



University of Exeter

Fine Art Collection

Collection Development Policy

21/05/2024



University
of Exeter

Purpose of Document: To provide the purpose, principles, policies and required procedures relating to the development of the University of Exeter's Fine Art collection.

Name of Collection: University of Exeter Fine Art collection ('the Fine Art collection').

Scope of Policy: This policy relates to the University of Exeter Fine Art Collection. It does not cover other collections such as University of Exeter Special Collections or the Bill Douglas Cinema Museum collection.

Name of Governing Body: The University of Exeter Council is the governing body, but delegates authority to the University of Exeter Arts and Culture Steering Group, chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean in the College of Humanities, as the body of approval, following advice and recommendations from Arts and Culture. Arts and Culture will report the decisions of the Arts and Culture Steering Group regarding the development of the Fine Art Collection to the Arts and Culture Assurance Group. Exceptional decisions regarding the Fine Art Collection will be passed to the Arts and Culture Assurance Group for approval.

Date on which policy was approved by the governing body: 21/5/24

Policy review procedure: The Collections Development Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every three years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: 25/2/27

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Contents:

1. Purpose of the collection
2. An overview of the collection
3. History of the collection
4. Principles for development of the collection
5. Themes and priorities for collecting
6. Acquisition policy
7. Acquisition procedure
8. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal
9. Rationalisation and Disposal Policy
10. Rationalisation and Disposal Procedure

1. Purpose of the collection

The Fine Art collection exists to enrich the cultural environment of the University, for the enjoyment of students, staff and public. The collection can support teaching, research and student experience and provide inspiration for creative projects. It also provides a physical legacy, through individual items, of the history of the University.

2. An overview of the collection

There are over 2,300 items in the current collection, comprising paintings, drawings, limited edition prints, engravings, sculptures, photographs, reproduction prints, silverware, jewellery, decorative arts and antique and vintage furniture.

Highlights of the Fine Art collection include sculptures by Barbara Hepworth, paintings by Terry Frost, Harold Harvey and Kurt Jackson. There is also collection of over six hundred 19th century engravings of JMW Turner sketches, including examples of proofs and published stage prints. Many of the sculptures in the collection feature in a sculpture walk on the Streatham Campus, which can be accessed by the public.

A large number of artworks in the collection are displayed in offices and public places in each campus. Other items are held in store.

Recently, a conservation programme of selected artworks has started, to ensure that they are maintained for people to enjoy in the future. It should be noted that conservation of artworks is an integral activity to owning an art collection and in acquiring new works, this responsibility should always be borne in mind.

3. History of the collection

Items in the Fine Art collection have been acquired by the University in different ways. Works have been purchased by the University, others have been gifted or bequeathed.

4. Principles for development of the collection

- 4.1 The Fine Art collection is held for the benefit of students, staff and the public. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound criteria must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to, or the disposal of any items in the fine art collection.
- 4.2 The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal of items in the Fine Art collection are carried out openly and with transparency. Recommendations for acquisition and disposal of items will be informed by the University of Exeter's 'Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy', as well as the Museum Association's 'Code of Ethics for Museums' and 'Decolonisation Guidance'.
- 4.3 Acquisitions into the Fine Art Collection outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 4.4 Due diligence will be taken not to acquire into the Fine Art collection, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any item unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that a valid title to the item in question can be acquired.

- 4.5 The University will reject any item for purchase or donation into the Fine Art collection if there is any suspicion that it was wrongfully taken during a time of conflict, stolen, illicitly exported or illicitly traded, unless explicitly allowed by treaties or other agreements.
- 4.6 The University will not acquire any object or specimen for the Fine Art collection 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).
- 4.7 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 University will reject any items for the Fine Art collection 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.
- 4.8 The Fine Art collection does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.
- 4.9 No biological, geological or archaeological specimens that are presented as distinct entities and are not part of an artwork will be acquired for the Fine Art collection.
- 4.10 The University will not undertake disposal of items in its Fine Art collection motivated principally by financial reasons.

5. Themes and priorities for collecting

- 5.1 Having art on display at the University enriches the cultural environment and enhances student experience. Nevertheless, some limitations must necessarily be placed on how the Fine Art collection develops in the future. Both storage and display space are limited and resources are required to manage and conserve the collections. Therefore one or more of the following criteria will be applied in making decisions as to whether a work will be accessioned into the Fine Art collection:
- It is of exceptional significance to the University – ie. it is likely to be used for research or educational purposes,
 - it has a strong association with the University, its work or history, or
 - it enhances existing fine art collections.
 - Additionally when considering whether to accession into the Fine Art collection, the University will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such resource factors as staff numbers, storage, specialist knowledge and funding for care of collections as well as health and safety in the University environment.
- 5.2 No furniture, decorative arts items, jewellery or silverware will be acquired for the Fine Art Collection due to storage and display constraints, and because they do not meet the criteria above.

- 5.3 The University reserves the right to decline donations of items for the Fine Art collection which do not meet the criteria in 5.1, are items described in 5.2 above, or for any other valid reason. However, in such circumstances, the University will attempt to recommend other institutions to the prospective donor.
- 5.4 Acquisitions into the University's Fine Art collection are managed on a daily basis by Arts and Culture, who will also give advice and make recommendations to the University of Exeter Arts and Culture Steering Group.
- 5.5 Decisions regarding acquisitions and disposals will be made by the University of Exeter Arts and Culture Steering Group. Exceptional decisions about acquisitions and disposals (eg regarding large collections or items) will be made by the Arts and Culture Assurance Group.

6. Acquisition policy

- 6.1 The University Arts and Culture Steering Group will usually make decisions on acquisitions with reference to the principles of acquisition and the agreed accessions criteria stated in the Collections Development Policy stated in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 above.
- 6.2 An acquisition into the Fine Art collection may be the result of a purchase, gift, bequest, transfer of an item from another University department or an artwork resulting from a creative project commissioned by the University.
- 6.3 If University departments wish to acquire artworks, they may do so, but consideration will only be given to formally accessioning artworks into the Fine Art collection if the principles for development of the collection in 4. above and collecting criteria in 5.1 and 5.2 above are met.

If University departments request particular artworks to be accessioned into the Fine Art Collection, because they have relevance to their teaching and/or research and they have somewhere to display them safely in their department, this may lend weight to a decision to accession the artworks into the Fine Art Collection. However, the University of Exeter Arts and Culture Steering Group will have the right to make a final decision.

- 6.4 If an item is acquired by the Fine Art collection in the form of a gift or bequest, donors may not impose conditions on usage or retention relating to artworks either before or after their acceptance by the University.
- 6.5 If an item in the form of an artwork is acquired direct from an artist or owners of an artist's estate, either by purchase or donation, the University will acknowledge the artist or their estate as the copyright holder, but will seek permission at the time of acquisition for the right to reproduce images of the artwork in a variety of media for any purpose consistent with the University's charitable objects and for publicity for the University as the University thinks appropriate in its absolute discretion, without charge and without having to seek permission on each occasion.

7. Acquisition procedure

- 7.1 All acquisitions into the Fine Art collection will be managed by Arts and Culture. Any offers of fine art items for sale or donation should be directed to Arts and Culture who will present

such offers to the University of Exeter Arts and Culture Steering Group for a decision, either at meetings or by email if between meetings.

- 7.2 Before recommending the acquisition of an artwork for the Fine Art collection, Arts and Culture will exercise due diligence to establish that whether an item is being purchased, donated, bequeathed or exchanged, a valid title to the item in question can be acquired, in accordance with paragraph 4.4 above. A record will be kept of documentation proving ownership of the item being acquired. Additionally Arts and Culture will establish that the artwork does not conflict with principles for development of the collection in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.10 above and documentation retained to record this.
- 7.3 Before recommending the acquisition of an artwork for the Fine Art collection through a donation or bequest, Arts and Culture will exercise due diligence regarding the donor in accordance with the University's agreed donor acceptance policy.
- 7.4 The University of Exeter Arts and Culture Steering Group will be invited to give consideration to accessioning an artwork into the Fine Art collection if the principles for development of the collection in 4.2 to 4.10 above and collecting criteria in 5.1 above are met. The Steering Group may consider accessions either at Steering Group meetings or by email if decisions need to be made between meetings. Consultation with consultees internal and/or external to the University may also be necessary as part of this process.
- 7.5 A written record will be made and retained of each item acquired, including title, artist, date item created, acquisition date and method, value, provenance, materials, dimensions, condition of item when received, a photographic record of the item and any other details relevant to the item. If necessary, an independent valuation of the item will be sought.
- 7.6 A deed of gift will be created for all items donated to the Fine Art collection, with copies retained by both donor and the University. Deeds of gift are to be signed by the Registrar of the University, witnessed by two members of the University Council. The only exception to this will be where an item is bequeathed to the University, in which circumstance a copy of the bequest will be retained on file.
- 7.7 Global Advancement at the University of Exeter, whose role includes cultivating, accepting and stewarding donations and bequests, will be provided with details of gifts to the Fine Art collection and will maintain records of said gifts.
- 7.8 Arts and Culture will provide a written rationale of the decision not to acquire an item, where a donation offered for the Fine Art collection is rejected.

8. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 8.1 The University recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the Fine Art collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.
- 8.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process

9. Rationalisation and Disposal policy

9.1 Disposal of an item in the Fine Art collection may be considered in at least one of the following circumstances:

- The item is a duplicate
- The item is not an original artwork (ie it is a commercial reproduction)
- The item is too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the Fine Art collection
- The item is badly damaged and the cost of conserving or repairing it outweighs the monetary value of the item itself and the work does not either have a strong association with the University and its history, support the teaching, learning and research needs of the University or enrich the experience of students, staff and the visiting public.
- The item does not further the University's mission.
- The item is in such a poor state that it places an immediate risk to the state of repair of other items stored in its vicinity.
- The work cannot be adequately stored or displayed within the University's resources.
- For reasons of health and safety

9.2 Every effort will be made to establish the University's ownership of an item in the Fine Art collection before considering disposal.

9.3 Prior to making a case for disposal of any item in the Fine Art collection, checks will also be made to establish any agreements on disposal made with donors prior to the start date of this policy (where applicable) which will need to be taken into account.

9.4 The University of Exeter Arts and Culture Steering Group will make a final decision whether it is legally free to dispose of an item.

9.5 When considering disposing of an item from the Fine Art Collection, the following methods of disposal may apply:

- Transfer to another department in the University
- Gift or sale of an item to another institution, prioritising other public collections
- Sale of item by auction
- Destruction

A decision to dispose of an item in the Fine Art collection, whether by transfer, gift, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collection or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff in Arts and Culture, if any, and not of staff in Arts and Culture acting alone. Consultation with consultees internal and/or external to the University may also be necessary as part of the decision-making process.

9.6 Any monies received from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the Fine Art collection, either for the purchase of further acquisitions or making improvements relating to the care of collections.

10. Rationalisation and Disposal Procedure

- 10.1 All disposals from the Fine Art collection will be managed by Arts and Culture.
- 10.2 Every reasonable effort will be made by Arts and Culture staff to establish proof that the University is the owner of the item to be disposed of and that there are no covenants or restrictions covering the item before taking any further action. This may include checking entry records, loan agreements, deeds of gift, accession register, minutes of meetings at which acquisitions were considered or reported, annual reports, catalogue records, and object history files, or talking to present or former staff and volunteers. If there is any doubt about an item or any restrictions that might apply, further advice will be sought before proceeding with any disposal.
- 10.3 Where an item has been gifted to the University every effort will be taken to ensure that any agreements made with donors prior to the start date of this policy are taken into account. Where possible, the views of such donors will be sought before considering disposal of an item.
- 10.4 The case for any proposed disposal of an item in the Fine Art collection will be made in writing so that those making the decision have all relevant facts and can check the proposal against agreed policy. The written case will include;
- A description of the item and reasons for disposal (in accordance with 8.1 above)
 - Any documentation citing proof of ownership of the item by the University (or giving grounds to assume it does).
 - A photographic record of the item
 - Any specific risks, costs or other relevant constraints.
 - Proposed the disposal method.
- 10.5 Specific written approval must be obtained from the University of Exeter Arts and Culture Steering Group before any accessioned object in the Fine Art collection can be disposed of.
- 10.6 Items from the Fine Art Collection will be disposed of ethically and in ways that least harm the environment.
- 10.7 Any items disposed of should have any distinguishing features relating to the University removed from them before disposal, unless transferring or selling an item to another institution where it is appropriate for the provenance records to be maintained.
- 10.8 If transferring or selling an item to another institution the appropriate documentation will be created (eg deed of gift, deed of sale etc) and arrangements made for physical delivery of the item.
- 10.9 If it is deemed appropriate to destroy an item, where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required. The destruction of items should be witnessed by an appropriate member of staff in Arts and Culture.
- 10.10 The University Finance Department will be informed on a regular basis of any disposals from the Fine Art collection, together with sale prices of any items sold, so that the asset register of the University can be updated.

10.11 Full records will be kept of all decisions and actions taken 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. Disposal records (both paper and on the Fine Art database) will include:

- Reference number of item in Fine Art Collection.
- The date of disposal
- The method of disposal
- Disposal reason
- Name and job title of the person/people authorising the disposal – authoriser
- The date of the authorisation – Disposal authorisation date
- The signature of the person with overall responsibility for the decision to dispose.
- Any restrictions that were applied to the disposal
- Any communications and agreements with donors of the item (where applicable)
- Other information – including a reference to the decision your governing body to accept disposal (date/meeting information)
- If the disposed objects were transferred to someone else, the name and contact details of the recipient of the disposed objects:
- The new number of the object in the recipient's collection (if relevant)
- If the disposed objects were sold record price, either for a single item or if sold in a group of items the group disposal price, date of sale, where sold.

10.12 If it is agreed by the University of Exeter Arts and Culture Steering Group that an item can be de-accessioned from the Fine Art collection yet it is deemed suitable to remain in the University's ownership (eg a commercial reproduction print), then full disposal records should still be kept.

NRG 25/2/21