

Museum Accreditation Scheme
Model Acquisition and Disposal Policy
Museum: Orleans House Gallery, Twickenham

Governing Body: LBRUT

Date approved by governing body: 2007

Date at which policy due for review: 2012

1. Existing collections, including the subjects or themes for collecting

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Art Collection was founded in 1963 by the Ionides Bequest of 467 works, which form the core and define the scope of the collection. Through subsequent gifts (notably the Gill Collection) purchases and bequests (notably the Paton and Burton Collections), the collection has subsequently grown to comprise over 2,400 oil paintings, watercolours, prints, drawings, photographs and objects. In addition, research material from the Lovell Collection relating to the explorer Richard Burton was gifted in 2007, although all books relating to Burton are housed at the Richmond Local Studies Collection.

Works are regularly included in main gallery thematic exhibitions and smaller In Focus displays.

Works in the collection span the period of the early 18th century to the present day.

The majority of works in the collection depict local topographical views of the Twickenham and Richmond Riverside, the view from Richmond Hill, notable residences or parks, gardens and open spaces. Other works include topographical views and landscapes in and around the borough, including the areas of Ham, East Sheen, Mortlake and Kew. Although the majority of works depict views within the borough, there are some works depicting geographically close locations in neighbouring boroughs, such as Chiswick, which is in the Hounslow borough.

The collection houses a number of portraits of local individuals in oils, watercolour, drawing and printed form dating from the 18th century to the present day.

The Burton collection comprises personal effects and objects once belonging the 19th century explorer Richard Burton.

2. Criteria governing future collecting policy, including the subjects or themes for collecting:

Condition

All works acquired should be in good condition. If works are in poor condition and gifted, then funds must be provided by the depositor to cover the costs of conservation, unless the work is of exceptional interest to the collection and external funding for conservation is sourced.

Provenance

All works should have a traceable provenance. Works with unclear or incomplete provenance will not be acquired for the collection.

Works of national significance

The gallery cares for a number of works by internationally significant artists including pioneers in the landscape genre Knyff, Tillememans, Marlow and work by Corot and Leighton. Landscapes, topographical views and portraits relating to the borough by nationally significant artists are of interest, as are works of other subject matter by artists with local links.

Works of local importance

Works should depict a view (scene, building, open space) or individual relating to the locality. If the work does not depict a local subject, it must be by a local artist.

Works of heritage / historical value

Some works, which may not be of artistic value, may be of historical research / educational value: e.g. depict a building which has been demolished or area which has changed or developed considerably. These works should be acquired even if they are not of great artistic merit.

Contemporary works

Works by 20th century and contemporary artists are underrepresented in the collection and should be acquired where relevant. The should comprise works with a local connection - either in subject or artist.

Community works

Works produced as a result of an education / community project or event or specifically commissioned can be accessioned if the works fall within the scope of this policy and have local relevance. Recent works acquired include photographs taken as part of the Museum and Galleries Month event (2006) and a series of photographs exploring leisure, culture and heritage in the area commissioned for the Culture Vultures (2007).

Duplications

In some cases, duplicates of works may be acquired, including prints. This should only happen if: 1) the work is an alternative version, e.g. hand-coloured engraving or a different version or state; 2) the work is gifted and in a better condition than the work already in the collection.

Underrepresented areas

- **Gaps / Omissions:** The majority of works date from the mid 18th to late 19th centuries. We are actively seeking to plug gaps and omissions in the collecting by acquiring relevant 20th century and contemporary works, in order to offer a complete chronological survey from c. 1720 to the present day.
- **Women Artists:** Like many regional collections of historical artwork, work by amateur or professional women artists is underrepresented. Where possible, artwork by women artists will be acquired to present a more balanced perspective.
- **Non-English artists:** The collection currently includes a number of 19th century items in the Burton Collection made by African and Asian craftsmen. The collection also includes work by 3 BAME contemporary artists. Where possible, work by historical and contemporary BAME artists will be sourced and current items historical researched.
- Works relating to the 'hidden history' of the borough, e.g. the borough's links with the international slave trade / portraits of servants, will be acquired.

3. Period of time and/or geographical area to which collecting relates

The geographical area comprises the London borough of Richmond, its neighbouring vicinity and boroughs.

The collection spans the early 18th century to the present day. Works from prior to the 18th century should also be sourced and acquired if possible.

4. Limitations on collecting

The acquisition of works is restricted by limited funds. Where possible, funds will be raised, when required, to acquire a work. The majority of works in the collection are gifts or bequests. 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.

5. 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 local museums:

The Museum of Richmond / Richmond Local Studies Collection

The Twickenham Museum

Where relevant, other national organisations will be taken into account.

6. 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 2012.

The Regional Agency / Museum Council 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.

7. 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.

8. 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 DCMS 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.

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).

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 8a, 8b, 8c, or 8e 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. Management of archives

As the museum holds 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 ed., 2002).

12. Disposal procedures

a. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) 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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Mark De Novellis

Curator of Exhibitions and Collection

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