



Margaret Herrick Library Preservation Policy

Revised March 2024

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I. The Margaret Herrick Library Mission Statement

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Margaret Herrick Library's mission is to collect, preserve and make accessible materials documenting the art, science, and industry of motion pictures.

The Library has a fundamental responsibility to ensure the continuing availability and authenticity of its holdings. Given the unique and irreplaceable nature of the collection, the Library has identified loss of assets as a risk to its mission. The responsibility for minimizing this risk is assumed by the Library director.

II. Preservation Policy Overview

This preservation policy is a statement of the principles and guidelines used by the Margaret Herrick Library in the conservation and stewardship of our holdings. It is our commitment to make informed, ethical, and transparent decisions about providing care for our collections, and is based on consideration of our current resources as well as anticipation of our future preservation strategies.

The Library recognizes that its primary function is providing research access to its collections. Although all material will be preserved and made accessible in its original state for as long as possible, preservation considerations may call for the use of surrogate formats to ensure the protection of particularly rare or fragile items.

This policy should be read alongside other policies of the Library including the collection development, loan, and disaster preparedness. This document is intended for all staff who manage and work with the Library collections, and for those who donate material to the Library. This policy assumes that a realistic assessment of institutional capacity is factored into every acquisition and deaccession, such as the scale of investment in collections to preserve and provide access. This includes factoring in the cataloging and processing work that provides access and use, including research, documentation, and artifactual values, as well as the benefit of providing environmentally stable and secure storage.

Through this preservation policy, the Library ensures that:

- It supports decision-making and strategy when allocating resources and space for the maintenance and appropriate storage of the collection.
- Its collections are protected, secured, cared for, and preserved.
- Its collections are conserved in accordance with current best practices in the conservation field.
- Its collections are digitized and/or duplicated in a manner that allows patrons access to information.
- It assists and supports the development of preservation approaches and methodologies for both physical and digital material.
- It allows the development of coherent preservation programs and workflows.

III. Roles and Responsibilities

The Conservation department advises on preservation issues at all levels of the Academy's operations and acts as a liaison with the Facilities and Security departments to ensure all relevant activities are consistent with national standards. This includes, but is not limited to, pest management procedures, environmental requirements for collection storage, and securing objects while on display. All Library departments are aware of the possible impact of their activities on preservation. In addition to ensuring the preservation of existing and future holdings, the Library has a responsibility to educate Academy members and donors about the importance of preservation.

Digital Management Services (DMS) and Information Technology (IT) departments, in consultation with collection managers, is responsible for the preservation of the digital files created to manage the collection and the born-digital files that are a part of the Library's collections. The Library's Conservation department, in consultation with collection managers is responsible for the preservation of all other materials.

In their oversight roles, the Academy's Board of Governors and its History and Preservation Committee, based on consultation with and advice from the Library director, support and approve the Library's preservation policy. Library managers and their staff assist in implementing the preservation policy as appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

IV. Preservation Activities

The Library's preservation activities include:

- **Cataloging:** The Library maintains catalog records for all its collections in patron-accessible and public-facing databases. Thorough cataloging by trained Library personnel allows researchers to explore collections without unnecessary handling of materials. Locations and tracking of collection materials are managed in the Library systems listed below.
 - **Library Systems**
Descriptive, contextual and resource discovery metadata for all Library resources (physical, digitized and born-digital) will be stored and managed within the Library's content management systems or their successors. Currently those systems are: Axiell (Academy) collections, Opentext Digital Asset Management (OTMM), Inmagic, CONTENTdm, Archive-It and Digital Reel.
- **Collections Preservation and Maintenance:** Includes the following activities:

- **Handling and Transportation:** The Library encourages proper handling of its collections by staff, outside vendors, and patrons. The Conservation department provides training and advice on handling collection material to all relevant staff and outside vendors and provides written and oral handling guidelines for staff and patrons. Procedures and policies have been developed to ensure that collection materials are carefully handled and well protected throughout the acquisition process (including in the field and while being transported to Academy premises), during cataloging, and whenever accessed for patron use, display, or loan.
- **Emergency Planning, Response and Disaster Recovery Plans:** Plans are in place to protect the staff and to ensure the safety of the collections. The Library has a Disaster Plan for each of the buildings where collections are stored, as well as Salvage Plans for the recovery of artifacts that may become damaged in a disaster. The Conservation department leads any artifact salvage operation, assisted by a team of trained staff members.
- **Housing:** Collection materials are housed at shelf, box and folder levels. Whenever possible, all housings are comprised of preservation-quality materials that have been evaluated for long-term storage and have passed the Photographic Activity Test (PAT). The PAT was developed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to determine whether a storage material will cause damage to an artifact.
- **Storage and Environmental Control:** The Library's storage vaults are outfitted and maintained to the highest possible standards in accordance with industry best practices. Studies by institutions and government agencies have determined specific temperatures and relative humidity ranges to ensure the long-term preservation of the collection materials and have guided the Library's environmental set points. Furthermore, the Library adheres to an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy, in which the Conservation department monitors the buildings for pest infestations that could pose a risk to collections. IPM is a proactive program, utilizing techniques that minimize or eliminate the use of chemicals. It is designed to determine whether there are pest problems or building maintenance or operational issues that need to be addressed to reduce the likelihood of an infestation in the future. An aspect of the IPM policy also includes good housekeeping practices, in which the storage vaults, processing areas and staff workspaces are routinely cleaned to remove dust and debris that could affect the collections if left unmonitored.
- **Conservation:** The conservation of collection materials aims to have minimal impact on the original content and intent of the artifact while preserving its information, material, and historic value. The Conservation department embraces a combined approach of preventive measures and conservation treatment when working with Library collections. Artworks, books, documents, ephemera, notated music, periodicals, photographs, posters, production art, scrapbooks, scripts, and three-dimensional object materials

receive regular condition assessment and conservation treatment, which involves written and photographic documentation of the performed treatment of the objects in the collection.

- **Digitization/Copying:** The main goal of digitization or other forms of copying of the collection materials is to improve access and to support the long-term preservation of the collection. This includes the production of surrogates for use in exhibitions, programs, and other activities. All materials are digitized according to current best practices and the digitization, copying and creation of surrogates are carried out in-house by the Library staff.

The Library is actively developing its collection of digitized and born-digital materials and recognizes the importance of digital preservation. This Library-wide initiative falls under the Academy's digital preservation policy developed by DMS.

- **Loans:** Original materials requested for loan must have assessment and necessary conservation treatment before being lent to borrowing institutions for the purposes of exhibition. Each artifact is evaluated for condition, exhibition history, and its ability to withstand additional handling and transportation before it is deemed stable for a possible loan. All borrowing institutions must provide facility reports to the Conservation department to ensure the safety of the artifact while on display. Please see [Exhibition Loan Policy](#) for more details.

V. Review Schedule

This document is reviewed annually to ensure that it addresses current strategic plans; meets the collection needs; reflects current national and international standards and changes in practice; supports the Library staff responsible for collection development.

VI. Resources

- Academy Digital Preservation Forum, <https://academydigitalpreservationforum.org/>
- Collections Management Policy, Museum of Modern Art
- Harvey, R. & M. Mahard (2014). *The preservation management handbook: A 21st-century guide for libraries, archives, and museums*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Preservation Policy, National Archives and Records Administration
- Preservation Policy, Smithsonian Institute Archives
- Wellcome Library Preservation Policy for Materials Held in Collections

VII. Glossary

List of Terms:

- Artifact
- Authenticity
- Born-digital

- Conservation
- Copy
- Digital Object
- Digital Preservation
- Digitization
- Duplicate
- Preservation
- Preventive Conservation
- Restoration
- Surrogate

Artifact

An object that is physical, two- or three-dimensional; it is often used to distinguish man-made objects from natural specimens.

Authenticity

The quality of being genuine, not a counterfeit, and free from tampering, and is typically inferred from internal and external evidence, including its physical characteristics, structure, content, and context.

Authenticity is closely associated with the creator (or creators) of an artifact or digital object. First and foremost, an authentic artifact must have been created by the individual represented as the creator. The authenticity of artifacts is usually presumed, based on provenance, rather than requiring affirmation.

Authenticity can be verified by testing physical and formal characteristics of an artifact (e.g., the ink used to write a document must be contemporaneous with the document's purported date). The presence of a signature serves as a fundamental test for authenticity; the signature identifies the creator and establishes the relationship between the creator and the artifact.

With respect to digital objects, authenticity is the mechanical characteristic of any digital object that reflects the degree of trustworthiness in the object in that the supportive metadata accompanying that object makes it clear that the object is what it purports to be.

Authenticity alone does not automatically imply that the content of an artifact is reliable.

Born-digital

Information, both text and visual, created in electronic format, including materials given to the Library in digital form.

Conservation

The profession devoted to the preservation of cultural property for the future. Conservation activities include examination, documentation, treatment, and preventive care, supported by research and education.

Conservation Treatment

The deliberate alteration of the chemical and/or physical aspects of cultural property, aimed primarily at prolonging its existence. Treatment may consist of stabilization and/or restoration.

Copy

A duplicate made from an original.

A copy can vary significantly in its fidelity to the original. In some instances, it may be sufficient for a copy to capture only the intellectual content of the original without regard to formatting. Or it may be an exacting surrogate of the original.

‘Copy’ connotes something reproduced from an original; for example, a photocopy. ‘Duplicate’ (see **Duplicate**) connotes a version that may be considered an original; for example, duplicate prints made from the same negative. A copy made with the intent to deceive is often described as a forgery or a counterfeit. A copy or similar work made by the creator of the original is often described as a replica or version.

Digital Object

A document, web site, file, or other aggregated unit of digital content comprised of one or more related digital files: metadata, derivative versions and/or a wrapper to link the pieces together.

Digital Preservation

Digital preservation can be defined as the combination of policies, strategies and actions to ensure access to and accurate rendering of authenticated, reformatted and born-digital content over time regardless of the challenges of media failure and technological change.

Digitization

The process of transforming tangible material into electronic (digital) form, especially for storage and use in a computer.

‘Digitized’ materials have been transformed from the media in which they were created. This distinguishes them from materials that are born-digital.

Duplicate

One of a number of copies of an object made from the same master.

‘Duplicate’ connotes versions that may be considered an original; for example, duplicate prints made from the same negative. ‘Copy’ (see **Copy**) connotes something reproduced from an original; for example, a photocopy.

Preservation

The protection of cultural property through activities that minimize chemical and physical deterioration and damage and that prevent loss of informational content. The primary goal of preservation is to prolong the existence of cultural property.

Preventive Conservation

The mitigation of deterioration and damage to cultural property through the formulation and implementation of policies and procedures for the following: appropriate environmental conditions; handling and maintenance procedures for storage, exhibition, packing, transport, and use; integrated pest management; emergency preparedness and response; and reformatting/duplication.

Record

A collection of related data elements treated as a unit, such as the fields in a database table. An entry describing a work in a catalog; a catalog record.

Restoration

Treatment procedures intended to return cultural property to a known or assumed state, often through the addition of non-original material.

Surrogate

A reproduction that simulates the appearance of the original as closely as possible. A surrogate attempt to reproduce the visual and tactile qualities of the original.

Glossary sources:

[American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works](#)

[National Digital Stewardship Alliance Glossary](#)

[Noonan, Daniel W. \(2014\), *Digital preservation policy framework: a case study*. Educause review online.](#)

[Society of American Archivists, Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology](#)