Margaret Herrick Library
Preservation Policy

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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 staff in its conservation and stewardship of Library materials. It provides consistency in communicating the Library’s policies to Academy staff and the public. It is understood that as the programs and other information needs of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences change, the preservation policy will change to meet these needs.

The Library recognizes that the use of and access to its collections are its primary functions. Material in original format will be preserved for as long as possible and access will be provided to original and surrogate formats as appropriate.

This preservation policy should be read alongside other policies of the Library including the collection development, loan, and disaster preparedness policies. This document is intended for all staff who manage and work with the Library collections, and for those who donate material to the Library.

Through this preservation policy, the Library ensures that:
• It supports decision-making and strategy when allocating resources for the maintenance 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
Digital Management Services (DMS), in consultation with collection managers and the Information Technology (IT) department, 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.

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. This is particularly significant where digital information is concerned.

On the advice of the Library director, the Academy’s Board of Governors and Preservation Committee members 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 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 collections, OTMM, Voyager, 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 in transit within or
between the Academy’s buildings or on loan for exhibitions are well protected and
carefully handled.

- **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
  volunteers.

- **Housing**: Collection materials are housed at shelf, box and folder levels. Whenever
  possible, all housings are comprised of preservation-quality materials that have been
  tested 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 operation 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.
  Scrapbooks, books, periodicals, posters, production art, photographs and manuscript
  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’s core clipping files are copied onto microfiche and then digitized for accessibility and preservation of the original artifacts. Files are selected based on frequency of use and fragility of material.

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
Collections Management Policy, Museum of Modern Art
Preservation Policy, National Archives
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 created in electronic format, including materials scanned and 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 row 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 attempts to reproduce the visual and tactile qualities of the original.

**Glossary sources:**  
[American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works](https://www.aic.org)  
[National Digital Stewardship Alliance Glossary](https://www.ndsa.org/glossary)  
[Society of American Archivists, Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology](https://www2.archives.gov/research/glossary.html)