

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

COLLECTION
DEVELOPMENT
POLICY

Revised August 2013

1. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The National Portrait Gallery of Australia Collection embodies the intent of the National Portrait Gallery of Australia's (the Gallery) statement of purpose:-

to increase the understanding and appreciation of the Australian people – their identity, history, creativity and culture – through portraiture.

The Collection will provide the basis for research, exhibition, educational and interpretive programs as well as the overall cultural enrichment of the broader Australian community. The context for this policy and guidelines and the implications for their implementation are provided in the Gallery's Corporate Plan.

1.1 Fundamental Policy Principles

- a) the Collection is primarily constructed around representations of individuals who have influenced or contributed to the shaping of Australia as a nation and a society.
- b) the Collection will consist of historical and contemporary material including paintings, drawings, limited edition artist's prints and engravings, sculpture, photographs, and digital media.
- c) the Collection will be developed through recommendations under this policy by the professional staff of the Gallery.
- d) the National Portrait Gallery of Australia Board (the Board) ratifies all decisions relating to the acquisition of portraits and associated material in the Collection according to the criteria set out in this policy.
- e) no item in the Collection will be subject to deaccession and disposal unless the Gallery formally identifies significant reasons for doing so.
- f) this Policy is a public document (apart from appendices) and is subject to review annually.

2. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY STATEMENT

Portraits acquired by the Gallery will reflect the broadest range of fields of endeavour, and represent all Australian states and territories.

The subject should be Australian, or should have made a substantial contribution to Australia.

The subject must be either important in his or her field of endeavor or a known and named person whose life sets him or her apart as an individual of long-term public interest.

Beyond these broadly shaped principles, the process of selection of portraits for the Collection is shaped by detailed considerations relating to the subject and the work of art.

Consideration may be given to the inclusion of a subject falling outside these criteria if, as an individual, he or she can be shown to have made a substantial contribution to, or impact on, the course of Australian history. Consideration will be given to the inclusion of other subjects when conditions of exceptional interest apply.

2.1 Study Collection

Items that relate to the development of a portrait and/or the life of its subject may be collected by approval of the Board for inclusion in the Study Collection.

Such as (but not limited to):-

- a) publications (of a rare or limited type)
- b) postage stamps
- c) non-limited digital prints
- d) photographic proof sheets
- e) copy photographs (ie second generation prints from existing prints)
- f) objects associated with a particular portrait

Items accepted into the Study Collection will be registered and not accessioned and will not be listed on public databases or annual reports. Recognition of donors will occur on exhibition labels, but as a rule, not on the donor boards.

Original works in any medium (such as preparatory drawings) should be treated as suitable for inclusion in the National Portrait Gallery of Australia Collection rather than in the Study Collection.

3. LEGAL AND ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Ownership and Copyright

The Gallery will not acquire any work, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange unless it can be satisfied that a valid title can be acquired for that work and that it 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, and in accordance with the provisions of the *Protection of Movable Cultural Heritage Act 1986* established to give effect to the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.

The Gallery recognises and respects all intellectual property and moral rights in works acquired for the Collection and will maintain complete and current records of all activities that affect such works and all activities relating to other items in the Gallery's care.

3.2 Professional Ethics

The Gallery's collection development and management procedures will also be informed by current professional and ethical guidelines such as –

- *Significance 2.0: a guide to assessing the significance of collections*, revised by the Collections Council of Australia Ltd (2009)
- *Code of Ethics: for art, history and science museums*, established by Museums Australia Inc. (1984)
- *Code of Ethics for Museums*, established by the International Council of Museums (1986)

4. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

4.1 The Distributed National Collection

The National Portrait Gallery of Australia Collection is part of the Distributed National Collection, a concept embracing the holdings of all major libraries, archives and museums in Australia. The National Portrait Gallery of Australia recognises the place of its Collection alongside the major national and state collecting institutions and supports a collaborative approach to collection development and management.

5. ACQUISITION

The Gallery will acquire portraits, historical and contemporary in all media, and associated material by purchase, donation, or bequest for the Collection. In addition, the commissioning of portraits will be actively pursued subject to the availability of funds.

When considering a potential acquisition due account is taken of the Gallery's responsibility to ensure adequate conservation, documentation and proper use, and takes into account limitations imposed by staffing, storage, conservation resources and display space.

Consideration will also given to the collecting policies of other Australian public collections in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and to ensure portraits that more properly relate to social history or other important categories of national interest are deposited in appropriate institutions for the benefit of all Australians.

5.1 Acquisition by Purchase

In evaluating a proposed acquisition for purchase the Gallery will seek to ensure that it acquires clear title to the work and pays a fair price.

Purchase of Portraits at Auction

When a portrait is offered for sale at auction and is deemed desirable for inclusion in the permanent collection the Director and Board will consider its purchase using established criteria and procedures. In the event of an auction taking place between meetings, two of the following, namely the Director, the Chairman, Deputy Chairman or a Board Member are authorised to determine whether a bid will be made for the work, taking into account the availability of funds.

Director's Discretion

In situations when an immediate purchase is necessary, the Director may authorise the purchase of portraits to the total value of \$20 000 in any one financial year, without prior consultation with the Board. In making these judgements, the Director shall adhere to the established criteria, and report in writing to the Board on the details of the purchase.

5.2 Acquisition by Donation

Donations to the Gallery are permanent gifts of collection items. The Gallery welcomes donations of works that match its policy statement and selection criteria, acquiring title to, and control over the physical items, and will respect both the privacy of donors and the legitimate interests of copyright holders. Such criteria will also apply to the acquisition of works transferred from another collecting institution.

5.2.1 Gifts under the Cultural Gifts Program

The Gallery will adhere to the regulations and procedures of the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts and Cultural Bequests Program when considering any gift proposal through this program.

5.3 Bequests to the National Portrait Gallery of Australia

The Gallery welcomes donation by bequest of works conforming to its policy statement and selection criteria. Through active research and development programs the Gallery will encourage the bequest of works held in private hands.

5. ACQUISITION (continued)

5.4 Acquisition by Commission

The commissioning process makes for the strategic shaping of a dynamic and innovative Collection. Commissioning portraits enables the Gallery to target significant subjects during their lifetimes and/or at the full flourish of their careers, and to acquire works by desirable artists, including artists not usually working in the field of portraiture.

5.4.1 Commissioning of Portraits by Third Parties

From time to time the Gallery is approached by a party seeking to commission a portrait for the National Portrait Gallery of Australia. In such cases, the Gallery may have a strong interest in seeing the subject suggested enter the Collection. However, the Gallery is unable in such circumstances to exercise the complete control and oversight of the process, particularly in such important areas as the selection of the artist and viewing progress, sketches etc.

On completion, the portrait will be assessed by the Board according to the criteria applied to the assessment of any gift offered to the Gallery. In such cases, if the resulting work is accepted for inclusion in the Collection the portrait will not be described as a National Portrait Gallery of Australia commission, but will be described as a 'Gift of [the donor]'.

6. DEACCESSION

Deaccessioning is the process to de-register an item from a collection for clearly stated reasons, and disposing of it in accordance with approved policies and procedures.

The right to deaccession and dispose of works is a necessary part of developing the Collection to its fullest potential. The Board will consider the deaccession and disposal of any work with extreme caution and will incorporate delay and review mechanisms in the disposal procedures.

6.1 No work in the Collection will be subject to deaccession except in the following cases: -

- a) where the status of a subject falls outside the Gallery's collecting policy
- b) it is a non-essential duplication of a work already held in the Collection
- c) the work is in an advanced state of deterioration that is irretrievable
- d) the work is subject to legislation which prevents the Gallery displaying it or having title to it

Written recommendations to the Board to deaccession works will include the object's identification number and description; advice on the legal status of the work; reasons for de-accessioning; and a recommended method of disposal.

6.2 Disposal Methods

The Gallery will dispose of a work in a manner considered most appropriate to the Collection in accordance with national museum standards and in adherence to the asset disposal procedures of the National Portrait Gallery of Australia.

Disposal methods are identified as: -

- a) returned to the donor or nearest living relative
- b) donating to another non-profit collecting institution
- c) exchange with another non-profit collecting institution
- d) destroying the material by physical destruction (if beyond preservation)
- e) selling at a private or public auction

The instance mentioned in d) will be applied only after the Gallery can demonstrate that it has offered the deaccessioned work to other non-profit collecting institutions prepared to pay all the costs of the transfers, and there are no takers.

6.3 Disposal Procedures

The Gallery will give preferential consideration to non-profit collecting institutions that can demonstrate the ability to care for and preserve the deaccessioned work and that can provide beneficial public and scholarly access. When a deaccessioned work is offered for sale, the highest price possible will be sought.

Every effort will be made to notify any living donor whose gift has been approved for deaccessioning. Any proceeds gained from the disposal of a work will be utilised solely for acquisition and the ongoing care and management of the Collection. No individual who is an employee of the Gallery may receive deaccessioned material from the Gallery.

All records of deaccessioned works and the circumstances of its deaccessioning and disposal will be marked clearly and kept on file for future reference and their accession number not reused.