

The University of Warwick Art Collection

Collection Development Policy

Name of museum: The University of Warwick Art Collection

Name of governing body: The University of Warwick

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: March 2021

Date at which this policy is due for review: March 2026

1. Museum's statement of purpose

The University of Warwick is an environment for the creation and realisation of ideas and knowledge. From the beginning, the University Art Collection was conceived as an integral part of the innovative campus. It is displayed in public spaces to delight, educate, challenge and inspire all who encounter it. The Art Collection acts a conduit, opening the campus and the University to different audiences. Through dialogue, reflection, creativity or provocation, the collection foster new models of critical thinking and the development and exchange of ideas across diverse communities.

2. An overview of current collections

- 2.1. The University of Warwick Art Collection comprises over 1000 artworks, including ceramics, digital media, drawings, glass works, mixed media works, paintings, photographs, prints, sculptures and textiles.
- 2.2 The earliest works in the collection date from the 1940s, the most recent are contemporary. Rather than attempt to fill "gaps" in the collection, the focus for acquisitions is on contemporary work.
- 2.3 The majority of works in the collection are by British and North American artists. In 2007 the acquisition policy was amended to include works by artists of all nationalities, reflecting the international community of the University.
- 2.4 Works that were originally collected by the Coventry College of Education as a teaching collection are distinguished by the suffix W in the accession code to ensure that it remains possible to distinguish this particular collection within the whole eg WU0332W. This collection is largely figurative.
 - 2.4.1. Included in the teaching collection of the Coventry College of Education are a group of ceramics, selected by the ceramics course leader Richard Dunning, together with a number of later works. All ceramics are identified by the suffix C eg WU0467C. In 2008 a decision was taken to suspend collecting ceramics in order to retain the integrity of this group of works as a teaching collection of the post-war era.
- 2.5 Works are acquired for open display on campus and need to be sufficiently robust to withstand display in spaces without any environment controls.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

All decisions regarding acquisitions will take into account the needs of the Collection; the condition of the work and the costs of conserving and storing the work; the potential for display and that any purchase has been negotiated to represent the best possible price to the University of Warwick.

The University of Warwick Art Collection responds to the physical and academic landscape of the university. The University of Warwick collects modern and contemporary work by international artists, especially from a younger generation, comprising painting, drawing, photography, prints, sculpture, video and film and new media as outlined in the sections that follow.

3.1. Painting

The University of Warwick collects international modern and contemporary painting. A particular priority is the collection of contemporary abstract painting to extend the discourse around its founding collection of abstract painting.

3.2. Drawing

The University of Warwick acquires drawings which are considered to be major works in themselves, particularly contemporary drawings by artists who are sculptors. It does not prioritise studies for works in the Collection unless they in themselves are of importance. The range of media employed in the production of contemporary drawing is constantly expanding and curators monitor developments to ensure contemporary relevance.

3.3. Prints

The University of Warwick collects international prints from 1960 onwards but the priority is contemporary work. One focus is the collection of prints by sculptors. Technical developments in the production of contemporary prints have extended the range of possible representation and such developments are monitored to ensure contemporary relevance.

3.4. Sculpture and Installation

The University of Warwick collects international modern and contemporary sculpture, primarily for siting in outside locations to facilitate community engagement with the campus of the University. The range and scope of work designated as sculpture has expanded in recent decades and contemporary sculpture may include elements in media other than those traditionally associated with three dimensional work, including sound and light. For installations that employ elements with a limited lifespan, the University of Warwick takes steps to ensure that such parts are replaceable either by a part of a similar nature or equivalent.

3.5 Photography

The University of Warwick collects international contemporary photography. Wherever possible it seeks to acquire prints of original vintage, although alternatives will be considered.

3.6 Video and Film

The University of Warwick collects contemporary works of art that employ video or film as a medium, including single screen, multiple-screen and installation works. Only works that can be secured while on open display will be acquired.

3.7 Digital technologies

The University of Warwick has yet to acquire works of art that use networked or non-networked digital technologies for creation, presentation and distribution. The redevelopment of Warwick Arts Centre presents new opportunities to engage with digital artistic output, thus making future purchase of such works possible.

4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

The University of Warwick will only dispose of objects for curatorial reasons and will not undertake disposal motivated by financial reasons. Disposal will be made by gift or sale and in accordance the procedures outlined in Section 13 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 using the following criteria:

- Artworks that are too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the Collection or for reasons of health and safety
- Artworks that fall outside the Collection Development Policy
- Where public benefit is better served by transfer of the artwork to another organisation

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.

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Since the collection is held on open display, artworks that include light sensitive materials will not be acquired. These include watercolours and textiles.

Some contemporary artworks may include materials beyond those traditionally used in fine art. As far as any biological or geological material is concerned, the University of Warwick will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold, or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

The University of Warwick does not intend to acquire any archaeological material or human remains. Should human remains form any component part of artworks for acquisition, the University of Warwick will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005. Should these remains prove to be less than 100 years old; the University of Warwick will obtain the necessary licence under the Human Tissue Act 2004.

6. Collecting policies of other museums

The University of Warwick 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. It will also advise other institutions that programme work that is relevant to the University of Warwick Art Collection.

Specific reference is made to the following museum(s):

- Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford
- Barber Institute of Arts, University of Birmingham
- Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery
- Compton Verney Trust
- Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Coventry
- Ikon Gallery, Birmingham
- Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum
- Modern Art Oxford
- Rugby Art Gallery and Museum

7. Policy review procedure

The acquisition and disposal policy will be published and reviewed at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review is noted above.

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the acquisition and disposal 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 University of Warwick itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

9. Acquisition procedures

- a. The University of Warwick 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 University of Warwick can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- b. In particular, the University of Warwick 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, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the University of Warwick 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. Any exceptions to the above clauses 8a, 8b, or 8c will only be because the University of Warwick 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 University of Warwick will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

10. Spoilation

The University of Warwick 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

The University of Warwick's governing body, acting on the advice of the University of Warwick's professional staff, 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 University of Warwick 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 13a-13d, 13g and 13o below will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

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'.

12. Management of archives

The University of Warwick Art Collection holds archives, including photographs and printed ephemera and 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 University of Warwick will not undertake disposal motivated by financial reasons.
- b. The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.
- c. By definition, the University of Warwick 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 University of Warwick's collection.
- d. The University of Warwick will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.
- e. When disposal of a University of Warwick object is being considered, the University of Warwick 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

- f. 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 or sale.

The disposal decision-making process

- g. 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 University of Warwick'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 University of Warwick will also be sought.

Responsibility for disposal decision-making

- h. 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 University of Warwick 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 University of Warwick 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 the Arts Council England.
- 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 University of Warwick 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 University of Warwick will not dispose of items by exchange.

Documentation

- 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 deaccession and disposal.