

Mary R. Schiff Library & Archives

ACCESS TO ARCHIVAL INFORMATION POLICY

The Mary R. Schiff Library and Archives (the “archives”) collects, preserves, and makes accessible the records of the Cincinnati Art Museum (1886-present) and its governing body, the Cincinnati Museum Association (1881-present). In addition, the archives maintain certain special collections relating to the arts and artists of the Greater Cincinnati region.

The archives recognize the value of these records both to the museum and to the wider community and is committed to making them accessible to researchers on a fair and equitable basis within the parameters established by this policy.

Physical Access

- Records in the archives are available for consultation by Cincinnati Art Museum (“CAM”) staff and by external researchers who demonstrate a need to access resources in the collection. All requests for access are considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Archival materials will only be made available in the Mary R. Schiff Library and Archives reading room during regular opening hours¹ under supervision. Archival records may not be removed from the reading room under any circumstances.
- Researchers wishing to view material from the archives should make an appointment² as far in advance as possible (at least 48 hours) to ensure that they can be accommodated and relevant archival resources can be located.
- When making an appointment, researchers will be asked for details of their research project, including the reasons for undertaking the research and, if known, the records they wish to review.
- Depending on the nature of the research project, the archives may ask for a letter of confirmation or recommendation from any institution (e.g. museum, university) with which the researcher is associated.
- On their first visit, researchers will be asked to present a photo ID and to agree to the terms of the **Archival Researcher Agreement**, which sets out the conditions under which access is granted to the archives’ collections. Any researcher who does not act in accordance with this agreement, or who demonstrates carelessness or deliberate destructiveness that endangers the safety of the collections will have their access suspended.
- The physical nature of many records in the archival collection may reduce their accessibility for patrons that require certain accommodations. In such cases, the archives will attempt to find alternative methods of providing access to the records or the information they contain, although this may not always be possible.

¹ For current hours, visit <https://cincinnatiartmuseum.org/visit/library-archives/>

² CAM staff are not required to make an appointment to view archival material, but it is **strongly** recommended as it may not always be possible to retrieve material on demand.

Intellectual Access

- To facilitate access, collections in the archives are arranged and described according to national and international standards. A finding aid is created for each collection, describing its content in greater or lesser detail depending upon expected demand and potential research value.
- Selected finding aids can be accessed online at the [OhioLink Finding Aid Repository](#)³. An overview of all collections held by the archives' can be found on the museum's website⁴, and staff can provide more details on request.

Remote Access

- The archives is committed to making information about its collections and their content available to researchers unable to visit in person.
- General enquiries concerning the nature and scope of records held in the archives, and those requiring *limited* research into the content of records are typically answered within 10 working days.
- Where an enquiry is likely to require significant research, involving the collection, assembly or extraction of information, researchers will be encouraged to make an appointment to visit in person. If this is not possible, research will be carried out as staff availability and workload permits. The archives reserves the right to charge a fee to undertake such requests; if this is the case, the researcher will be notified before any research is undertaken.

Restrictions to Access

- The archives aims to provide access to the records in its care to the fullest extent possible. However, it reserves the right to limit or refuse access to any record without notice to protect the interests of the museum and the privacy of individuals.
- Categories of record to which access may be limited or refused include:
 - Records containing personally identifiable information
 - Records relating to objects in the museum's permanent collection, or to objects loaned by other institutions (e.g. insurance and appraisal information, prices paid, information on donors, vendors, and lenders, gift agreements, contracts and negotiations)
 - Minutes of the Board of Trustees and its committees⁵
 - Records relating to museum security
 - Financial and legal records
 - Architectural blueprints
 - Unprocessed archival collections
 - Damaged/fragile materials
- These restrictions apply to external researchers and to CAM staff. Restricted records will only be made available to staff, or to individuals working on behalf of CAM (e.g. interns, volunteers), with a legitimate need for access.

³ <http://ead.ohiolink.edu/xtf-ead/>

⁴ https://cincinnatiartmuseum.org/media/298455/archives-listing-for-website-feb2022_geoff-edwards.pdf

⁵ All requests for access to Board minutes are subject to the approval of the museum director.

- Archives staff may be able to extract non-confidential information from an otherwise restricted record on behalf of a researcher, or to provide access to a redacted version of the record.
- If a record is too damaged or fragile to be used, a copy may be provided in place of the original. Alternatively, archives staff may be able to extract information on a researcher's behalf.
- Any request to waive access restrictions for archival records are subject to the approval of the department that created the records (or its successor) and/or the museum director.

Copies of Records

- To facilitate access, the archives allows copying of records in its collection but reserves the right to refuse duplication of any material if this could result in damage to the records, or if donor, acquisition, or legal restrictions prohibit copying.
- The archives may also refuse to copy material where the format, size, or quantity of records makes it impractical.
- The copying of records on site by researchers is restricted to the use of a camera without a flash. No other self-service copying or reproduction is allowed.
- For researchers unable to visit in person, copies of archival records may be requested from the archives⁶. Copies can be provided electronically, mailed, or made available for collection in person. Copy requests are normally completed within 10 working days, but extensive requests will be completed as staff availability and workload permits. The archives reserves the right to charge a fee to undertake copy requests; if this is the case, the researcher will be notified before any copies are made.
- Before copies are provided to a researcher, or permission is granted for a researcher to make copies, a copyright disclosure statement must be signed acknowledging that the researcher understands:
 - copies are for private study, scholarship, or research use only;
 - the provision of copies of material from the archives, or the granting of permission to make copies, does *not* constitute an authorization to publish or reproduce them in any form;
 - permission to publish or reproduce any record from the archives, in full or in extract, must be applied for in writing *prior* to publication;
 - if CAM does not hold copyright for the material, it cannot grant permission to publish;
 - if the content is protected by the copyright law of the United States (Title 17, U.S. Code), the researcher is responsible for securing permission to publish from the copyright holder and will be liable for any infringement.

Loan of Archival Materials

- The archives will consider requests for loans from qualified external organizations, such as libraries, museums, and educational institutions, on a case by case basis. Requests may be refused for any reason.
- All borrowers will be required to complete and sign an **Archival Loan Agreement**, which sets out the terms under which the loan is made.

⁶ Copies for research use are typically provided as watermarked JPG files scanned at 150dpi. Copies suitable for publication must be requested separately.