The importance of cataloguing archive collections: top tips

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Archivist, Modern & Contemporary Art

National Galleries of Scotland

NATIONAL GALLERIES SCOTLAND

Why should you catalogue your collection?
To bring order to chaos!
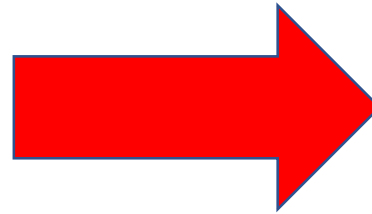
GMA A35/1/3/180
Folder of photographs of the
International Surrealist
Exhibition, London, 1936
Roland Penrose Archive,
National Galleries of
Scotland

Why should you catalogue your collection?

To help preserve your photographs!

To save time (in the long run)

GMA A35/1/3/186/5
May Day Demonstration, Hyde Park, London, 1938
Roland Penrose Archive, National Galleries of Scotland

GMA A35/1/3/378
André Breton and Jacqueline Lamba at the International Surrealist Exhibition, London, 1936
Roland Penrose Archive, National Galleries of Scotland

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Why should you catalogue your collection?
So you can share what you have.

Scottish Archives Online

SCA are developing a new portal for accessing Scotland's online archive catalogues. Building on the success of the Scottish Archives Network (SCAN), the portal will provide a nationwide online resource and discovery tool that provides a dynamic and comprehensive means of accessing Scotland's collections, including local authorities, universities and community archives. The project will improve the level of archive information available to current and potential users and provide more opportunities for engagement both physically and virtually with archives.
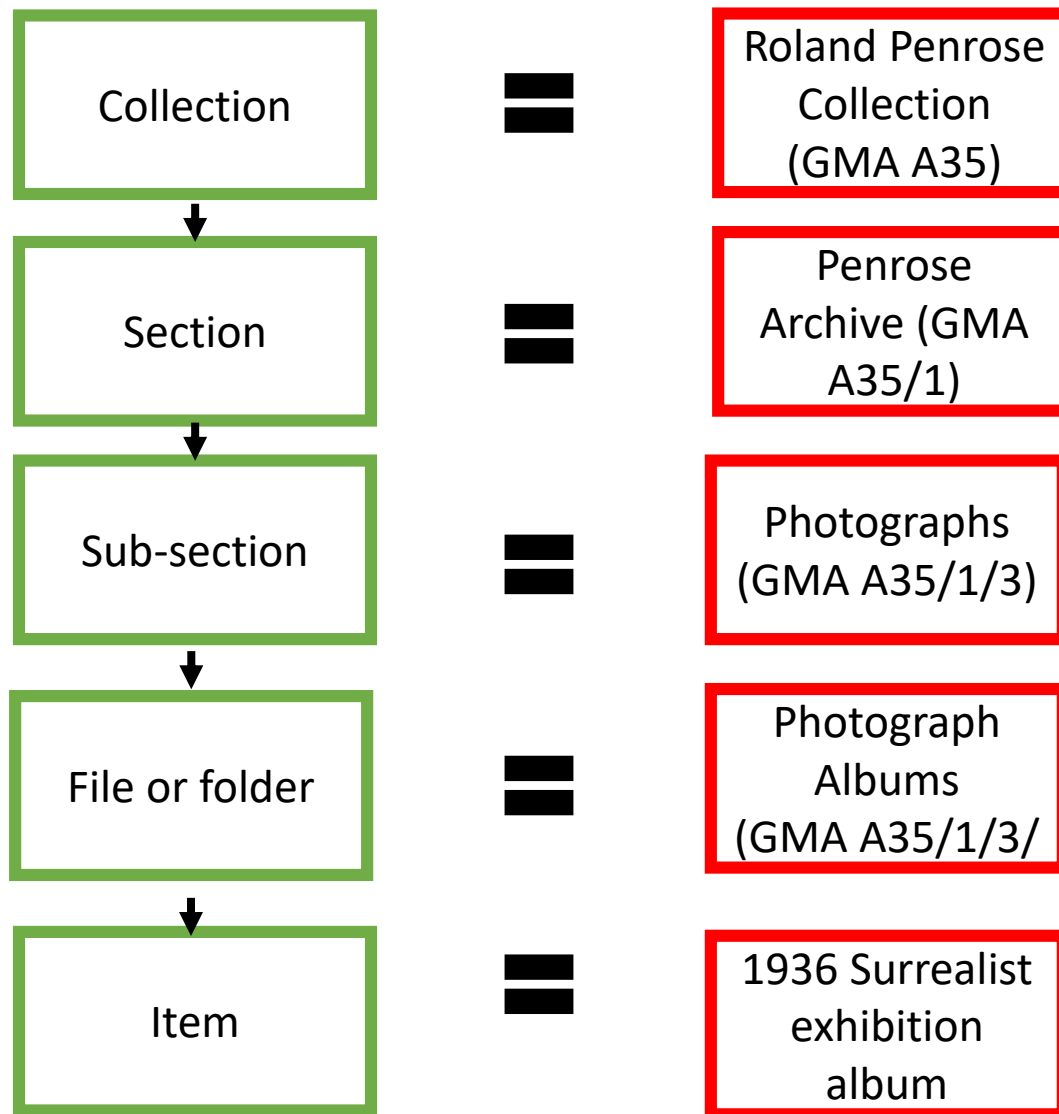
SCA will be working with the Archives Hub, on an eight-month pilot project from January 2019 to understand more of the issue around data export and aggregation. Six repositories around Scotland are participating. It is hope that the new portal will launch in 2020.

Why should you catalogue your collection?
So you can share what you have.

https://www.communityarchives.org.uk/index.php

Levels in an archive collection

Collection	=	Roland Penrose Collection (GMA A35)
↓		
Section	=	Penrose Archive (GMA A35/1)
↓		
Sub-section	=	Photographs (GMA A35/1/3)
↓		
File or folder	=	Photograph Albums (GMA A35/1/3/
↓		
Item	=	1936 Surrealist exhibition album

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  1 • Penrose Archive
  2 • Penrose Library
  3 • Penrose Posters
  Loan1 • Letter for Roland Penrose and Lee Miller/ Farley Farm
  Loan2 • Le Nouveau Candide
  Loan3 • Metal plaques for Prayers to help heal parts of the body

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      7 • Photographs: Balkans 1938: Penrose, Roland and Miller, Lee Tour; 2. Bulgaria, Rumania
      8 • Photographs: Banks, David and family
      9 • Photographs: Barcelona, Catalonia (general/Roland Penrose visits)
      10 • Photographs: Barr, Alfred and Marga
      11 • Photographs: Beuys, Joseph
      12 • Photographs: Bevan, Aneurin and related photo
      13 • Photographs: Books (Roland Penrose Library)
      14 • Photographs: Boué Family; Colonel Gilbert and Marthe Boué; Valentine Penrose's mother
      15 • Photographs: Braque, Georges
      16 • Photographs: Brassaï: Photos by
      17 • Photographs: Brazil / Mexico / USA: Penrose, Roland visit, 1959
      18 • Photographs: Brighton, 1937
      19 • Photographs: Brossa, Joan
      20 • Photographs: Calder, Alexander
      21 • Photographs: Camouflage
      22 • Photographs: Camouflage
      23 • Photographs: Camouflage
      24 • Photographs: Camouflage
      25 • Photographs: Canary Islands 1: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Maud and Eduardo Westerdahl
      26 • Photographs: Canary Islands 2: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; 1st International Exhibition of Sculpture in the Street, Santa Cruz, Tenerife
      27 • Photographs: Canary Islands 3: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, 1973; Chirino, Martín (Sculptor)
      28 • Photographs: Chiddingly
      29 • Clergue, Lucien: Photos by
      30 • Photographs: Condom sur Biase, France; Roland Penrose and Valentine Penrose, 1920s and 1930s
      31 • Copley, William (Bill) Photographs of, 1961 and 1964
      32 • Photographs: Cornwall; Lambe Creek, 1938 (Roland Penrose and Lee Miller)
      33 • Photographs: Crompton, Gigi
      34 • Photographs: Czechoslovakia: RP, LM + 1969 & other visits
      35 • Photographs: De Kooning, Willhelm; + Roland Penrose, Spoleto
      36 • Photographs: Deriaz, Diane

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        1 • Photographs: Canary Islands 1: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Maud and Eduardo Westerdahl ; Roland Penrose and Lee with
        2 • Photographs: Canary Islands 1: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Maud and Eduardo Westerdahl ; Roland Penrose
        3 • Photographs: Canary Islands 1: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Maud and Eduardo Westerdahl ; Roland Penrose and Eduardo
        4 • Photographs: Canary Islands 1: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Maud and Eduardo Westerdahl ; Roland Penrose and Lee with
        5 • Photographs: Canary Islands 1: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Maud and Eduardo Westerdahl ; Landscape
        6 • Photographs: Canary Islands 1: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Maud and Eduardo Westerdahl ; Roland Penrose, Maud West
        7 • Photographs: Canary Islands 1: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Maud and Eduardo Westerdahl ; Ancient tree, landscape
        8 • Photographs: Canary Islands 1: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Maud and Eduardo Westerdahl ; Roland Penrose and Lee Mill
        9 • Photographs: Canary Islands 1: Roland Penrose and Lee Miller visit, December 1973; Roland Penrose, Lee Miller and Maud and Eduardo Westerdahl ; Lee and Maud Westerdahl
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369 • Photographs of works of art: various
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372 • Photographs of works of art: Vasar
373 • Photographs of works of art: Wilson
374 • Photographs of works of art: Wols
375 • Photographs of works of art: Zimba
376 • Photographs of works of art: groups
377 • Photographs of works of art: Group
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379 • Photograph Album inscr. 'Roland P
380 • Photograph Album: RP & VP Franc
381 • Photograph album: RP & VP visit t
382 • Photograph album: Picasso, Chica
383 • Photograph album: exhibition insta
384 • Photograph album: 'Trees'
385 • Photograph album: '1982 Trouville a
386 • Photograph album: 'Roland Penros
387 • Photograph album: ditto, works in e
388 • Photograph album: RP visit to Keny
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390 • Photograph album: RP with Henry
391 • Photographs; misc o/s photograph:
392 • Photoboard: International Surrealist
393 • Photoboard: International Surrealist
394 • Photographs o/s exhibition ICA Lor
395 • Penrose, Roland: camouflage 'Indu
396 • Penrose, Roland: camouflage 'Indu
397 • Penrose, Roland: camouflage 'Indu
398 • Penrose photograph Album
399 • Picasso Exhibitions: Picasso Hims
400 • ICA Exhibition : Wonder and Horror
401 • ICA Exhibition : Wonder and Horror
402 • Peckover Family and Peckover Hou
4 • Penrose - Sketchbooks, scrapbooks, obj
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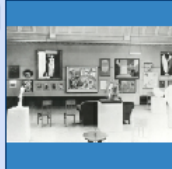Catalog | Conservation | Location | Loans

IDENTITY

Repository: Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art Archive
Level: File
Ref_No: GMA A35/1/3/378
Object_Number:
Alt_Ref_No: 1174
Extent:
Author:
Artist:
Title: Photograph Album: International Surrealist Exhibition, London 1936
Date: 1936 - 1939

CONTENT

Description: Album of b&w photographs and presscuttings, mainly of International Surrealist Exhibition, London 1936, but also other exhibitions of Surrealism in Britain e.g. in Cambridge, Zwemmer Gallery London etc.
Named_Collection: Roland Penrose
Format: Photograph
Format/2: Album
Format/3: Newscutting
Thumbnail

Notes: Compiled by Roland Penrose; installation shots of the exhibition have Penrose's pencil annotations verso; images titled by Penrose; 1936 exhibition installation photographs by Chancery
Notes/2: In very poor condition - cannot be handled by visitors. Photocopies of some of the album's pages have been made and are available for consultation.
Current_Location_Note:
Normal_Location:
Current_Location:
Abstract:
Condition: Poor
Condition_Note: Pages detached and bruised; newscuttings very brittle
Conservation_Priority: High
Site: 1044

:Component* Condition_Note(ConditionNote)*

20 new notifications

12:24
29/08/2019

Using Excel to catalogue

If you don't have archive software like CALM, use Excel:

- It's usually included free on Windows
- Most people are familiar with it, or can easily pick it up
- It's easy to input data into
- It's searchable
- The data can be exported into CALM or other databases of archive collections later on

GMA A63/15

Carton de seins de Marcel Duchamp, Galerie Maeght, Paris, 1947
National Galleries of Scotland

Example of an Excel spreadsheet

R:\Archive & Library\VISITS\Scottish Council on Archive Caring for Photographs event Sep 2019\Template for cataloguing photographs.xlsx

GMA A33/2/02/1/01
Photograph album of the Dean Orphanage, c.1890s
National Galleries of Scotland

Cataloguing tips:

- Be accurate! Check your spelling, and double check people's names

- Give as much contextual information as possible, it'll help when searching

- Try and give a description of the image (especially if there are lots of similar images) – e.g. 'tower block with young boy in foreground and dog barking at left'

- Have a format cheatsheet nearby: https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/5.-photographs/5.2-types-of-photographs

- Don't use the term 'miscellaneous' - it's not helpful!

How do you number the photograph?

Don't use something that doesn't come off (like pen). Use pencil to write on the back of the photo (not on the image itself).

Depending on the paper, can use a normal pencil, or a chinagraph pencil:

Or, can write in pen on the enclosures if you don't want to write on the photographs themselves:

Funding Avenues

National Archives' Cataloguing Grants:
https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/finding-funding/archives-revealed/cataloguing-grants/

Digitisation funding:
https://blog.townswebarchiving.com/2018/02/sources-funding-for-heritage-digitisation-projects

Crowdfunding
https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/finding-funding/how-to-fundraise/4-different-types-of-fundraising/crowdfunding/

Donors
https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/finding-funding/how-to-fundraise/4-different-types-of-fundraising/cultivating-new-donors/

GMA A09/1/3/4/3
Joan Eardley in her Glasgow studio sketching a boy (photo by Oscar Mazaroli)
Joan Eardley Archive, National Galleries of Scotland