



Ararat Rural City

Ararat Gallery TAMA (Textile Art Museum Australia) Acquisitions Policy

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Responsible Officer: Visual Arts Coordinator
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Stakeholder Engagement:
Chief Executive Officer
Visual Arts Coordinator

INTENT

Ararat Gallery TAMA (Textile Art Museum Australia) will acquire art works with a view to developing an outstanding collection of local and national significance.

The Gallery will accord with public gallery industry standards in this endeavour, with special consideration given to ethical issues involved in the acquisition and long-term custodianship of cultural material.

Acquisition criteria, selection processes, and reporting, administrative and documentation requirements relating to the acquisition or de-accession of artworks is addressed in a related procedural document entitled, **Appendix 1 - Specifications and Guidelines**.

POLICY

This policy defines the scope and limitations for acquiring works of art for the Ararat Gallery TAMA (Textile Art Museum Australia) collection. The policy is established to ensure:

- The development and maintenance of a high-quality contemporary art collection of national significance;
- The preservation and documentation of the collection;
- That the acquisition or de-accession of artworks are made in the long-term interest of Ararat and wider regional community;
- The Gallery follows public gallery professional standards across all areas of its operation;
- The Gallery adheres to the:
 - *International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums*; and;
 - *UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970*.

The TAMA Collection

The TAMA Collection will develop through the acquisition of objects through bequest, donation, purchase or transfer, in accordance with this policy.

The Visual Arts Coordinator manages the TAMA Collection and is responsible for its curatorial development and long-term conservation.

Scope of Collection

The Gallery does not aim to broadly represent the visual arts outside the scope of the **Primary Collection**, which comprises an extensive survey of contemporary (post-1970s) textile and fibre art practices in Australia with key international influences represented from time to time.

Secondary Emphases are detailed in **Appendix 1 - Specifications and Guidelines**. These secondary collection emphases include:

- artworks of local relevance and significance;
- modern and contemporary fashion and fabric design;
- other art forms, when offered through donation, transfer or bequest;
- study collection material.

Policy Implementation/Responsibility

The Visual Arts Coordinator is to ensure the policy is adhered to and will ensure that acquisitions accord with public gallery industry standards with a view to establishing an art collection of long-term artistic and cultural significance.

The Visual Arts Coordinator will refer to, and be guided by, this policy and **Appendix 1 - Specifications and Guidelines** when assessing works of art proposed for acquisition or de-accession. These specifications and guidelines provide a detailed 'Criteria for Acquisition' and explain roles and responsibilities in regard to the assessing and approving of artworks for acquisition or de-accession.

Any dispute arising from the operation of this policy shall be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for decision.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department or officer and minor updates to legislation which do not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.

DEFINITIONS

Nil

REFERENCES

- International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums.
- UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970.
- ARCC Staff Code of Conduct Policy

RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Individual accession files are created for all art acquisitions and these are stored at Ararat Gallery TAMA.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Acquisitions Specifications and Guidelines

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BACKGROUND

Ararat Gallery was established in 1968 and has specialised in collecting contemporary fibre and textile art since 1974. The 1970s were a time of a major renewal and development for the crafts in Australia.

Under the leadership of inaugural Director, Pamela Gullifer AM, Ararat Gallery established a distinct curatorial and collection focus in contemporary textiles and fibre art, partly in response to Ararat's history as a centre for fine merino wool production.

The Gallery now holds a substantial collection of post-1970s fibre and textile art. It has a similar curatorial and collection focus as Tamworth Regional Gallery in New South Wales.

Over the years, the Gallery's collection has been enriched through donor generosity, which began when Felicity Shaw, neice of Sir Lionel Lindsay, generously gifted the work *Pheasant on Magnolius*. This donation was closely followed by Mr Peter Lindsay's 1971 donation of a further 43 prints by Sir Lionel Lindsay.

The Japan Foundation and the Craft Council of Australia donated *The Art of the Japanese Package* in 1981. Australian textile design pioneer Frances Burke donated 35 fabric prints in 1986.

One of the Gallery's significant sub-collections is the Lady Barbara Grimwade Costume Collection - a survey of fashion design from 1956 to 1989, especially notable for its garments from the Melbourne fashion house, Tu.

In 2004 Ararat Gallery became the long-term custodian of the textile, fibre and leather components of the Victorian State Craft Collection.

The Gallery's collection includes a small representation of other art forms including works on paper, paintings, sculpture, ceramics and glass. Most non-textile and fibre artworks acquired since 1979 have been acquired through donation.

In 2005 Ararat Gallery Inc was liquidated and Ararat Rural City Council commenced operating the Gallery as a Council facility. The Gallery operated as Ararat Regional Art Gallery between 2005 and 2017.

In August 2018 the Gallery celebrated its 50th year. In recognition of its significant textile collection and contemporary programming, the Gallery was renamed Ararat Gallery TAMA (Textile Art Museum Australia).

THE TAMA COLLECTION

Scope of Collection

The TAMA Collection will develop through the acquisition of art objects through bequest, donation, purchase or transfer, in accordance with this policy.

The Gallery does not aim to broadly represent the visual arts outside the scope of the Primary Collection and generally acquires art objects other than textiles and fibre art through gifts and donation.

The Primary Collection

- Comprises an extensive survey of contemporary (post-1970s) textile and fibre art practices in Australia with key international influences represented from time to time;
- Excludes articles of domestic handcraft, such as lace, embroidery or quilting, and articles of costume, such as wearable art, historical costume, uniform, wedding dresses, christening garments or other similar objects.

Secondary Emphasis

- Includes art works of significance to Ararat and its region, including historic depictions of the local area or works by notable artists associated with the region. An opportunity to assess artworks of local significance for acquisition was introduced in this policy in 2008. This does not represent an intention to establish a sub-collection that comprehensively surveys the work of local artists;
- Includes other textile and fibre art examples and antecedents where they enhance the interpretation of the Primary Collection;
- Includes outstanding examples of costume design or fabric design, with an emphasis on the work of modern and contemporary designers, augmenting the Primary Collection's textile focus and strengthening the Lady Barbara Grimwade and Frances Burke sub-collections;
- Includes paintings, works on paper, ceramics, glass, sculpture or other works in other mediums acquired either through donation or purchased when the Gallery had different acquisition policies.
- Includes a Study Collection with ancillary materials that support interpretation of the TAMA Collection.

ACQUISITION PROCESS

Role of Visual Arts Coordinator

The Visual Arts Coordinator with approval of the CEO is authorised to acquire artworks within budget, with reference to this policy, through:

- Purchase, where funds are identified and available for this purpose;
- Assessing proposed artworks donations or gifts on a case-by-case basis;

This policy recognises that action is sometimes required at short notice to capitalise on acquisition opportunities where:

- Artworks are available for purchase in a competitive environment (eg exhibitions, auctions);
- Timing deadlines require immediate action to secure funding, donations or gifts;

The Visual Arts Coordinator is also required to prepare a written 'Acquisition Report'. This report must:

- a) Explain the 'rationale for acceptance' of the work into the TAMA Collection.
- b) Demonstrate compliance with the Ararat Gallery TAMA Acquisitions Policy.

This report will form the basis for an accession file that will contain key information about the acquisition to support its ongoing management and conservation (Refer to: [Acquisition procedures below](#))

The Visual Arts Coordinator is also authorised to use their discretion to assess and decline donation proposals that do not meet the criteria of this policy.

Role of the Ararat Gallery TAMA Collection Working Group

The Ararat Gallery TAMA Collection Working Group comprises up to 6 members including:

- The CEO (Chair)
- The Visual Arts Coordinator (Deputy Chair)
- 2 local practicing artists appointed directly by Council
- 2 community representatives, appointed by process of EOI

The Visual Arts Coordinator will convene Working Group meetings as required.

The community representatives will hold their position for a maximum of 2 years.

The Visual Arts Coordinator will assess all received proposals and collate an Acquisition Report for those that demonstrate compliance with the Ararat Gallery TAMA Acquisitions Policy.

The Acquisition Report will be presented to members of the Ararat Gallery TAMA Collection Working Group, in advance of the nearest meeting, for the information of members and their assessment of the acquisition's compliance against the Acquisition Policy.

A motion that is moved and seconded by two members and carried by a majority of the Working Group members is required and represents the means in which an artwork is formally accepted into the TAMA Collection, following final approval by the CEO.

The Working Group will follow a similar process as per the deaccessioning of artworks from the TAMA Collection (Refer to **Deaccession** below).

Conflict of Interest

The Visual Arts Coordinator and the Ararat Gallery TAMA Collection Working Group must declare any real or perceived conflict of interest prior to consideration of proposed acquisitions and have this declaration documented in accordance with council's Conflict of Interest requirements

It may be necessary for a Working Group member to abstain from participating in the assessment process when a conflict of interest is identified.

CRITERIA FOR ACQUISITION

Essential Acquisition Criteria

- The object has clearly established provenance, there is legal title to the object or the donor/vendor can legally donate or sell the object.
- The donor assigns legal title for the object.
- The object is free of encumbrance.
- The object is not a duplicate of an existing object in the collection, unless it is of superior condition and / or historic or artistic value and significance. In such a case, the Gallery may consider de-accession of the duplicate where this complies with the policy.
- The object is not accepted principally in anticipation of future or further donor or vendor largesse.
- The object is of artistic significance and warrants long-term custodianship and collection management expenditure.
- The resources required for long-term conservation of the object are clearly identified in the Acquisition Report.
- The object can be effectively stored in existing collection storage areas.
- The object is free of biological deterioration or pest infestation that could spread to the collection.
- A lifespan has been assigned to materially vulnerable or ephemeral objects and recorded in the Acquisition Report and vendor or donor agreements to guide future conservation and de-accessioning.
- The Acquisition Report records any conservation treatment required to bring the object to exhibition standard and identifies funding sources, including contributions from donors/vendors, to ensure this occurs.

Specific Acquisition Criteria

Contemporary Textile and Fibre Art

- The object is significant to the TAMA Collection's survey of contemporary (post-1970s) textile and fibre art practices Australia and internationally.
- The relationship of the textile and fibre component to the overall object is of primary significance, either materially or conceptually.
- The object represents excellence and innovation in textile and fibre art and is made by an artist with a substantial commitment to their practice, as demonstrated through exhibitions and critical recognition.

Costumes and accessories / Fabric Design

- Individual objects may be considered for acquisition where they enhance existing sub-collections, eg Lady Barbara Grimwade Costume Collection and Frances Burke Fabrics Collection.
- The Gallery will generally acquire examples of costume design and accessories or fabric design only through gifts and bequests.
- Accessories for costume collections will be examined selectively and must relate to a particular garment, period or designer represented in the collection.

Other Artworks

- Other artworks must be acquired only through bequest or donation.
- An exception is made for significant and major artworks of local relevance, which may be purchased.

Study Collection

- The Study Collection aims to provide support material relevant to the TAMA Collection. This material must enhance and contribute to exhibitions, research, and educational programs.
- Acquisitions may comprise samples, swatches, documentation, ephemera, and other material supplementary to the TAMA Collection.
- Study Collection objects will be suitable for careful handling by researchers and members of the public, unless otherwise stated.

DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS

Donor Agreements

A Donor Agreement must be prepared and signed by the Visual Arts Coordinator and the Donor as a record that the donation is offered without encumbrance. The Donor Agreement is to be filed in the artwork's Accession File for future reference.

Donations – Associated Costs

In most cases, objects proposed for donation should have associated costs including significance and conservation assessments and valuations paid by the donor, including valuations for the Cultural Gifts Program (see below).

Cultural Gifts Program

The Gallery is a participating institution in the Commonwealth Government's Cultural Gifts Program. The program encourages gifts of significant cultural material by offering a tax deduction to the donor for the market value of the gift. The Gallery is responsible for submitting applications to the Cultural Gifts Program.

If a submission to the Cultural Gifts Program is not approved, either the donor or the Gallery may rescind the donation arrangement.

Donor recognition

Donor credits will be decided on at the time of the donation's approval. The donor credit line will be included in the Donor Agreement and filed in the Accession File for future reference. The donor credit line will be included on labels exhibited alongside the donated artwork and alongside future reproductions on the donated work.

ACQUISITION PROCEDURES

Record of accession

The acquisition will be added to the Accession Register.

An Accession File will be created for the acquired artwork. All original documents and associated material pertaining

to the acquisition of the artwork will be filed and maintained for future reference.

Storage and Location

A location and storage arrangement for the work will be determined prior to receiving the acquired object. Professional advice from a conservator will be sought as required to ensure the object is stored and secured in accordance with art conservation principles.

Condition report

A condition report will be completed at the time the artwork enters the TAMA Collection. A photograph of the acquired artwork will be taken upon receipt of the work and filed with the condition report in the Accession File, to support future identification, management and conservation of the work.

DE-ACCESSION

Criteria for De-accession

De-accession is a process in which an artwork is formally removed from the TAMA Collection. There are many reasons why de-accessioning may be pursued, including:

- An object's lack of relevance or significance to a collection
- Mistaken attribution or fakery
- No evidence of clear legal title
- Theft or loss
- Irreparable damage and deterioration of an artwork
- Incorrect or mistaken registration or accession processes
- Repatriation of cultural materials

Guiding Principles and Ethics

De-accessioning must be undertaken with great caution and underpinned by sound research undertaken by the Visual Arts Coordinator (seeking appropriate expert advice as required) and presented to the Ararat Gallery TAMA Collection Working Group for consideration in a De-Accession Report.

De-accessioning should not be pursued in response to changing tastes, fashion or because of the personal values or opinions of Gallery staff or Collection Working Group members.

Donors and/or living artists should be informed of the intention to de-accession relevant artworks as a courtesy.

Gallery staff, their relatives or associates, or any individuals or organisations associated with Gallery, including members of the Collection Working Group must not benefit in any way from disposals of de-accessioned artworks.

De-accession Procedures

De-accessioning will be initiated by the Visual Arts Coordinator.

The Visual Arts Coordinator will prepare a written report for the Collection Working Group in response to the *Criteria for De-accession* and *Guiding Principles*. The written report will include a photograph and full catalogue details of the work proposed for de-accession and explain the reasons for the proposed de-accession.

De-accession is subject to the approval of the Collection Working Group and the Chief Executive Officer and is to be recorded in the Working Group's minutes, which must be filed in the Accession File for the de-accessioned artwork.

Disposal of an artwork

A 'cooling off' period of six months will precede the disposal of the work.

The de-accessioned object may be disposed of or transferred in one of the following ways, as determined by the Collection Working Group and the Chief Executive Officer on a case by case basis.

- Offered to the Ararat Rural City Council for its collection.

- Offered to an appropriate public collecting institution as either a gift, exchange or sale.
- Offered to its creator, donor or donor's family either as a gift, exchange or sale.
- Sold on the public market.
- Dismantled and/or destroyed in the event of no other options being suitable.

Funds raised through the sale of de-accessioned works are to be reinvested only in future acquisitions for the TAMA Collection.

Any funds raised through the sale of previously donated works that are used to acquire new works will be credited to the original donor of the de-accessioned object.

Documentation

- The de-accessioned artwork must be photographed and condition reported prior to transfer or disposal.
- The condition report and attached photograph must be filed in the artwork's Accession File for future reference. A duplicate must be provided to any public collecting institution that accepts the work as a donation.
- The Visual Arts Coordinator will edit the Accession Register ledger record in red pen, running a single horizontal red line through the ledger record and noting, also in red pen, on a blank ledger on the same page, the date and reason for de-accession.
- The written de-accession report and Collection Working Group minutes approving the de-accession will be retained for future reference in the Accession File. The file is to be marked in red pen to identify that the artwork has been de-accessioned.