Archive of Art & Design Research Guide

Painting & Drawing
The V&A’s Archive of Art and Design (AAD) holds the working papers of individual artists and designers, as well as the records of companies and associations involved in all aspects of applied art and design. The archives can be consulted by appointment at Blythe House, located near Olympia in West London.

Although essentially devoted to the decorative arts, the Archive of Art and Design holds a small but significant amount of material relating to the history and development of the graphic arts in the UK, spanning from the 19th century to the present day. The material held includes personal papers and correspondence, diaries, sketchbooks and designs, photographs, press cuttings, administrative records and actual artefacts.

For example, the holdings for Sir William Russell Flint include many printing blocks and plates which offer a glimpse into the mechanics of the artistic process, as well as proofs of book illustrations, appointment diaries covering the years 1934 to 1968 and variously dated sketches. The archive for Edward Ardizzone gives an insight into the working life of the artist, with books he illustrated, menu designs, legal papers, details on the loan of paintings to exhibitions, Christmas cards designed by Ardizzone in the 1960s and 1970s, correspondence about picture sales and royalty statements.

The Archive of Art and Design’s holdings for artists’ organisations and societies provide a rich source of research material and include items such as catalogues covering nearly 150 years of exhibitions by the Society of Women Artists; the Royal Institute of Oil Painters’ council meetings minutes dating from 1882 to 1986; and amongst the Royal Society of British Artists’ records, letters from J. A. McNeill Whistler. There is also a vast number of files held in the Arts Council of Great Britain archive dating from its inception in 1928 to the present day.

Painting in the AAD

- Edward Ardizzone, artist and book illustrator: papers, about 1939–80
  AAD/1981/2

- John Vere Brown, painter, writer and photographer: papers, about 1960 – about 2000
  AAD/2001/3

- Sir William Russell Flint R.A., artist: papers, 1902–70
  AAD/1983/9

- Rupert Lee, artist: papers, about 1880s–2001
  AAD/2001/11

- Thomas Balston research papers on John Martin: papers, about 1818–1966
  AAD/2011/4
• Olga Lehmann, artist and film production designer: papers, about 1920 – about 1985
  AAD/2002/14, AAD/2015/2

• John Seymour Lucas, artist: papers, 1880-1920
  AAD/1983/12

• Laurence Scarfe, painter and graphic designer: papers, 1935–89
  AAD/2002/4

• Alfred Stevens, painter and sculptor: collection, about 1830–75
  AAD/1985/5

• Leon Underwood, illustrator, painter and writer: papers, about 1925–73
  AAD/1981/4

Drawing in the AAD

• Leon Underwood, illustrator, painter and writer: papers, about 1925–73
  AAD/1981/4

Organisations and societies in the AAD

• Artists' League of Great Britain: records, 1911 – about 1985
  AAD/1995/19

• Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (later Society of Designer-Craftsmen): records, 1886–1984
  AAD/1980/1

• Arts Council of Great Britain: records, 1928–97
  ACGB

• Misha Black, industrial and exhibition designer and architect: papers, 1928–77
  (Includes material relating to UNESCO, Industrial Design Partnership, Design Council, Society of
  Industrial Artists and Designers (Great Britain) and International Council of Societies of Industrial
  Design.)
  AAD/1980/3

• Central Institute of Art and Design: records, about 1940 – about 1959
  AAD/1998/13

• T.A. Fennemore, designer of pottery, wallpaper and textiles: papers, 1924–58
  (Includes material relating to the Society of Mural Painters, Council of Industrial Design (Great
  Britain) and Design and Industries Association (Great Britain))
  AAD/1983/3

• Royal Institute of Oil Painters: records, 1882–1997
  AAD/2000/5
• Royal Society of British Artists: records, 1823–1985
  AAD/1997/8

• Society of Women Artists: records, 1905–98
  AAD/2005/8, AAD/2007/13

Search

Search the Archive of Art & Design

You can also consult the Guide to the Archive of Art and Design, Victoria & Albert Museum by Elizabeth Lomas (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 2001), which not only lists the AAD archives, but also identifies related material in the V&A and other institutions.

Access

The V&A Archive of Art & Design is located at Blythe House, near Olympia in West London and can be consulted by appointment only.

Find out how to access the Archive of Art & Design

Contact

Archive of Art and Design
Blythe House
23 Blythe Road
London
W14 0QX
Tel: +44 (0)20 7942 2303

Contact us online