

COLLECTIONS POLICY

ADOPTED: November 2017

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy presents the rationale and procedures for the acquisition and deaccession of artworks for the collections of the New England Regional Art Museum (NERAM). The NERAM collections consist of:

- The Howard Hinton Collection;
- The Chandler Coventry Collection;
- The NERAM Collection;
- The Armidale City Collection; and
- The Museum of Printing Collection.

This policy provides clear and formal procedures on the means by which acquisitions can be made through donation, gift or commission and outlines the process and criteria that potential acquisitions must fulfil in order to be approved. This policy will also provide procedures for the correct deaccessioning and removal of existing works.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Manager for Exhibitions and Curatorial to ensure it reflects best and current practice.

2. BACKGROUND

The Collections Policy supports NERAM's mission:

NERAM seeks to create opportunities for our visitors to experience a diversity of artistic programs and exhibitions, showcase the collections in our care in meaningful ways and support opportunities for the development and expression of our regional culture and identity to a national audience.

The Art Museum, through donations and purchases, is consistently acquiring new works that enhance and strengthen its collections to enable NERAM's vision 'to be a creative catalyst within the New England for the enjoyment of arts and cultural activities.'

The Howard Hinton Collection, in the sheer breadth of its cover of Australian art from the 1880s to the 1940s is one of the only collections of its kind in regional Australia. English born Howard Hinton was a Trustee of the Art Gallery of NSW and an avid collector of art and visitor of artists' exhibitions and studios. He first donated works to the Armidale Teachers College in 1929 and, by the time of his death in 1948 had donated over 1,100 works. He collected for the purpose of encouraging artists, educating students, and for the benefit and enjoyment of the public. The Collection is a 'snapshot' of Sydney and Australian art and cultural life in the inter-war era. The educational nature of the collection is reflected in its representation of the different painting and artistic genres, and in the themes of the time, especially

Australian landscape art. It includes works by many key early 20th century Australian artists including the Lindsay family, Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts, Elioth Gruner, J.J. Hilder, Arthur Murch and Adrian Feint. The collection is overseen by the terms of the Howard Hinton Trust.

Two separate subsequent donations have been included as part of the Hinton Collection: Margaret Olley's *The Yellow Room Triptych* donated by packsaddle in 2012 and *The Gale* Donation of 12 works donated in 2016. Both donations were afforded inclusion into the Hinton Collection due to their exceptional relevance to the works within the existing Hinton Collection and to ensure that these works fell under the guidelines of the Hinton Trust which ensures that works from the Hinton Collection may not be de-accessioned.

Sydney gallerist Chandler Coventry was born in Armidale into a pastoral family and began collecting the works of contemporary Sydney artists in the 1960's. He gave his first donation to the Armidale City Collection in 1966. The Collection strongly reflects the art movements of the 1960's and 1970's. The primary focus is on expressionist and abstractionist painters, with some figurative artists and includes paintings by Ralph Balson, Gunter Christmann, Dick Watkins, Michael Taylor, Peter Booth, Brett Whiteley, Max Miller and David Voigt. It also contains works by a number of overseas artists including Bridget Riley, Christo, and Gene Davis. He donated his collection to the people of Armidale in 1999 with the understanding that they would be housed in the newly formed New England Regional Art Museum. The Chandler Coventry Collection has been housed at NERAM since its opening in 1983.

The Armidale City Collection was begun in 1963 and until the opening of NERAM was the main repository for donors and artists wishing to provide the community of Armidale with artworks. It includes a number of works donated by Chandler Coventry which are now combined with the Chandler Coventry Collection. In 2016 the Armidale Regional Council transferred ownership of the Armidale City Collection over to NERAM.

The NERAM Collection was begun in 1983 and mainly comprises contemporary Australian art. The Art Museum purchases works of art, and receives donations from both collectors and artists. Acquisitions have been made with the assistance of the Australia Council, The Ministry for the Arts and through funds raised by the Packsaddle Committee and private donors. NERAM has made several important purchases including works by Suzanne Archer, Jenny Barwell, David Fairbairn, Christopher Hodges, Wendy Stavrianos and Salvatore Zofrea. Among donations the Art Museum has accepted works by Martin Boscott, Dale Frank, Rosalie Gascoigne, George Gittoes, James Gleeson, Max Miller, Tony Tuckson, David Rankin, John Peart, Brett Harris and Aida Tomescu. The NERAM collection also contains over 100 works by Australian Aboriginal artists including canvases, bark paintings, coffin logs and carved sculptures from areas such as Ramingining, Arnhem Land, Bathurst Island, Papunya, Yirrkala, Melville Island, and Utopia.

The Museum of Printing Collection includes a number of pieces of rare printing equipment and full alphabets of rare or unique type, which were purchased by or manufactured by F.T. Wimble & Co. It also includes working and non-working equipment used to produce printed materials through each stage of the printing process from layout to guillotine. The company F.T. Wimble & Co. holds a key place in the development of the printing industry in Australia throughout the late 1800's and early 1900's, including the spread of newspaper printing to regional communities, advertising and graphic design. The collection brings together a range of named and branded pieces of Wimble-related printing equipment, as well as wooden type fonts from British manufacturers and the only major Australian collection of wooden type from American manufacturers and type designers.

The entirety of the NERAM collection includes a range of artforms and styles including paintings, sculptures, prints, drawing, photography, collage and ephemera items.

A 2010 Significance Assessment of the NERAM Collection by Dr Leigh Summers reported that “many of the works in the Howard Hinton collection were purchased by Hinton when the artists were unknown or ‘emerging’ prior to gaining prominence and/or developing successful careers” and that “includes several female artists collected at a time when women artists were almost universally regarded as dilettantes, despite their talent and commitment. Hinton appears to have been unaffected by the gender bias prevalent in early 20th Century art circles.”

The report concludes:

The combined collections have extensive and far reaching interpretation and exhibition potential. The quality and breadth of the collections provide seemingly inexhaustible opportunities for exhibition. The clear points of difference between the collections enable them to be utilized separately or together with dramatic exhibition outcomes. The historical nature of the Hinton and Chandler Coventry collections facilitates (and will continue to facilitate) inspiration for education materials that celebrate Australian art history within 19th and 20th Century western art.

The primary responsibility of New England Regional Art Museum is to build on its existing Collections; to acquire more significant works by artists not well represented in the Collections; to acquire quality works by significant Australian artists that are not present or unrepresented in the Collections; to collect contemporary works that will maintain NERAM’s current and future relevance within the canon of Australian art; and to collect works that reflect our region’s culture, history and identity.

NERAM aims to develop a focused Collection under managed responsibility within limited resources. Responsible custodianship comprises a number of criteria which reflect best international museum standards. The work needs to be appropriately stored, professionally conserved (if necessary) and displayed and interpreted to its best advantage within these guidelines.

3. COLLECTION AREAS AND CRITERIA

Artworks acquired for the NERAM Collection are done so to reflect and complement the quality and standard of work in the Collections at NERAM and to allow for the collection of important contemporary works that will ensure NERAM’s continued relevance and merit within Australian art history and practice. To this end, NERAM intends to acquire museum quality works by contemporary and historical Australian artists, with a focus on New South Wales including significant artworks from or about the New England region. This acquisition policy reflects the fact that NERAM holds a uniquely focused collection of art with a small number of nationally significant works.

The Museum of Printing (MOP) Collection aims to communicate the historic and ongoing artistic and social importance of printing and printmaking within Australia. Artefacts including print machinery, equipment, tools and ephemera that have relevance to the history of printing in Australia and our region or that relate specifically to the existing collection focus on the F.T. Wimble & Co. story, may be acquired through donation or purchase to further establish MOP as one of Australia’s most significant print museums. In addition, this significant artefact collection, in combination with the extensive holdings of printing based artworks establishes printing as a collection theme for acquisitions within the NERAM

collection. Australian and international artworks, exploring the styles, techniques and processes of printmaking will be selected for inclusion in the NERAM Collection.

New England Regional Art Museum will acquire works of art:

- to improve the standard of representation of important artists already in the Collections;
- to add, in a significant way, to works of a period already represented in the Collections;
- by contemporary artists or groups who extend the existing Collections in some relevant way, reflecting the diversity of artistic practice in terms of period, theme, or media;
- to reflect and support the artistic history and talent of the local New England Region by collecting the works of significant local artists or those connected to the region, or works acting as a record or legacy of significant local creative projects which are deemed to be of museum quality;
- to add in a significant way, to the identified theme of printing both as an artistic medium and area of historic importance represented by both artworks within NERAM's collections and artefacts in the Museum of Printing collection;
- over which it can exercise responsible custodianship.

The NERAM Collections Advisory Committee assess each art work under consideration for acquisition and make a recommendation to the Board for approval prior to contracts for purchase or donation being executed.

All acquisitions must follow the Collections Management Policy. The Art Museum reserves the right to decline a proposed gift if the artwork does not meet the Collection Area and Criteria outlined in the NERAM Collections Policy. All proposed donations and purchases must be submitted for consideration by the NERAM Collections Advisory Committee to determine their relevance and alignment to the acquisition criteria.

4. AUTHORITY AND DELEGATION

The Board of NERAM makes the final decision on all acquisitions and deaccessioning based upon advice received from the Collections Advisory Committee (CAC) and the NERAM Art Museum Director, Curator and Registrar.

The Collections Advisory Committee (CAC) is a sub-committee of the Board of the New England Regional Art Museum Ltd and is chaired by a member of the Board. It provides advice to the Board of NERAM on the control and management of all new acquisitions as well as other collection related matters. The CAC meets four times annually to discuss all proposed donations that have undergone the appropriate process as outlined in the Collections Management Manual. If an acquisition is accepted by the CAC these are then submitted to the Board of NERAM for final approval. In exceptional cases, (such as specific purchase at auction that falls between CAC meetings) as determined by the Director of NERAM, acquisitions may be approved outside of meetings via e-mail if a majority vote is achieved.

The Art Museum Director recommends which works are sent to the Collections Advisory Committee for acquisition or deaccessioning, based upon consultation with stakeholders including other NERAM staff. The Art Museum Director is a member of the Collections Advisory Committee.

The Manager, Exhibitions and Curatorial (or their representative) is the staff representative on the Collections Advisory Committee and assists with co-ordinating meetings, agendas and minutes.

5. MEANS OF ACQUISITION

5.1 Purchase

Artworks may be purchased directly from dealers, agents, artists and collectors, or may be purchased at auction. Purchase of new acquisitions is generally achieved through funding assistance from external funding sources (government, corporate or philanthropic), fundraising and individual donations from the Packsaddle Committee, Friends of NERAM Inc. , individuals or groups of museum members.

5.2 Direct Donation

Donation of artworks or artefacts without financial exchange or other incentive from artists, collectors, organisations or members of the public.

5.3 Donation through the Cultural Gifts Program

The Australian Government Cultural Gifts Program (CGP) is a Commonwealth Government initiative which is recognised as an incentive to private collectors who consider donating art & other cultural items to public institutions. Once a proposed CGP donation has been approved by the Collections Advisory Committee and the Board of NERAM, museum staff can provide assistance to potential donors in organising valuations and liaising with the administrators of the Cultural Gifts Program. All Cultural Gifts submissions require two valuations to be completed by a professional valuer who has registered on the CGP Approved Valuers list. The donor is responsible for the full costs of one valuation and NERAM the other.

5.4 Bequests

The bequest of artworks will normally be considered where the testator / testatrix has given the artworks to NERAM Limited unconditionally pursuant to a Will. NERAM Limited reserves the right to accept or reject any bequest in accordance with this policy.

Artworks offered by way of a bequest that include conditions may only be accepted after consideration of the gift in accordance with this policy and, subject to recommendation of the Board of Directors.

It is recommended that potential bequests are discussed with the curatorial staff at NERAM at an early stage.

6. DEACCESSIONING

The New England Regional Art Museum will deaccession artworks from its collections for these purposes:

- removing works determined to be unfit or inappropriate for the collection;
- rationalising, consolidating and focusing the collection; or
- generating income for further collection development.

Works contained within the Hinton and Coventry Collections are prohibited from deaccessioning as per their deed of trust.

.1 Criteria for Deaccessioning

The following classes of work may be considered for deaccessioning:

- works which may not have been lawfully obtained by the Museum or which may legitimately be claimed by an individual or their heirs, trustees or representatives;
- works in poor physical condition which are beyond restoration to a level suitable for public display or scholarly use;
- works that have been determined to be forgeries, or which have been falsely or wrongly attributed;
- duplicates of a print or multiple whose retention serves no purpose for public display or scholarly use;
- with the exception of special study collections, works that fall below the general level of aesthetic quality or historical significance in the Museum's representation of an artist, period or style;
- works that fall outside the parameters of the Collection, as defined by the Art Museum's Acquisition Policy at the time of deaccessioning;
- All deaccessioned works are listed in the actioned year's annual report.

6.2 Restrictions on Deaccessioning

The following works will generally not be considered for deaccessioning:

- works acquired less than five years prior to the time of the proposed deaccession;
- works gifted or bequeathed that have conditions or trusts attached expressly or by implication prohibiting deaccession, without having taken into consideration the views of the donor, the personal representatives of the donor's estate.

6.3 Procedures for Deaccessioning

The following steps shall be followed in deaccessioning an item from the Collections:

- Identification of an item for deaccessioning shall be initiated by the Curator and Registrar in consultation with the Art Museum Director or at the request of the Board of NERAM Ltd or the Collections Advisory Committee;
- The Art Museum's clear and unrestricted title in the work shall be established;
- A written deaccession proposal shall be prepared by the Art Museum Director, and presented to the Collections Advisory Committee for consideration; the method of disposal of the item is also tabled for discussion;
- The Committee will approved the item in principle for deaccessioning on the absolute majority; the Committee will take into account the representations made;
- The recommendations of the Committee are tabled to the Board for final approval of the deaccessioning of the item; approval of deaccessioning takes a unanimous vote by the Board;
- Three months should generally elapse between the decision of the Collections Management Committee and the final resolution by the Board relating to the deaccessioning and disposal.
- Once the final Board approval for the deaccessioning is received, a written deaccession form is prepared by the Registrar; all deaccessioning paperwork needs to be countersigned by the Director, a member of the Collections Advisory Committee and a member of the Board of NERAM Ltd. Collection registers are updated and the deaccession form is filed for Audit.

6.4 Disposal of artworks to be Deaccessioned

A deaccessioned work shall be disposed of by one of the following means:

- transfer to another museum or appropriate public institution;
- exchange with another museum or appropriate public institution;
- exchange with a collector or dealer;
- sale by public tender;
- sale by public auction;
- returns to the original owner, their heirs, trustees or representatives; or
- audited destruction.

****NOTE:** In the case of exchange or sale other than by public auction, at least one independent valuation of the work and in the case of exchange with a collector or dealer at least two independent authentications and valuations shall be obtained prior to the exchange or sale, from a qualified external assessor. In relation to an exchange and after certified valuations and authentication, payment of a sum of money shall be made or received in recognition of the difference in value between the works exchanged if appropriate.

6.5 Disposal restrictions

Under no circumstance shall a deaccessioned work be purchased by or transferred or given to any Trustee or employee of the Museum, The Collections Advisory Committee or any member of their immediate families.

6.6 Proceeds from sales

Proceeds from the sale of a deaccessioned work will be:

- reserved and applied to acquisitions, with priority given if appropriate to works for the same area of the Collection; or
- reserved and applied to conservation and care of the Collections; or
- applied to the NERAM Foundation.

Where practicable, the credit line of a work acquired with the proceeds of the disposal of a donated work shall acknowledge the original donor.

7. Referenced Documents

The Collections policy should be read in relation to the following documents:

- NERAM Strategic Plan 2017-2020
- NERAM Significance Assessment 2010
- NERAM Collections Manual
- NERAM Ltd Constitution
- Hinton Trust Deed and Variation
- Coventry Trust Deed
- NERAM Foundation Trust Deed
- NERAM Preservation Needs Assessment 2012

Terms of Reference

Name: NERAM Collections Advisory Committee

Date: June 2017

Scope and Purpose: The Collections Advisory Committee reports to, and makes recommendations to the NERAM Ltd Board. It provides advice to the Board of NERAM on the control and management of all new acquisitions as well as other collection related matters.

Collections Advisory Committee Objectives:

1. To assess the current state of the collections, particularly the NERAM Collection, to rationalise, consolidate and focus the collection as required but no less than once a year.
2. To assess proposed donations of works of art for inclusion in the collections.
3. To identify works of art that are unfit or inappropriate or fall below the general level of aesthetic quality in the NERAM's representation of an artist, period or style.
4. To advise on de-accession and/or relocation measures deemed necessary towards reduction of storage and maintenance costs.
5. To review and update NERAM collection policies.
6. To formally de-accession works as in 3 and 4 (above), following which the committee will determine the most appropriate means of dispersal to the best advantage of NERAM, including:
 - a) transfer to another museum or appropriate public institution;
 - b) exchange with another museum or appropriate public institution;
 - c) exchange with a collector or dealer;
 - d) sale through public auction or dealer;
 - e) destruction.

Type: The Collections Advisory Committee (CAC) is a sub-committee of the Board of the New England Regional Art Museum Ltd.

Membership: The Committee is made up of:

- 2 NERAM staff members (Director and 1 curatorial staff member)
- 1 NERAM Ltd Board member (who acts as the CAC Chair)
- Minimum of 3 external members comprised of art experts including practicing artists, art/museum professionals, collectors and gallerists.

The committee has a minimum of six members and requires five members, or their delegates present to establish quorum.

Authority: The Committee makes recommendations to the Board of NERAM Ltd through tabling its minutes at Board Meetings and provides staff with feedback at meetings.

Meeting arrangements: The CAC meets four times annually to discuss all proposed donations that have undergone the appropriate process as outlined in the Collections Management Manual. If an acquisition is accepted by the CAC these are then submitted to the Board of NERAM for final approval. In exceptional cases, (such as specific purchase at auction that falls between CAC meetings) as determined by the

Director of NERAM, acquisitions may be approved outside of meetings via e-mail if a majority vote is achieved.

Review: The Committee will review its composition and Terms of Reference every twelve months and provide its recommendations to the NERAM Board in time for the February Board Meeting every year.