

Methodist Modern Art Collection Collection Development Policy

Governing body: The Methodist Modern Art Collection Management Committee, as appointed and delegated authority by the Methodist Council

Date approved by governing body: March 2021 **Date at which policy due for review:** May 2026

MMAC background and purpose

1. Statement of purpose

- 1.1. The Methodist Modern Art Collection contains works of art produced in the last 100 years, which offer perspectives on aspects of Christian faith and life. Some of the artists are people of faith, others are not; some of those who view them are people of faith, some are not.
- 1.2. The Methodist Church values this Collection because through exhibiting the works in local churches, cathedrals and community buildings, as well as museums and art galleries, people are encouraged to explore the meaning of life and to ask questions about faith and about the Methodist Church itself.
- 1.3. The Calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. Many of the pictures in this Collection show scenes from the Bible and from the life of Jesus and often they explore the contemporary relevance of these historical events. We hope that those who visit an exhibition will be introduced to a living faith, that they will be encouraged to ask questions and to talk to one another, and that they will enjoy the opportunity to see great works of art in their own context.
- 1.4. The Church recognises the quality of this unique Collection in British 20th century religious art and the popularity of this period at the present time with audiences, and that as the Collection

has grown, increasingly international artists are represented which creates broad appeal to wide, diverse audiences globally.

2. Seeing the spiritual: Our vision

- 2.1. The Methodist Modern Art Collection is a resource for the Methodist Church and should be used to underpin our activities. The Management Committee believe that the MMAC has a significant role to play as a tool in reaffirming the calling of the Methodist Church to respond to the Gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission.
- 2.2. Our aim is for the Collection to be a distinctive, unique and highly effective Connexional tool for mission.
- 2.3. We will promote the potential of the works of art for theological engagement with the visual arts, enthusing those of Christian faith who appreciate art, as well as helping reach those who are unconvinced by Christian faith, and promoting open-minded responses.
- 2.4. We are keen to develop non-Methodist partnerships, as well as working with others across the Connexion.
- 2.5. We are committed to broadening access to the Collection, particularly through exhibitions (both physical and online) at a popular as well as academic level, thus acknowledging the potential for the Collection to transform wider perceptions of the Methodist Church.

3. A brief history of the Methodist Modern Art Collection

- 3.1. The Collection began in the early 1960s as the inspired initiative of a Methodist layman, Dr John Morel Gibbs (1912-1996), from Penarth in South Wales. Vice-President of the 1958 Conference, he was renowned as a psychologist and academic. Working with the local Methodist minister in Penarth, the Revd Douglas Wollen (1909-1998), who worked as an art critic for publications including *The Times* and the *Methodist Recorder*, Gibbs acquired some outstanding examples of British 20th century art, all chosen to illustrate aspects of the Gospel narrative, from the Nativity to Pentecost.
- 3.2. The resulting Collection of just over 50 works was particularly strong in works by contemporary British artists such as Patrick Heron, Ceri Richards, Graham Sutherland and William Roberts. There were also examples of continental artists such as Georges Rouault, and international artists such as F. N. Souza. The first ambitious nationwide touring exhibition of the Collection – entitled *The Church and the Artist* – took place between July 1963 and September 1965.
- 3.3. The Collection was presented to the Methodist Church and was initially managed by the then Methodist Education Committee, with the Methodist Council having ultimate responsibility (as it does today). The Collection has continued to grow, thanks to the generous support of the Gibbs Family Trust and the donation of works by other benefactors (most recently in 2018, of *Behold the Man*, a watercolour by Norman Adams). It now includes examples of work by such international artists as John Muafangejo, Jyoti Sahi and Sadao Watanabe.
- 3.4. The Collection has continued to tour throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland – as a unit, or as smaller themed selections in chapels, churches, cathedrals, museums and galleries, schools, colleges, universities, and even a shopping centre. During the period between 2016 and 2018, it was seen by nearly 80,000 visitors. It has been displayed as part of local art trails and festivals,

and loans have coincided with major national themes, such as a showing in Hull during the city's 2017 Year of Culture, or to mark local events, such as the 200th anniversary of Walcot Methodist Church in Bath in 2016. We want our exhibitions to be relevant and contemporary for our audiences, addressing issues such as peace and reconciliation, the current refugee crisis, the affirmation of Dalit people, reflecting the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and ensuring a role in the healing process, and where possible, embracing equality, diversity and inclusion.

- 3.5. From 2019 to 2021, the Collection underwent a 'rejuvenation pause', enabling a planned conservation programme to be undertaken with the aim of a relaunch in 2021. The Collection will then be presented in optimum condition, with many paintings transformed by surface cleaning and other interventions, and protected by stronger frames suitable to withstand the physical demands on the Collection from frequent touring. Going forward, the Committee aims to care for the Collection to the highest standards, 'preserving it for future generations' (Collections Care and Conservation Policy, 2021) and ensuring that it plays a key role in the missional life of the Methodist Church.

1. Strategic context and aims

1.1. Scope of the Collection

- 1.1.1. We aim to enhance the Collection through identifying strategic priorities for acquisition, the emphasis of which will change from time to time. In certain areas our Collection can be regarded as comprehensive and therefore unlikely to expand further unless some exceptional works become available.
- 1.1.2. Works entering the Collection should be 'modern' or 'contemporary' in the broadest sense and dated no earlier than 1900. Whilst there is a historic focus on British art, we are committed to broadening our holding of work by artists from

around the world, particularly from those regions where Methodism is most prevalent. In doing so, we hope to improve inclusivity and relevance for the World Church.

- 1.1.3. Traditionally we have collected across a limited range of disciplines – predominantly painting, drawing and print. Our aspiration is to extend the range of works in the Collection to include sculpture, photography and time-based media including film and video work.

1.2. Collecting activity

- 1.2.1. We will build relationships and identify and cultivate potential sources in order to engage with a variety of means of acquisition to include bequest, gift, purchase and commission. We aim to strengthen our relationships with artists, collectors and experts in order to enhance our opportunities to acquire significant items, and we will establish clear processes to facilitate legacy giving.
- 1.2.2. We will balance opportunism and strategy in our collecting. While our collecting strategy gives us a general framework and sets out some particular targets, there should also be room for us to respond to the unexpected opportunity. Sometimes this may require a swift attempt to lever funding to bid at auction, or a longer-term approach to cultivating a specific legacy or bequest.
- 1.2.3. Acknowledgement of supporters' generosity, whether from an organisation or an individual, will be important to the consolidation of existing relationships and to the cultivation of others. Wherever possible and appropriate, we will seek to profile new acquisitions and major loans with due acknowledgement.

1.3. Purchasing for the Collection

- 1.3.1. We will develop and implement a fundraising strategy to encourage regular giving towards an Acquisitions Fund. The Friends of MMAC will be key partners in this activity. We will seek funding from grant making bodies and other charitable

organisations in order to enhance the value of this fund or to support a particular purchase.

- 1.3.2. Where financial gifts are offered, we will ask donors if they are willing for the gift to be held in escrow until an acquisition can be made in line with strategic objectives.

1.4. Resource

In order to strengthen our collecting aspirations, we will encourage and develop further the skills of our Management Committee in seeking out, nurturing and securing acquisitions. Curatorial expertise needs to be applied to a rigorous selection process and to the advocacy of fundraising and legacy giving. We will also develop our networks of expertise and advice to enable us to draw upon a range of sources should this become necessary.

2. Principles of collecting

- 2.1. We will acquire objects if they are considered to have the potential for display and touring and for use in other media, taking account of the Methodist Council's Historic Artefacts Collections Policy, which encourages increased online access to Methodist Collection.
- 2.2. We will acquire objects if they have the potential for use for missional purposes and can be interpreted for audiences in a meaningful and interesting way. The subject of any work acquired should reflect the Christian narrative and experience. It is not a requirement that the artist should be a Christian, but the subject should be dealt with respectfully.
- 2.3. We will acquire objects if they fill an identified gap in the Collection. This may include, but is not limited to, gaps in subject matter, artistic style or medium, geographical region or historical period.
- 2.4. The Management Committee has the right to refuse a gift, if it determines that the work of art is not fit to be part of the Collection or if adequate

resources to store or maintain the work are not available.

- 2.5. We will acquire objects if they have an identified research potential, or if they illuminate and enhance existing holdings in the MMAC.
- 2.6. We aim to be representative rather than comprehensive and to seek excellence rather than quantity. At no point should the expansion of the Collection dilute its artistic integrity.
- 2.7. Wherever the person from whom the work is acquired is the rights holder, we will negotiate reproduction rights at the point of acquisition. As a minimum, we will seek permission to reproduce images of the work in published online catalogues, non-commercial promotional material (online and offline), for press, marketing, social media use and digital engagement.
- 2.8. We will only acquire works which meet with the unanimous approval of all members of the Management Committee. An exception to this will be where there is an imperative to respond quickly to an unexpected time-sensitive acquisition opportunity. In such circumstances, the decision to acquire work may be taken by a delegated group of no fewer than three members of the Management Committee.

3. Limitations on collecting

- 3.1. We recognise our responsibility, in acquiring additions to the Collection, to ensure that care of the Collection, documentation arrangements and use of the Collection will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard and of the Methodist Historic Artefact Collections Management Policy. We will collect responsibly in light of available finance, staffing or storage.
- 3.2. In addition to the above, the collecting plans detailed in this document are normally limited by the following factors:
 - 3.2.1. Material will not be acquired for the Collection unless suitable environmental conditions are available for storage.

- 3.2.2. Material will not be acquired if conservation or remedial treatment to make the acquisition suitable for long-term storage cannot be carried out to a defined programme of work determined before acquisition.
- 3.2.3. New acquisitions will be sound and fit to travel to multiple venues, or will have potential to tour once conservation work (for which funding has been identified) has been carried out.
- 3.2.4. Larger objects will not be acquired unless the space to contain the material and the long-term resources to maintain them are clearly defined before acquisition.
- 3.2.5. Where curatorial and registrar expertise is absent, for the time being, a cautious approach to acquisition will prevail and the presumption will be against acquisition.
- 3.2.6. Material will only be acquired if it is well provenanced and has a well-documented full history.
- 3.2.7. The Management Committee will obtain two independent valuations before purchasing any new works for the Collection.

4. Summary of main priorities 2021-2025

Our summary of priorities is as follows:

- 4.1. To continue to collect across the range of disciplines in accordance with identified specific priorities:
 - 4.1.1. Representing the contemporary.
 - 4.1.2. Time-based media work.
 - 4.1.3. Women artists.
 - 4.1.4. Artists from the World Church.
 - 4.1.5. Gospel narratives not yet represented in the MMAC.

- 4.2. To seek excellence rather than quantity and to focus on items of national and international significance.
- 4.3. To ensure sufficient curatorial time is given to the cultivation of relationships with peers, potential donors and lenders and develop further the skills of our committee members in this area.
- 4.4. To enhance our funding and support networks to support acquisitions.

5. Collecting policies of other organisations

We will take into account the collecting policies of other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. The Management Committee will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

6. Policy review procedure

- 6.1. 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.
- 6.2. The Methodist Council will be notified of any changes to the Collections Development Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of the MMAC.

7. 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 Management Committee, having regard to the interests of other Collections.

8. Acquisition

- 8.1. A completed acquisitions proposal form will be completed for every potential acquisition and submitted to the Collections Care and Conservation Working Group for consideration and recommendation to the Committee.

- 8.2. The MMAC Management Committee (MMACMC) will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the Committee is satisfied that it can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 8.3. In particular, the MMACMC 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.)
- 8.4. 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 1 November 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the MMACMC will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The Management Committee will be advised by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by DCMS in 2005.
- 8.5. The MMACMC will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the Committee or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures, such as 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 (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or reporting finds through the Treasure Trove procedure (in Scotland).
- 8.6. Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the MMACMC is:
 - 8.6.1. acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or

- 8.6.2. 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; or
- 8.6.3. acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
- 8.6.4. in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases, the MMACMC will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

9. Human remains

We do not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

10. Biological or geological material

We do not hold or intend to acquire any biological or geological material.

11. Spoliation

We will use 'Spoliation of works of art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of principles and proposed actions', issued by the National Museum Directors' Conference in 1998, and report on them in accordance with the guidelines.

12. Repatriation and restitution

The Methodist Council, acting on the advice of the MMACMC, may take a decision to return objects or works to a country or people of origin. The MMACMC will take such decisions on a case-by-case basis, within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications.

13. Management of archives

- 13.1. As we hold and intend to acquire archives relating to works in the Collection, including photographs and printed ephemera, the Management Committee will be guided by the Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd edition, 2002). The MMACMC will also aim to meet the standards for archives outlined in The National Archives Standard for Records Repositories (2004).
- 13.2. The MMACMC will also adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in its acquisition, care and management of archive Collections.

14. Disposal

- 14.1. By definition, we have a long-term purpose and should possess (or intend to acquire) a permanent Collection in relation to its stated objectives. We accept the principle that there is a strong presumption against the disposal of any items in the Collection.
- 14.2. All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM primary procedures on disposal.
- 14.3. The MMACMC will establish that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Any decision to dispose of material from the Collection will be taken only after due consideration and with the agreement of the Methodist Council. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, Friends of the MMAC and others served by the Collection will be sought.
- 14.4. The Methodist Council may dispose of an object by way of sale, gift or exchange:
 - 14.4.1. where the object is transferred to another national museum or institution listed in Schedule 5 Part 1 of the Museums and Galleries Act 1992;
 - 14.4.2. where the object is transferred to another Methodist museum or heritage site, Methodist school, or Methodist church;

- 14.4.3. where the object is a duplicate of another item already owned by the Methodist Church;
- 14.4.4. where the object, in the Management Committee's opinion, is unsuitable for retention in the Collection (eg because it is no longer of [or never possessed] missional value or because it cannot be cared for appropriately) and can be disposed of without detriment to the interests of the Methodist Church or members of the public;
- 14.4.5. where the object has become useless for the purposes of the Collection by reason of damage, physical deterioration, or infestation by destructive organisms (in this case, the means of disposal can include destruction).
- 14.5. When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the MMACMC 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.
- 14.6. Decisions to dispose of items will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds.
- 14.7. Any monies received from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the Collection. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions but, in exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of the Collection in order to meet or exceed accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the Collection may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way.
- 14.8. A recommendation 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 Collection), will be the responsibility of the MMACMC acting on the advice of professional curatorial and conservation staff, if any, and not of any officer of the Collection acting alone.
- 14.9. The MMACMC require any proposition that an object has become unsuitable for retention to be verified sequentially by a multi-disciplinary panel of curators before the case is brought to the Methodist Council. An internal auditor is consulted in all methods of disposal.
- 14.10. 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 free transfer of title, to another national museum or institution, as listed in Schedule 5 Part 1 of the 1992 Act, or by free transfer of title to other accredited museums likely to be interested in its acquisition. Priority will be given to other Methodist museums and collections.
- 14.11. Free transfer of title as described in 14.10 is to be undertaken via a deed with a ten-year right of pre-emption. In the rare event that a satisfactory transfer of the object or work could not be arranged and it had to be sold, the proceeds of the sale would be protected within the purchase allocation and not applied to defray running or project costs.
- 14.12. If the material is not acquired by any accredited museums to which it was offered directly, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through a notice on the Museum Association's 'Find an Object' web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 14.13. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of 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.

- 14.14. 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.

15. Codes of Conduct

- 15.1. We are committed to achieving standards of excellence as defined by the relevant professional codes and standards for Collections care. This Collection and Disposal policy for the Methodist Council conforms to the relevant provisions of the following codes and standards. Copies of the standards are kept in the appropriate departments.

15.2 Codes and standards

- 15.2.1. Department of Culture, Media and Sport, 2005, Combating Illicit Trade: Due diligence guidelines for museums,

libraries and archives on collecting and borrowing cultural material

- 15.2.2. Museums and Galleries Commission/Museums Association, Guidelines on Disability for Museums and Galleries
- 15.2.3. Museums Association, 2002, Code of Ethics for Museums
- 15.2.4. Museums Association, 2004, Acquisition: Guidance on the ethics and practicalities of acquisition. Ethical Guidelines. Advice from the Museums Association Ethics Committee. Number 1, second edition, 2004
- 15.2.5. Museums Association, 1996, Disposal: Guidance on the ethics and practicalities of disposal. Ethical Guidelines. Advice from the Museums Association Ethics Committee. Number 2, June 1996
- 15.2.6. National Archives, 2004, Standard for Records Repositories
- 15.2.7. Standing Conference on Archives and Museums, 2002, Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom, third edition

Appendices

4. Collections Care and Conservation Policy
5. Exhibition Loans Policy