

**Arts Council Collection
Collections Information
Policy & Documentation
Procedure**

Collections Information Policy

1 Introduction

Recording information about collections is an essential aspect of responsible collections management.

The policy aims to ensure that Arts Council Collection fulfils its responsibilities in relation to security, management and access to collections information. It will:

- Improve accountability for collections.
- Maintain at least minimum professional standards in documentation.
- Extend access to collection information.
- Strengthen the security of the collections.

The policy is one element of the Arts Council Collection's wider collections management framework.

It should be read in conjunction with the documents contained in the Arts Council Collection Collections Management Policy Framework, which includes the Collections Development Policy, Collections Access Policy, Loan Policy, and Care and Conservation Policy.

Mission Statement

The Arts Council Collection is the national loan collection of modern and contemporary British art. Founded in 1946, the Collection reaches the broadest possible audience through long loans to public institutions, exhibition loans, touring exhibitions, and digital and print publications. The Collection supports artists in the UK through the purchase and display of their work, and safeguards it for future generations using the highest possible standards of collections care.

Description of Collections

The Arts Council Collection is one of the largest loan collections of modern contemporary British Art. There are now almost 8,000 works in the

Collection, which is owned by Arts Council England and administered by the Southbank Centre in London. The collection operates as a 'museum without walls' and is the most widely circulated of all of Britain's national collections. Works are varied and can be viewed in exhibitions in museums and galleries across the UK and abroad and include paintings, sculpture, original works on paper, prints, photographs, film and video, and installation works.

Arts Council Collection lends to public buildings across the UK, including schools, universities, hospitals and charitable associations.

2 Standards

The Arts Council Collection aspires to record information about its collections in accordance with the standards set out in PAS 197:2009 Code of Practice for cultural collections management, the UK Accreditation Standard and SPECTRUM 4.0 – the UK Standard for Collections Management.

As a minimum, this will include artist/collective details, acquisition method, donor/purchase details, object name, object description, accession number and location.

The Arts Council Collection aims to enhance records as far as possible with the addition of provenance information and high-resolution images (as resources allow).

The Trust undertakes to maintain SPECTRUM key procedures as follows:

- Object entry.
- Acquisition (accession register, security copy of accession register and marking/labelling of objects with their accession number).
- Location and movement control.
- Cataloguing.
- Object exit.
- Loans in.
- Loans out.
- Retrospective documentation.

The Arts Council Collection is committed to maintaining an up-to-date documentation procedures manual to ensure consistent application of

standards in accordance with SPECTRUM key procedures.

3 Ethics and Legislation

Work in this area is guided by the Data Protection Act 1998, Intellectual Property rights, the Museums Association Code of Ethics 2015 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

4 Access to Collections Information

The Arts Council Collection is committed to developing access to collections information for the public, partners, staff and researchers.

Access to collections information for the Arts Council Collection is particularly important to enable accurate and relevant information to be made available to potential borrowers and partners.

The Arts Council Collection uses the SPECTRUM compliant Vernon collections management system, which makes a fully searchable online catalogue available to users.

Vernon is managed and maintained by the Southbank Centre on behalf of the Arts Council Collection. Staff access the Vernon system through computers at Southbank Centre, Winchester House and Longside.

Access to collections information is also made available through:

- Catalogues.
- Annual publications of new acquisitions.
- Exhibition information and labels.
- The Arts Council Collection website.
- Social media.
- Research visits.

Arts Council Collection and Southbank Centre are committed to regularly updating the Vernon system and ensuring collections information remains current and accessible.

5 Security of Collections Information

The Vernon collections management system database is backed up regularly on the central Southbank Centre server.

To guard against obsolescence, regular checks will be maintained to ensure paper and electronic records remain up to date and accessible.

The Arts Council Collection will ensure that paper documentation records are managed securely and back-up copies are maintained in line with SPECTRUM standards.

Documentation Procedure

The Arts Council Collection aims to comply with SPECTRUM procedures and recognises that, although all works in the Collection are formally acquired, the criteria below has not been completed for each object.

The required information according to SPECTRUM standards is:

- Unique number.
- Title.
- Artist(s).
- Year.
- Method of acquisition e.g. purchase.
- Media.
- Provenance.
- Measurement.

Where further information is available, this will be added to the collections database, Vernon. The Arts Council Collection aims to audit its information backlog and create a plan for improvement by December 2017.

Object Entry Procedure

When an object has been formally acquired it will have completed acquisition paperwork and been collected and brought to one of our two collection stores (see Acquisitions Procedure). In rare cases, work may go straight from the original owner to exhibition. In this instance, a member of the Arts Council Collection team will oversee the unpacking and condition checking of the work at the exhibition venue. The work officially enters the Collection at the point it is collected from the original owner.

On entering our store, each object is assigned a number and a record on our collections database, Vernon. It will be condition checked and any concerns will be raised with the Senior Curator or Collection Curator. It will then be given a home location and this location will be entered into Vernon.

Numbering

The Arts Council Collection uses the following format for numbering objects: The Arts Council Collection YEAR/001, for the first object acquired that year.

Historically, the Arts Council Collection has adopted a variety of numbering

systems which include:

AC 001
ACA 001
ACL 001
ACP 001
PR 001

Temporary Objects

The Arts Council Collection recognises that there are a small number of objects at our stores which have not been accessioned or assigned a temporary number. We aim to rectify these issues by April 2018.

On the occasion of housing a loan object in preparation for a touring exhibition or similar, each object will be assigned a unique number which follows the format T001.

Cataloguing

All works are listed on our collections management database, Vernon.

The Arts Council Collection keeps a hard record of all acquisition information in a printed and bound Accession Register. This is updated every April by the Acquisition Coordinator and stored in two separate locations in a locked, fire-proof cabinet.

Labelling and Marking

All objects in the Collection are labelled with a unique Arts Council Collection number on entering the store. Methods for object labelling or marking include:

- Writing on in pencil.
- Attaching a label to the reverse of the work.
- Writing a number on the t-frame or crate.

Object Movement

Any entry to, or exit from, our collection stores is receipted, with the receipt signed by Arts Council Collection staff releasing/receiving the object and by those responsible for collecting/delivering the object. From this receipt, Vernon is updated and the original receipt is filed for future reference.

Internal Movement

If an object is moved and is not returned to its original location by the end of the working day this must be logged on a movement sheet which is brought up to the office at which point Vernon is updated. The technicians also keep a movement log of their own in store so we have two records of in-store movements to cross reference against.

Photography

The Arts Council Collection aims to have high quality images of all of its works. As of March 2017, there are 365 sculpture works which need to be photographed and 165 works whose home location is Winchester House. This does not include works which may need to be re-photographed due to poor quality of the original images. The Arts Council Collection aims to photograph a minimum of 20 works at Longside and 30 works at Winchester House per annum.

Valuations

Each work is valued by the Director of the Arts Council Collection before going out on loan. Values are recorded on Vernon and provided for borrowers on request.

Loans In

Before any borrowed work enters an Arts Council Collection premises the following procedure will be adhered to:

- A written agreement will be in place signed by an Arts Council Collection representative and the lender with clear reference to Arts Council Collection care standards and other terms and conditions.
- The reason for the loan will be clearly stated to the lender and logged in Vernon.
- Loans will be for a fixed period to protect against a backlog of objects whose ownership status is unclear.
- Appropriate insurance or indemnity cover will be in place.
- Where object storage is necessary, a suitable location will be identified.

Audit

The Arts Council Collection aims to audit the Collection every five years. The purpose of an audit is to check that all works are in their recorded location, to check the condition of works to ascertain conservation priorities, to improve storage conditions and to undertake housekeeping.

It is recommended that the Collection be split into discrete sections and

audited in sequence. The audit will be managed by the Arts Council Collection Senior Curator and Collection Curator, making records tamper-proof.

In the case of suspected theft, a sampling audit will be triggered where a random selection of 150 objects will be audited.

Audit findings will be signed off by the Director of the Arts Council Collection. If works are discovered to be missing as part of the audit, the Director of the Arts Council Collection will lead an investigation into tracing the work(s).

