

# Collections Development Policy



**Name of museum:** Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum

**Name of governing body:** Warwick District Council

**Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:** August 2018

## **Policy review procedure:**

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

**Date at which this policy is due for review:** July 2023

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 collections.

## **1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:**

- 1.1. The museum's statement of purpose is:  
'To provide opportunities for everyone to benefit from, enjoy and participate in the creation, interpretation and preservation of the Arts and Heritage.'  
(WDC Leisure Committee, 17 November 1998)
- 1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
- 1.3. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
- 1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.6. The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift or bequest 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.

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

## **2. History of the collections**

The collections of Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum have their foundations in the pictures and museum specimens that were donated to Leamington Free Public Library from the early 1860s. In 1875/6 the collection was sufficiently well established to cause the managing Free Library Committee to form a separate Museum Committee. By 1914 the museum collection was sharing the Public Library building, which became so overcrowded that an Art Gallery extension was built in 1928.

In 1947 a Museum Sub Committee was formed to consider collecting and disposals. Mr S.C. Kaines Smith, Keeper of the Cook Collection and former Director of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, was invited to advise. He recommended that the Natural History collection should be discontinued, with emphasis instead placed on building up a representative collection of 20<sup>th</sup> century English pictures; developing the pottery and porcelain collections; to begin the acquisition of English glass and silver; and to add to the local history collections and bygones generally. This resulted in significant growth to the decorative arts collection in the 1950s and '60s.

Following the reorganisation of local government in 1974, the administration of the museum was separated from that of the library and given to the newly formed Warwick District Council. In 1988 the policy document, *A Museum and Exhibition Service for the 1990s*, written by the Museums and Exhibitions Manager Jeff Watkin, recommended that the museum service should concentrate on human history which covered areas in which the collections were particularly strong. The following year the botanical and zoological collections were transferred to the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum in Coventry, and the Geological collection was transferred to Warwickshire Museum.

In 1999 the Art Gallery & Museum service moved to new premises in the Grade II\* listed Royal Pump Rooms. Drawing on the building's history as a medical treatment centre, a new collecting programme, *Medicate* (1999-2005) was introduced. With funding from the Wellcome Trust and the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, a group of works by contemporary artists that explored the links between medical science and art was acquired. The *Medicate* programme and the medical history of the building are continuing strands of the Collections Development Policy.

## **3. An overview of current collections**

### **3.1. VISUAL ARTS**

The Visual Arts collections encompass Fine Art and Decorative Art. The 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 core collections in this section are Fine Art: Modern and Contemporary British (3.1.a.), and Fine Art: Modern and Contemporary Warwickshire (3.1.b.). A selection of works from across the collections is presented in themed displays at all times in the main art gallery, with extensive changes to the displays at regular intervals.

## Fine Art

**3.1.a. Victorian, Modern and Contemporary British.** This collection mostly ranges in date from the 1880s to the present, 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, John Bridgeman, Patrick Caulfield, Jacqueline Donachie, Sir Terry Frost, Duncan Grant, Patrick Heron, Damien Hirst, Ivon Hitchens, Colin Hitchmough, L S Lowry, Paul Nash, Winifred Nicholson, Marc Quinn, Bridget Riley, Abraham Solomon, Simeon Solomon Stanley Spencer, Mark Titchner, Edmund de Waal, Gillian Wearing, and Carel Weight. As artists are beginning to work in a variety of new media LSAG&M is gathering a small collection of digital works, including films by Jordan Baseman and Jo Roberts.

**3.1.b. Victorian, 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, Simon Lewty, Elizabeth Whitehead and Frederick Whitehead.

**3.1.c. European.** The collection of oil paintings attributed to Dutch and Flemish artists working in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries includes a number of pictures acquired through the Mark Field Bequest of 1953 and the George Watson bequest through the Art Fund in 2015. There are also works by Abraham Bloemaert, Phillippe de Champaigne and Godfried Schalcken.

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

## Decorative Art

**3.1.d. Ceramics.** This collection includes a wide variety of functional and decorative ceramics, most made in England in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Amongst the factories represented are Bow, Bristol, Chelsea, Worcester and Wedgwood. There are about 450 objects in the collection.

**3.1.e. Glass.** This collection falls into two groups: (a) the Francis Jahn collection of late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> 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 230 pieces in the collection.

**3.1.f. Contemporary Designers and Makers.** This collection consists of: (a) a small number of vessels made by contemporary artists Peter Beard, David Jones and Clare Seneviratne; and (b) a small number of pieces of jewellery by locally based maker Jane Moore. There are about 10 pieces in the collection

## 3.2. HUMAN HISTORY

The Human History collections encompass Social History, Numismatics, Ethnography and Archaeology. These diverse collections have been largely donated by local residents and reflect their histories, lives and interests. The core collections in this section are Social History: Community Life (3.2.a.), Social History: Domestic and Family Life (3.2.b.), Social History: Personal Life (3.2.c.), Social History: Working Life (3.2.d.), Social History: Photographs and Prints (3.2.f.), and Social History: Medical Equipment and Ephemera

(3.2.g.). The present permanent museum displays include objects from all of LSAG&M's Human History fields, with the largest number drawn from the Social History collection.

## **Social History**

The Social History collection embraces a wide range of objects, most British and ranging in date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Many relate to the history of the district, especially Royal Leamington Spa. The collection comprises:

**3.2.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, local guidebooks, commemorative objects and civic memorabilia, school uniforms, objects from the Home Front during the Second World War, police truncheons and sports medals.

**3.2.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.

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

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

There are about 3950 objects in Social History categories 2.2.a - 2.2d.

**3.2.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 300 posters in this group.

**3.2.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 3700 objects in this group.

**3.2.g. Medical Equipment and Ephemera.** This includes equipment, furniture and archives associated with the Royal Pump Rooms and other medical establishments in the district. Objects include heat lamps, X-ray machines and spa treatment guides. There are about 100 objects in this group (excluding photographs and prints).

**3.2.h. Numismatics.** This diverse collection mainly comprises British and foreign coins and tokens dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are also a number of Roman, Medieval and Elizabethan coins. There are about 1200 coins in the collection.

**3.2.i. Ethnography.** Most of this material appears to have been made and collected during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It includes artefacts produced by the indigenous, pre-industrial, cultures of Africa (including Egypt), Asia, Oceania, Australia, the Americas and Europe. Some objects 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.

**3.2.j. Archaeology.** This collection comprises pottery and other objects excavated locally or in London between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 1930s. There are about 70 objects in the collection.

#### **4. Themes and priorities for future collecting**

##### **GENERAL CRITERIA**

- Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum will only collect objects for which suitable storage and exhibition facilities are available.
- Because Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum has no in-house conservation resources it will in general acquire only objects which are in fair, good or excellent condition. In exceptional circumstances objects which are in poorer 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 Leamington Spa Art Gallery & 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 objects associated with spas in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 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 the Second World War and more recently because of membership of the European Union.

##### **4.1. FINE ART**

Future acquisitions will reflect three particular considerations:

- Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum's Visual Arts collections are a resource of countywide importance.
- Leamington Spa Art Gallery & 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.
- Leamington Spa Art Gallery & 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 Spa Art Gallery & Museum, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund or The Art Fund.

Taking these factors into account Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum aims to collect in the following fields:

**4.1.a. Victorian, Modern and Contemporary British.** Work by 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 not yet represented in the collection with national or international reputations; medically related visual arts, particularly those related to spa treatments and bathing.

**4.1.b. Victorian, Modern and Contemporary Warwickshire.** Artworks relating to Warwickshire, with a particular interest in work that casts new light on artists already well-represented in the collections, or artists new to the collections; work by the camouflage artists based in Leamington Spa during the Second World War.

**4.1.c. European and International.** Artworks which add strength to the existing collections of works by European and International artists.

## **Decorative Art**

**4.1.d. Ceramics.** Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum will not actively seek to add to the collection of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century factory wares. It will only accept donations of this type in exceptional circumstances, for example, donations of objects from local households.

**4.1.e. Glass.** Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum will not actively seek to add to the collections of late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> glass and West Midlands produced glass. It will only accept donations of this type in exceptional circumstances, for example, donations of objects from local households.

**4.1.f. Contemporary Designers and Makers.** Studio produced pieces in ceramic, glass and other materials by designers and makers with national or international reputations, particularly those with local associations.

## **4.2. HUMAN HISTORY**

Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum aims to collect the following categories of material:

**4.2.a. Social History.** It is preferable that acquisitions have clear associations with Warwick 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 in the following categories:

- Communities that have settled in the district since the Second World War, including Black and Ethnic Minority communities and those from the European Union.
- Spas and medical treatments available in the Royal Pump Rooms in the 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Community life since the Second World War
- Domestic and Family Life since the Second World War
- Personal Life since the Second World War
- Working Life since the Second World War
- Local travel and tourism, particularly around Warwick district and 'Shakespeare's England'

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.

**4.2.b. Numismatics.** Coins and tokens will be collected as an aspect of local life and industry. Collections compiled by local residents will be considered.

**4.2.c. Ethnography.** 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 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Therefore, although Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum will not actively seek additional ethnographic material, it may accept donations or bequests which are associated with or

complement the existing collection. It will also collect objects which reflect the continuing relationship between the district's residents and the wider world through travel and tourism, for example, modern holiday souvenirs.

**4.2.d. Archaeology.** 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.

## **5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal**

- 5.1 The museum 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 collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 The museum will only dispose of objects for curatorial reasons and will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons. Disposal will be made by gift or sale and in accordance the procedures outlined in Section 16 below. The Museums Association's Code of Ethics for Museums and Disposal Toolkit will be used to guide disposal.

Objects from the collections will be considered for disposal on a case by case basis under the following criteria:

- Poor condition
- Duplicates exist
- Falls outside the Collections Development Policy
- Public benefit better served by transfer to another organisation

## **6 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items**

- 6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

## **7 Collecting policies of other museums**

- 7.1 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 specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
- 7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museum(s)/organisation(s):

Compton Verney; Coventry Transport Museum; Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry; Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery; Queens Own Hussars Museum (Warwick); Royal Regiment of Fusiliers Museum (Warwickshire); Rugby Art Gallery and Museum; the University of Warwick Art Collection; Warwickshire County Record Office; Warwickshire Museum Service; Warwickshire Yeomanry Museum.

7.3 There are currently no joint acquisition agreements, but the museum does not rule out the possibility in the future.

## **8 Archival holdings**

As Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum holds archives, including film, 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 (third edition, 2002).

## **9 Acquisition**

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

All potential acquisitions are considered by the Collections & Engagement Managers, Visual Arts Curator and Human History Curators at bi-monthly Acquisitions meetings, with regard to the areas for collecting outlined in section 4; the resources of the museum and the collecting policies of other museums and institutions.

9.2 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).

9.3 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.

## **10 Human remains**

10.1 As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.

## **11 Biological and geological material**

11.1 The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.



## **12 Archaeological material**

**12.1** The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

## **13 Exceptions**

**13.1** Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

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

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. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

## **14 Spoliation**

**14.1** 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.

## **15 The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains**

**15.1** 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 (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), 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. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

**15.2** The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

## **16 Disposal procedures**

**16.1** All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.

- 16.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 16.3 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.
- 16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or as a last resort - destruction.
- 16.5 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 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. 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.
- 16.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by 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 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 or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. 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.
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered 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 a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9 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.
- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly 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 the Arts Council England.

- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12 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.

#### *Disposal by exchange*

- 16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

#### *Disposal by destruction*

- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.17 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.
- 16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.