.

COLLECTING FOCUS AND PARAMETERS

SPARC comprises approximately 8,000 rare books, 547 serial titles, 350 manuscript collections, 100 linear feet of archives, more than 500,000 works of art on paper, and an unknown number of audiovisual items. The collections cover the subjects of fashion, fashion illustration, regional costume, dressmaking and tailoring, textile

design, the textile industry, interior design, art and architecture, and decoration and ornament.

Fashion, costume, and textile history and design are represented by more than 500,000 original sketches by European and American designers and firms from 1888 to the present, scrapbooks of clippings and personal memorabilia documenting firms and designers, and oral histories consisting of unpublished interviews with notable major 20th century fashion personalities. These oral histories include reminiscences about private life, business, and creative work, from designers, manufacturers, retailers, writers, editors and educators. Among the interviewees are Glenda Bailey, Eileen Ford, Grace Mirabella, Liz Claiborne, Nina Hyde, Ralph Lauren, Arnold Scaasi, Geoffrey Beene, Vera Maxwell, Bonnie Cashin, Mollie Parnis, Harriet Meserole, Louise Brooks, Eleanor Lambert, Andrew Goodman, and many others. Highlights from the scrapbooks and sketch collections include the Bonnie Cashin sketch series, the Mainbocher scrapbook collection, the Eleanor Lambert collection, the Bergdorf Goodman Custom Salon sketch series, and the Max Meyer sketch collection. SPARC stewards and makes available European and American periodicals from 1805-1987 including *Vogue* (1907-1955), *Harper's Bazaar* (1867-1940), *Godey's Lady's Book and Magazine* (1841-1896), *Les Modes* (1901-1928), *Femina* (1901-1956), and rare publications such as the full run of *Gazette du Bon Genre : Arts, Modes & Frivolities* (1912-1925) and *Modes et Manières d'Aujourd'hui* (1912-1922).

The Frances Neady collection of original fashion illustrations was established by Rosemary Torre and Frederick Bennett in 1984 in honor of Frances Neady, retired professor of fashion illustration. It includes drawings from 1913 through the present with over 40 illustrators, such as Bouché, Antonio, Eric, Stavrinou, Mats Gustafson, Christian Berard, Joe Eula, and Ruben Toledo. The original collection of 45 sketches has grown to almost 300 and includes works in charcoal, pastel, watercolor, marker, brush and ink, gouache, and graphite.

FORMATS

SPARC primarily holds and is best suited to acquire paper based materials. These materials will have a higher collecting priority though exceptions will be made for materials such as film, textiles, and others when the subject matter is important to the focus of the collection. Establishing an infrastructure for the preservation of digital assets is a growing priority for both born digital materials and digital reproductions.

USE OF MATERIALS

Collections materials shall be made available to the fullest extent possible without potential damage to the materials. Researchers and staff using Library materials in SPARC must handle all materials with extra care and observe additional regulations concerning the use of valuable collections. Staff and users are responsible for any Library materials they use and they should always handle all materials carefully to avoid any damage.

Photo-reproduction of Library materials always has the potential of damage. Photocopiers and scanning equipment are used by specially trained staff to effect minimal damage to materials. Where any form of reproduction may be detrimental to the material, the preservation of the material takes priority.

Exhibitions, by nature, expose Library materials to light and other potential environmental damage for long periods of time. Therefore, exhibitions require that special attention be given to the physical environment of the exhibit cases and surrounding space.

Materials may be loaned for exhibit in libraries, museums and historical societies which meet commonly accepted national standards as institutions. Prior to loans of materials, the requesting institution must submit a detailed description of the exhibition facility and installation procedures and must complete and sign a SPARC loan agreement.

Because of the unique and irreplaceable nature of many items in Special Collections, and because of the public trust in which its collections are held, permission to borrow items for exhibition from Special Collections is offered subject to several conditions. Requests must comply with any donor agreements and all copyright restrictions. The nature of the items requested and the physical condition of the items will be considered in view of loan. Items are to be displayed in a secure area under stable environmental conditions with respect to light, temperature, humidity, fire suppression, etc. The borrowing institution must provide and demonstrate proof of insurance on the material to be lent at values assigned by FIT Special Collections. All aspects of the loan must be documented on a loan agreement form supplied by FIT Special Collections and must be signed by appropriate representatives of both parties or each institution in the case of a travelling exhibition.

ACQUISITIONS

Materials will be accepted into the collections according to the Donation, Assessment, and Accessioning Procedure for Special Collections and College Archives. Assessment will be determined by the appropriateness of the item or collection of items in terms of historical and research value, age, scarcity, as well as how well the material falls within SPARC's collecting scope.

Accession forms will be kept in triplicate as permanent records and will include an accession number, title of collection, name and address of the source or donor, accession date, a description of the materials and amount of material. Accession files will contain accession forms, supporting documentation such as inventories, finding aids, disposal information, and correspondence. Deed of Gift Agreements will be kept for all donated material.

DEACCESSIONING AND WEEDING

Library materials will be evaluated for retention or disposal in the following categories: uncatalogued duplicate materials; cataloged duplicate materials that may no longer be needed; original materials of poor quality; copies acquired in another format; material damaged beyond repair; and subject matter which is no longer appropriate to the collection.

The frequency of use, curriculum needs, materials available in other areas of the library, multiple copies held in excess of 3, will be key determinants in a de-selection process. The head of Special Collections is the ultimate arbiter of deaccession.