



National Galleries of Scotland

Acquisition & Accessioning

Principles

NGS is committed to maintaining, developing and enriching our collection for exhibition, interpretation, education, and research, to the widest possible public.

The NGS Collection Development Framework informs the strategy and process of acquisition, as part of the NGS mission and objectives. We identify and acquire the best objects available, taking into consideration how they will complement and enhance the existing collections, their potential use and access, and all associated costs, and in collaboration with other museums and galleries collecting in the same field.

Definitions

Acquisition: The process of obtaining legal title to an object, with the intention of using it for museum/gallery purposes; documenting and managing the addition of objects and associated information to the NGS collections and their possible accession to the permanent collections.

Acquisition Candidate: An object that is being negotiated as a potential acquisition, and/or an object that has already arrived at NGS but has not yet been formally accessioned and has not formally become part of NGS collections.

Acquisition Pending: An object that will almost certainly be accessioned but is awaiting completion of formalities before it can become an accession.

Accession: The act of formally including an object in the NGS permanent collection and recording it as such.

Legislation and ethics

Our acquisition process meets our obligations for audit and accountability, for accessibility, and for due diligence, including the requirement to obtain due title for any acquisition. We do not acquire any biological or geological material, or any illicitly exported objects, and we do not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

Relevant statutory requirements and codes of ethics include:

- Endangered Species (Import & Export) Act 1976
- National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985
- Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988
- National Heritage Act 1980 Section 16 (as amended by the Museums and Galleries Act 1992)
- Return of Cultural Objects Regulations 1994
- Human Rights Act, 1998
- Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003



- Charities Act 2006
- Immunity from Seizure Tribunals, Court and Enforcement Bill 2008
- Holocaust (Stolen Art) Restitution Act 2009
- EU Directive 2001/84EC on Artists' Resale Rights
- UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, ratified in the UK 2002
- Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom, Third Edition, 2002
- Freedom of Information Act 2002
- Human Tissue (Scotland Act) 2006
- Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums 2008
- Treasure Trove in Scotland and Code of Practice 2008
- ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums 2013
- Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act 2017

Due Diligence:

- 1970: UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property
- 1998: NMDC Washington Conference: Statement of Principles on Spoliation of works of art during the Holocaust and World War II period
- 2005: DCMS: 'Combating Illicit Trade'. Due diligence guidelines for museums, libraries and archives on collecting and borrowing cultural material.'
- 2003: Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act
- 2007: Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007. Part 6: Immunity from Seizure
- 2009: Holocaust (Stolen Art) Restitution Act
- 2017: UN Security Council Resolution 2347 Article 17 (g) called on governments to engage with the museum sector and art trade on 'differentiated due diligence' and other measures 'to prevent the trade of stolen or illegally traded cultural property.'
- 2019: The Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Act 2019

Standards

This policy is part of the Collections Management set of policies that form a requirement of PAS197 and Spectrum as part of the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme.

Control measures

Before we consider an object for acquisition we take into consideration all implications, for example that it represents best value for financial, educational, accessibility and/or scientific/research reasons, its future requirements for conservation and care, its impact on other objects in our collections, and the context of the object.

NGS applies due diligence to all acquisitions, including the requirement to obtain due title for any acquisition. We are actively involved in collaborative projects that recommend, establish



and refine the standards of best practice and codes of ethics for acquisition in international art movements.

As part of our duty of care for all our collections we review and refine the management of local environments taking into account the needs of potential future acquisitions.

All acquisitions must be approved by Senior Management.

Related policies

The following are related NGS policies:

- 01 Object Entry
- 03 Location and Movement Control
- 04 Inventory
- 05 Cataloguing
- 07 Loans in (borrowing objects)
- 08 Loans out (lending objects)
- 09 Documentation Planning
- 10 Condition Checking and Technical Assessment
- 11 Collections Care and Conservation
- 12 Valuation
- 13 Insurance and indemnity
- 14 Emergency Planning for Collections
- 15 Damage and Loss
- 17 Rights Management
- 18 Reproduction
- 19 Use of Collections
- 20 Collections Review
- 21 Audit

Also the following NGS documents

- NGS Audience Development Framework
- NGS Carbon Management Programme 2018-2022
- NGS Collection Care Framework
- NGS Collections Development Framework
- NGS Estates Management Strategy
- NGS Environmental Management Programme 2018-2022
- NGS Partnership Framework
- NGS Public Programme Framework
- NGS Risk Management Policy
- NGS Research Policy and Framework

For NGS Rights and Reproduction Policies: SEE NGS Trading Company Policies