

Collections Development Policy August 2019

Museum: The New Art Gallery Walsall

Governing Body: Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Date of Policy Review: July 2024

1. Museum's Statement of Purpose

Our **mission** is to collect, present and interpret historic and contemporary art in innovative and challenging ways that encourage the engagement and enjoyment of existing and future audiences.

Our **purpose** is to provide a cultural and educational service of the very highest quality and to act as a focus for civic pride and community identity for the people of Walsall and the region.

Our artistic programming, the development of our collections and our approaches to access, engagement and interpretation explore new models of how art galleries can contribute to people's lives.

As an art gallery of outstanding excellence, we seek to disseminate our work as widely as possible, thus drawing national and international attention to Walsall and its achievements.

2. Overview of Collections

The museum's collections encompass the following:

Art Collections

Permanent Art Collection

Garman Ryan Collection (closed)

Garman Ryan Epstein Collection

Archives

Epstein Archive

Gallery History Archive

Collections Information Archive

Harry Wingfield Archive

Art Library

Reference Library holdings

Artists' Publications

Permanent Art Collection

The Permanent Art Collection consists of over 3000 artworks collected since the foundation of Walsall Museum and Art Gallery in 1892. The art collection was separated from the history collection and the local archive collection in 1976. As well as historic works and works with a particular resonance to Walsall, the Gallery retains a strong commitment to contemporary collecting, reflected in acquisitions made through the Contemporary Art Society Special Collection Scheme and Art Fund International, as well as works acquired from contemporary artists who have exhibited or had residencies at the Gallery.

Key sub-collections:

The Special Collection Scheme

The Contemporary Art Society Special Collection Scheme ran between 1998-2004. It supported the acquisition by museums across the UK of contemporary art. It enabled Walsall to collect contemporary artworks with a sculptural focus, which demonstrated the diversity of contemporary sculpture within the context of a unique new building. Through this scheme, key works were acquired by Dorothy Cross, Rose Finn-Kelcey, Laura Ford, Hew Locke, Mike Nelson, Yinka Shonibare, Yoshihiro Suda, Gavin Turk and Richard Woods. The works that comprise this collection transferred ownership to Walsall Council from the Contemporary Art Society in 2014, becoming part of the Permanent Collection.

The Art Fund International Collection

Jointly owned by The New Art Gallery Walsall and Birmingham Museums Trust, the Art Fund International Collection was developed between 2008-2013. The Art Fund gave £1 million for the development of a new collection of international contemporary art for the West Midlands, on the theme of the metropolis. Works were collected by artists including Mohamed Bourouissa, Andreas Gefeller, Romuald Hazoume, Ola Kolehmainen, Aleksandra Mir, Josef Robakowski, Dayanita Singh, Beat Streuli and Gracia Toderi.

The Clive Beardsmore Collection

In 2014, the Gallery was gifted a private collection of 200 artworks from Birmingham-based historical researcher Clive Beardsmore. Clive has a longstanding association with the Gallery, having worked at the old Walsall Art Gallery in the 1970s when Kathleen Garman gifted her collection to Walsall. As well as two works by Epstein, this collection features works on paper by Modern British Artists including John Bratby, David Hockney, Graham Sutherland and Keith Vaughan and also works by St Ives artists such as Terry Frost, Patrick Heron and Tony O'Malley. There are also ten works by Clive's former neighbour, renowned abstract painter and former Head of Fine Art at Birmingham Art School, William Gear. Having also worked for many years as an artist's model, both in London and the West Midlands, and been an active supporter of the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, Clive has formed close relationships with many contemporary artists who are represented, including Paul Bartlett and Paul Hipkiss.

Garman Ryan Collection

The New Art Gallery Walsall is the home of the distinguished Garman Ryan Collection, which was gifted to the Borough in 1973 by Lady Kathleen Epstein (née Garman), widow of the great 20th century sculptor Sir Jacob Epstein. The Garman family were originally from Wednesbury and, though Kathleen had spent her adult life in London, she wanted to give something back to the Black Country where she had grown up, believing that culture should exist outside the big cities. She formed the collection following Epstein's death in 1959 with her close friend, Sally Ryan, a talented sculptor and granddaughter of a wealthy American tycoon. This important collection consists of 365 works of art, with around a third of them 3-dimensional works from different cultures and periods around the world. It also contains a wide-ranging body of the work of Epstein and many significant works by European artists including Van Gogh, Picasso, Monet, Matisse, Degas and Constable, represented in prints, sketches and drawings, as well as paintings and sculptures. The Garman Ryan Collection is a closed collection. Future collecting in relation to this collection will be made through the Garman Ryan Epstein Collection.

Garman Ryan Epstein Collection

The Garman Ryan Epstein Collection was formed in 1996 with the intention of creating a partner collection to the Garman Ryan Collection, which is a closed collection. The Garman Ryan Epstein Collection contains over 200 works by artists closely related to the Garman Ryan Collection, in particular works by Epstein, which have been purchased, bequeathed or donated to the Gallery.

Epstein Archive

The archive was formed in 1996 as a partner collection to the Garman Ryan Collection and the Garman Ryan Epstein Collection. It consists of photographs, letters, catalogues and digital material relating to Jacob Epstein, Kathleen Garman, their family and friends. It also contains material relating to artists whose work is represented in the Garman Ryan Collection. The archive is intended to be a resource for researchers and acts as a secure repository with appropriate legal restrictions for items deposited by donors and lenders. It also supports the development of interpretation around the collections and the work of Jacob Epstein.

Gallery History Archive

The Gallery History Archive seeks to record the history of the art gallery in Walsall – and contains archival documentation from the Walsall Museum and Art Gallery and the establishment of The New Art Gallery Walsall. This collection also archives and documents printed material relating to The New Art Gallery's exhibition and events programmes since it was established in 2000.

Collections Information Archive

The Gallery collects information related to artworks and artists featuring in the Garman Ryan Collection, Garman Ryan Epstein Collection and Permanent Collection, for example relevant articles, images, catalogues, biographical information and other ephemera. This material is filed under the relevant art collections accessioning systems.

Harry Wingfield Archive

Harry Wingfield (1910-2002) was an English illustrator known for his drawings in the Ladybird Books Key Words Reading Scheme, throughout the 1960s and 70s. Wingfield lived locally and in 2002 an exhibition was held at the Gallery to celebrate his work. His family then donated a body of material from his studio, including photographs, newspaper and magazine clippings and other source materials, as well as some sketches and drawings.

Reference Library holdings

Our extensive Art Library is a free public reference resource, containing a wide range of art books, exhibition catalogues, journals and art magazines.

Artists' Publications

The Artists' Publications Collection was established in 2009 as a special collection of the Art Library. The collection contains publications that have been wholly or primarily designed, produced or self-published by artists. Publications in this context are defined as books, pamphlets, newspapers, posters, maps and other ephemera produced in multiple editions.

3. Themes and Priorities for Future Collecting

The Permanent Art Collection

The New Art Gallery Walsall will seek to acquire works for the Permanent Art Collection according to the following criteria:

- Work from any period which represents and reflects Walsall Borough, the Black Country, the West Midlands, and its people, including the industrial past and present
- Significant works by contemporary artists, both emerging and of national and international status, in particular by those whose work broadly comes under the category of sculpture, and which questions the nature of collecting within the context of the contemporary museum and in relation to existing collections
- Important works which have appeared in solo or group exhibitions at the Gallery
- Work by artists from cultural groups currently under-represented in the Collections

The Garman Ryan Collection

- This is a closed collection

The Garman Ryan Epstein Collection

The New Art Gallery Walsall will seek to acquire for the Garman Ryan Epstein Collection:

- Work by Jacob Epstein which shows aspects of his practice that are not adequately represented in the Garman Ryan Collection
- Work of particular relevance for educational and interpretative strategies in the Garman Ryan Collection
- Work by friends and family members of Jacob Epstein and Kathleen Garman and other artists within the Garman Ryan Collection

Epstein Archive

The New Art Gallery Walsall will seek to acquire:

- Material in any media and from any period of time relating to the Garman Ryan Collection, Kathleen Garman, Sally Ryan, Jacob Epstein and their friends and families
- Material in any media and from any period of time related to the artists whose work is represented in the Garman Ryan Collection and the Garman Ryan Epstein Collection

Gallery History Archive

The New Art Gallery Walsall will seek to acquire:

- Material relating to the institutional operation of Walsall Museum and Art Gallery (pre-2000) and The New Art Gallery Walsall (post-2000)
- Material relating to the project to design and build The New Art Gallery Walsall
- Material from past exhibitions and events held at Walsall Museum and Art Gallery (pre-2000) and The New Art Gallery Walsall (post-2000)

Collections Information Archive

The New Art Gallery Walsall will seek to acquire:

- Material related to artworks and artists featuring in the Garman Ryan Collection, Garman Ryan Epstein Collection and Permanent Collection, for example relevant articles, images, catalogues, biographical information and other ephemera

Harry Wingfield Archive

The New Art Gallery Walsall will seek to acquire:

- Material related to Harry Wingfield's life and work, including Ladybird Books

Reference Library

The New Art Gallery Walsall will seek to acquire:

- Art books, exhibition catalogues, journals, magazines and information relating to The New Art Gallery Walsall's Collections, Exhibitions, Architecture, Artist Studio Programme, Art Education and Local History
- Other important Art Historical texts, catalogues and publications at the discretion of The New Art Gallery Walsall Collections Curator

Artists' Publications Collection

The New Art Gallery Walsall will seek to acquire:

- Publications by practicing artists in the region, reflecting their interests and concerns
- Publications by artists who have exhibited at The New Art Gallery Walsall
- Publications that reflect current trends in artists' books production

The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museums Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisitions.

4. Themes and Priorities for Rationalisation and Disposal

Responsible, curatorially motivated disposal takes place as part of a museum's long-term collections policy, in order to increase public benefit derived from museum collections. The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museums Association Code of Ethics when considering disposal.

The main priorities for rationalisation and disposal of any items in The New Art Gallery Walsall Collections we would envisage to be:

- the transferral of items which are duplicated and there is another exact or like example in our collections
- the transferral of objects which may not fit within our collecting policy and are deemed to be of more benefit to another museum's collection
- items which are damaged beyond repair, for example through insect infestation, where the item is no longer fit for purpose, or has associated health and safety risks, and the only option would be to dispose

The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

5. 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 and use SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

6. Collecting Policies of other Museums

The museum will take into account the collecting policies of other museums and organisations collecting in the same or related areas. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplications.

Specific reference is made to the following collections also owned by Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council: the Leather Museum, Local History Centre and Walsall Museum Collections

Specific reference is made to the policies of other regional museums in the West Midlands: Birmingham and Wolverhampton

Specific reference is made also to other national collections, in particular: The Henry Moore Foundation and Tate

7. Policy Review Procedure

The Collections Development 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.

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

8. 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.

9. Acquisition Procedures

- 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.
- 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).
- 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 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.
- d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
- 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.

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include 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.

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is either:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- 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
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin
- 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.

g. The museums does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

10. Spoliation

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.

11. Repatriation and Restitution

The museum’s governing body, acting on the advice of the museum’s professional staff, if any, 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 and available guidance.

12. Management of Archives

As the museum holds and intends to acquire archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd edition, 2002).

13. Disposal Procedures

a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

b. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the museum’s collection.

c. The museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

d. 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 and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or, as a last resort, destruction.

f. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:

- the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
- the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
- the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored

g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, the decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including the public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.

h. 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 or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

i. 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. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from Arts Council England.

j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard and money restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collections.

- k. 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 or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, 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 specialist journals where appropriate.
- m. The announcement relating to gift or sale 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 giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- n. The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- o. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the above and below procedures will be followed.
- p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist publications and websites where appropriate.
- r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.
- s. 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 de-accession and disposal.