

Research

Guide

Gallery

Archives

Why Use This Guide?

This guide can be a great tool for researchers and enthusiasts who are interested in exploring gallery archives in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Gallery archives, like galleries are incredibly diverse. They are often repositories of historical records, documents, and materials related to the art world, offering a wealth of information about artists, exhibitions, collections, financial and business records and the art industry's evolution. Whether you're a historian, curator, artist, or just passionate about art, this guide aims to help you navigate and utilise gallery archives effectively.

The Archives: What Kind of Things You May Be Able to Find

Gallery archives are typically home a diverse range of materials, including but not limited to:

- **Artwork:** A collection of pieces in a range of mediums, artwork from previous exhibitions.
- **Exhibition Records:** Information on past exhibitions, including catalogues, press releases, and installation photographs.
- **Artistic Correspondence:** Letters and communications between artists, collectors, dealers, and gallery owners.
- **Historical Context:** Documentation of art movements, trends, and cultural shifts.
- **Art Market Research:** Market analyses, sales records, collectors and price lists.
- **Press Clippings:** Newspaper articles, reviews, and media coverage of gallery activities. This may include reviews of past exhibitions and their impact on the art world.
- **Artwork Documentation:** Documentation related to specific artworks, including provenance, condition reports, and appraisals.
- **Gallery Business Records:** Financial records, contracts, and administrative documents relating to the gallery's operations.
- **Photographs and Visual Materials:** Photographs of artworks, artists, exhibitions, and gallery spaces.



Whitechapel Gallery Archive and Foyle Reading Room from whitechapelgallery.org

Examples

Here are some examples!

Henry Moore Institute Archive (Leeds, UK):

Context: The Henry Moore Institute Archive, part of the Henry Moore Foundation, is dedicated to the study of sculpture and the work of Henry Moore. The archive is made up of twelve main collections, these include books, exhibition and sale catalogues and audio recordings. The collections are searchable online via the link below, where you can also book in for an appointment.

<https://henry-moore.org/henry-moore-institute/plan-your-visit-to-the-henry-moore-institute/>

Courtauld Institute of Art Archive (London, UK):

Context: The Courtauld Institute of Art Archive is associated with the Courtauld Institute of Art, a leading centre for art history research and education, its archive is therefore more similar to that of a university. Its archive houses documents and papers related to art history, including materials on artists, art movements, and art theory. It is a valuable resource for art historians and scholars.

<https://courtauld.ac.uk/libraries/collections-and-image-libraries/special-collections/>

Tate Archive (London, UK):

Context: The Tate Archive is an extensive repository that houses historical records related to the Tate Gallery's and its collections. The archive is located within the Tate Britain site and contains material relating to the history of British art from 1900 onwards. Tate offers an online catalogue which is well worth exploring and they also have some of their collection digitalised so it can be viewed online. To book an appointment or have a look at their

Scottish National Gallery Archive (Edinburgh, UK):

Context: The Scottish National Gallery Archive holds records related to the collection and exhibitions of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. It holds documents relating to 20th and 21st century Scottish and international art, artist and sitter files from the 16th century onwards and documents revealing the history of the gallery's. It provides insights into the history of art in Scotland and the development of the national art collection. You can search the collection and book an appointment through the following link. <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/visit/archives-special-collections>

National Gallery Archive (London, UK):

Context: The National Gallery Archive, situated within the National Gallery in London, holds a wealth of materials related to the gallery's exhibitions, acquisitions, and collections. This archive can be an essential resource for those studying European art and the Gallery's activities. If you follow the link below, you can search the collection and book an appointment. <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/research/research-centre/archive/request-an-appointment>

These examples illustrate some of the diversity of gallery archives in the UK and Ireland, each offering a unique perspective on the history of art, artists, exhibitions, and the art market. Researchers can explore these archives to deepen their understanding of the art world and contribute to the discourse on art history.

Where to Start

- **Identify Your Research Goals:** Like when visiting any archive, clearly define your research objectives and questions before diving into the archive. 'What are you looking to find?', 'what questions do you have?', these are good things to think about before deciding on which archive to visit.
- **Select a Relevant Gallery:** Many galleries focus on a particular period, place or artist, so choose a gallery archive that aligns with your research interests. If possible, research the gallery's holdings online or consult directories so you know what to expect.
- **Access Policies:** Check the gallery's access policies, including opening hours, visitor requirements, and any fees. It may be best-unless stated otherwise-to contact the archive directly as some may not advertise their archive as open to the public.

Referencing Your Research

Accurate referencing is crucial for maintaining academic integrity and acknowledging the sources you have consulted in your research. When using materials from a gallery archive, follow these guidelines for referencing:

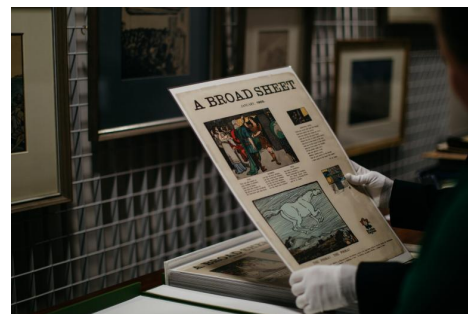
Citation Style: Determine the appropriate citation style recommended by your academic institution or your discipline.

Documenting Archival Sources: When citing archival materials, include the following elements:

- **Artist/Author/Creator:** Include the name of the person or organisation responsible for the item
- **Title:** Include the title or description of the specific item or collection you are referencing.

Searching the Archive and Using the Collections

- **Catalogues and Finding Aids:** Utilise catalogue and finding aids to identify relevant materials within the archive. These can include online catalogues, inventories, or guides specific to certain collections.
- **Consult Archivists:** Archivists and librarians can provide valuable guidance and assistance in navigating the collection. If you're having trouble finding specific materials or need guidance, don't hesitate to reach out to the archivists.
- **Handling Materials:** Follow proper handling procedures, including wearing gloves when necessary, and be respectful of fragile items.



National Gallery of Ireland. Photographer: Jack Caffrey, The Pimlico Project, 2017

- **Date:** Include the date(s) associated with the material, such as the creation date or the date range of the collection.
- **Location Numbers:** If applicable, include the box and folder numbers where the item is located within the collection.
- **Repository Name:** Provide the name of the gallery where the material is housed.
- **URL or Location:** If the material is accessible online, include the URL or the physical location of the archive.

Permission and Copyright:

Ensure compliance with copyright regulations when using materials from the gallery archive. Seek permissions as necessary.

Acknowledgment: It is considered good practice to acknowledge the archive or institution in your research work's acknowledgments section.

Happy researching!