



December 2019

Frequently Asked Questions

Joining the Library

Why do I need a library account?

You need a library account to request material and to use the Reading Room; please see our [Conditions of Use here](#). We recommend that you [create an account](#) and place requests ahead of your visit. Please bring proof of ID and address to complete your registration and get a library card.

Your library card allows free use of the cloakroom near the Cromwell Road Entrance. Bags, food, drink or pens are not permitted in the Library for security and collection preservation purposes.

Can I join the library without an email account?

No, you will not be able to create an account or request books without an email address. We recommend that you create a free personal email account yourself online. If you require assistance while you are in the Library, please speak to a member of staff.

I've created an account, but I haven't yet received an email confirmation.

If the email has not appeared in your inbox or junk/spam folder after 10 minutes, you can click the 'reset password' link in the 'Sign In' screen. Please [contact us](#) if you require further assistance.

I had an account in the old library catalogue (closed in December 2017), do I need to create a new account?

Yes, if your existing library card expires before December 2022, you will need to create a new account. Please bring your existing library card or proof of ID on your next visit to the library to complete your registration.

Accessing our Collections

Can I borrow from the library?

No, our collections must be consulted in the Library. Book scanners are available and free to use with a USB memory device. Copying is subject to UK copyright law and permitted for private study or non-commercial research.

Can I browse the library collection?

No, our library staff retrieve material on your behalf. You can virtually 'browse the shelf' on the library catalogue, however please note that our general collection is mostly ordered by size and neighbouring books are unlikely to be on a similar subject. To browse by subject, use the 'Identifier; Subject' option in Advanced Search and enter your keyword(s). Further information about our book collections can be found on [our website](#).

Guidance on searching the catalogue is located under the 'Search the Catalogue' section of the [National Art Library webpage](#).

How do I request books and journals?

Our guide to requesting material can be found under the 'Search the Catalogue' section of the [National Art Library webpage](#).

Why can't I see the 'Request Item' button?

This option will not show for the following items:

- Bound volumes. Many of our manuscripts, exhibition catalogues and sales catalogues are contained in bound volumes. This is indicated by a 'Source' field at the top of the record. To request the bound volume, expand 'View Description' and click on the link next to 'More Information'. Click to 'Request Item'.
- Journal Articles. Search results include article citations from our e-resources. If the full-text is available online a link will be visible. If not, print copies of the journal may be available to request to view in the Reading Room. To check, make a note of the citation details and then carry out a separate search in the library catalogue for the journal title and to request the volume or issue required in the text box.
- 'Appointment only'. For preservation purposes, some Special Collection items require permission from the Curator to view. For these items, an option to 'Contact us to request to view material' will appear instead of 'Request Item'.
- Material held by the Prints & Drawings Study Room, Museum of Childhood and Blythe House Archive & Study Room. Visit the [V&A Study Rooms](#) webpage for access information.

Detailed instructions can be found in our guide to requesting material on the [National Art Library webpage](#). Please [contact us](#) if you require further assistance.

Why can't I find the journal I need on the library catalogue?

Some journals share matching titles (e.g. Art Journal) or have different editions (e.g. UK or US Vogue). Use Advanced Search to refine your search results by adding further publication details; for example, select 'Place of Publication' and type *London* to find the UK edition of Vogue.

Accessing E-Resources

Why can't I access an e-book / e-journal / journal article?

The links in your search results connect to both freely available and subscription material. Due to licencing restrictions, you can only access subscription material in the [V&A Study Rooms](#). For further information about our subscription e-resources please see [our blog post](#).