

Glasgow School of Art Museum and Archive Collections

Collections Development Policy

Name of museum: Glasgow School of Art

Name of governing body: Board of Governors, Glasgow School of Art

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: September 2013

Date at which this policy is due for review: 2017

1. Museum's statement of purpose

Glasgow School of Art is committed to: *'managing its fine art, design, architecture and archive collections by means of collecting, preserving, documenting, disseminating and interpreting this material for the benefit of its staff and students and the wider public in line with recognised professional practice'*.

2. An overview of current collections

The holdings of the Glasgow School of Art Archives and Collections Centre include both physical artefacts and paper based archives. There are some 300 objects, chiefly furniture and works on paper, by Charles Rennie Mackintosh. There are some 2400 items, almost all by former staff and students of the School (from the late 19th century to the present day) and includes drawings, paintings, prints, architectural studies, ceramics, sculpture, furniture, stained glass, textiles and metalwork. Some 200 items form the Plaster Cast Collection, an archive of full-size classical statuary and architectural fragments dating from the mid-to-late 19th century. Some 25,000 items comprise the institutional records of the Glasgow School of Art. These are paper-based records and ephemera, photographs, glass plate negatives and slides, and collections deposited by individuals and associations connected to the School.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

The extent of future acquisitions for the Glasgow School of Art Archives and Collections Centre (as a result of gift, loan, bequest, purchase or exchange) will be restricted to items of a fine art, design or architectural nature. All future acquisitions will relate to either the history or development of teaching at the School, or will consist of work and/or records either produced by, or in the collection of, former staff and students of the School, current staff and students of the School or by individuals or groups directly associated with the School.

In 2013/2014 this collection development policy will be complemented by a new collection development plan. This policy ensures that the Glasgow School of Art acts in accordance with nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK with

regard to acquisitions and disposals. The plan will describe an annual process for collecting, including calendar points, agreed areas of focus for 2013/2014 and clear criteria for selection expressed in greater detail that is appropriate for this policy.

4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

The Glasgow School of Art recognises that the rationalisation and/or disposal of any item in its collection should only be considered following responsible, curatorially-motivated discussions that address matters pertaining to the museum's long-term collections development strategy, and the public benefit derived from the remaining collections. Consideration should be given to the Museum Association's *Code of Ethics for Museums* and its *Disposals Toolkit* with particular reference to the method of disposal (gift, sale or exchange) or where the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons.

5. Limitations on collecting

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 staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

6. 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 specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources. Specific reference is made to the following museums:

- The Hunterian Art Gallery, University of Glasgow
- Glasgow Life
- National Museums of Scotland
- National Galleries of Scotland

7. Policy review procedure

The collections development 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 noted above.

Museums Galleries Scotland will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.

8. 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.

9. Acquisition procedures

- a. The Archives and Collections Centre 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 Archives and Collections Centre can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- b. In particular, the Archives and Collections Centre 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, the Archives and Collections Centre 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.
- d. The Archives and Collections Centre will not acquire any biological or geological material
- e. The Archives and Collections Centre will not acquire any archaeological material
- f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 9a, 9b, 9c, or 9e will only be because the museum is:
 - acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
 - 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
 - acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

- in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970

In these cases the Archives and Collections Centre will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

- g. The Archives and Collections Centre does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

10. Spoliation

The Archives and Collections Centre 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.

11. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

N/A

12. Management of archives

As the Archives and Collections Centre 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 (third edition, 2002).

13. Disposal procedures

Disposal preliminaries

- a. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- b. By definition, the Archives and Collections Centre has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the Archives and Collections Centre's collection.
- c. The Archives and Collections Centre will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

- d. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the Archives and Collections Centre 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.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13o will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. The Archives and Collections Centre will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons

The disposal decision-making process

- g. Whether the disposal is motivated either by curatorial or financial reasons, 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 the public benefit, the implications for the Archives and Collections Centre's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the Archives and Collections Centre will also be sought.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

- h. 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 or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the Archives and Collections Centre acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

Use of proceeds of sale

- i. Any monies received by the Archives and Collections Centre governing body from the disposal of items will be applied 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 Museums Galleries Scotland.

- j. The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

Disposal by gift or sale

- k. 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 or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- l. If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly 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 an announcement in the Museums Association's *Museums Journal*, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- m. 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.

Disposal by exchange

- n. The Archives and Collections Centre will not dispose of items by exchange.

Documenting disposal

- o. 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 de-accession and disposal.