

Grundy Art Gallery

Collections Development Policy

Name of governing body: Blackpool Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body: TBC

Date at which this policy is due for review: March 2017

1. Museum's statement of purpose

Grundy Art Gallery is now recognized as a leading contemporary visual arts venue in the northwest region. It has a growing national and international profile. It wants to continue to grow this profile and attract larger and more diverse audiences to its programmes. Its current position has been achieved through ambitious and contextual programming, which makes the most of its beautiful exhibition spaces and the environment beyond the gallery walls. Blackpool is an extraordinary location of rich cultural history and contemporary popular culture and Grundy's programmes will continue to explore these and add new perspectives to help better understand and appreciate them. The link between all of its programmes and the role of its permanent collection has been and will continue to be an opportunity for audiences to think in new and unexpected ways through art.

Grundy will hold dear a commitment to artistic excellence and ambition in all of its activities and strive for more and more people to value its contribution to Blackpool's cultural offer and the appreciation of contemporary art.

2. An overview of current collections

The permanent collection now numbers c. 2,315 objects. It can be divided into four main areas, fine art, decorative art, modern jewellery and ephemera.

Fine Art

This collection includes a representational sample of the following:

- Victorian (mid to late 19th century)
- Early modern British (including St. Ives, Newlyn, Glasgow Boys, c.1870-1930)
- French realism (late 19th century)
- 19th and 20th century topographical watercolours
- War (World War I and II)
- Modern and Contemporary British, and that relating to Blackpool and its history.
- Documentary Photography (Blackpool)

Decorative Art

These are items from collections acquired by local individuals who have subsequently bequeathed their collections to Grundy. The ivory collection is of greatest importance due to the quantity and quality of the items included.

- Ivory wares
- Oriental artefacts
- Purses

Modern Jewellery

Whilst under the management of Lancashire County Museums Service, Grundy started to collect contemporary crafts and jewellery. The collection was formed from purchases and gifts largely from the Contemporary Art Society. The jewellery is an important regional collection due to the crafts people represented and quality of items.

Ephemera

The gallery holds a small collection of ephemera relating to Blackpool and its history as a mass seaside resort. These include postcards, photographs and souvenirs.

3. Themes and priorities for future collecting

There are three principal criteria governing Grundy's future collecting policy:

- i. The first is to take into account and continue John and Cuthbert Grundy's efforts to support emerging contemporary art, complementing and enhancing the existing permanent collection, with contemporary visual art in particular.
- ii. The second is to capture and respond to Blackpool's historical and contemporary culture.
- iii. The third is Grundy's ability to care long term for any new acquisitions to recommended national standards.

i. Contemporary Art

John and Cuthbert Grundy made it clear in the early years of the gallery that one of its major roles was to support modern emerging art forms. This was demonstrated by the acquisition of art works from contemporary shows of their day.

This commitment has continued through Grundy's membership of the Contemporary Art Society (CAS). The acquisitions of modern and contemporary fine art made through the society are amongst the most important, exciting and popular works within the collection. They include Craigie Atchinson, Peter Blake, Martin Creed, Laura Ford, Gilbert and George, and Eric Ravilious.

In recent years Grundy has developed a critically acclaimed and supported contemporary exhibition programme, which has enabled it to become an Arts Council England National Portfolio organization.

Grundy will seek to develop its collection in a similar manner to which it has developed its exhibition programme, and will look to commission and acquire new works using a variety of funding sources.

In 2012, Grundy commissioned a work by young British artist Ruth Claxton, which has been designed for the stairwell within the gallery. Funded by CAS, this commission is a result of developing an ongoing working relationship with the artist which began through the Gallery's temporary exhibition programme.

Grundy is a member of The Sculpture Fund, supported by one of CAS's patrons, Cathy Wills, which will provide five museums in the North West with the opportunity to work together over a period of five years to research and then to acquire a group of sculptural works to develop their existing collections.

Participating Museums alongside Grundy include Manchester Art Gallery, The Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, University Liverpool, The Walker Art Gallery, and The Whitworth Art Gallery. Works already acquired through this initiative include Haroon Mirza's 'A Dry Sleek Yell'.

ii. Celebrate Blackpool's Historical and Contemporary Culture

Grundy acquires items which demonstrate Blackpool's important seaside inheritance and culture. This could be in the form of historical and contemporary ephemera and souvenirs and tourism material. In addition this could include commissioned artwork that reflects or is inspired by the historic or contemporary culture/subcultures that exist in the town. This is an area of the collection that supports the aims of Blackpool Council's Heritage Strategy to establish and celebrate Blackpool's unique heritage as the first mass seaside resort in the world.

iii. Appropriate Care

Grundy is very conscious of its professional responsibilities to collect in a responsible manner. An important part of this is to consider the long term care of any item it wishes to acquire. Consequently the physical state and long term care and storage requirements will always form part of the decision making process for all acquisitions.

4. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

A collections review will be undertaken during the lifespan of this policy. This review will potentially identify areas which will no longer be actively collected. It may also identify specific items or parts of the collection which will be considered for disposal.

The decision to dispose of these items from the collection or not will be made through evaluation and consultation following the guidelines set out in section 13 of this policy. The disposal procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

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 collection/museum(s):

- Blackpool Heritage Service
- The Lancashire Museum Service
- The Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston
- Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery
- Towneley Art Gallery and Museums, Burnley

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.

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 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 museum 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 museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- b. In particular, 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).
- 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 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.
- d. So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum 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.

- e. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.
- 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 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.

- g. The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

10. Spoliation

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.

11. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

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

As the museum 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 museum 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 museum's collection.
- c. The museum 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 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.

Motivation for disposal and method of disposal

- e. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 13g-13s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.
- f. In exceptional cases, the disposal may be motivated principally by financial reasons. The method of disposal will therefore be by sale and the procedures outlined below in paragraphs 13g-13m and 13o/s will be followed. In cases where disposal is motivated by financial reasons, the governing body will not undertake disposal unless it can be demonstrated that all the following exceptional circumstances are met in full:
 - the disposal will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection
 - the disposal will not be undertaken to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
 - the disposal will be undertaken as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored

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 museum'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 museum 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 museum 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 museum 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 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 nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- o. In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or unaccredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 13a-13d and 13g-13h will be followed as will the procedures in paragraphs 13p-13s.
- p. If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- q. If the exchange is proposed with a non-accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will make an announcement in the Museums Journal and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- r. Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

Documenting disposal

o/s. 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.