

New Zealand Portrait Gallery Te Pūkenga Whakaata

Collections Policy

August 2019

1. Introduction

The New Zealand Portrait Gallery Te Pūkenga Whakaata is a national public gallery and charitable trust that tells the stories of New Zealanders through exhibitions of portraiture. The Collections Policy is designed to help the Gallery achieve these objectives and to complement and support the Exhibitions Policy.

The Collection Policy outlines the purpose of the Collection, how the Collection must be cared for, how new objects may be acquired for the collection and how objects may be deaccessioned from the Collection.

With the current absence of an acquisitions fund required to develop a collection through purchase, the Gallery acquires works for its Collection through gift, bequest or sponsorship.

2. Scope

This policy covers all objects in the Collection, including objects on long term loan.

As at 20 August 2019 the Collection has a total of 236 items collected from 1990 onwards.

- Most are paintings with some photography and drawings and a few video and multimedia works. There are no sculptures in the Collection. There is one work made of toast.
- All the artworks in the Collection are by Pakeha artists. 81% are by male artists, 19% are by female artists.
- Subjects are also mainly Pakeha. 61% of subjects are male, 39% of subjects are female. There is one transgender subject. 3% of subjects are Māori, there is one portrait of an individual of Pacifica descent. There are no subjects of Asian or any other descent.
- There are 96 Alan Pearson artworks.
- There are 8 Adam Portraiture Award first prize-winning artworks
- Collection records are stored in e-hive and shared on Digital NZ
- The Collection store at Shed 11 is now at capacity and the lack of space for processing incoming and outgoing artworks on loan for exhibition puts works at risk.

3. Collecting Priorities

The Gallery recognises that Alexander Turnbull Library and The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa hold the most significant national collections of portraiture and are Government funded to acquire portraiture. The Gallery can borrow, wherever practical, objects from these and other collections for exhibition.

The New Zealand Portrait Gallery Te Pūkenga Whakaata is not the primary repository for national collections of portraiture and lacks the resources to care for a large, growing collection.

At present the Gallery therefore collects principally for the purpose of exhibition. The collecting priorities below reflect exhibition making priorities, focusing on works that:

- increase the diversity of subjects and artists represented in the Collection, be that by ethnicity, gender, socio-economic, cultural and religious orientation, aiming to be proportional to national demographics.
- increase the diversity of artistic styles, media, and eras represented in the Collection
- demonstrate the Gallery's commitment to the relationship with tangata whenua by supporting the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- have the capacity to significantly broaden our audiences or increase audience engagement while displayed within the exhibition programme
- have multiple attributes with potential for exhibition idea generation
- have won first place in the biennial Adam Portraiture Award

Not all works meeting these criteria will necessarily be acquired.

4. Collecting Principles

- The Gallery holds its Collection in trust for the benefit of the public to enable it to tell the stories of New Zealanders through the art of portraiture. The Trustees therefore accept 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 Gallery's Collection.
- The principle for the inclusion of an object in the Collection is that the object is especially suitable and useful to tell the stories of New Zealanders through the art of portraiture. The object must have potential to be frequently used for exhibition making.
- The Gallery recognises the role and importance of stakeholder communities in the acquisition process and will work to and uphold the principles of partnership, participation, tino rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga in development and management of collections.
- Each offer is considered on a case by case basis, taking into account eligibility and suitability for the Collection, quality, authenticity, artistic and historic importance, seeking expert advice as necessary.
- The Gallery will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object unless the Director and Trustees can acquire a valid title to the item in question and the acquisition comes with verifiable provenance.
- When considering a potential acquisition due account is to be taken of the Gallery's responsibility to provide the resources to ensure adequate conservation, documentation, access and care of objects to meet the standards of recognised best practice and requirements of the *Museums Aotearoa Code of Ethics and Professional Practice*. Due account is also taken of the limitations imposed by such factors as staffing, storage, conservation resources, display space and long-term maintenance costs.
- The Gallery will take account of the collecting policies of other museums, libraries and archives 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 specialisations, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. The Gallery will not acquire an item would be better suited to collection and care by another national collection. The Gallery will avoid competing knowingly at auction with any other public museum, gallery, library or archive.
- Every effort will be made to acquire copyright to a work at the time of acquisition. The inability to achieve this, particularly if caused by undue complexities and/ or disputes among the owners or alleged owners of the rights, may result in the acquisition process being terminated.

- The Gallery may, on occasion, enter into joint-acquisition agreements with other interested parties. Any such agreements will clearly set out the terms of acquisition, including but not limited to the purchase price; conservation; insurance and other practical arrangements around the long-term care of the object(s) in question.
- Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the Director and the Trustees, having regard to the interests of other museums and galleries.

In addition, the Gallery will not normally accept items for the Collection if:

- They do not achieve the collecting priorities or adhere to collecting principals
- They are, or are likely to become, physically dangerous and/ or a health and safety hazard or a hazard to other objects within the Collection
- They are beyond the means of the Gallery to conserve, store, document or make accessible to an adequate standard
- They are accompanied by unduly restrictive conditions
- They are not useful for exhibition purposes
- They do not contribute something new to the Collection or do not fill a gap in terms of subject, artist, artistic, style, ethnicity, occupation etc.
- They duplicate existing Collection items
- They open up new avenues for collecting not covered by this policy
- The primary motivation for acquisition is for a reason other than the merit of the item and its value to the Collection

5. Acquisition Process

As of December 2018, the Gallery's Collection storage is at capacity. Offers of potential gifts are being referred in the first instance to the Alexander Turnbull Library or The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, as the institutions that are Government funded to collect portraiture on behalf of the nation. At this time, any potential acquisitions into our Collection need to be found appropriate alternative long-term storage until such time that the Gallery is in a position to take care of them.

The process for acquisition will be as follows:

1. Offers are referred to the Director
2. The Director will assess if the offer meets the terms of the policy.
3. If the offer meets the terms of the policy the Director will seek the advice of the Programme and Acquisitions Committee.
4. The Director will decide whether an item should be acquired or not, will consider reputational risks to the Gallery and will report all decisions promptly to the Trustees.
5. The Director will communicate the outcome of the consideration of all offers, successful and non-successful, to the Trustees and to those proposing an acquisition. With successful offers a formal deed of gift will be entered into and all paperwork relating to item, will be kept on file in both hard and soft copy.
6. The process is to be handled with sensitivity, politeness and speed.

6. Acquisition Considerations

- The Gallery reserves the right to require an endowment of money, staff or premises (or any combination thereof) in order to appropriately care for the acquisition long-term as a condition of accepting any item or items for the Collection.
- Items will never be purchased for the Collection from serving Members of the Trustees, serving members of the Gallery staff, volunteers, trainees, interns, contractors, or partners or business associates of any of the above. A period of seven years will run from the date that a person ceases to be in any of the above categories before the Gallery will consider purchasing items from them.
- The Gallery will maintain acquisition and catalogue documentation that includes a work's accession number, legal status of the work, activity and history of the object within the Gallery, loan and exhibition history, provenance, copyright agreement and credit line at the time of acquisition.
- The Gallery maintains an emergency plan which is regularly reviewed; it sits alongside other business continuity and evacuation procedures. It outlines plans for moving the Collection to a safe place in the event of an emergency, undertaking remedial action as appropriate and staff training.

7. Deacquisition Principles

Deacquisition of items from the Collection should not reduce the quality or significance of the Collection but should result in a rationalised, more useable, well-managed Collection.

The Gallery may dispose of an object, by way of transfer, sale, or gift:

- where the object does not fit within the Collection policy
- where the object is not useful for current or future exhibition development
- where the object is to be transferred to another national collection.
- where the object is a duplicate of another object which they own or where the Gallery's Collection of a specific sitter includes multiple portraits.
- where the object is unable to be adequately cared for by the Gallery due to environmental requirements, storage limitations or other resource deficits.
- where the object has become useless by reason of damage, physical deterioration, or infestation by destructive organisms (in which case the means of disposal can include destruction) and this has been confirmed by expert advice.

This notwithstanding, there is a presumption against disposal and the Gallery will not undertake disposal motivated principally because of financial reasons.

8. Deacquisition Process

The process followed will meet professional standards, will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process. The process is to be handled with sensitivity, politeness and speed.

1. The Director will confirm that the Gallery is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account. Cases where the donor has implied or expressed preference against disposal will be considered.
2. Expert advice will be obtained as required and the views of all relevant stakeholders (including artists, donors, funding bodies, researchers, the Charities Commission, local and

source communities, sitters, benefactors and others served by the Gallery) will also be sought.

3. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the Gallery's Collection and collections held by galleries and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered.
4. The Director, acting on advice from the Registrar and expert advice of the Programme and Acquisitions Committee and other colleagues, including conservators, as appropriate, shall outline the case to the Trustees; it shall not be on the basis of a director acting alone.
5. Trustees must vote in favour of a recommendation on the proposed item(s) for de-accessioning, and to approve the recommended mode of disposal.
6. All items disposed of shall be recorded in the Trustees minutes. All paperwork relating to a collection item, including that of disposal, will be kept on file.

9. Disposal Principles

- Once the 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 transfer, gift, or sale, directly to other public Museums/Galleries, archives or libraries. If the material is not acquired directly as a transfer, gift, or for sale, then the museum/gallery community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material.
- The Gallery will only dispose of a work by sale or destruction in exceptional circumstances. This form of disposal would only be authorised by the Trustees on the written advice of the Director and at least one external advisor with expert knowledge of the field.
- When disposal of an object is being considered, the Gallery 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.
- Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the material involved. Proper arrangements will be made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned. The Gallery will retain copies of the acquisition documentation and the original documents will be passed to the new owner together with transfer of title documentation.
- Serving Trustees, Honorary Officers, serving members of the Gallery Staff, Gallery volunteers, trainees, interns, contractors (unless on behalf of new owner or for secure destruction) or partners or business associates of any of the above will not be permitted to acquire, by purchase or otherwise, objects that have been de-accessioned or otherwise disposed of directly from the Gallery Collections
- It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (exhibition prints, duplicate mass-produced articles or common objects which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found. Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, is a risk to other Collection items or has high associated health and safety risks.

10. Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees approves policy and comments on acquisition and deaccession proposals which the Director presents to the Board at its quarterly meeting. It delegates responsibility to the Director for the development of the Collection. The Director and Trustees will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

The Director is responsible for oversight of Collection development, in dialogue with the Registrar and the Programme and Acquisitions Committee who provide expert advice.

The Registrar is responsible for providing Collection management and registration support as required to enable the development of the Collection. This includes responsibility for oversight of copyright and intellectual property.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. Next review: August 2022