

LEAMINGTON SPA ART GALLERY & MUSEUM
ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY 2007 - 2012

Museum: **Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum (Royal Pump Rooms)**

Governing body: **Warwick District Council**

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1. EXISTING COLLECTIONS

The principal subjects or themes are grouped under Visual Arts and Human History.

1.1. VISUAL ARTS

The Visual Arts collections encompass Fine Art and Craft. A selection of works is presented in themed displays at all times in the main art gallery, with comprehensive changes to the displays at regular intervals.

Fine Art

1.1.a. *Modern and Contemporary British.* The core of this collection ranges in date from the 1880s to the 1960s, with paintings in oil and watercolour, drawings, prints, mixed media and a small number of sculptures. The collection includes works by Terry Atkinson, Vanessa Bell, Patrick Caulfield, Sir Terry Frost, Duncan Grant, Patrick Heron, Damien Hirst, Ivon Hitchens, L S Lowry, Paul Nash, Winifred Nicholson, Marc Quinn, Bridget Riley, Stanley Spencer, Mark Titchner, Gillian Wearing, and Carel Weight. As artists are beginning to work in a variety of new media the museum is gathering a small collection of digital works, including a film by Jordan Baseman.

1.1.b. *Modern and Contemporary Warwickshire.* This collection mostly ranges in date from the 1840s to the present, and is mainly drawings and paintings in oil and watercolour, many showing local scenes. It includes significant groups of pictures by Thomas Baker, John Burgess, Colin Moss, Harry Weinberger, Elizabeth Whitehead and Frederick Whitehead.

1.1.c. *European.* The collection of oil paintings attributed to Dutch and Flemish artists working in the 16th and 17th century includes a number of pictures acquired through the Mark Field Bequest of 1953. There are also works by Abraham Bloemaert, Phillippe de Champaigne and Godfried Schalcken.

There are about 2,000 works in the Fine Art collection.

Craft

1.1.d. *Ceramics.* This collection includes a wide variety of functional and decorative ceramics, most made in England in the 18th and 19th centuries. Amongst the factories represented are Bow, Bristol, Chelsea, Worcester and Wedgwood. There are approximately 400 items in the collection.

1.1.e. *Glass.* This collection falls into two groups: (a) the Francis Jahn collection of late 17th to early 19th century drinking glasses, jugs and bottles, acquired in 1955; and (b) a small group of cut glass drinking glasses and jugs made in major

glass factories of the West Midlands, acquired in 1963. There about 220 pieces in the collection.

1.1.f. Contemporary Designers and Makers. This collection consists of: (a) a small number of recently acquired vessels made by contemporary artists Peter Beard, David Jones and Clare Seneviratne; and (b) a small number of recently acquired pieces of jewellery by locally based makers Jane Moore and Vannetta Seecharran.

1.2. HUMAN HISTORY

The Human History collections encompass Social History, Numismatics, Ethnography and Archaeology. The museum's present permanent displays include items from all of these fields, with the largest number drawn from the Social History collection.

Social History

The Social History collection embraces a wide range of items, most British and ranging in date from the late 18th century to the present. Many relate to the history of the district, especially Royal Leamington Spa, whose town council supported the museum from its origins in the second half of the 19th century until the local government reorganisation of 1974. Since then the museum has formed part of Warwick District Council. The collection comprises:

1.2.a. Community Life. Material related to the community rather than individuals or families. This includes objects used in education, warfare, health, entertainment and sport. Examples include mineral water bottles, theatre programmes, commemorative items and civic memorabilia, school uniform, items from the Home Front during the Second World War, police truncheons and sports medals.

1.2.b. Domestic and Family Life. This category includes artefacts used in building, heating, lighting and managing houses. Examples include kitchen implements, toys, infant feeding bottles, and candlesticks.

1.2.c. Personal Life. This category includes items belonging to or normally used by one person, rather than general domestic objects. Examples include clothes, shoes, jewellery and other accessories, and personal correspondence.

1.2.d. Working Life. This category includes items made for work or business. Examples are agricultural tools, shop receipts, whitesmiths' tools, shoemakers' tools, shop signs and packaging

There are about 2300 items in Social History categories 1.2.a - 1.2.d.

1.2.e. Travel Posters. This includes railway and shipping posters, many of the 1920s - 1930s and relating to British and foreign services and resorts. There are about 200 posters in this group.

1.2.f. Photographs and Prints. This largely comprises photographs and prints depicting the people, landscape and buildings of Warwickshire (in particular the Warwick District). The collection is particularly rich in images of Royal Leamington Spa. There are about 2800 items in this group.

1.2.g. Medical Equipment and Ephemera. This includes equipment, furniture and archives associated with the Royal Pump Rooms and other medical establishments in the district. Items include heat lamps, X-ray machines and spa treatment guides. There are approximately 80 items in this group (excluding photographs and prints).

Numismatics

1.2.h. This diverse collection mainly comprises British and foreign coins and tokens dating from the late 18th to early 20th centuries. There are also a number of Roman, Medieval and Elizabethan coins. There are about 1500 coins in the collection.

Ethnography

1.2.i. Most of this material appears to have been made and collected during the 19th and early 20th centuries. It includes artefacts produced by the indigenous, pre-industrial, cultures of Africa (including Egypt), Asia, Oceania, Australia, the Americas and Europe. Some items are of particular significance, for example ceremonial stilts from the Marquesa Islands, a Chinese libation cup of rhinoceros horn, Chinese silk shoes for bound feet and African cooking pots. There are about 950 objects in the collection.

Archaeology

1.2.j. This collection comprises pottery and other items excavated locally or in London between the late 19th century and the 1930s. There are about 70 objects in the collection.

2. CRITERIA GOVERNING FUTURE COLLECTING POLICY, INCLUDING THE SUBJECTS OR THEMES FOR COLLECTING

GENERAL CRITERIA

- The museum will only collect items for which suitable storage and exhibition facilities are available.

- Because the museum has no in-house conservation resources it will in general acquire only items which are in good or excellent condition. In exceptional circumstances items which, after cleaning or minor restoration will be in good or excellent condition, may be acquired provided (a) resources are available to carry out the necessary restoration work; and (b) they are important acquisitions of a type otherwise unlikely to become available.
- In recognition of the opportunities provided by the museum's relocation to the Royal Pump Rooms in 1999, there is particular interest in collecting Visual Arts and Human History material relating to medical science and health, especially items associated with spas in the 19th and 20th centuries. The aim is to explore the relationship between the visual arts, science, and social history. Topics of particular interest include hygiene, swimming, and spa treatments past and present. A significant start to collecting in this area has been made through the Medicate health and medical science programme of 1999 – 2005.
- There is particular interest in collecting Visual Arts and Human History material relating to local communities currently under-represented in the collections, notably Black and Minority Ethnic communities and those from other European countries who have settled in the area as a result of World War II and more recently because of membership of the European Union.

2.1. VISUAL ARTS

Background

The Visual Arts collections benefited from a series of important donations during the 1930s and 1950s, after which they grew only slowly until the acquisition of a group of work by contemporary artists made through the Medicate programme. The Medicate acquisitions were only possible because of substantial external funding, and unless comparable support can be achieved in the future it is expected that the Visual Arts collections will again grow only slowly, with an emphasis on the selective acquisition of good quality works. Future acquisitions will reflect three particular considerations:

- The museum's Visual Arts collections are a resource of countywide importance.
- The museum's picture store and ceramics store, created as part of the 1997 - 99 refurbishment of the Royal Pump Rooms, offer good quality storage space with only limited room for further acquisitions.
- The museum has only modest financial resources for purchases in the art market, even with financial assistance from external bodies such as the Friends of Leamington Art Gallery, the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund or The Art Fund.

Taking these factors into account the museum aims to collect in the following fields:

Fine Art

2.1.a. Modern and Contemporary British. Work by modern British artists active during the periods already represented in the collection, especially those from the 1840s to 1960s; contemporary British artists of the 1960s and later, particularly those with national or international reputations.

2.1.b. Modern and Contemporary Warwickshire. Modern and contemporary art relating to Warwickshire, with a particular interest in artists new to the collections, or work that casts new light on artists already well-represented in the collections.

2.1.c. European and International. Work by artists, particularly those with local associations, which add strength to the existing collections.

Crafts

2.1.d. Ceramics. Items which complement or fill gaps in the existing collections of 18th and 19th century factory produced wares.

2.1.e. Glass. Items which complement or fill gaps in the Francis Jahn collection and the collection of products from West Midlands factories.

2.1.f. Contemporary Designers and Makers. Work by designers and makers with national or international reputations, particularly those with local associations.

2.2. HUMAN HISTORY

These diverse collections have been largely donated by local residents and reflect their histories, lives and interests. The museum aims to collect the following categories of material:

Social History

2.2.a. It is preferable that acquisitions have clear associations with the district, although where there are gaps in the collections otherwise unlikely to be filled, objects from further away may be accepted. There is particular interest in acquiring material relating to the communities that have settled in the district since the end of World War II, including Black and Minority Ethnic communities and those from what is now the European Union, and in material associated with spas or with the medical treatments available in the Royal Pump Rooms in the 19th - 20th centuries. It is expected that much of the new material will be

acquired by donation or bequest, rather than purchase. Supplementary information concerning the origins, provenance and former use of objects in the collection may also be acquired, including in the form of documents, photographs, oral history recordings or digital archives.

Ethnography

2.2.b. The ethnography collection, although not directly related to the historic culture of the locality, reflects the relationship between some of Leamington's residents and the wider world during the 19th and earlier 20th centuries. The collection also has the potential to help present a broad perspective on the diversity of human culture, a theme of particular relevance to the multi-cultural communities of the district. Therefore, although the museum will not actively seek additional ethnographic material, it may accept donations or bequests which are associated with or complement the existing collection.

Archaeology

2.2.c. The Warwickshire Museum Service provides the principal storage for archaeological material from Warwickshire, and Warwick District Council will not acquire further archaeological finds for the collections of Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum.

3. LIMITATIONS ON COLLECTING

The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

4. COLLECTING POLICIES OF OTHER MUSEUMS

The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. Specific reference is made to the following museums: Compton Verney; The Herbert, Coventry; Mead Gallery, Coventry; Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery; Rugby Art Gallery and Museum; Warwickshire County Record Office; and Warwickshire Museum Service.

5. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

The Acquisition and Disposal Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above. MLA (West Midlands) will be notified of any changes to the Acquisition and Disposal Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

6. ACQUISITIONS NOT COVERED BY THE POLICY

Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

7. ACQUISITION PROCEDURES

7.a. The museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

7. b. In particular, the museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

7.c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by DCMS in 2005.

7.d. The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

7.e. The museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures, such as reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996 (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or reporting finds through the Treasure Trove procedure (in Scotland).

7.f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 7.a, 7.b, 7.c, or 7.e will only be because the museum is either:

acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or

acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or

acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or

in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

8. SPOILIATION

The museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

9. REPATRIATION AND RESTITUTION

The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, may take a decision to return human remains, objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis, within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications.

10. MANAGEMENT OF ARCHIVES

Although the museum does not collect archives it does collect supplementary material, including photographs and printed ephemera, relating to items in the collections. In the case of such material its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002). The Museum recognises Warwickshire County Record Office's Acquisitions and Disposal Policy, and the role Warwickshire County Record Office as the archive service for the county of Warwickshire.

11. DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

11.a. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and should possess permanent collections in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body accepts the principle that, except for sound curatorial reasons, there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

11.b. The museum will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Any decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after due consideration.

11.c. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant.

11.d. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.

11.e. Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions but in exceptional cases improvements relating to the care of collections may be justifiable. Advice on these cases will be sought from MLA.

11.f. A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

11.g. Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift, exchange or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

11.h. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other professional journals where appropriate.

11.i. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations.

11.j. Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Note. All references in this Policy to 'museum' should be understood to mean 'Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum'.

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