

How to search the Library Catalogue and request material

This guide covers how to search for items and place requests at the National Art Library (NAL) catalogue. Click heading in Table of Contents to jump to a section. If you have any special requirements around searching or accessing the catalogue, then please contact us:

nal.enquiries@vam.ac.uk

View [Frequently Asked Questions here](#)

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1. Search the Library Catalogue

1.1 Basic Search

Carry out a basic search by entering keywords into the main search box on the library catalogue homepage at <https://nal-vam.on.worldcat.org/discovery>

1.2 Search Tips

1.2.1 Use an **asterisk (*)** as **truncation** when searching for a keyword with variable endings.
For example: paint broadens a search to include paints, painted, painting and painter.*

1.2.2 For **variant spellings**, use a **question mark (?)** in place of a character.
For example: search Colo?r to include both color and colour in your search results.

1.2.3 Use **quotation marks** to search for an **exact phrase**, for example “sustainable architecture”

1.2.4 Narrow or broaden your results by combining **Boolean operators** AND, OR and NOT with your keywords, for example:

Constable AND Clouds

All search results will include both keywords.

Romantic era OR Romanticism

Broadens search results, particularly helpful when searching for synonyms.

Illustration NOT Fashion

Search results will exclude titles on fashion illustration.


1.2.5 Use **Search Tools** (in the left side bar) to refine your search results by Format, Author, Publication Year, Subject Terms, Language and Source Database.

The screenshot displays the V&A library catalogue interface. On the left, a sidebar contains search refinement tools. A red box highlights the 'Format' section, which lists 'All', 'Article (47)', and 'Book (20)'. A red arrow points from the 'Book (20)' option to a search result. The search result is for the book 'Constable's clouds: paintings and cloud studies by John Constable'. The result includes a thumbnail image of the book cover, the title, authors (John Constable 1776-1837, Edward Morris, National Galleries of Scotland, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, John Gage 1938-2012, Edward Morris 1940-2016, National Gallery of Scotland, Walker Art Gallery), subjects (Clouds in art, Clouds Depictions Exhibitions), and availability information (Print Book ©2000, [Edinburgh]: National Galleries of Scotland; [Liverpool]: National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, ©2000). It is available at the Victoria and Albert Museum, National Art Library GC/SEC General Collection: Second Floor Store, 604.AA.0976, and is available at 2 locations.


1.2.6 After clicking on a title to view a record, use **Browse the Shelf** at the bottom of the screen to explore our diverse general collection or to browse within a special collection.

< Back to Search Results Result 1 of 169 > ★ Saved Items (0)

1

 **Ramesh Bisht : sculpting in space**

Authors: Vinod Bhardwaj (Author), Ramesh Bisht (Artist), Brij Sharma (Translator), Ramesh Bisht (Artist), Brij Sharma (Translator)

 **Print Book 2016**
New Delhi : Mansi Prakashan, 2016.

Access Options

✓ Available

Victoria and Albert Museum
National Art Library
GC/THI General Collection: Third Floor Store
604.AT.0123

[Request Item](#)

More Author/Title Info: original Hindi text: Vinod Bhardwaj; English translation: Brij Sharma.

Physical Description: 323 pages : illustrations (black and white, and colour), portraits ; 30 cm

Subjects: [Library of Congress Subject headings](#)
[Bisht, Ramesh.](#)

Notes (General): In a slipcase.

Database: WorldCat

ISBN: 9380515294, 9789380515298

OCLC Number/Unique Identifier: 1008550892

LCCN: 2017325259

[More Item Details](#)

Availability of this Edition at Victoria and Albert Museum


✓ National Art Library

✓ 1 Available at this Location

Other Availability & Holdings


[Other Libraries Worldwide \(2 Libraries\)](#)

[Browse the Shelf](#)



[American style and spirit: fashions and lives of the Roddis family, 1850-1995](#)


Authors: Jane Bradbury (Author), Hilary Bird, Gillian Bostock-Ewing ...

 **Print Book 2016**
604.AT.0132

✓ Copy A Available


National Art Library GC/THI General Collection: Third Floor Store

[2 Available at 1 Location](#)



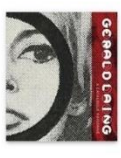
[Harrodsburg](#)

Authors: Dougie Wallace (Photographer), (Author), Peter York 1944: (Writer of ...)

 **Print Book 2017**
604.AT.0133


✓ Available

National Art Library GC/THI General Collection: Third Floor Store




[Gerald Laing : catalogue raisonné](#)

Authors: David Knight (Author), Gerald Laing 1936-2011: (Artist), Michael ...

 **Print Book 2016**
604.AT.0134


✓ Available

National Art Library GC/THI General Collection: Third Floor Store



[British silver : State Hermitage Museum catalogue](#)

Authors: M.N Lopato (Marina Nikolaevna), Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh (Russia), ...

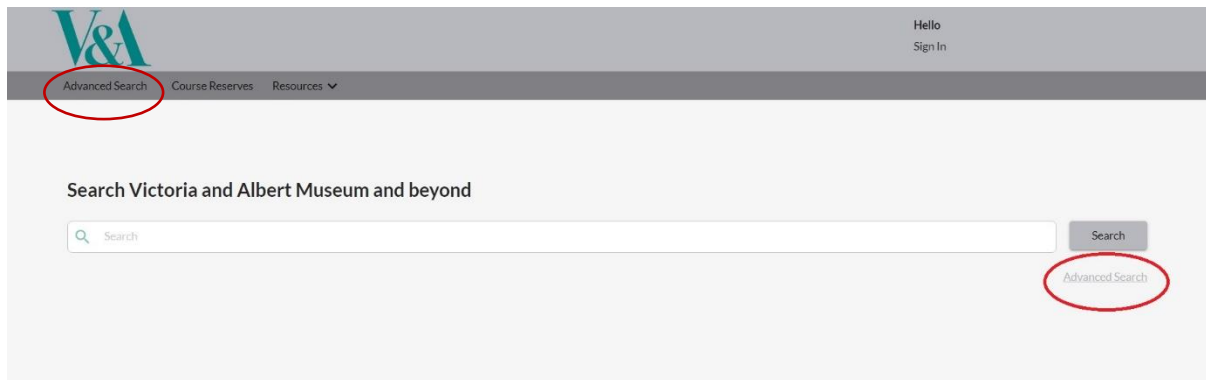
 **Print Book 2015**
604.AT.0135

✓ Available

National Art Library GC/THI General Collection: Third Floor Store

1.3 Advanced Search

The Advanced search option can improve the relevancy of your search results and is linked from the top menu bar and also under the main search button on the catalogue homepage at <https://nal-vam.on.worldcat.org/discovery>



You will then be presented with the Advanced Search indexes

Advanced Search

	Search Index	Search Term
	Keyword	
Operator	Search Index	Search Term
AND	Title	
Operator	Search Index	Search Term
AND	Auctioneer & Auction Hou	
Add row		
Clear		Search

You can combine up to five indexes or apply limits (peer-reviewed articles, format, publication year) to retrieve a more precise set of search results.

On the search results page, use the **Search Tools** (in the left side bar) to refine your results by **Format, Author, Content Type, Publication Year, Subject Terms, Source Database** and **Language**.

The Advanced Search table describes some of the key **Search Indexes** available and how to use them. Each **Search Index** has a keyword option and a phrase search option.

Advanced Search table:

Search Type	Search Index	How to use this Search Index option	Example
Auctioneer or Auction House (Keyword or Phrase search)	Auctioneer & Auction House; Author	Search for auction houses or auctioneers	<i>Sotheby*</i>
	Auctioneer & Auction House; Author phrase	Use the *wildcard to search across e.g. Sotheby's Belgravia, Sotheby's Olympia London, etc. You can also use this option to search for exhibition catalogues published by a gallery or Museum	<i>National Gallery</i>
Author (Keyword search)	Auctioneer & Auction House; Author	Search for an author using keywords	<i>Charles Dickens</i>
Author (Phrase search)	Auctioneer & Auction House; Author phrase	Search for author in the format <i>surname, first name</i>	<i>Bryant, Julius</i>
Date of Sale	Date of Sale	To browse by year: YYYY To browse by month: MMYYYY To search for a specific date, use the syntax: YYYYMMDD	<i>ds:2008</i> <i>ds:052013</i> <i>ds:20170509</i>
Conference or international exhibition name	Corporate/Conference Name	Search for a conference or international exhibition using keywords and date	<i>British Empire 1925</i>
		You can also search by the city in which a conference took place	<i>Toronto</i>
Subject or artist	Identifier; Subject Phrase	Search for books on a subject, or an individual in the format <i>surname, first name</i> .	<i>Surrealism</i> <i>Kahlo, Frida</i>
ISBN / ISSN	ISBN / ISSN	Search for unique identifier	<i>9780241339862</i> <i>0262 - 2130</i>
Publisher	Publisher	Search for a publisher	<i>Whitechapel Gallery</i>
Sale Code	Sale Code	Search using a known sale code	<i>24769</i> <i>JASPER</i>
Title	Title Phrase	Search for the exact title of the publication or manuscript.	<i>Art Journal</i>

1.4 Expert Search

Expert search labels allow you to refine and enhance the relevance of your search results. Combine your keywords with a **search label** in the main search box on the library catalogue homepage. Some useful examples are listed in the table below.

Expert Search Table:

Type of Search	Search Label	Example
Artists' Books	[keyword] ge= artists book*	food <i>ge= artists book*</i>
Author	au: [keyword]	<i>au: Germaine Greer</i>
Barcode	bq: [number]	<i>Bq: 38041801000696</i>
Children's Books	[keyword], ge: children's*	Potter <i>ge: children's*</i>
Date of Sale [for auction catalogues]	Specific date ds:YYYYMMDD	<i>ds:20170509</i>
Local reference number (such as MSL/)	nt: [reference number]	<i>nt: MSL/1970/2604</i>
NAL Pressmark	nu: [exact pressmark]	<i>nu: 603.AT.0124</i>
Reference books	[keyword] b8: Reference	Dictionary <i>b8: Reference</i>
Subject / Topic	su: [keyword]	<i>su: furniture design</i>
Title / Journal Title	ti: [keyword]	<i>ti: Art Journal</i>
V&A Publications Collection	[keyword] b8:SC/VAP*	Fashion <i>b8:SC/VAP*</i>

There are two types of expert search: Keyword and Phrase. To search by keyword, use a colon (:) after the search label. To search for a phrase, use an equals sign (=) after the search label. A phrase search will search for every keyword from left to right in order.

- For a **title phrase search**, exclude the initial articles *A, an, the* and their equivalents in other languages. *For example: ti=Art Journal*
- For an **author phrase search**, enter the name in inverted order if using the equals sign; *For example: au=Greer, Germaine*

Further guidance on searching the catalogue can be found in this [WorldCat Discovery guide](#).

2. Search for Auction House Sale Catalogues using Advanced search

Use Advanced Search (link below main search box) to find specific auction catalogues.

Many sale catalogues are bound together with others in a volume, please also refer to [section 8](#) for information on requesting this type of material.

Advanced Search

Search Index
Date of Sale

Search Term
20170509

Operator
AND

Search Index
Auctioneer & Auction House; Author

Search Term
Christie*

Operator
AND

Search Index
Conference location; Place of Sale

Search Term
London

Add row

Clear Search

Option	How to use this search option	How this will work in main search	Example
Date of Sale	To browse by year: YYYY To browse by month: MMYYYY To search for a specific date, use the syntax YYYYMMDD.	ds:YYYY ds: MMYYYY ds:YYYYMMDD	2008 052013 20170509
Place of Sale	This will usually be the city in which the sale took place.	e9:[keyword]	Toronto
Auctioneer & Auction House; Author / Author Phrase	You can use the *wildcard to search by auction house, so for example you can search across Sotheby's Belgravia, Sotheby's Olympia London, Sotheby's Los Angeles... using Sotheby*	Au:[keyword]	Sotheby*
Keyword	Search 'Lugt' in the Keyword field followed by the number.	Lugt [Lugt number]	57195
Sale Code	Search using a known sale code.	sl: [sale code]	24769 JASPER

3. Search for Exhibition Catalogues using Advanced Search

Use Advanced Search to find specific exhibition catalogues or runs of catalogues.

Some exhibition catalogues are bound together with others in a volume, please also refer to [section 8](#) for information on requesting material in bound volumes.

Advanced Search

Search Index	Search Term	
Auctioneer & Auction House; .	Royal Academy	
Operator	Search Index	Search Term
AND	Title	Summer Exhibition
Operator	Search Index	Search Term
AND	Auctioneer & Auction House; .	
Add row		
Clear		Search

Option	How to use this search option	How this will work in main search	Example
Auctioneer & Auction House; Author	You can use this search option to search for exhibitions by a gallery or museum name	au:[keyword]	royal academy
Title	Use keywords from an exhibition title either on their own, or in conjunction with other indexes to narrow your results	ti:[keyword]	summer exhibition
Identifier; Subject	Search for exhibitions about artists or on themes using keywords, and use truncation for best results	su:[keyword]	Alexander Mcqueen textile* exhibition*
Publisher	Search for a museum or gallery as publisher	pb:[keyword]	Whitechapel Gallery

If searching for a foreign language catalogue, enter your keyword(s) followed by Expert search label 'nt' to search notes, for example, *Franz Metzner nt:exhibition*

4. Books held within V&A Departmental Libraries

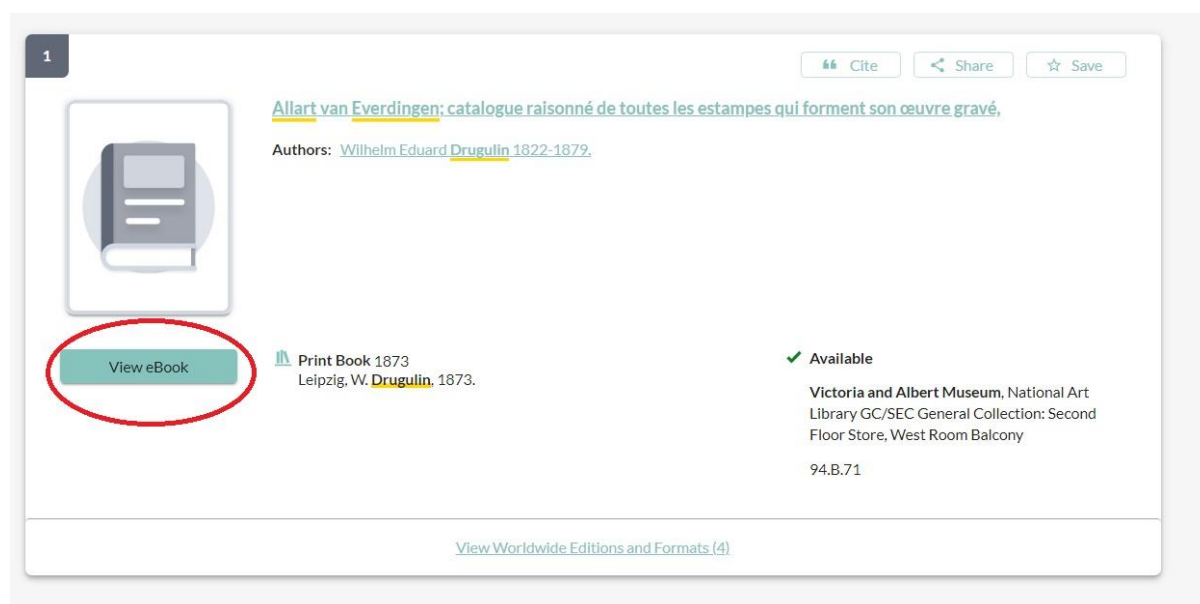
Books held in the V&A departmental libraries are selected by curatorial staff and can be found in the library catalogue. **At present these books are being organised into a new collection facility and are temporarily unavailable.**

5. Access Online Material

Your catalogue search results may include direct links to online content, including:

- E-books and e-journals
- Journal Articles (full-text and article citations)
- E-Resources

If available online, a link will show in the search results and catalogue record (circled below). The link will read **Access online**, **View eBook**, **Access journal** or **View full text**.



These links connect to both freely available and subscription material. Due to licensing restrictions, you can only access subscription material in the V&A Study Rooms.

To view a complete list of our subscription e-resources, click **Resources** (top menu bar) then select **E-Resources**.

We have also created a list of freely available art and design web resources. To access, click **Course Reserves** in the top menu bar and select **E-Resources – Recommended and Freely Available (A-Z)**.

For further guidance on accessing our e-resources, please see the following V&A blog posts:

Subscription e-resources: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/museum-life/national-art-library-art-and-design-e-resources-subscription>

Freely Available e-resources: <https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/museum-life/national-art-library-freely-available-art-and-design-e-resources>

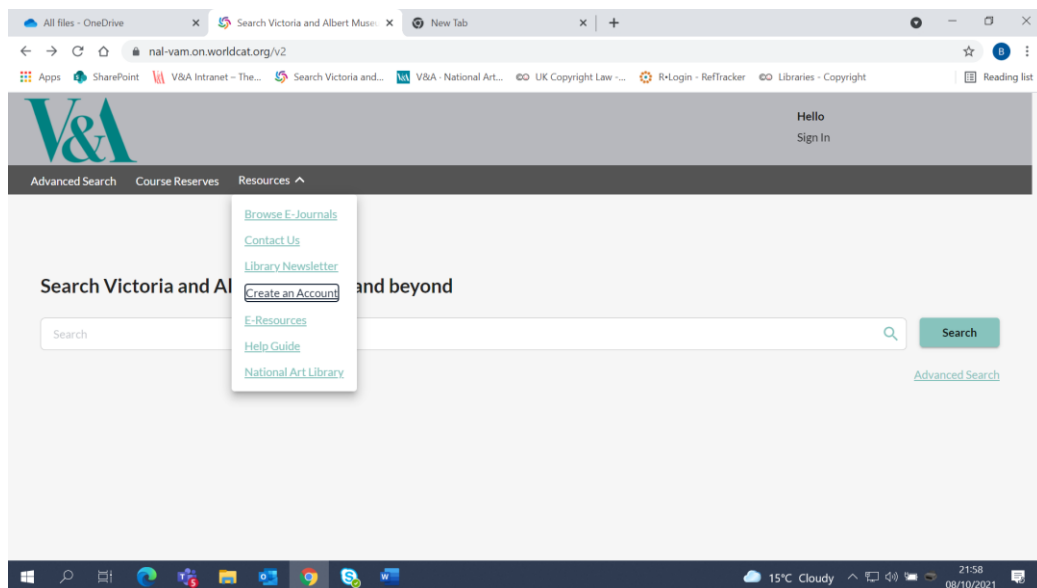
6. Create an Account

To request items to view in the library and other V&A study rooms, you will first need to join the library by creating an account. On your first visit to the library, please show current ID (e.g. passport, bank card, National ID card, etc) and proof of address (e.g. bank statement, utility bill, driving licence, etc), in order to complete the process and be issued with a Library Card.

How to Create an account

6.1 Go to our library catalogue at <https://nal-vam.on.worldcat.org/discovery>

6.2 Click on **Resources** (top menu bar) and select **Create an Account**.



6.3 Complete the form.

Please use an active email account as you will be sent a link to set your own password on completing the form.

6.4 Click on the link in the email you receive to set your password.

7. Request an Item

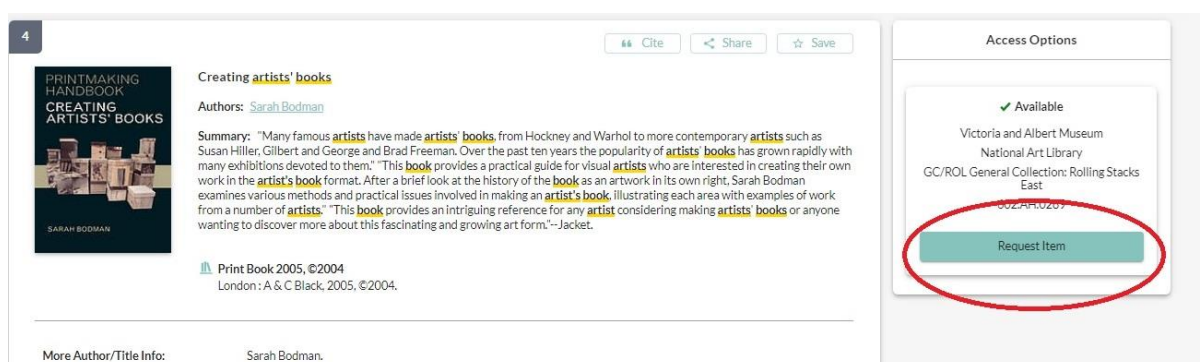
There are retrievals throughout the day on our days of opening, until 3.30 pm for both General and Special Collections. We are typically able to retrieve items within 90 minutes of receiving your request while we are open. You can request up to 8 items at a time. You are advised to request items you wish to consult in advance of your visit. Find our days of opening at <https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/national-art-library>

7.1 Go to our library catalogue at <https://nal-vam.on.worldcat.org/discovery>

7.2 Search for an item using the main search or Advanced Search.

7.3 Click the title of your selected item in the search results and click 'Request Item' (right sidebar). If the request button is not available, the item may be in a [bound volume \(see section 8\)](#).

Please note: If available online, you will see an 'Access Online' or 'View eBook' link ([see section 5](#)). Due to licencing restrictions, access to some online content is restricted to in the Study Rooms only.



7.4 Sign in using the 'Visitor' option. *You must first have created an account - see [section 6](#)*. Upon logging in, you will see the request options below.

Tick the box next to your selected copy/ copies. We recommend requesting a **General Collection** copy where possible.

Please note that it is only possible to request copies with the status 'Available'.

If the item is 'checked out', please contact us: nal.enquiries@vam.ac.uk to arrange access.

Tick the box 'I need this for specific dates' from the dropdown option to place a request for a future date when we are open. You can leave this blank if you are collecting items for the next date we are open. If the book is in a departmental library see [section 4](#).

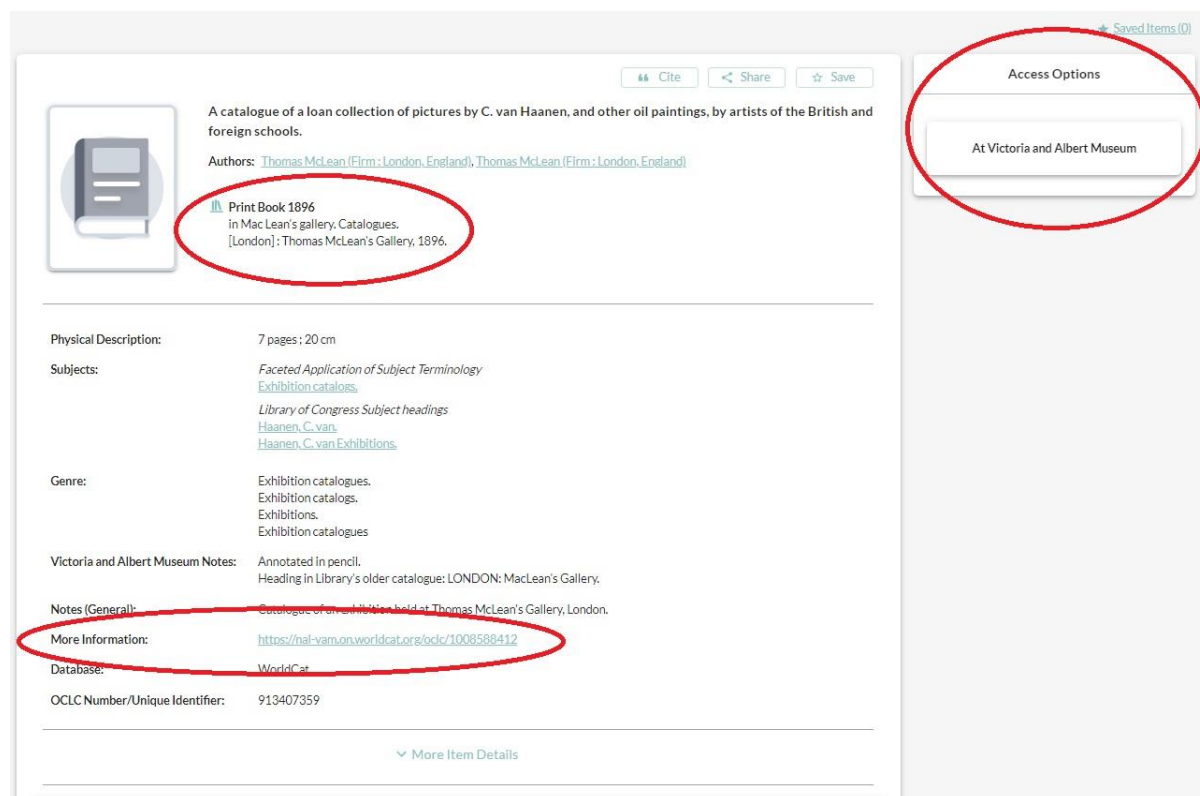
7.5 Click 'Submit' to complete your request.

You will receive an email when your request is ready to collect at the National Art Library. Emails are sent hourly, so your item may be ready before you receive the email. To check the status of each request, login and go to 'My Account' (top right) and select 'Requests' from the dropdown. When your item is ready for collection, the status will be set as 'Ready for pick up at National Art Library until [date]'.

If you have placed a request in advance, or if you have selected a specific date (see [section 10](#)), you may only receive a confirmation email on the morning of the date you wish to view the item, once it is ready to collect.

8. Request an Item in a Bound Volume (e.g. sale or exhibition catalogue, manuscript)

Some items in the National Art Library's collection are grouped together, such as multiple items bound together in a single volume. This is often the case for sales catalogues, exhibition catalogues and some manuscripts and is indicated by the presence of 'in [title]' below the format icon and the lack of a request item button (right sidebar). You are unable to request these items individually and the record will appear as pictured below.



8.1 To place a request on the bound volume containing your selected item, click on the link next to 'More Information'.

8.2 The catalogue record for the bound volume will open in a new tab. Click 'Request Item'.

You will receive an email when your request is ready to collect at the National Art Library. Emails are sent hourly, so your item may be ready before you receive the email. To check the status of each request, login and go to 'My Account' (top right) and select 'Requests' from the dropdown. When your item is ready for collection, the status will be set as 'Ready for pick up at National Art Library until [date]'.

If you have placed a request in advance, or if you have selected a specific date (see [section 10](#)), you may only receive a confirmation email on the morning of the date you wish to view the item, once it is ready to collect.

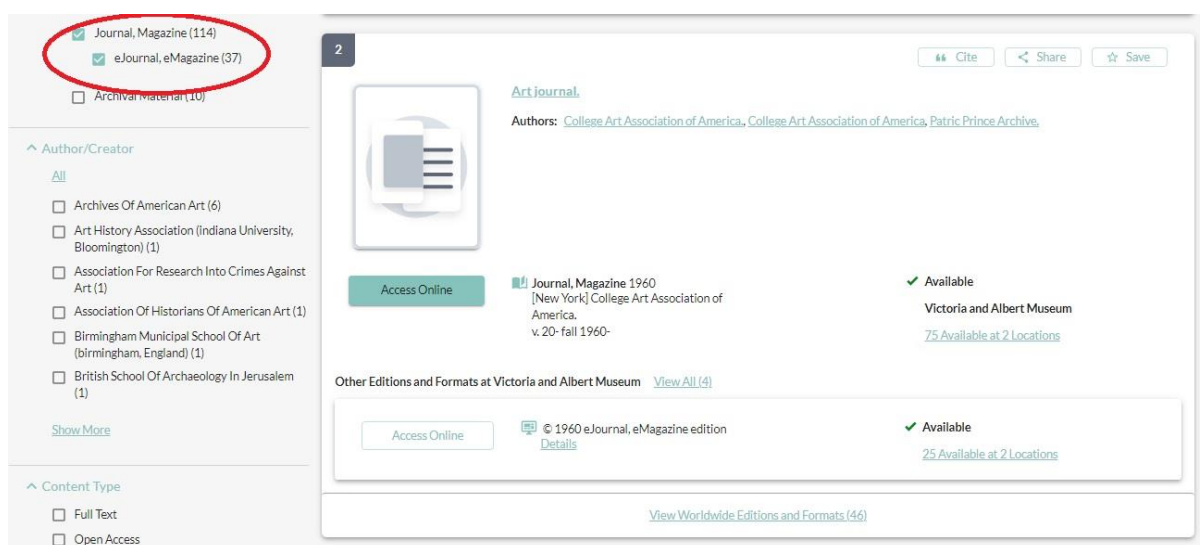
9. Request Periodicals and Journals

Use of our online subscription content is highly encouraged and for preservation purposes we do not retrieve print journals that are available online in our reading rooms.

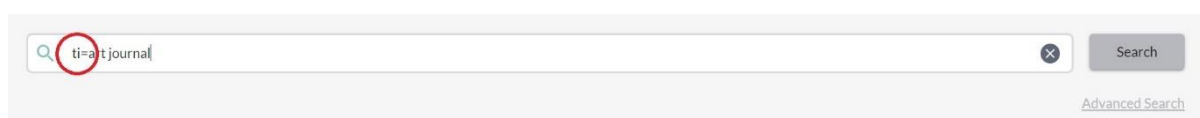
9.1 Go to our library catalogue homepage at <https://nal-vam.on.worldcat.org/discovery>

9.2 Search for the journal title.

In the search results page, limit results to '**Journal, Magazine**' using the filters in the left sidebar.



You can also use **Title Phrase** search in the main search box to find a specific journal title, e.g. ti=art journal.



If available online, click on the 'Access Online' button.

*A list of e-journals can also be found by clicking on '**Browse E-Journals**' under the **Resources** drop-down menu from the top menu bar.*

9.3 Click on the Journal title to view further bibliographic details and for a list of the National Art Library's print holdings.

9.4 To request print holdings, click on 'Request Item' (right sidebar)

Find out how to create an account in [Section 6](#)

9.5 Under 'I want these specific copies or volumes' tick the box next to the closest date match (circled) and fill in the exact volume(s) you wish to consult in the box on the right (circled), for example **v. 77, no.1, 2018**. You can place a request for a run of issues; however separate requests must be placed if there are any breaks in the sequence.

Please note that it is only possible to request copies with the status 'available'.

Institution Name *
National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum

Pick Up Options *
National Art Library - National Art Library

I want these specific copies or volumes *

Sort items by
Copy or Volume

Copy or Volume	Status	Item Location	Pick up location	Need a specific copy or volume? Anything else we need to know about this request?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PP.601.J*	v.76:n.2(2017:Summer)	Art and Design, based at Blythe House. National Art Library Periodicals This item is held at the National Art Library which is open Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 - 17:30. Please specify which volumes/issues you wish to consult to help us satisfy your request.	National Art Library - National Art Library National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> PP.601.J*	v.76:n.3/4(2017:Autumn/Winter)	National Art Library Periodicals This item is held at the National Art Library which is open Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 - 17:30. Please specify which volumes/issues you wish to consult to help us satisfy your request.	National Art Library - National Art Library National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum	<input type="text"/>

If you need to place a request for a future date, see [section 10](#). Find our opening hours and planned closures at <https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/national-art-library>

9.6 Scroll down to the bottom of the screen and click 'Submit' to complete your request.

You will receive an email when your request is ready to collect at the National Art Library. Emails are sent hourly, so your item may be ready before you receive the email. To check the status of each request, login and go to 'My Account' (top right) and select 'Requests' from the dropdown. When your item is ready for collection, the status will be set as 'Ready for pick up at National Art Library until [date]'.

If you have placed a request in advance, or if you have selected a specific date (see [section 10](#)), you may only receive a confirmation email on the morning of the date you wish to view the item, once it is ready to collect.


10. Request an item for a Specific Date of Visit

- 10.1 Go to our library catalogue at <https://nal-vam.on.worldcat.org/discovery>
- 10.2 Search for an item using the main search or Advanced Search.
- 10.3 Click the title of your selected item in the search results and click 'Request Item' in the right sidebar. If the request button is not available, the item may be in a [bound volume \(section 8\)](#).
- 10.4 Sign in using the 'Visitor' option. Select an item from the Copy or Volume list.
Find out how to create an account in [Section 6](#)


The 'I need this for specific dates' dropdown option allows you to place a request for a future date. You may leave this blank if you are collecting your books at the library's next available date of opening.

☒ I need this for specific dates

From


To


I cannot pick up...

Must be within requested date range.

From

To

'From' date: Please select the date of your visit. Find our days of opening at <https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/national-art-library>

Please request copies held by the National Art Library where available.

'To' date: Leave blank; requested items will only be kept for one week.

- 10.5 Click 'Submit' to complete your request.

Please note: You may only receive a confirmation email on the morning of the date you wish to view the item, once it is ready to collect.

11. Request NAL ‘appointment only’ Material

Some items in our collection cannot be retrieved immediately due to:

- Conservation and preservation policies. The item may be stored remotely, or we need to make a condition assessment due to the fragility of the item.
- High value or uniqueness of an item. Senior curatorial authorisation is needed.
- Audio/Visual material that may not be compatible with onsite equipment, so we need to first check that the item can be viewed.
- NAL material (e.g. elephant folios) held in another study room. See [section 13](#).

For these reasons, for some items you will not see a ‘Request Item’ button. Instead, you will see a message advising you that you need to make an appointment.


Availability of this Edition at Victoria and Albert Museum

National Art Library		
1 Available at this Location		
Shelving Location	Call Number	Status ↑
Special Collections, by appointment only	KRPA.10	✓ Available
<i>Note: This item is not currently available for immediate retrieval due to its fragility. It is highly advised to select an alternative copy if one is available. Please contact us directly to discuss an appointment to consult this material.</i>		

Please contact us: nal.enquiries@vam.ac.uk to arrange an appointment. Please make sure you include all the required information including the date you would like to see the item. It may take several working days to receive a reply.

12. Update or Cancel a Request

12.1 Login and go to 'My Account' (top right). Select 'Requests'. The options to **Edit** or **Cancel** are shown for each request:

CHECKOUTS (21)	REQUESTS	FEES (£0.00)	SAVED SEARCHES (0)	PROFILE
Title	Submitted Date		Status	
<input type="checkbox"/> Select All	CANCEL REQUESTS			
<input type="checkbox"/>	 <u>From Manet to Hockney : modern artists' illustrated books</u> National Art Library (Great Britain) London : Victoria & Albert Museum, 1985 <i>Print Book</i>	10/10/2021 Edit Request	Not ready for pick up	

Edit your request

12.2 Click **Edit Request** to change the details of the request. You can then:

- Change 'Dates I need item'
- Change Item Description / Notes

I want to use items from

Institution Name:
National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum

Pickup Location:
National Art Library - National Art Library

Dates I need item

From: 10/10/2021 To: 10/11/2021

I cannot pick up


From: dd/mm/yyyy To: dd/mm/yyyy

Item Description/Notes

12.3 Click **Cancel** to delete your request. Then click '**Cancel request**' in the pop up box to confirm.

CANCEL REQUEST

You are cancelling your request for this item.



From Manet to Hockney : modern artists' illustrated books
National Art Library (Great Britain)
London : Victoria & Albert Museum, 1985
Print Book

Please note: you are unable to cancel a request that is ready for collection.

13. Request Material held in other V&A Study Rooms

Some material in the library catalogue is held in V&A Study Rooms other than the NAL. The location will display under 'More Item Details'.

Prints & Drawings Study Room

^ Prints & Drawings Study Room			✓ 1 Available at this Location
Shelving Location	Call Number	Status ↑	
GC/PDP General Collection: Prints & Drawings Study Room	PDP REF.(DESK)	✓ Copy D Available	
<i>Note: This item is held at the Prints & Drawings Study Room.</i>			

Please note: Material from the two collections listed below is currently unavailable due to Museum redevelopment

Blythe House Archive & Study Room

Availability of this Edition at Victoria and Albert Museum

^ Blythe House Archive & Study Room			✓ 2 Available at this Location
Shelving Location	Call Number	Status ↑	
SC/AAD Special Collections: Archive of Art & Design	AAD/1996/6	✓ Available	
<i>Note: This item is held at the Archive of Art and Design, based at Blythe House.</i>			

Museum of Childhood

^ Museum of Childhood Study Room			✓ 2 Available at this Location
Shelving Location	Call Number	Status ↑	
GC/MoCR General Collection: MoC Reference Collection	BE.1.3 JOH	✓ Available	
<i>Note: This collection is unavailable during Museum redevelopment.</i>			

Contact details and further information can be found on the Study Rooms webpage:
www.vam.ac.uk/info/study-rooms