



## **Collections Development Policy**

### **Victoria & Albert Museum**

South Kensington  
London, SW7 2RL  
January 2015

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## Prologue: Contemporary collecting at the heart of the V&A's mission

Collecting the contemporary has occupied a special place in the history and mission of the V&A. We have collected in a wide variety of fields of design, and continue to do so in order to represent the practice of design as it is today, as well as to reflect the role of design in society. In addition, the Museum has collected new work in particular branches of art, especially prints and photography and artists' books. More recently, contemporary performance has been added to the categories of art and design practice collected. Currently, contemporary collecting is pursued across all the Museum's departments. This 2014 version of the V&A's Collection Development Policy begins by asserting the continuing relevance and central concerns of the V&A's contemporary collecting. The scope, history and standing of the major collecting departments follow, providing a detailed account of the Museum's collections and efforts to enrich and promote them in the service of our strategic aims.

Diversity of curatorial approach is a quality of the V&A. For some departments it is a priority to support craft skills or fields of decorative art that the museum has always collected. Some fields of design are so broad that curators have developed a focus on, for example, the haute couture, the handmade or the studio produced object in order to keep pace with artistic developments; others increasingly focus on the mass produced, or maintain an ongoing commitment to everyday visual culture.

When first set up as the 'Museum of Ornamental Art' in 1852, the embryonic V&A acquired a selection of casts and other teaching aids, transferred from the 'School of Design' (later to become the Royal College of Art), and £5,000 worth of purchases of British and foreign articles of contemporary manufacture from the Great Exhibition of 1851. The aim was to improve the design of manufactured goods by showing contemporary as well as historical specimens 'to illustrate the history of various manufactures' – some for outstanding skill of manufacture or workmanship, others to present to the manufacturer and to the public choice examples of what science and art had accomplished in manufactures of all kinds.

These were mainly contemporary holdings, but they were quickly supplemented by the acquisition of fine examples of Medieval and Renaissance art by J C Robinson, then curator of the Museum. For the next 100 years the Museum's resources were concentrated mainly on historical collections. A few contemporary objects were acquired – the Donaldson Gift of Art Nouveau furniture in 1900 is particularly noteworthy – but there was no sustained Museum-wide effort to make late 19th- and 20th-century collections representative. The exceptions were the Prints and Drawings Department, which consistently collected contemporary prints in the 20th century, the Library, which collected books illustrated by major modern artists as well as modern binding and calligraphy, and the Circulation Department, which developed touring exhibitions for the regions, actively collecting contemporary objects. Finding that objects of recent manufacture were of greatest relevance for the students of colleges to which their shows were circulated, the Department gradually assumed responsibility for the full range of the Museum's 20th-century collections in the mid-20th century. It was only on the closure of the Circulation Department in 1977 that the majority of the 'materials' or 'cultures' departments began to submit their 20th-century collections to the same critical and scholarly review as the earlier collections and to set about giving them significant shape.

From 1982 to 1986 the V&A collaborated with the Conran Foundation to develop the 'Boilerhouse', which brought a fresh new dimension to the V&A with exhibitions of current manufactures. A young audience, keen for explorations of recent developments in product design, was secured. After the Foundation moved its activities to the Design Museum at Butler's Wharf, debates about the V&A's contemporary role intensified. In 1988, the centrality of collecting contemporary design was reasserted in an attempt to re-connect with the Museum's founding principles. This was allied to a desire to serve today's audience among the creative industries as well as to provide inspiration for all.

In 2002 a new programme-led Contemporary Team was formed. It presented an active and innovative programme of displays, installations, events and exhibitions featuring contemporary art and design, including the themed, monthly Friday Late evenings. In 2007, the Museum opened the Porter Gallery – the hub of the designated contemporary programme. Offering a wide range of exhibitions, in collaboration with curators in other Museum departments, it brought the best of today's visual culture from around the world to the Museum. Spanning all aspects of art and design including fashion, furniture, product design, craft, graphic design,

digital media, performance, architecture and photography, the contemporary exhibition programme considered the inter-relationships between these forms. These expanded our younger audience as well as widening our base within the creative industries. In addition, the Museum formed a partnership to appoint a joint V&A/Brighton University Research Fellow in product design, which continues today.

In 2012-13 the Museum restructured the Contemporary Team to create a collections-based section which pursues areas of contemporary work central to the practice of design in the world today, while bringing a newly directed focus on contemporary to the heart of the Museum, its collections. This reorganization sought to redress the balance towards fields where the majority of designers work. The Contemporary Architecture and Urbanism, Product Design and Digital Design (CADD) section now forms part of an expanded Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department.

The wider context for CADD's work is to consider design within the context of society today. The subjects of CADD are not meant to be exclusive of one another or defined narrowly and, indeed, digital design (as process, as interface and as object) is central to all areas of contemporary art and design collected by the Museum. The collecting strategy of the CADD section therefore overlays and further complements departmental strategies. The CADD team has also developed a new logic for collecting that responds to global events. 'Rapid Response Collecting' has brought objects such as the world's first 3-D printed gun, and a pair of Primark jeans that promote reflection and debate about the Rana Plaza factory fire in Bangladesh that killed over 1000 textile workers. CADD curators have been shaping debates on topics that connect the designed world to current socio-political concerns.

Thus, contemporary collecting in CADD engages with design's central position in debates about globalisation, consumerism, ecology, politics and so on, in order to bring to the fore the ethical choices made in creating a work of design, as well as technical and aesthetic achievements. In future, these concerns will increasingly spread across all Museum departments. Every collecting department faces the challenge of reflecting the evolution of art and design practice in its particular field. New definitions of such practice are emerging that will certainly inform the thinking of every curator engaged in contemporary collecting.

The V&A collects recent and contemporary art and design more broadly than any other institution. Some parts of the collection are paralleled elsewhere, although often to different ends. The Crafts Council's 'national collection of craft' is intended for loan to other bodies and serves a purpose analogous to the loan collection of the Arts Council England, which works harmoniously with the relevant national museum collections. The Design Museum deals with the design development, production and marketing of mass manufactured artefacts. The British Museum's collections of 20th-century ceramics, glass and metalwork are of a very high quality but they are limited in range and depth compared with the holdings of the V&A, and have not typically included current work. Following an agreement made in 1983 with Tate, we do not currently collect large-scale sculpture produced after 1914, or British and European oil

paintings except when associated with architecture, design and the decorative arts. The V&A is working actively with all these institutions to ensure that our respective endeavours work to mutual and public advantage.

Our cross-Museum contemporary collecting reflects what is new, what is influential, what is innovative or experimental, and what is representative of contemporary social and artistic trends in an increasingly global world. Every artefact acquired is the result of a creative process and is culturally significant. There are obvious important specialist areas within the collection, detailed in the departmental plans, and we maintain and develop their unique focus.

The Museum's strategy therefore aims to mirror the cross-disciplinary and multi-faceted nature of contemporary practice. Designers may be working in a variety of specialist arenas at any given time. We reflect the nature of practice in a variety of fields, bound neither by institutional departmental interests nor by conventional material and geographic categories. Our work is based on collaborative research and analysis of current trends.

Documenting the design process has been a special aspect of the V&A's historical and contemporary collecting since the 19th century. We collect not only finished objects but also design drawings, models, prototypes and material samples, as well as in more recent decades recorded interviews with the artist, craftsperson, designer or company, corporate literature, trade catalogues, and information on the manufacture and dissemination of products. Such collecting grows out of relationships formed with contemporary practitioners, makers and manufacturers and allows us to take unique advantage of such contacts.

Collecting the contemporary is crucial to the mission of the V&A and to our audiences. Of special importance are the ways in which our historical collecting informs our approach to collecting the new, as well as how our collecting contemporary art and design helps us look afresh at work of the past. That dialogue between past and present reminds us of our founding mission to promote knowledge and understanding of the designed world to the widest possible range of public.

The six chapters that follow describe how the V&A's collecting departments develop the collections to that end. The plan concludes with brief sections about our future collecting and engagement with Africa and Latin America. There is rich information about many of the collections and subjects discussed in the plan freely available on the V&A website. To avoid footnoting we have not supplied web addresses, but we hope that readers will be inspired to find out more.

## **1. ASIAN DEPARTMENT**

### **1.1. Scope, history, standing and collecting**

The Asian Department was created in 2001 by bringing together the Indian and South-East Asian and East Asian collections with the Museum's holdings of material from the Middle East, giving the Museum a coherent strategy for all its Asian collections for the first time in its history. The scope of these collections is extremely broad chronologically, geographically and in terms of media. The collections include paintings in oil, watercolour and ink on canvas, paper and cloth; prints and photography; sculpture and carvings in stone, metal, wood, ivory, jade and other hardstones; metalwork and jewellery; arms and armour; dress, textiles and carpets; ceramics and glass; furniture and lacquer. The process of drawing together the Museum's collections from the Middle East, Islamic Central Asia, North Africa and Islamic Spain is nearing completion and when fully assembled the Asian Collections will encompass over 150,000 objects.

The cultures of Asia, whose peoples today represent over 60% of the world's population, are of great historical depth. At different times and in different ways they have both influenced and been influenced by Western art and culture. Today, Asia is undergoing rapid change and is of great economic, political and cultural significance and this is reflected in the Museum's collections. The V&A's world-class Asian collections, together with those of institutions such as the British Museum and the British Library, make London the most important centre for the appreciation and study of Asian art and archaeology outside the various countries of origin. The Museum therefore has an important role to play in helping to interpret both historical and contemporary Asian artistic, design and cultural traditions to a growing and changing audience of national and international visitors.

The V&A's particular strengths lie in the decorative arts and design history, complementing the archaeological focus and numismatic strengths of the British Museum, and the British Library's focus on manuscripts and the printed book. There is considerable consultation with other institutions in London and throughout the UK as we continue to build our collections with a national framework in mind. For all our acquisitions, we pay close attention to provenance and follow UNESCO protocols.

We aim to continue to build and develop our Asian collections by acquiring objects that illustrate and document the history of art and design throughout Asia. In fields where designers are active in international arenas, we work in consultation and collaboration with the Museum's other curatorial departments, including the Contemporary Architecture, Design and Digital team.

### 1.1.1. South and South-East Asia

The collections from the South Asian subcontinent (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) range from ca. 3,000 BC to the present and number ca. 60,000 objects. The Museum also holds rich collections from most regions of South-East Asia (Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia, ca. 3,500 objects) and from the Himalayan region (Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal and Tibet ca. 1,500 objects).

The collection of Mughal court arts includes some of the most important pieces in the world, such as the wine cup of Shah Jahan, and the collection of South Asian textiles (ca. 10,000 items) is the largest and most important outside the region itself. A few very significant artefacts from the courts of Tipu Sultan and Maharaja Ranjit Singh make the V&A an important centre of study in both these fields. The collections of South Asian paintings and works on paper (ca. 5,000) and sculpture (ca. 5,000) are, along with those of the British Library and the British Museum respectively, among the finest in the western world. The V&A's distinctive strengths also include furniture (ca. 300), musical instruments (ca. 200) and objects relating to the performing arts. The collection is strong in metalwork and decorative arts of the second half of the 19th century, especially items made for exhibition purposes, but does not comprehensively cover earlier periods. The Museum has smaller collections of works by 20th - and 21st-century artists and designers, (both those based in the Indian subcontinent and of South Asian origin working in the UK) and a significant holding of 20th-century and contemporary Indian film posters – a genre which is important to an understanding of the modern and contemporary visual world of South Asia.

In addition to the ca. 60,000 objects from South Asia already cited, the archive collection of 19th-century (predominantly architectural site) photographs of South Asia, (ca. 20,000 prints and a large collection of negatives) along with photographic documentation of items of Indian art elsewhere in the V&A, is of enormous value.

From South-East Asia, the V&A holds a significant collection of 19th-century material from Burma (Myanmar) and further strengths include a good collection of textiles and the UK's most important collections of early sculptures from Indonesia, Thailand, Burma and Cambodia, and of metalwork from mainland South-East Asia.

The Himalayan collection consists primarily of sculpture, *tangkas* (painted scrolls), and ritual and domestic vessels, but also includes important items of dress, personal ornament, arms and armour.

The South and South-East Asian collections originated in the Museum of the East India Company. In the second half of the 19th century the 'India Museum' was transferred to the newly established India Office and its broadly based historical collections were developed with a particular focus on arts, manufactures, and economic products, largely through acquisitions

from international exhibitions. By the 1870s they included an unrivalled assemblage of then contemporary decorative arts from all of what was then considered 'Greater India', i.e. those areas of South-East Asia and the Himalayan regions that had historically been influenced by India, or which were governed by British India. In 1880 the old India Museum was dispersed, and its decorative arts and historical collections were brought together in South Kensington with the collections that had been developed at the Museum.

When the V&A's collections were rationalised in 1909 and divided into material-based collections and departments, the South Asian collections continued to be known as the 'India Museum'. A new appreciation of early Indian art forms and religious traditions led to the serious collecting of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain sculpture and of Indian painting in the 1910s and 20s. This continued in a substantial manner in the 1930s, 40s and 50s under the Department's Keepers, K de Burgh Codrington and W G Archer. In the mid-1950s, the old 'India Museum' was demolished, and the collection's displays, now much reduced in scale, were moved to the main South Kensington site, but the broad pattern of collecting both historical and contemporary sculpture, painting and the decorative arts and design has continued since that date.

In the case of the South Asian historical collections, we aim to acquire selective examples of sculpture of the Gupta and medieval periods and court art from the 16th to 19th century, as well as paintings from both religious and secular traditions, early examples of South Asian textiles (including trade textiles), types of 18th - and 19th-century furniture, metalwork, jewellery and objects made for everyday use. One aim will be to acquire objects that will enrich Nehru gallery rotation displays in areas where there are few examples in the collection, such as Sultanate, Deccani and pre-Mughal Hindu painting. Opportunities will also be sought to acquire notable examples of significant genres of art from particular traditions, such as the Jain religion, where these are not well represented in the collection. With regard to South-East Asia we aim to build on our holdings of sculpture, painted works, textiles and jewellery. We also hope to strengthen the Himalayan collection by the judicious addition of examples of early painting (12th-14th centuries) and sculpture, and of early 20th-century textiles and jewellery which represent the traditional culture of the region.

In the case of post-1900 works, we aim to increase our South Asian holdings in all media to reflect changes in society, technology and the use of raw materials. In the sphere of paintings, drawings and prints we will continue to work closely with the British Museum in the acquisition of works that reflect more indigenous traditions and with the V&A's Western collections with regard to the work of artists whose approach is more self-consciously international. The Department also intends to collaborate with South Asian institutions and individuals to develop its collection of contemporary handloom/hand-dyed/hand-printed textiles from the traditional and modern design arenas by purchase and commission. Recent years have also seen the rapid development of a South Asian fashion industry, much of it based on a revival and elaboration of indigenous types of dress. We aim to collect and document key examples of modern and contemporary clothing, fashion and textiles. We also aim to acquire examples of craft and product design relating to the domestic interior. We plan to focus on the major strengths of our

South-East Asian and Himalayan collections by acquiring selective examples of contemporary paintings, textiles and decorative arts.

#### 1.1.2. East Asia

The collections from East Asia consist of ca. 65,350 items from China, Japan and Korea. They include objects from China (ca. 18,000 items) ranging from archaeological material of the 4th millennium BC to 21st-century items, Japanese material (ca. 48,500 items) primarily from the 16th century to the present, and Korean material (ca. 850 items) from the Three Kingdoms period (57BC-668AD) to the present.

The Museum has collected material from East Asia since its inception. Important donations and bequests during the course of the 20th century, coupled with determined scholarship and collecting by individual curators, led to major strengths. These included acquisitions from the Salting, Eumorfopoulos, Hildburgh, Alexander and Le Blond collections; and the curatorial achievements of B Rackham, W B Honey and John Ayers in the fields of Chinese and Korean ceramics, and G Wingfield Digby for Japanese textiles.

The East Asian collections were assembled from the materials-based departments of the Museum in 1970. This reassembling under the care of specialist curators permitted the Museum to achieve a comprehensive assessment of its Chinese, Japanese and Korean holdings for the first time. Together they now constitute the largest and most extensive museum collection of East Asian ceramics (totalling ca. 9,000 items) and East Asian furniture and textiles (over 4,000) in the UK, while the collections of Chinese export art and Japanese prints (over 30,000), *inro* (ca. 570 items) and lacquer (ca.2,000 items) are among the finest in the western world. Following the generous gift from Edwin Davies, CBE, the V&A now has the largest and most comprehensive collection of Japanese cloisonné enamels of any museum in the world. Further strengths are Chinese metalwork and carvings (ca. 1,500 items), Japanese *netsuke* (ca.860 items) and swords and sword fittings (over 5,000 items). The V&A has also built up a strong Korean collection despite the scarce availability of Korean artefacts during the colonial period (1910-45), Korean War (1950-53) and military regimes. Excellent ceramics, textiles, metalwork, furniture and lacquer-ware have been acquired through generous donations and strategic purchases.

Since 1980, there has been a consistent focus on modern and contemporary collecting. 20th-21st-century Chinese artefacts have been collected in a conscious effort to map the period and now constitute an impressive group perhaps unmatched outside China. Contemporary Japanese crafts, which the Museum has been collecting actively since the late 1980s, are another particular strength. Contemporary Korean ceramics and works in other media have also been steadily acquired since the establishment of the Korean Gallery in 1992, the first of its kind in London.

In the case of East Asia we continue to collect historical material selectively to augment and enrich our existing collections and to allow for the rotation of sensitive material such as painting, calligraphy, textiles and dress. The main focus of East Asian collecting is on 20th and 21st century material. In the case of Japan, we work with the material-based departments of the Museum to collect the products of Japanese designers active in international arenas such as fashion, graphics and interior design. We particularly concentrate our own collecting on Japanese dress and Japanese studio crafts. For Korea, we acquire objects that reveal innovative use of traditional cultural heritage and that showcase the dynamic contemporary craft and design scene particularly in the fields of textiles and dress, ceramics, lacquer, metalwork and paper. With regard to China also, we acquire objects that develop historical traditions already represented in the V&A's collections, particularly in the spheres of dress and graphic arts

### 1.1.3 Middle East

The V&A holds over 18,000 items from the Middle East in the Islamic period. Until 2002, when staff with relevant expertise were appointed to the Asian Department, this world-class collection remained divided among the Museum's materials-based departments. Transfer of the Middle Eastern collections to the Asian Department's care has been carried out in tandem with gallery development and other projects and is now well advanced.

The importance of the V&A collection in the field of Islamic art from the Middle East lies partly in its size and quality but also in the early date at which the collecting process began. The V&A was the first institution in the world to form a systematic and purposeful collection of Islamic art, the founders of the Museum seeing it as a key source for the reform of British design. Objects were first acquired by purchase from the European market and from international expositions and then, from the 1860s, by sending agents into the field. The foundation of the outstanding Iranian collections, for example, was the achievement of Sir Robert Murdoch Smith in Iran in the 1870s and 80s. The Museum also received major bequests from private collectors such as George Salting. Collecting continued on a less intensive scale after World War I, with a significant spate of acquisitions in the 1980s, when a number of major items were purchased at auction. More recently, acquisitions have been made to fill gaps in the collection and to extend coverage to 20th-century and contemporary art and design.

In date, the collections begin with the rise of Islam in the 7th century. They are strongest in their representation of Iran, Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Iraq, but also include objects from Spain under Muslim rule, North Africa (Morocco to Libya), the Caucasus republics, and Afghanistan and the former Soviet Central Asia, most notably Uzbekistan. The collections include holdings of ceramics, textiles, metalwork and woodwork that are remarkable for their size and range. The ceramics collection is internationally the most important and comprehensive of its kind (3,500 objects and ca. 8,000 sherds). It is particularly strong in Iranian wares and tiles of all countries. The textiles collection is of equally substantial range and importance (ca. 3,600 items) and includes most famously the huge carpet from the shrine at Ardabil in Iran. The metalwork collection, which includes vessels, jewellery, and arms and armour, is also of world importance.

The woodwork collection has areas of significance such as Mamluk carved wood. There are also smaller but significant collections of carving in ivory, rock crystal and stone, which include the unrivalled Fatimid rock crystal ewer. The arts of the book and graphic arts have not generally been a central concern of the Museum, but some areas of the collection, such as the holdings of Iranian architectural drawings from the 19th century, are of great importance. The Museum also has important holdings of architectural casts and one-for-one copies of 17th-century tilework from Isfahan, made in 1876.

Collecting of Middle Eastern material falls into two categories. On the one hand, we seek to augment the historical collection by acquiring in fields not adequately represented. On the other, we have begun to collect modern and contemporary art and design from scratch.

In terms of our historical collections, there are significant omissions. For instance, we wish to strengthen our collection of metalwork, by acquiring objects made before the 13th century and, in the area of non-Iranian metalwork, after the 16th century. We also aim to collect items that illustrate production methods that are specific to our region and relevant to our collections and that have wider social or art historical meaning. Another issue to be addressed is the skewing of our 18th and 19th-century collections towards tradition and away from modernity and we have begun to collect items from this period that show a full range of themes, both modern and traditional, and that can be seen as the forerunners of art and design in the 20th century.

In collecting the 20th and 21st centuries, we seek items that reflect both the major currents in art and design in the region as well as political and social life more generally. Another major concern is the way in which contemporary artists and designers are inspired by Islamic tradition. This is the theme of the Jameel Prize, a biennial international award and, along with other contemporary works, we aim to acquire pieces from the Prize exhibitions that are produced by artists and designers from the Middle East.

In making 20th- and 21st-century acquisitions, the Asia Department works with colleagues within the Museum and with other national and regional institutions. The Museum's collection of contemporary photography from the Middle East, for example, is held by the Photography section of the Word and Image Department, but it was formed with our assistance and the co-operation of the British Museum, with most of the acquisitions generously funded by The Art Fund.

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## **2. FURNITURE, TEXTILES & FASHION DEPARTMENT**

### **2.1. Scope, history, standing and collecting**

The Furniture, Textiles and Fashion Department was formed in 2001 by the amalgamation of the two former departments of Furniture and Woodwork and Textiles and Dress. In 2013 the new Contemporary Architecture, Design and Digital (CADD) section was added. The Department holds more than 83,000 objects.

Objects for acquisition are selected with emphasis on their history and provenance as well as their individual quality as examples of mainly high-style design and manufacture or craftsmanship. The focus of CADD is on both design in the public realm and responding quickly to events in the world as they manifest themselves in design. As cataloguing and review of the collections for new Museum projects continues, our awareness of shortcomings in some of the historical collections becomes focussed. Future projects in the Department will involve not only investigation and interpretation of aspects of the existing combined collections but also the areas of overlap and shared concerns between our subjects. The V&A website has been a particularly valuable means to disseminate information about the collections and special exhibitions. It also provides opportunities to create links to other collections and stream live events such as Fashion in Motion and high profile talks and events.

Certain aspects of the collections, including architectural woodwork and period rooms, carriages, musical instruments, textile equipment, and regional dress are, in most respects, closed collections, though acquisitions might be made of exceptionally fine and well-provenanced examples should they come on the market or be offered as gifts. Other aspects of the collections, such as textiles from before the early modern period, or 18th-century furniture from North America with particular relationship to the British tradition, are effectively closed because of the rarity and high cost of suitable examples but, given the opportunity, exceptional pieces might be acquired.

#### 2.1.1 Furniture and Woodwork

The Furniture and Woodwork collection contains more than 11,000 objects, dating from the medieval period to current times. Most are from Europe or from areas influenced by the European tradition. Although furniture dominates, there are also substantial holdings of interior architectural woodwork and smaller, though important, holdings of musical instruments, leather, treen and papier-mâché. The collecting of clocks is shared with the Metalwork collection, reflecting the V&A's interest in case design rather than technical design (which is the province of the British Museum). Historically, we have held many Islamic objects but these are currently in the process of being transferred to the Asian Department.

The geographical and chronological range of the collection is unique. However, our greatest strength lies in the holdings of British furniture made between 1700 and 1900. Our international 20th-century holdings are uneven but are rivalled by perhaps only one other institution (the Vitra Design Museum). They are extensively used by students and scholars. In certain areas, the numbers of objects may be small but include particularly rich examples, as of 18th-century furniture from the German states and 15th-century Italian furniture. Considerations of space must always inform acquisition and it is for this reason that certain types of furniture (e.g. beds, large bookcases, office furniture, or extensive sets of furniture) may only be represented by a few examples in the collection. The question of acquiring 18th-century or earlier furniture made in North America did not arise until recent years and consequently we hold almost no items of this date and provenance. Furniture from South America, Australia and New Zealand is also scarce, and furniture from African states (except a few items of Islamic North African, in process of transfer to Asian Department) has not been collected.

Although Western furniture is now seen as the core of the Furniture and Woodwork collection, it originated (as did most collections in the Museum) in the purchase of fine examples of woodworking techniques/craftsmanship for the Government Schools of Design at Somerset House in the 1840s. The earliest acquisitions, of contemporary French parquetry and carving from the Paris Exhibition of 1844, were typical of the kind of material acquired in the first 20 years of the Museum's life. Though historical pieces were acquired from 1848 onwards, the emphasis for acquisitions of all dates was on technical excellence and the value of such pieces as examples for current practitioners. Purchases included European and Asian woodwork of all kinds, with lacquer and carving particularly strongly represented. It was the Great Exhibition of 1851 that prompted the acquisition of contemporary furniture, both British and from continental Europe, but again, technical virtuosity was the prime criterion for selection.

A powerful tool in the development of the Furniture and Woodwork collection in the 19th century was the acquisition of complete personal collections. Amongst the largest of these were the Soulages Collection of Italian and French Renaissance objects (acquired between 1859 and 1865) and the Jones Collection of 18th-century decorative arts (bequeathed in 1882). Such additions continued in the 20th century, including the Bettine, Lady Abingdon Collection of 24 pieces or pairs of French Empire furniture, bequeathed by Mrs T R P Hole in 1986.

From the 1880s onwards the preference for highly decorated Continental furniture and woodwork gradually gave way to a developing taste for English furniture made before the 19th century. At the same time, the interest in contemporary furniture waned, as the fashion for antique collecting gripped the middle classes. From this time, for more than a generation, the Museum concentrated on acquiring British furniture of the 16th to the 18th centuries. It was in this period (1890-1930) that the Museum acquired many of its period rooms. In the early 20th century these became a popular aspect of the displays and continue to be so in the new British Galleries. Given the greater protection for historic interiors in recent years, it is unlikely that the

Museum would acquire another period room, though an exceptional interior by Frank Lloyd Wright (the Kaufmann office) was acquired by gift in 1974.

Contemporary collecting, which had formed such an important aspect of the Museum's acquisition policy in its early years, was almost entirely abandoned in 1909. The long series of acquisitions from international exhibitions in the 19th century had culminated in the presentation by Sir George Donaldson of a number of pieces of Art Nouveau furniture shown at the 1900 Exhibition in Paris, as mentioned above. This unfortunately generated a great deal of criticism, and contemporary collecting was not taken up again systematically within the department until the 1960s, although some pieces had been courageously collected by the Circulation Department as early as the 1920s and 1930s and were distributed to the appropriate material-based departments when Circulation was disbanded in 1977. Currently, collecting of contemporary material is a strong priority.

The opening of the new Furniture Gallery, devoted almost entirely to the ways in which furniture has been made and decorated – from traditional to digital methods – has usefully reinforced the special attention we give to those subjects.

The collection of Furniture and Woodwork is recognized as the most comprehensive in the world. Unlike most national collections (rich as many are), the V&A has historically collected items from a wide range of countries and thus offers a unique opportunity for comparative study. Staff in the collection exercise expertise in British and European furniture from the Medieval period to the 19th century and internationally in the 20th century and in the field of contemporary furniture across an international spectrum.

Although the collection is designated as the National Collection, we recognize its place as part of the wider national collection held in museums, houses, churches and public buildings throughout the UK. The V&A has always encouraged other institutions in the UK to develop particular collections of furniture and woodwork and the Department continues this tradition. We maintain active relationships with staff in regional museums and those working for other organisations (such as English Heritage and The National Trust) who are responsible for other collections of national and international importance. Certain public institutions, notably the Wallace Collection, Temple Newsam House, Leeds, the Lady Lever Art Gallery (National Museums Liverpool) and the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, hold important collections of a particular date or origin that complement those of the V&A. However, none of these museums offers the wide range of furniture that makes the collection at the V&A pre-eminent.

Generally, the interests of other bodies have mainly been in British furniture and largely pieces made before 1900. Whereas some institutions, such as Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum (for Cotswold furniture and, more widely, the Arts and Crafts movement), and the Judges' Lodgings, Lancaster (for pieces by Gillows), acquire objects representing the history of their own local craft or industry, many other areas and aspects of production are neglected, with regional museums having to adopt ever more selective collecting policies. As a result of this the V&A has

had to take a particularly active role in many different areas to ensure that national collections are as representative as possible of high design from all major centres.

In the past, some items have been acquired with the specific intention of returning them on loan or by transfer to other institutions. In the case of furniture, examples include the Mary of Modena bed, transferred to Historic Royal Palaces, and the giltwood table designed by Vardy, now shown in Spencer House, London, together with the suite of chairs designed by him for the Painted Room there. With the work on the new British Galleries came a long-awaited chance to lend back to Sizergh Castle (National Trust) the late 16th-century panelling sold from the house in 1891, and a bed from Boughton House, given by the Duke of Buccleuch in 1916, has been returned on loan. The allocation to the V&A of furniture under the AIL scheme, with agreement for its retention in situ, has brought furnishings at Longleat and Houghton into the collection in recent years, with the furniture and tapestries remaining in situ but on loan.

Our aim is to develop and enrich the established areas of the collection of Furniture and Woodwork, covering primarily Western furniture and woodwork made between the Medieval period and the present day. We would like to enlarge our holdings of high-style furnishings showing the influence of the European, and especially the British, tradition from all areas of the world not covered by the holdings of the Asian Department. The collecting of 20th - and 21st-century material will be a particular priority, as will items for use in gallery displays.

In line with this commitment to collecting modern and contemporary material, the global representation in these periods needs addressing. We aim to improve this situation by collaboration with the Museum's Asian department, through the Museum's African collecting initiative, and also through exhibition and research projects and collaborations. In our collecting of modern and contemporary works we intend to focus not only on examples of high design, but also furniture that reflects cultural, social and political change, working with our colleagues in the CADD section. In a transitional period characterised by changing life styles, work patterns and the increasing importance of the virtual world, our collecting will reflect the current engagement with experimentation with new, more flexible forms, materials and adaptations, and with experimental or speculative design.

### 2.1.2. Textiles

The Textile collection is the world's largest and the most wide-ranging of its kind. The joint collections of Textiles and Fashion contain nearly 72,000 items. While it includes examples from every continent except Asia and Antarctica, and a small number of archaeological textiles several thousand years old, the bulk of the Textile collection extends in date from the 3rd century AD to the present day, while geographically it concentrates on Western Europe. Historically, we have held many Islamic objects but these are currently in the process of being transferred to the Asian Department. Many of its sections are remarkable for their variety and comprehensiveness, and the collection of British textiles is the finest in the world.

The Museum's Textile collection began with the formation of study collections for the Government Schools of Design in 1842. As that collection grew, there was a revival of interest in historical patterns and in their potential for adaptation, and so, when the Museum was founded in 1852, it began to acquire medieval and renaissance textiles, many of which had survived in the form of church vestments. There was also sustained interest in the manufacture of lace. Attempts were made in several countries to revive the lace industries in the middle of the 19th century, and the Museum responded by acquiring and exhibiting many fine examples. Although contemporary woven and printed textiles were acquired from the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the Paris Exhibitions of 1855 and 1867, the initial emphasis was on acquiring pre-19th-century material, partly because it was thought that contemporary textiles did not conform to the principles of 'good design'. The Museum showed little interest in contemporary embroidery, probably reflecting its original concern with the manufacturing industries rather than with craft.

Apart from individual purchases, gifts and bequests, many important and large collections of historical textiles were acquired, including 500 medieval and renaissance textiles from the Bock collection (1863), 450 16th - and 17th-century European textiles from the Forrer collection (1877), 62 18th-century Greek embroideries from the Wace collection (1919) and 700 18th-century Greek and Turkish embroideries from the Dawkins collection (1950). From the beginning of the 20th century to the 1930s the Museum made an effort to collect textiles from the period 1600-1750. English domestic embroidery from the 17th century is well represented and includes large furnishings as well as small, exquisite items of dress. The collection of European textiles from the 17th century is large and extraordinarily varied.

In more recent times, re-organization within the British textile industry led to the acquisition of major collections of 18th, 19th and 20th-century textiles from leading UK manufacturers including the following collections: Warners (1972 and subsequently – 1,215 textiles and pattern books), Mortons/Courtaulds (1977 – 87 textiles), Hull Traders (1989 – 73 textiles), The Wilton Royal Carpet Factory (1992 – 157 samples), Heals (1999 – about 1,150 lengths of furnishing) and Courtaulds (2001 – an archive of over 6,000 items covering a wide range of manufacturers and dates). Contemporary collecting, which had an erratic early history, was almost entirely abandoned in 1909 when it became the responsibility of the Circulation Department until that department was disbanded in 1977, when the Textiles collection once again resumed contemporary collecting and inherited the textile collections formed by the Circulation Department. In 1934 the collections of the British Institute of Industrial Art were acquired by the Museum. The Institute had collected contemporary textiles on an annual basis from 1919 to 1932 and the Museum undertook to continue the tradition by collecting those textiles which were judged to be the best of each year's international production. In this way an extensive and unique collection of 20th-century textiles of both industrial and craft production has been formed to complement the historical collection. In 1979 and 2002 many fabric samples previously held in the Manchester Design Registry were acquired, to enhance the collection of early 20th-century textiles. The Textile collection is the world's largest and most wide-ranging assemblage of such material.

The Textile collection is designated as the National Collection. Like the Furniture and Woodwork collection, it differs from many fine and well-established national collections in Europe in terms of its international coverage over a wide-ranging historical period, as detailed above. As with the Furniture and Woodwork collection, its designation as a National Collection is taken as representing also a support role for the many smaller collections of textiles held by museums throughout Britain which are important elements in the wider national collections.

In recent years, the decline of both expertise and active collecting in regional museums has presented particular problems for this Department as for others in the V&A. Although some regional collections make strenuous efforts to develop their collections relating to local trades and industries, few regional museums (other than the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester) are able to maintain and develop collections of textiles with a wider scope, leaving the V&A with the responsibility for maintaining the breadth of the nation's collections.

### 2.1.3. Fashion

The Fashion collection is the premier collection in the UK and consists mainly of European (predominantly French and English) fashionable clothes and accessories for both sexes, with, additionally, contemporary holdings of American and Japanese fashion. The collection spans four centuries, with some rare pieces dating from the 17th century, though its strength lies in the later 18th century onwards. It has steadily developed as a focus for scholarly interest, while at the same time remaining one of the most popular collections with general visitors. Like the Textile collection, the Fashion collection has groups of objects which are important for their depth of coverage (such as 1930s evening wear, 1960s daywear, wedding dresses, 18th-century men's waistcoats, post-war couture, fashion dolls and shawls). The collection includes many outstanding items, with an emphasis on women's dress and formal dress, including two magnificent mantuas from the 1740s, Worth evening gowns, a Charles James padded satin jacket of 1937, the seminal New Look suit, 'Bar', by Christian Dior, and Vivienne Westwood's 'mock-croc' blue platform shoes. 21st century fashion acquisitions include examples of the work of Alexander McQueen, Giles Deacon, Mary Katrantzou, Nicholas Kirkwood and Dries Van Noten.

Despite its current high profile, the Fashion collection had a less than auspicious start. The history of dress figured nowhere in the hierarchy of arts when the Museum was founded. Garments were acquired as early as the 1840s, but only if the textiles were considered significant. Gradually this approach changed and clothing was acquired for other reasons, such as fashionable cut and construction, provenance, rarity and the aesthetic appeal of the garment design. The collection developed slowly and in a sporadic fashion, chiefly by means of the gift, purchase or bequest of individual objects. Occasionally items came as part of collections of historical fashion, including accessories. These collections included the Brooke Collection (1864 and 1865 – 30 items of fashion and ca. 200 textiles), that of Sir Matthew and Lady Digby Wyatt

(1876 – 124 fans), the Isham Collection (1900 – 31 items of dress and textiles), and the collection of Harrods (1913 – 1,442 items of dress).

It was not until well into the 20th century that the discipline of dress studies became firmly established and not until 1957 that the first curator for fashion was appointed. In the 1960s the Department began actively to collect 20th-century fashion, though individual items had been acquired from the 1930s. The 20th-century fashion collection grows around several major holdings: the Board of Trade Utility Collection (1942 – 34 items of dress), the Heather Firbank Collection (1960 – 110 items of dress), the Cecil Beaton Collection (1971 – 1,200 items of dress), the collection formed in association with the exhibition *StreetStyle* (1993-1995 – 1,253 items of dress), the Jill Ritblat Collection (2000 – 459 items of dress) the Costiff Collection (2002 – 178 full outfits by Vivienne Westwood) and, most recently, the Mark Reed collection of menswear (more than 50 complete ensembles).

Given the enormous quantities of clothing generated annually by the fashion industry, it is possible only to acquire a limited selection of a designer's output. We work closely with other dress-collecting museums in Britain to direct appropriate objects and collections to them. Fashion is a key aspect of the V&A's National-Regional partnerships and we look for opportunities to work with other museums with strong fashion and textiles collections to set up a programme of sharing skills, expertise and displays; our close involvement in the Dress and Textile Specialists Network is a key part of this. In 2009 we worked as a consortium with the Museum of Costume at Bath and the Bowes Museum to acquire a group of Vionnet couture gowns which were the subject of an export stop (the first such for 20th-century couture). In addition, our Fashion in Motion programme (started in May 1999, three shows per year at the time of writing) offers an opportunity through close collaboration to collect work both by leading names in the industry and up and coming designers, and to allow the public to see contemporary fashion brought to life. Our aim is to use such partnerships and programming, including images, film and live streaming of Fashion in Motion on our website, to make all the collections of the Department more accessible throughout the UK, as well as internationally, as a means of encouraging and disseminating expertise in our fields of study.

The Fashion collection is designated as the National Collection. It is currently the largest and most comprehensive collection of dress in the world, only rivalled in the field of contemporary dress by the Costume Institute at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Musée de la Mode et du Textile and the Palais Galliera, Paris, MOMU, Antwerp, and the Kyoto Costume Institute in Japan. In terms of material from 1600 to 1800, the V&A's collections are the largest anywhere and our collection of 20th-century sub-cultural fashion is unique in range and size.

In terms of the future, we aim to develop the collection of British and other European textiles from 1850 to the present, by acquiring pieces of outstanding aesthetic quality, technical construction, and/or important provenance. The need to provide additional high quality items of 18th - and 19th-century fashion for display remains a priority if we are to maintain a comprehensive and educational display in the Fashion Gallery, and a sustained representation

in the Museum's major Art and Design Galleries, including the British Galleries, Medieval and Renaissance Galleries, and Europe 1600-1800 Galleries. Almost all new major gallery projects that include material from across collections look for a fashion element, including regional partnerships like V&A Dundee. This requires that we build our collection in greater depth to ensure rotation of objects. Our primary emphasis, however, will be to proactively pursue contemporary material, which we will draw upon for the planned new Textile and Fashion Quarter. Our acquisition policy will reflect advances in technology in relation to textile and fashion design and the widening international fashion industry. There will be a specific focus on building up our African collections and examples of design from emerging fashion centres such as Russia and Brazil. We will continue to collect the work of leading designers of both men's and women's wear, and, in cooperation with colleagues in the CADD section, will broaden our scope to include items of fashion which reflect topical issues generated by social, economic or political concerns.

#### 2.1.4 Contemporary Architecture & Urbanism, Product Design & Digital Design (CADD)

The CADD section was founded in 2013. Its collecting activity is not limited by material, object type or culture, but derives from the section's strategy to engage in new ways with the world of contemporary architecture, design, manufacturing and digital design. This must necessarily be approached as a global story.

The ethos of our collecting activity is to identify objects with embedded stories about the way design and architecture define the public sphere today. Instead of focussing only on artistic achievement, CADD looks to objects that tell us how our lives as citizens are defined by designed things. At a time when the idea of the public realm is contested (through increasing role of security and surveillance in public spaces, the emergence of new mobile and digital technologies, widening economic inequality and an increasing role for the private sector in public services), design and architecture are barometers of social and political change. CADD hopes to reflect this in its work.

The first CADD collecting method is titled Rapid Response Collecting, and brings objects into the Museum in timely response to events in the world that signal shifts in design, architecture, manufacturing or urban life. This strategy was approved by Collections Group in 2013. Among the first objects acquired were an example of the Liberator, the world's first functioning 3d-printed gun, which was purchased with help from The Design Fund; a pair of jeans from the high street store Primark, acquired just after the Rana Plaza factory disaster in 2013; and a Motorola WT4000 Wearable Terminal, worn by workers in large distribution warehouses to measure their productivity. Such objects highlight the V&A's engagement with moments of global attention on design.

The second method is of course to collect the work of architects, designers and digital designers whose practice addresses themes of public life, from the digital interface to the urban plan. Some of this work is undertaken by those working across different fields, such as activists, social

innovators, system designers and citizens, as well as architects, designers and digital designers. We aim to reflect the changing roles of designers in these disciplines. As with existing parts of the Museum's collection, we aim not only to collect the finished object but to collect and document the process of design.

The collecting of architecture is undertaken as part of a cross-Museum approach to the field, and is closely linked to the collecting of the Designs section of WID and in relation to the Museum's partnership with the RIBA.

There are challenges in the collection and storage of some of our material, as there are for other V&A collections. Digital design collecting in particular faces issues of storage and display that are just starting to be addressed by many museums worldwide, and to which the V&A will have to develop robust answers. Architecture collecting today reaches far beyond works on paper, and the diversity and size of material associated with works of contemporary architecture will present specific challenges for conservation and storage.

## **2.2 Further Reading**

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### **3. MUSEUM OF CHILDHOOD**

#### **3.1 Scope, history, standing and collecting**

The V&A Museum of Childhood houses the nation's finest collection of material relating to childhood. The collection ranges in date from the 17th century until the present day. The collection has a broad reach, covering all aspects of childhood and is also rich in the diversity of its media. The internationally significant areas of the collection are children's clothing, dolls' houses, dolls, and games.

It is widely acknowledged that the MoC holds the foremost collection of childhood material in the UK and as such we aim to collect the finest and most important examples. The other major collections are the National Trust Museum of Childhood, Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire and the Edinburgh Museum of Childhood. Although strong in certain areas, neither has quite the breadth of the MoC. This breadth does mean however that the MoC does not seek to compete with the specialist vehicle collection of the Brighton Toy and Model Museum, or the Optical Toys held by the Science Museum.

The individual associated with starting the Childhood collections at Bethnal Green is Arthur Sabin. In 1922 he was appointed Curator of the Bethnal Green Museum with the remit to reorganise the museum. At the time, the Museum's collections included European Fine Art and Furniture, some Eastern works of art, a range of animal and food products from the 1851 exhibition and examples of trades local to the East End. Sabin's main vision, however, was to develop collections and displays relating to childhood and to attempt to make these and the museum's existing collections accessible for children. In the early years of the collection major donors included Mary Greg (1850-1949), an important collector of everyday domestic objects, and Queen Mary. These donors and Sabin's own interests resulted in strong acquisitions of toys and dolls houses.

In 1974, under the Directorship of Sir Roy Strong, the Bethnal Green Museum was officially launched as the Museum of Childhood. This marked a historic shift towards the Museum's pre-eminent position as the world's broadest collection representing the history and culture of childhood. The existing childhood collections at Bethnal Green were supplemented with childhood material transferred from the V&A South Kensington's collections departments. Since 1974 the MoC's collecting policy has formed part of the collecting policy of the V&A.

Today, the MoC aims to be the pre-eminent museum collecting material culture that relates to art and design for children and the child's own voice or expression. We seek to collect material that explores the child's relationship with the wider world of art and design and its impact on their lives. The major threads that run through our collecting are Childhood and Design and their impact on society.

The following criteria inform the MoC's collecting

- Time scale - 1600 to the present
- Age range – 0 to 18, bearing in mind that in some time periods the top end may need to be lowered
- Geographically, priority is given to British Childhood as it is experienced both at home and abroad, encompassing the influence of other countries within this remit
- Given the breadth and nature of the MoC's collections, links are created between objects, archival material and images

Our current collecting priorities are: education, classic and contemporary children's design items, visual representations of childhood, contemporary collecting and oral history and other aspects of intangible heritage (as a way to capture the child's own voice in future displays and exhibitions.) The Collections have recently been re-categorised into six sections: Archive; Children's Clothing; Dolls' Houses and Miniatures; Children's Narratives; Play and Visual Representations of Childhood.

### 3.1.1 Archive

MoC is home to the British Toy Making archive (British toy manufacturers, notably Lines Bros. Ltd., Paul and Marjorie Abbatt, Mettoy and Palitoy). These contain a wide range of original resources, including photographic material, trade catalogues, advertisements and promotional documents, press cuttings, financial records, company and personal correspondence and designs. The archives as a whole relate to varied areas of interest including industrial history, with particular reference to British toy manufacturing, the social history of education and child development, theories of play and toy design. The majority of the material is 20th century.

In addition the archive contains the Faith Eaton archive (history of dolls and dolls' houses); the Anthony H Lebus archive (personal childhood correspondence ca. 1920–1950); and the Bob Dixon archive (ephemera and research notes). An oral history archive records the childhood experiences of a culturally diverse group of East Londoners. The archive also contains original historical records of the Museum of Childhood, including catalogues and other registers, photographic material, records of past exhibitions and displays and material relating to the history of the building.

### 3.1.2 Children's Clothing

The MoC holds the premier public collection of children's clothing in the UK, with multiple examples of many types and dates of garment. It contains mourning wear, work clothing, uniforms, fancy dress, swimwear, and many of the 20th century's innovations as well as main garments, accessories and underwear, mainly from the 18th century to the present day. The upper age limit is 18.

### 3.1.3 Dolls' Houses and Miniatures

The Museum has a collection of around 80 mainly British and European dolls' houses. It is one of the largest public collections in the world. The houses range in date from the 17th to the early 21st centuries. Many different styles are represented from the traditional Nuremberg House of 1673, through the 18th-century Tate Baby House and Killer Cabinet rooms to the 20th century, commercially produced examples from companies such as Tri-ang. There are also several homemade houses, some replicas of real dwellings and some very simple types made for children by family members.

### 3.1.4 Children's Narratives

This area covers all aspects of children's everyday lives, children's creative outputs, education, personal stories and the environments/spaces they inhabit. A new collecting feature of this section is the acquisition of oral history and other forms of intangible heritage to support the collections. This section consists of domestic, public and virtual narratives.

In the domestic narratives section, early year's material includes feeding equipment, and objects connected with teething, health, hygiene, mobility and ritual. It ranges in date from the 1730s to the present day. Holdings of children's furniture are among the best in the UK, comprising several hundred pieces, ranging from a traditional English oak cradle dated 1641 to 'Play +' plastic foam shapes from Italy, ca. 2005. Highlights include a child's house-shaped wardrobe of 1712, an ormolu-decorated 'bateau' cradle of 1810 and a number of artist-linked pieces – a 'cat' chair made by Gerard Rigot; a high chair designed by Gerrit Rietveld; two William Morris Sussex chairs; Charles & Ray Eames' 'elephant' seat; an Ambrose Heal Art & Crafts chair; Peter Opsvik's 1972 adjustable Tripp Trapp chair and Ikea's 2001 moon-shaped plastic foam rocking chair. The collection is strong in European and USA material.

Children's creativity is reflected by items and material created by children themselves. There are toys, art and craft work, diaries, examples of handwriting and letters. There are also adaptations and additions to existing toys and games, including the Merten family toy theatre, Cass Family board games and the Cattley Family toys and stories. In addition there are toys made of a combination of disposable objects and imagination – examples include the Edward Lovett collection of toys made by children.

In the public narratives section, there is a small education collection which has a wide range of dates and types of material. Education is a theme which is spread through the object collection, the library and the archive. It is also reflected in the Renier collection of ephemera, manuscripts and objects, which complements the book collection of the same name held at the National Art Library. Stand-out pieces include Charlotte Finch's Puzzle cabinet; early 19th-century copybooks; an Eton Montem suit of the same period; a personal collection of Percy Bishop's school magazines spanning three decades; and dressmaking coursework from Woolwich Polytechnic in

the 1920s. We hold a good collection of exercise books, teaching resources, and school prizes which demonstrate changes in teaching and learning practice. Our small collection of furniture includes good examples of desks, easels, a spelling board and abacus. We collect good early examples of furniture from schools, and 20th-century items which demonstrate changing ideas of teaching spaces. We hold a range of material relating to extra-curricular activities in schools, including drama and sport, and semi-educational organisations such as scouting, sports clubs and theatrical societies, which we will continue to collect. Children's individual experiences are well represented. The Celia Haddon, Kirke, Hemsley and Lebus archives include children's letters, photographs and diaries, and we are developing an oral history archive which focuses on education. The collection is currently biased towards public school experience, which we are seeking to address by collecting material relating to the variety of 'special schools', home school, and state school experience.

The entertainment collection includes material relating to optical toys, popular films, TV programmes, Punch & Judy toy theatre and puppet collections. The optical toys collection includes most of the well-known standard 19th-century examples used for both educational and recreational purposes. The MoC is particularly rich in lantern slides, with examples ranging from early 19th-century panoramic and movable slides to early 20th-century sets, based on stories, geographical locations and occupations. There is a large range of peepshows, including two 18th-century Engelbrecht theatres and the classic views of the Great Exhibition and the Thames Tunnel. The MoC holds about 600 puppets, representing such places as Japan, India, China, Java, Myanmar (formerly Burma), Italy and the UK. Many are toy or souvenir editions, reproduced from traditional stories and shows and not originally produced for children. 20th-century puppetry in the UK is well represented with examples by famous makers such as Christine Glanville and Mary Bligh Bond, Winifred Gill and Lotte Reiniger, a growing collection of Pelham puppets, as well as puppets relating to popular TV shows. There is a small collection of toy theatres and sets ranging from the early 19th century to the 1960s.

The virtual narratives section is an emerging collecting area, and will focus on the categories of technology, communication and play. Examples of early handheld devices including a Game Boy and Game Gear have been collected. Most of the major consoles feature, including Sega, Nintendo and Sony. The early television-linked classics are represented by a Phillips Binatone and an Amstrad CPC 464.

The Children's Narratives and Spaces section has features in common with the Archive section (3.1.1) and also includes letters, diaries, greeting cards & stationery and official documents.

### 3.1.5 Play

The Play Collections are split into sub-themes: Dolls, Games & Puzzles, Learning & Development, Soft Toys and Toys.

Numbering over 8,000 items, the MoC's doll collection is one of the most significant and largest in the world and can be considered by material category: Ceramics, Cloth, Composition, Plastic, Wax and Wooden. The doll collection is international in scope and breadth. Highlights include fine examples of ceramic and bisque dolls by makers such as Steiner Jumeau, Bru, Armand Marseille and Kammer & Reinhard; cloth dolls by Lenci (Italian) Käthe Kruse, Steiff (German) as well as British firms such as Dean's, Norah Wellings and Chad Valley. A notable example of a composition doll is of Shirley Temple from 1934; good examples of plastic dolls include Rheinische Gummi- und Celluloid-Fabrik (1873-1930), a boxed Barbie 1961 made by Mattel Inc (1945 to present) and a collection of Sasha dolls made by Trendon toys; an effigy of the infant Don Santiago de la Haza y Laguno of ca. 1700. The other highlights of the museum's wax doll collection are mainly Victorian and Edwardian: Princess Daisy, and the superb Pierotti group of dolls. The highlight of the wooden doll collection is a group of English pre-1800 examples, notably 'The Old Pretender' doll of about 1680 and Mrs Leahy's doll of 1700-20. This group also includes five Dutch dolls formerly belonging to Florence Upton. These were drawn by her for a popular series of children's books, including *Two Dutch Dolls and a Golliwogg* published in 1895.

The MoC's games and puzzle collection of about 3,000 items is one of the finest in the world. The earliest example is from Germany and dates from 1535. There are five main categories—board games, card games, indoor games, outdoor games and puzzles. The board games include important early examples, mostly published in England; children's favourites; classics of the 20th century such as Monopoly and Scrabble and the more recent examples such as Trivial Pursuit and Cranium. The outdoor games and toys collection includes battledore and shuttlecock, jacks and marbles as well as roller skates and spacehoppers. The Museum holds a good selection of 18th- and 19th-century dissected puzzles and a good range of 20th-century jigsaws covering most of the major manufacturers.

The learning toys collection is unique and encompasses the history of educational movements and related toys. Material relates to Paul & Majorie Abbatt, Friedrich Froebel and Maria Montessori. There are toys such as ABC blocks and shapes and sorters that help children to learn educational basics and teach hand-eye co-ordination. Developmental toys include typewriters, sewing machines and toy versions of other domestic appliances such as mangles, vacuum cleaners and tools. A group of push- and pull- along toys are designed to encourage young children to balance and walk.

There are over 150 teddy bears in the collection, from the early 20th century onwards, and including examples from most of the major teddy bear manufacturers worldwide. Most of the pre-1920 bears are German, including half a dozen Steiffs. There are also early examples of British and American bears. The 1920s and 1930s bears are German and English and include such leading names as Schuco, Merrythought and Chad Valley. As well as a selection of pandas and koalas, the museum has several character bears including Paddington, Rupert, Superted, Winnie-the-Pooh and Care Bears. The Museum's collection of soft toys covers a range of animals from domestic to wild. The more popular cats, dogs, lambs and rabbits predominate but there are also foxes, lions and monkeys. As with bears, the best known manufacturers are well

represented and include Steiff, Schuco, Chad Valley, Merrythought and Deans. There are several character toys in this collection, older favourites such as Mickey Mouse and the Wombles as well as the more recent Teletubbies.

The extensive toy collection includes a huge range of material, dating mainly from the 18th century to the present. There are mechanical toys, constructional toys, vehicles and play figures. The mechanical toys include a small group of 19th-century automata. Clockwork toys are well represented from the late 19th century to the 1970s and feature well known makers, such as Bing and Lehman as well as later examples produced in Japan and China. There are battery-operated toys mostly from the 1950s to 1970s, including some good examples of space toys and robots. The constructional toys collection is a large one with representative examples from many of the leading makers. Sets include Richter Ankerblocks, Meccano, Lotts, Minibrix, Bayko, Kiddicraft, K'nex and Lego. The vehicle collection comprises cars, trains, boats and planes and includes typical examples from the companies Hornby, Airfix, Marklin, Bing, Lesney (Matchbox) and Mettoy (Corgi). The collection in the main is British and German but also includes some recycled toys from Africa. The toy figure collection comprises about 1,000 objects and includes soldiers and civilian model figures. The group of soldiers is small but includes a wide range of different types (flats, solids, hollow cast, die cast and moulded) and materials (paper, card, wood, metal and plastic). The civilian group includes farm sets, animals and railway and everyday scenes. There are also collections of character toys and figures from films and television. Other toys in the collection include rocking horses, Noah's Arks, crib/crèche scenes and figures from around the world, paper toys, a collection of artist made toys and toys made by children.

### 3.1.6 Visual Representations of Childhood

We plan to extend our current, minimal holdings through the acquisition of important depictions of children's lives in painting, photography, film, drawing, prints and sculpture, both contemporary and historical. The paintings collection consists of 18th - 19th - and 20th - century depictions of children and childhood. Future fine art acquisitions will extend beyond pure portraiture, building a collection which has the capacity to present a visual record of children's lives at different points in history, by selecting works which shed light on the social context of their time. In many cases, this will involve acquiring works which feature items represented elsewhere in the collections – such as clothing, furniture or nursery equipment – thereby deepening and making more accessible the interpretation and educational impact of our displays, reserve collections and digital resources.

The photographic collection comprises about 800 photographs dating from 1860s onwards, documenting children's lives. The collection contains a small selection of family photograph albums allowing the placement of the child within the family group as well as a good selection of posed studio portraits of children. In addition the collection includes a large number of *cartes de visite* and cabinet prints from 19th century photographers based across Britain.

Particularly significant objects include a poignant album of the life of Justinian Laczkovic, who died in 1884, aged 10. An album from Alexander Bassano's studio contains costume photographs of all the children who attended the 1936 Lord Mayor's Fancy Dress Ball. There are also posed and un-posed images of children undertaking various activities. More recent photographs include those of Alec Brooking, a head teacher who produced a body of work based on his pupils in the 1970s-80s; and the work of John Heywood, a photographer whose images document slightly older children of the 1980s, capturing elements of home life, youth culture and society.

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## **4. SCULPTURE, METALWORK, CERAMICS & GLASS DEPARTMENT**

### **4.1. Scope, history, standing and collecting**

The Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics & Glass Department was formed in 2001 from the amalgamation of the former Departments of Sculpture, of Metalwork, and of Ceramics and Glass.

The tradition of collecting in these three areas is based on curatorial expertise, with the result that the Museum has often been able to make valuable additions in under-researched areas at low prices. The creation of the three collections stems from the organisational re-arrangement of the Museum in 1909; but there are many links between sculpture and the decorative arts, and their grouping together offers the chance to revisit past priorities – while continuing to fill gaps in the historic collections – and to place additional emphasis on collecting the contemporary across the collections. Acquisitions often have relevance to more than one of the collections.

The intensive programme of gallery refurbishment since the 1980s, which has transformed almost all the galleries with which the Department is concerned, has provided many opportunities to evaluate the strengths of the existing collections. Demonstrating the synergy between acquisition and display, the new ceramic galleries illustrate the importance of technical developments in ceramic history, with recent acquisitions reinforcing this important point. The creation of a new contemporary glass gallery has provided the opportunity to develop our collections in this area and to make more contacts with international practitioners in this field.

There is now a renewed emphasis on collecting the contemporary, to promote, support, and document the artistic practice of today. This is also seen as an important way of attracting a wider range of audiences. This calls for the adoption of new collecting strategies that reflect current creative practice, for the documentation of innovative techniques in production, and of evidence of popular and commercial success where this is appropriate.

On occasion we will commission contemporary work both on a small scale (as with the seal of the Board of Trustees of the V&A, designed and made by Malcolm Appleby in 1985, and the presentation medal made by Felicity Powell in 2002-3) and on a larger scale as part of a new gallery display, as with the installation 'Signs and Wonders' by Edmund de Waal installed in the

Ceramics Galleries in 2009. Key items are also occasionally borrowed, as in the case of the Chihuly chandelier in the Dome.

Certain collections, including the plaster casts and electrotype reproductions, are not actively developed, although acquisitions might still be made in these areas.

Relationships with both national and regional museums are being further strengthened in a variety of ways. Joint purchases – such as in the case of *The Three Graces* by Antonio Canova, bought in partnership with the National Galleries of Scotland in 1994 – is one such area of potential growth; and the expert advisers in the Department acts as ‘champions’ for export-stopped items, often encouraging and aiding other museums to acquire works of art in danger of being exported. Long-term loans in to the Museum, as with Tate loans to the Sculpture Galleries, may sometimes be seen as an alternative to purchase, and make the most of the nation’s holdings in different institutions.

#### 4.1.1. Sculpture

The Sculpture collection is the most comprehensive holding of post-classical European sculpture in the world, containing over 17,000 objects. Since it was formed within an applied art museum, the V&A’s collection is much broader than those found in many art galleries, where sculpture often simply forms an adjunct to a paintings collection. The collection contains outstanding and numerous examples of medieval ivories and English medieval alabasters, and celebrated collections of Italian Renaissance and Baroque sculpture; it also extends to polychrome wood sculpture and small-scale boxwood statuettes, terracotta sculptors’ models, bronze statuettes and functional pieces, including ivory plaques for the adornment of book covers.

The chronological range of the collection is conditioned by the existence of the pre-eminent collections of classical sculpture at the British Museum and the holdings of post-1914 sculptures at Tate. With a small number of exceptions, therefore, the earliest pieces date from the beginnings of Christian art in around 300 AD and the latest to the early 20th century.

The collection enjoys the status of a National Collection. Although certain categories of European post-classical sculpture are also to be found in the British Museum, the Wallace Collection and notable regional museums, nowhere else is the entire range of sculpture represented in such depth.

The earliest acquisition dates from 1844. Major landmarks in the second half of the 19th century included the acquisition of the Gherardini Collection of sculptors’ models in 1854, sculpture from the Soulages Collection in 1856 and the Gigli-Campana Collection of Italian Sculpture in 1861. Numerous acquisitions made by J C Robinson in 1852-67 and the early 1880s created a collection of Italian sculpture that is unequalled outside Italy. The extensive collection of medieval ivories was established by the end of the 1860s through a series of purchases from the London dealer John Webb. The beginning of the 20th century was marked by gifts of Romanesque and Gothic

sculpture from J H Fitzhenry between 1906 and 1910, and the Salting Bequest greatly strengthened the holding of bronzes and ivories in 1910. Rodin's gift of 18 of his sculptures in 1914 instantly established the Museum as a place of study for the artist's work. In 1916 the collection of architectural sculptures and plaster casts from the Royal Architectural Museum was transferred to the V&A. Dr W L Hildburgh was an outstanding benefactor to both the Sculpture and Metalwork collections: from 1915 until his death in 1955 he made numerous single gifts, but his greatest donation was his entire collection of over 260 English Medieval alabasters, given on his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1946.

We aim to acquire documented, signed and dated works of art that will enrich the most comprehensive holding of post-classical sculpture in the world. English sculpture and post-medieval ivories are two of the areas in which we especially seek appropriate additions. Although by agreement with Tate in 1983 we do not currently collect large-scale sculpture produced after 1914, we are actively adding to our collection of 20th-century and contemporary medals, and other small contemporary sculpture including ivories and bronzes. There is an ongoing dialogue with Tate in connection with the display of post-1800 sculpture in both places and an expectation that the displays at South Kensington, Millbank and Bankside will continue to be considerably improved by a series of mutually-advantageous loans.

#### 4.1.2. Metalwork

The Metalwork collection contains over 45,000 examples of decorative metalwork, silver and jewellery ranging in date from the Bronze Age to the present day. It includes an unrivalled collection of English silver, an outstandingly comprehensive collection of jewellery, and collections of ironwork, continental silver, arms and armour, medieval champlevé and late 19th-century enamels, brasswork, pewter, steel, cutlery, Sheffield Plate, electrotypes and medieval metalwork of international importance. The pre-1800 German silver collection is the largest outside Germany and Russia. Long-term loans of British ecclesiastical silver have been encouraged since 1916 in order to illustrate this important aspect of the history of the craft.

European silver and non-precious metals were actively collected from the start, and outstanding purchases of both medieval and post-medieval objects were made at the sales of great collections, including those of Bernal, Soulages and Soltikoff (the Gloucester Candlestick and Cologne Tabernacle'. J C Robinson collected important examples of Spanish ecclesiastical silver in the second half of the 19th century and a rare group of medieval silver from the Basle Cathedral Treasury, sold by auction in 1836 was later bought by the Museum.

Much of the late 17th - and 18th -century British domestic silver and pewter entered the museum after 1900 as gifts and bequests from collectors; these include the Croft Lyons Collection of Sheffield Plate, pewter and boxes, the Cropper Collection of bottle tickets, and Late Stuart and Early Georgian silver from C D Rotch.

The collections of jewellery and small work extend from tiaras to tie-pins, and gold watches to pomanders (ca. 14,000 items). Purchases in the 19th century included contemporary French jewellery bought in exhibitions in London and Paris, the Castellani Collection of Italian regional jewellery (1868) and the ring collection of the antiquary Edmund Waterton (1870). A superb collection of gemstones, including gems from the Hope Collection, was bequeathed in 1868 by the Reverend Chauncey Hare Townshend. Over 600 jewels were given by the scholar and collector Dame Joan Evans between 1933 and 1975. They date largely from before 1800, and complement the magnificent jewellery, mainly of the late 18th and 19th centuries, bequeathed by Lady Cory in 1951. Since the 1970s, 20th-century and contemporary jewellery has been at the centre of acquisition policy, building on the foundations laid by the Circulation Department. Two outstanding collections given by Patricia V. Goldstein in 2002 and Judith H. Siegel in 2007 to the American Friends of the V&A greatly increased both the quality and the extent of the display of 19th- and 20th-century European and American jewellery. The Royal College of Art Visiting Artists Collection, comprising work made between 1987 and 2006, was also acquired in 2007. As with the silver collections, continual encouragement of heirs to use the benefits of the Acceptance in Lieu system has resulted in major acquisitions, including a Cartier tiara, Arts and Crafts jewellery and a necklace from the 1970s. Since 2008 the William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery has provided a major stimulus to donors of both contemporary and historical work.

Across the principal fields of Metalwork's collections, we will acquire objects by known designers, makers or patrons, documented where possible by designs and bills. The object which reveals the identity of a particular designer, enameller, engraver or chaser, or documents the history of a design process from commission to delivery, will be highly prized. We seek innovative design and use of material, whether a Renaissance armour which reflects court fashion in dress, an early French rococo snuff box, a neo-classical ice pail, a historicist centrepiece, an Art Deco jewel, virtuosity in the treatment of titanium, or a ring illustrating computer-aided design. We wish to represent supreme examples of decorative metalwork, as well as, within limitations of space, a range of the more significant designs for object types which are relevant to the period in which they have been made.

In many areas of acquisition, such as medieval metalwork, jewellery set with significant gemstones made before 1800, or French silver before the Revolution, the recycling of metals and gems means that surviving work with sound provenance is a rarity. It will be pursued whenever possible, using the full range of tax incentives.

Except where a collection is received by bequest or gift, contemporary work will numerically be dominant in acquisitions. Our aim is to represent the leading designers and designer-makers, both in their unique work and, in discussion with colleagues across the Museum, in their designs for production. Among object types, we will be particularly concerned with designs for vessels and tableware, cutlery, and lighting. We will continue to collect innovative design in ironwork and the base metals. Jewellery acquisitions will range across many media from paper,

wood and acrylic to platinum and diamonds, and will embrace international designer makers, small jewellery firms and the pre-eminent houses.

The Metalwork collection also administers the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection which is on long-term loan to the Museum from the Gilbert Trust for the Arts, London. The collection of nearly 1,100 items is arguably the most important private collection of gold boxes, silver and gold, portrait miniatures and modern mosaics formed in the 20th century. It includes the largest group of diamond-set table snuffboxes associated with Frederick the Great of Prussia outside Germany and most comprehensive collection of so-called micromosaics worldwide. The holdings of silver complement the V&A's collection with an extraordinary group of works by Paul de Lamerie and Paul Storr as well as continental baroque and rococo silver. Sir Arthur's collecting principles were precious or rare materials, exquisite craftsmanship and illustrious provenance. The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection intends to continue acquiring outstanding masterpieces in all areas based on these principles with the priority of filling gaps in all areas of the collection. In doing so it will also aim to follow the collecting strategies set up by the respective V&A collections.

#### 4.1.3. Ceramics & Glass

The Ceramics & Glass collection contains ca. 80,000 objects, including ceramics and glass from the Western world, stained glass, post-medieval painted enamels on copper, and plastics. The holdings of European tin-glazed pottery and porcelain, English ceramics 1600-1900, post-medieval glass, tiles, stained glass and 20th-century and contemporary international ceramics and glass are of such size and importance as to be internationally pre-eminent. The Ceramics collection alone is without parallel; by virtue of its size, quality and range it may be considered pre-eminent in its entirety. The Glass collection, now largely housed in the Glass Gallery, is the most comprehensive in Europe, and the stained glass holdings are unparalleled anywhere in the world.

From 1844, the earliest acquisitions focused on contemporary work and Renaissance wares with a 'fine art' emphasis. The French porcelain collections were strengthened by the Jones Bequest in 1882. The Schreiber Gift in 1884 laid the foundations for the outstanding collections of 18th-century English porcelain, bolstered by the transfer of objects from the Museum of Practical Geology in 1901. Maiolica and Renaissance and later painted Limoges enamels were strengthened by the Salting Bequest in 1910. The gift of the Wilfred Buckley Collection in 1936 transformed the holding of glass into one of leading international importance. The collections of stained glass, particularly of Medieval and Renaissance pieces, were augmented by the gifts and bequest (1900) of Henry Vaughan, followed by the Morgan Gift in 1919 and the gift of the Ashridge stained glass by E E Cook in 1928. Contemporary collecting by the former Circulation Department provided the foundations of today's significant collection of 20th-century ceramics and glass. Especially rich in Scandinavian ceramics and glass, and British and European studio ceramics, this has subsequently been developed and extended into the 21st century, and the section continues to have extremely strong holdings in contemporary work. The Glass

collection has expanded considerably since the opening of the main Glass Gallery in 1994 and the Mårit Rausing Gallery in 2004, with major additions of British and international glass art. The opening of a dedicated gallery for Contemporary Ceramics in 2009 has similarly provided an additional impetus for collecting, with an increased focus on international work.

We aim to acquire historical pieces, especially those with documented provenance, where they add to our already pre-eminent collection and where opportunity and identified needs occur. Collecting priorities include iconic examples of 20th-century design and early 19th-century ceramics and glass. British glass and ceramics remain priorities, especially objects made for export. Other areas that would benefit from development are Italian maiolica of the 17th and 18th century, German porcelain figures, and objects of a utilitarian nature.

We are most active in collecting the contemporary, both in studio practice and in product design in ceramic and glass. Studio practice is collected across the realms of craft and fine art. Priority is given to acquiring the best examples of work from the most significant artists, reflecting ambition and excellence, and prioritising new strategies in making. Examples of design in ceramics and glass are selected to reflect aesthetic and technical innovation, and the response to changing social and cultural demands. Representative examples of batch-produced craft are also collected. We primarily collect 'fine' ceramics intended for display or domestic use, including decorated tiles. Sanitary ware, and ceramics and glass for industrial, medical, or other architectural uses are not normally collected.

#### 4.1.4. Wedgwood Collection

The Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass department has curatorial responsibility for the Wedgwood Collection, presented by the Art Fund to the V&A with major support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, private donations and a public appeal (December 2014). The Collection is one of the most important industrial archives in the world and a unique record of over 250 years of British ceramic production. It comprises more than 80,000 objects including ceramics, moulds, waxes, pattern books, designs, factory production records, manuscripts, printed documents, fine art and mechanical objects. The collection will remain at the Wedgwood Museum in Barlaston, on long-term loan from the V&A to the Wedgwood Museum, which is managed by Waterford Wedgwood Royal Doulton (WWRD UK Ltd).

We aim to acquire objects for the Wedgwood Collection where they significantly add to the understanding of the history, design and production of Wedgwood and, where appropriate, its incorporated companies. Selected current WWRD production will be added to the collection, to ensure the continuity of the company history and illustrate the design development and technical innovation.

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## **5. THEATRE & PERFORMANCE DEPARTMENT**

### **5.1. Scope, history, standing and collecting**

The Theatre & Performance collections are the National Collection for the Performing Arts. Dedicated to the history, craft and practice of the live performing arts in the UK, their emphasis is on drama, dance, opera and musical theatre. In providing the national record of performance, they combine the functions of museum, archive, library and educational resource. Between 1974 and 2007 the department was referred to as the Theatre Museum. The current name was adopted when the Theatre Museum at Convent Garden closed.

The department documents the production and critical reception of live performance by gathering a variety of evidence in different media. Objects are collected for their significance in the history and development of performance.

The collections fall into two main groups: Core Collections comprising the most popular and heavily used material, organised into large series according to format and material type (photographs, designs, prints, etc), and Special Collections which are mainly archival. Acquisitions are made both through pro-active gathering of documentation on a systematic

basis, the pursuit of target collections and items, and the creation of the department's own record of contemporary performance through video and photography; and through re-active consideration of material offered as a gift, purchase or bequest.

The department is widely regarded as leader of the many performing arts collections in the UK. It takes a central role in SIBMAS (the International Association of Performing Arts Museums and Libraries), the UK's subject specialist network for the subject of performance - the Association of Performing Arts Collections (APAC), and in The Society for Theatre Research (STR). It is a leading partner in the *Backstage* project, an electronic portal for UK performing arts material. It has engaged in several large-scale partnership projects with, and funded by, the HE sector, focussing on research, digitisation and resource discovery.

The Theatre Museum was founded as a distinct department of the V&A in 1974 when the Enthoven and Beard collections were merged with the holdings of the British Theatre Museum Association and Richard Buckle's 'Friends of the Museum of Performing Arts'. The Theatre Museum's role as the central performing arts holding was rapidly affirmed by the acquisition of the Antony Hippisley Coxe Circus Collection, and the British Puppet Guild Collection. Rock and pop was included in response to gifts from Pink Floyd, The Who, Elton John, and others, and the flourishing interest in popular music. The department is the deposit library on a *de facto* basis for professional performance in the UK and its collection of programmes is the most comprehensive in the world. No other institution documents UK performing arts from day to day or offers such depth of related material.

In 1987 the Theatre Museum moved from South Kensington to separate premises in Covent Garden. Over 60,000 volumes were acquired on the closure of the British Theatre Association. Major archives including the Arts Council of Great Britain's were added to the collection. Since 1992 the department has made archival recordings of selected, current stage productions for its National Video Archive of Performance (NVAP). Video has added a vital dimension to conventional collections by capturing performance in real time, and is heavily used for study, display and education. Our staff include a video producer and a contemporary performance curator. We are building strong holdings of Black and Asian companies and alternative theatre.

Despite the fact that the performing arts are global, collecting focuses on performance in the UK. It is also prioritised by subject area, strength of coverage and public demand. Where coverage is modest, a conscious decision is made either to improve the holdings, or to refer enquirers to other centres. Non-UK material may occasionally be collected where it is vital for a fuller understanding of the arts in this country. Similarly, although the collecting focus is on live performance, some material relating to film, television, and radio is collected where artists, designers, writers and others have had active careers here, as well as in the theatre industry.

We maintain a list of collections to be pursued which will assist the evaluation of offers of other material that the department may consider acquiring reactively. Amongst our priority areas, and with a focus on 20th- and 21st-century collecting, we aim to develop the process of

updating the national record of performing arts across the UK with programmes, posters, playtexts, library materials including commercial and archival videos/DVDs etc. Another area of focus is the recording of productions and interviews with key practitioners for the National Video Archive of Performance, where possible extending coverage beyond London to include dance and other forms, especially popular entertainment.

We continue developing pro-active photography by using the department's photographer to record current productions and by acquiring the work of outside photographers. Furthermore, we aim to expand our collection of oral history recordings and selectively build holdings of modern and contemporary designs, models, costumes, prompt-books and archives. Another departmental aim is to develop holdings on experimental theatre in the post-1968 era, and hard-to-document areas such as physical theatre, mime, visual, site-specific, environmental, processional, carnival, Black, Asian and other ethnic minority performance. It is our intention to improve coverage of dance in musicals/theatre shows, and new dance in Britain, through strategic acquisitions and to build holdings of costumes, scores, recordings and photographs for opera and musical theatre around the Bunnett-Muir bequest of musicals tapes, records, CDs, posters, music sheets and books.

The department continues to document rock and pop and its theatricality by collecting key examples of design and technology as well as photographs, archival material, etc. A further focus is the documenting of theatre architecture and stage technology through trade literature, photographs, plans, etc., to be regularly updated and relevant materials acquired and by maintaining close liaison with the Association of British Theatre Technicians, the Theatres Trust, English Heritage, etc. We aim to develop acquisitions of library materials - new play texts and libretti professionally performed in the UK and key secondary materials including books, pamphlets, periodicals, trade catalogues, CD ROMs, commercial and archival videos, DVDs and other multimedia materials as appropriate. Collecting film which is integral or closely related to other material collected and where the conservation needs are manageable, and selectively acquiring digital material where it is fundamental to development of the subject area are further examples of our departmental targets. Finally, we wish to develop the collecting of individual records where the cover/other artwork is of design significance or collections which provide comprehensive coverage of relevant performance sectors.

#### 5.1.1. Drama/Theatre

This area is the best represented of the performing arts in the collections. Coverage grows significantly from the 18th century onwards via playbills, programmes, posters, texts, reviews, files on practitioners, companies and theatres, books, letters, legal documents, prompt-books (e.g. for *Look Back in Anger* and *The Mousetrap*), photographic collections (e.g. Guy Little, Houston Rogers, Douglas Jeffrey), prints, drawings, ceramics and paintings.

Costumes and accessories include examples worn by Olivier (e.g. as Richard III and Othello), Gielgud and Edith Evans, from Peter Brook's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Inca masks from

*The Royal Hunt of the Sun*. The design holdings, rivalled only by the Robert Tobin Collection (USA), include major work by de Louthembourg, the Grieve family, Wilhelm, Gordon Craig, Ernst Stern, Tanya Moiseiwitsch, Leslie Hurry, Anthony Holland, Ralph Koltai, Sean Kenny, Michael Annals, Sally Jacobs, Voytek, Lez Brotherston, Mark Thompson and other leading names. The Museum is well provided with archives from theatres, companies and producers (e.g. H M Tennent, Royal Court, Tricycle, and Cheek by Jowl), and actors including Paul Scofield, Ian McKellen, Vivien Leigh and Ellen Terry. Writers are well represented with the Christopher Fry personal archive covering a large span of the 20th century, alongside writers as diverse as Clemence Dane, Alfred Fagon, Tom Taylor and those produced by Paines Plough – a specialist new writing company whose archive is held by the department. Drama has benefited from being a priority for NVAP recording and is another rich resource for documenting the work of leading contemporary actors, directors and designers. Coverage of Black and Asian work now includes NVAP videos of productions (e.g., *East is East*, *Gem of the Ocean*, *Lift Off*, the *Not Black and White* season of Black writing at the Tricycle), interviews with leading practitioners (*Blackgrounds*), archives (Black Mime Theatre, Temba Theatre, Talawa (on long-term loan), biographical files, photographs and other material in the core collections.

#### 5.1.2. Dance

Dance coverage is especially strong for ballet although the focus is now on broadening dance holdings. The heart of the dance collection is the extensive Ballets Russes holdings including the world's largest collection of costumes and scenic cloths. A particular highlight is the *Train Bleu* front cloth (after Picasso). This is supported by the Parmenia Ekstrom Collection of Diaghilev's business papers and drawings by Valentine Gross and British artists commissioned by Cyril Beaumont. The earliest items in the collection are designs for the 17th- century *ballets de cour* and the most recent is the 21st - century Akram Khan Archive. There are extensive collections of dance costumes, designs including those by Léon Bakst, Pavel Tchelitchev, Natalia Goncharova and Howard Hodgkin, and photographic collections including Gordon Anthony, Anthony Crickmay, Chris Ha and Chris Nash. The collection is notably strong on the 19th century including Romantic Ballet Prints, Margaret Rolf's collection on Marie Taglioni and the Georges Jacobi Collection primarily of annotated music scores for the Alhambra Ballet. Developments in 20-century dance are well documented with archives and collections recording London Contemporary Dance Theatre, Western Ballet, Alexander Roy's London Ballet as well as substantial holdings on major dance companies both through the core collections and named archives.

#### 5.1.3. Opera and Musical Theatre

Opera material includes many libretti, programmes and prints of singers and composers; an original 1720 prompt copy for Handel's *Radamisto*; costumes worn by Chaliapin, Tito Gobbi, Boris Kristoff and Joan Sutherland and in English National Opera and Royal Opera House Covent Garden productions; models and stage cloths by John Piper for Britten premieres; and the archives of Opera Factory, and of impresario Sander Gorlinsky. A recent substantial acquisition

of paintings, ceramics and archival material was made from the Gasson Collection, further strengthening coverage of opera.

Musical Theatre highlights include D'Oyly Carte's Gilbert and Sullivan designs, prompt-books and photographs, the *Salad Days* magic piano, Julie Andrews's *My Fair Lady* ball gown, the original conductor's score for *Jesus Christ Superstar* and John Napier's model for the 1996 Lyceum revival of that show, and Maria Bjornson designs for *The Phantom of the Opera*.

Much documentation on musical theatre and opera is embedded in the core collections. Both subject areas will be strengthened when the Department acquires the Rex Bunnett collection of music-based reference material, which will be bequeathed to the department.

#### 5.1.4. Other performing arts

*Rock and Pop* - includes Harry Hammond photographs of pop stars (late 1940s-60s), costumes worn by Mick Jagger, Adam Ant, Kiss etc., Jamie Reid's designs for The Sex Pistols, and Lazaridis' set model for Duran Duran's 1993 tour.

*Circus* - the UK's best public holding. It comprises the collections of Antony Hippisley Coxe, Cyril Mills, Larry Turnbull posters and Baron de Rakoczy's photographs of the 1920s-50s.

*Puppetry* - includes rare Victorian Tiller-Clowes and Barnard marionettes, the Gair Wikinson marionettes, the British Puppet Guild Collection (mid-20th century) and extensive supporting documentation compiled by Gerald Morice. A recent acquisition is the archive of Punch & Judy material collected by the respected authority on English puppet theatre, George Speaight.

*Pantomime* - includes early Grimaldi prints, scripts, designs by Hugh Durrant and others, a star trap, costumes for Victorian Harlequin, pantomime dame and cow, and a large collection of pantomime scripts produced for the Howard and Wyndham circuit between the 1940s and 1970s.

*Revue, Cabaret* - includes C B Cochran's scrapbooks, the archives of Chauve Souris, André Charlot, Douglas Byng, the Windmill Theatre and designs by Oliver Messel and others, costumes for Murray's and Eve's cabaret clubs.

*Music Hall, Variety* - includes many music sheets, images and business records for the Alhambra (Alfred Moul Collection) and the circuit managed by the London Pavilion Company.

*Theatre Buildings, Technology* - includes a collection of ca. 10,000 building plans by Frank Matcham & Co., Colin Sorensen's buildings files, Strand Electric's photographs, Frederick Bentham's (lighting control) Archive, and the Association of British Theatre Technicians' interviews with practitioners.

### 5.1.5. Film

Although the V&A was a world museum pioneer in collecting photography from the 1850s, its attitude to collecting film in the early 20th century was not enthusiastic. Unlike early photography, considered by many to be an art form, film was seen at the time as a down market and sensational entertainment for the masses. These attitudes endured for many years and led eventually to the British Film Institute being founded in 1933. In recent years the Department's interest have moved closer to those of the BFI, particularly on the design aspects of film. This resulted in the significant decision in 2012 for the BFI to transfer its costume collection to the V&A.

### 5.1.6. Television and Radio

The BBC holds the UK's principal collection for performance on television and radio. Generally the V&A does not collect in these areas, unless material comes within other collections, such as the photos of the Motown Review being recorded for Ready, Steady, Go! at Rediffusion's studios in 1965, which form part of the collection.

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## 6. Word & Image Department

### 6.1. Scope, history, standing and collecting

The National Art Library (NAL) (including the Archive of Art and Design) together with the Museum Archives, and the Prints, Drawings, and Paintings Department were merged in 2001 to form the Word & Image Department (WID). The merged Department's collections encompass a wide range of Museum objects and literature on all the subjects covered by the Museum's collections: more than two million items overall. This plan concentrates on the collections as exemplars of art, craft and design. There is a separate *Policy for the development of the NAL's documentary materials* available on the V&A website (See: (<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/n/national-art-library-collection-development-policy-documentary-materials/>))

The NAL's collections began with the Schools of Design set up at Somerset House in 1837 to help improve the teaching of design. They moved to Marlborough House in 1852 and into the current suite of Reading Rooms on their completion in 1884 after occupying various locations in the Museum at South Kensington. The title 'National Art Library' first appeared in 1865 at a time when the *Universal catalogue of books on art* was being planned. This catalogue was an early expression of the Library's ambition to provide a national centre for art documentation.

From the outset the NAL included prints and drawings, and by 1856 photographs. In 1909 prints and drawings were transferred to the curatorial Department of Engraving, Illustration and Design. Photographs followed much later, in 1977, when the Department's title became Prints, Drawings & Photographs. A separate Paintings Department was set up when the Museum opened at South Kensington in 1857. The Archive of Art and Design was established as part of the NAL in 1978 to assemble material already in the Museum, and to acquire archives associated with the production, marketing, promotion and study of British art and design.

Collecting is carried out by six sections detailed below. British work is prioritised in all areas. The collections overlap with and complement many other collections nationally and internationally but are given distinctive meaning by their context. UK partnerships include the British Museum, the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, Tate, and the National Media Museum with which the V&A has entered into loan arrangements to maximise the value of the collections to the nation, and the National Archives which, as well as overseeing the management of public records at the V&A, disseminates information on its collections via the National Register of Archives. We also work with numerous smaller bodies with complementary collections, and outreach organisations.

The Department has responsibility for eight collections which have 'individual national status' (as defined by the provision of expertise and authoritative information, as well as the extent and/or significance of the collections themselves; see the *V&A Collections Management Policy*, 2009).

These national collections in the care of the Word and Image Department are:

- Architectural Drawings
- Art of Photography
- British Watercolours and Drawings
- Commercial Graphics , including Posters
- Computer Art
- The literature of the art, craft and design history of the book
- Pastels
- Portrait Miniatures
- The work of John Constable (1776-1837)

We continue to acquire historic material, especially in those areas where we have national responsibility, but in practice much of the Department's collecting activity is now focused on the contemporary - that is, work by living artists and designers (often young or early in their careers), and with an emphasis on new media and technologies, new conceptual categories, and new object types, as well as topical material in traditional formats. The acquisition policy is essentially forward-looking, but also extends the strengths of the existing collections. The V&A's aim is to promote, support and develop the UK creative economy by inspiring artists, designers and makers, and this is reflected in our collecting.

The contemporary field necessitates a joined-up approach to identifying, assessing and taking decisions on acquisitions, given the spread of expertise on things contemporary within the Department, and also the 'hybrid' or mixed media character of so much contemporary work. This joined-up thinking extends to other Collections. We work closely with the Contemporary Architecture, Design and Digital section (CADD), especially in the field of architecture; and also with Asia curators who advise on and support relevant acquisitions of photography by the Word & Image Department. We collaborate with the Theatre & Performance Department, to co-ordinate our acquisition of design material, graphics and so on. The post-1900 Period Expertise Group is also a useful forum for developing a co-ordinated approach to collecting and for identifying those areas (such as digital art, product design, film) which we aim to represent coherently.

We collect to represent processes and techniques in all media. In terms of subject matter we seek to acquire work which reflects contemporary culture, including material which addresses political, cultural and social issues such as climate change, health and identity. By following the established patterns and purposes in collecting we are better able to collect effectively and systematically and also to co-ordinate our acquisition policy with the other national museums. At the same time we are alert to new areas of art and design practice which may relate only tangentially to existing collection strengths, but are nevertheless pertinent to the V&A's role and remit. We aim to continue building the collections in ways which reflect the cultural diversity of London and the UK.

Collecting priorities are also linked to plans for new permanent galleries (and to the rotation of light-sensitive objects in such galleries) and to major exhibition projects, as well as departmental displays. It can be more cost-effective to acquire works for such projects than to borrow. Our current priorities in this area include finding substitutes for British Museum prints currently on loan to the British Galleries and works in all media for major forthcoming exhibitions. Collecting priorities can be summarised in several broad categories, but within each of those categories there are more specific priorities which may be object types, work by individual named artists, or work from particular groups or geographic areas.

#### 6.1.1 Design and the Archive of Art and Design (AAD)

These two collections which are jointly managed, comprise some 300 archives and over 80,000 drawings. They aim to represent the design process from conception to consumption and together provide a preeminent point of access to primary source material for the study of design. They include records of individual artists and designers, businesses and institutions involved in the production, marketing, promotion and study of art and design, including order books, correspondence, accounts, diaries, photographs, and promotional material; and British, European and American drawings for architecture, the applied and industrial arts, product design, fashion, and also sculptors' drawings.

The collection has some international rivals for major historical material, but no national rivals except in terms of architectural drawings, where the holdings complement those of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Since 2004 the RIBA collection has been housed at the V&A. The RIBA collection is very large (ca. 1,000,000 items) and is the property of its membership. WID's collection differs from the RIBA in that it includes designs for building by type, as well as by architect. Architects' archives are, where appropriate, directed to the RIBA and fine arts archives to Tate; in other areas the V&A is as anxious to ensure that archives find an appropriate home as to add them to the V&A's collection. The British Museum has occasionally acquired design drawings, as works of art, rather than as examples of a design process.

The V&A has a remit to lead public perception and understanding of design as a category and as a process, and this must be reflected in our collecting policy. In the field of design drawings we continue to collect contemporary examples in those areas in which we already have strong holdings and which relate directly to the other V&A collections – furniture, textiles, ceramics, and metalwork. Areas of design activity which fall outside these traditional categories are now being targeted: product design, fashion design and illustration, garden design, designs relating to shops and shopping, and graphic design (complementing existing strengths in the print collections).

Though much of the design material we collect relates to the domestic milieu, we also aim to collect designs for public projects, such as monuments and sculpture. Wherever possible we aim

to acquire the complete 'job bag' (everything from first concept to specification). We want to reflect the importance of Computer Aided Design in the design industry. 3D models are collected where they play a significant part in demonstrating or elucidating the design process. A cross-Museum approach is being taken to collecting architecture, in which we work particularly alongside CADD. WID collects architects' drawings with a focus on global architecture; the RIBA collects the work of British architects only. The V&A's purpose in collecting is to represent the art of architecture; the RIBA collects material in order to represent the processes of architecture.

We do not proactively acquire design for film, which is the province primarily of the British Film Institute. However, where a designer's career includes film among other design disciplines, or where specific works clearly relate to existing strands of V&A collecting and offer new perspectives on other design disciplines such as architecture, interiors, furniture, graphics and fashion, design for film is considered for the V&A's collection.

The AAD helps oversee the paper-based archives in the Wedgwood Collection, which is on loan to the Wedgwood Museum at Barlaston (see 4.1.4). These comprise personal and family papers of Josiah Wedgwood and his descendants, and the records of the Wedgwood business, including artwork and pattern books, from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Additions to the archive are considered for acquisition which document the history and continuing design and production of Wedgwood and, where appropriate, its incorporated companies.

Priorities for the AAD are shaped by two factors, the first being a moral obligation to accept accruals to our existing archival collections to prevent archives being dispersed unnecessarily, and the second being limited storage space. Our practice is to consider high-quality material only, by which we mean that it is from a significant name; or that it documents a career or business concisely; material which represents the design process clearly; or where there will be strong research interest. Our other priorities are archives which fill a gap in our holdings (examples include ceramics design, or male fashion), or which supplement our strongest existing holdings (e.g. stained glass, silver). Archives with strong links to a particular locality are directed to a local authority repository; we always seek a suitable alternative home for an archive before we decide to acquire it for the V&A.

### 6.1.2 Paintings

The collection contains over 2000 oil paintings, of which around one third are Continental and two thirds are British; over 2000 portrait miniatures; 6,800 watercolours; over 10,000 British drawings, illustrations and sketchbooks; and 2,000 Old Master drawings.

The collection began in 1857 with John Sheepshanks' gift of 233 oil paintings and 289 watercolours, drawings and etchings by mainly contemporary British artists, and was known for 50 years as the National Gallery of British Art. Since the foundation of Tate, most collecting of oils has been of decorative paintings, works related to decorative schemes, representations of

the decorative arts, and portraits of practitioners of art and design. The collection of 19th-century British oil paintings, which includes the principal collection of John Constable, is, nonetheless, second only to that of Tate. The foreign oil paintings are also of national significance.

We continue to have national responsibility for collecting British watercolours and also English portrait miniatures, an unrivalled collection, with foreign examples acquired to provide a wider context. In addition it was recently agreed with the British Museum, the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and Tate that we should take on national responsibility for pastels. We also collect drawings and have strength in Italian, Netherlandish and French as well as British examples, and such amateur media as silhouettes and cut-paper work. The collection is outstanding for the range of painting media represented, from late antiquity to the present.

In collecting unique works on paper, we continue the established pattern of acquisition, concentrating on the work of British artists, and artists working in Britain, including recent immigrants and artists from the African and Asian diaspora. We continue to focus on the innovative use of traditional media, and on the processes and techniques of artistic production. Drawings by sculptors and installation artists are particularly desirable. With three recognised 'national' collections (portrait miniatures; British watercolours; pastels) we continue to give priority to significant acquisitions in these areas.

### 6.1.3. Photographs

The V&A was the first museum in the UK to collect photographs, beginning in 1852, and the first to hold a photography exhibition, in 1858. Throughout the 19th century – as well as building an extensive 'virtual museum' of reproductive photographs illustrating art, architecture and design – acquisitions were also made direct from major creative photographers and photographs were recognized by the museum as a creative art in its own right. The collection is international and spans the whole history of the subject from 1839 to the present. It numbers ca. 300,000 photographs. In 1977, the photographic collection transferred from the NAL to the re-named Prints, Drawings, Paintings & Photographs Department. Holdings of 19<sup>th</sup> - and more especially 20<sup>th</sup>- century classic photographs have since expanded rapidly, and the collection of contemporary photographs has become a priority.

The V&A Photographs Collection overlaps and complements many other collections nationally and internationally. We have national responsibility for collections of the art of photography. The collection is among the most important of its kind in the world. It does not include photographic hardware, which is the responsibility of the National Media Museum, Bradford, a branch of the Science Museum (NMSI), London.

The V&A's collection is unique in covering the history of photography as a fine and applied art medium. The history of photography has traditionally been centred on Western Europe and the United States, and although we will always seek to improve our holdings of such classic

photographs, our priority now is to collect work from the Middle East, Africa, Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America. We continue to focus on work by emerging photographers, especially those trained or working in Britain. Other priorities include early British photography and daguerreotypes, contemporary fashion photography, photojournalism, vintage mid-20th-century photographs and items that exemplify a range of processes and techniques. Photo books and books made by artists using photography continue to be an area of interest, and these are collected by the National Art Library in consultation with Photographs curators.

A Photographs Acquisition Group (PAG) was established in 2011 to help the Museum expand and diversify its renowned collection. The Group brings enthusiasts and collectors with a shared passion for photography into closer dialogue with the Museum's curators. Donations from the group help the Museum plan for and continue to broaden its holdings, purchase historic and contemporary work, support emerging photographers and consider photographers' archives. We are also concerned to establish a national collecting framework for photographers' archives and are working with professional colleagues to resolve the relevant problems.

Overall, the focus of the section's collecting is to facilitate changing displays and research. Collecting strategy is designed to tell a balanced chronological history of photography in the Museum's annual changing displays, to contribute photographs to the Museum's periods and styles galleries and to contribute to the headline temporary exhibition programme.

#### 6.1.4 Prints

This large and active section is responsible for collecting printed images created as works of art or to fulfill a practical purpose. The Print collection had its origins in the NAL, and from 1909 prints were part of the Prints, Drawings and Paintings Department and its successor departments.

The Prints collection comprises ca. 500,000 items, including fine art prints from the Renaissance to the present; printed designs for the decorative arts; portraits; topography; social history subjects, religious and pagan symbolism; costume and fashion plates; fan leaves; caricatures; playing cards, packaging, stationery, posters and other commercial graphics; wallpapers; and reproductive prints.

Uniquely in Britain, the Prints collection embraces 'fine' prints and commercial production. It also houses the most comprehensive collection of printed designs for the decorative arts in the UK, one of the world's foremost collections, and is the only museum collection that aims to represent the history of how prints have been presented and displayed. It does not seek to rival the British Museum's collection of Old Master prints, although acquisitions in this field are made to improve representation of printmaking techniques, where we aim to be comprehensive, and where specific works are needed for gallery projects and touring exhibitions. The V&A is the only national institution to have consistently collected prints by living artists since the mid-19th century.

The V&A is the only UK museum to collect across the whole spectrum of 'print' from ephemera to fine art. Many of our priority areas for collecting extend or build on established strengths (wallpapers, greetings cards, fine art prints) but focus on manifestations which employ new media or have new applications. For example, it is a continuing priority to acquire wallpapers designed by artists and made specifically for installations and exhibitions; our greetings card acquisitions now include examples for the holidays and festivals of various cultures, and cards promoting companies and institutions. In the field of fine-art prints, we are especially interested in examples which employ digital or other new or unconventional media, and the application of print to 3D formats, including unique works as well as multiples. Within fine art printmaking, other key priorities include work by artists from Africa and the African diaspora, and from Russia and Latin America.

Of our traditional collecting strengths, posters (commercial and political) remain a high priority, not least with the aim of targeting specific material for the planned Gallery of Graphic Design and Communication, and to cover significant gaps in our holdings overall. These include work from the Polish Poster School (1950s – 1980s) as our current holdings are not representative of this important area; International Typographic School (largely Swiss in origin); 'new wave' graphic design of the 1980s; Chicano posters, which are missing from our otherwise good holdings of 1960s and 70s agit-prop posters. We also wish to acquire more material relating to the design process for posters, since our current holdings of original poster artwork mainly relate to pre-war London Transport posters. As with the other sections (Designs, Digital Art) we also want to find ways to 'collect' or archive posters and other graphics which exist only in a digital form. Strategies for collecting contemporary material include visiting international poster biennales, working with the Design and Art Direction awards to get copies of the best of the nominated posters, and liaising with commissioning organizations such as Transport for London's Art on the Underground. We are alert to current events which generate posters, such as the Olympic Games, and UK and US elections, as well as activism and protest world-wide.

In keeping with the Museum's founding emphasis on design and making, we are keen to acquire material relating to the processes of printmaking, such as blocks, plates and proofs (with published impressions, if we do not already hold them), subject to the usual criteria with regard to the quality of the work. We also continue to collect printed designs for the decorative arts; likewise, trade cards relating to products in the V&A collections – particularly textiles and dress, furniture and interiors, metalwork, jewellery, ceramics and glass, as well as the printing trade.

#### 6.1.5 The Art and Design of the Book

The National Art Library holds the V&A's collections of the arts and design of text and image, and the formats in which ideas and graphics are distributed by publication, ranging from medieval manuscripts to modern paperbacks.

Many aspects of the collection are of national significance, including illuminated manuscripts, calligraphy, book bindings, artists' books, children's books, and comics and graphic novels. Collecting activity is done with reference to other major national collections such as the British Library, Tate and smaller specialist organizations.

Medieval and post-medieval illuminated manuscripts were acquired from the 1850s, as complete volumes but also cuttings and leaves (almost 3,000 fragments). All were intended as a design source for educational purposes, but the collection also includes notable examples of miniature painting by celebrated illuminators. Examples of early printing were also collected in this way, in the form of complete works and single pages or even initials, to provide an encyclopedic account of book design and ornament. The collection of fine bindings similarly aims to provide an overview from the medieval to the present, predominantly in European examples, but the Clements Collection is outstanding for armorial bindings from the British Isles. Holdings of illustrated books in trade and deluxe bindings are also extensive. The collection is strong in publications of selected private presses, writing and lettering books, fine typography, and *livres d'artistes*. With the traditional crafts and technologies of the book thus well represented, additional examples are acquired today only if they are particularly relevant to the collection or to contemporary conditions of book production.

The 20th-century Book Art collection was built up during the 1980s and 1990s to become the foremost in Britain. In this period book art became established as an art practice in its own right. Today artists' books of all kinds are acquired selectively. We collect to represent the response and impact of significant artists when they address the concepts and formats of the book. We also continue to document the ongoing development of book art as an art practice, especially work responding to changes in the contemporary scenes of publishing and the distribution of ideas. Digital works were first acquired in the 1990s, in physical formats now becoming obsolete; in future we will address digital artists' publications, once a sustainable framework of storage and access is established. Acquisitions are naturally linked where possible to museum programmes or existing holdings in the NAL and in other departments. With British artists' books collected at the British Library through the legal deposit system, we focus more on Europe and the U.S., always aiming to complement rather than duplicate other collections.

Since the 1980s, the National Art Library has built up its comics holdings very substantially, on the basis of several large private collections. The main strength is American, including separate collections of Romance and Disney-based comics; balanced by a collection of amateur British 'mini-comics'. In collecting comics, the aim is to provide a study collection representative of all formats, of major centres of production, and of innovative design and art-work. Individual items are added only if they are newsworthy, or if they evoke an important aspect of contemporary life, or are inspired by artistic and design subjects.

Museum collections have represented commercial design from the outset. The Library collected examples of modern book design from the 1860s. Innovative commercial book production of the 20th century such as paperbacks, dust jackets, and children's book was also added to the

collection. A small collection documents 'High Street' book and magazine design in the early 21st century. Today, examples are collected very selectively, on grounds of excellence or influence. The British Library loan deposit of 500,000 20th-century dust jackets is a rich research resource in the study of book design.

Illustration is a wide field clearly associated with 'word and image' studies. The National Art Library has extensive historic collections of illustrated books, on such subjects as natural history and botany, topography, costume and all the decorative arts, as well as literary and imaginative works. These reflect both the needs of early student designers and artists for visual information about the world, and the fact that illustration provided a career for artists, especially once 19th-century technological and educational developments created a large market for illustrated magazines. After 1909 the Department of Engraving, Illustration and Design actively pursued illustration of all kinds in original artwork and separate prints. Related books often were held in the Library, and illustrated bookplates and dust jackets were collected by both departments. The Renier Collection is a collection of ca. 80,000 mostly illustrated children's books. The Archive of Art & Design has acquired a number of illustrators' archives. Thus research material relevant to illustration is distributed broadly across the Word & Image Department. The contemporary illustration industry is supported primarily through the annual V&A Illustration Awards. Museological and art-historical illustration, both graphic and photographic, are of course copiously represented in the Library's collection of documentary publications.

#### 6.1.6 Digital Art and Design

Until recently, the Museum held relatively few works that illustrate the early years of computer-generated art and design. However, the Department now holds one of the world's largest collections of computer art, created from the 1950s onwards. The term 'computer art' is used for works created before the advent of personal computers, or in a similar style if created later. In practice, computer-aided design and computer graphics were closely related. Computer-generated prints began to enter the Department's collection in the late 1960s, at around the time of the ground-breaking *Cybernetic Serendipity* exhibition held at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts. Other works were acquired from time to time, but the strength of the collection today is the result of two recent acquisitions: the Patric Prince Collection and the archives of the Computer Arts Society. The V&A now holds an internationally significant collection of computer art from the 1960s to the 1990s and beyond. Together, these major acquisitions form the basis for the V&A's national collection of computer-generated art.

The bulk of the artworks consist of plotter drawings, screen prints, inkjet prints, posters and photographs, but there are also examples in other media, including 3D images and computer files. Patric Prince was an art historian and archivist of computer art. Based in California, Prince actively collected computer-assisted art works for many years. In addition to some 200 individual artworks, the collection also contains a huge quantity of books, archival material and ephemera, including monographs, manuals, exhibition catalogues, slides, off-prints and

interviews with practising artists. Because the early history of digital culture is still under-documented, the material she accumulated is now of great significance to researchers.

The Museum also holds the archives of the Computer Arts Society (CAS), numbering 200 artworks. As computer artists passed through London, they often gave the Society examples of their work. These were stored until the V&A acquired the collection in 2007, along with the Society's working records of its own activities. The CAS material complements the Patric Prince collection perfectly. So-called 'algorithmic' works are particularly well represented and the Department already holds significant pieces by major figures such as Harold Cohen, Paul Brown, Roman Verostko, Jean-Pierre Hebert and Mark Wilson. We continue to build on these core collections, and have recently acquired additional computer-generated works on paper by artists such as Frederick Hammersley, Vera Molnar, Frieder Nake and Darrell Viner.

We also collect born-digital artworks selectively, by artists such as Daniel Brown, Aaron Koblin and Casey Reas. The technological and logistical problems of preservation and display lead us to focus on works that require little or no active maintenance. Priority is given to digital works, or applications of digital technology, which extend our holdings in other media (e.g. computer art on paper, the book, wallpaper, etc). Areas of practice we plan to collect in collaboration with the V&A's Contemporary Architecture Digital Design team include digital animation, computer games, and the work of artists exploiting gaming technology.

## 6.2 Further Reading

### DESIGN PROCESS

#### Introductions

Lambert, Susan, ed. *Pattern and design: Designs for the decorative arts, 1480-1980 with an index to designers' drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1983)

Newton, Charles. *Victorian designs for the home* (London, 1999)

Leslie, Fiona. *Designs for 20th-century interiors* (London, 2000)

Bryant, Julius. 'Recent acquisitions (2001-09) of designs at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London', *Burlington Magazine*, CLI (June, 2009) 433-440

#### Catalogues

Catalogues of architectural drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum:

Darby, Michael. *John Pollard Seddon* (London, 1983)

Du Prey, Pierre de la Ruffinière. *Sir John Soane* (London, 1985)

Wedgwood, Alexandra. *A.W.N. Pugin and the Pugin family* (London, 1985)

Rowan, Alistair. *Robert Adam* (London, 1988)

Lomas, Elizabeth. *Guide to the Archive of Art and Design* (London, 2001)

Bryant, Julius, ed., *Art and Design for All: the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London and Munich, 2011)

Bryant, Julius. *Alec Cobbe, Designs for Historic Interiors* (London, 2013)

S. Weber, ed., *William Kent. Designing Georgian Britain* (London and New York, 2013)

## **PAINTINGS**

### Introductions

Lambert, Susan. *Drawing: Technique and purpose* (London, 1984)

Fermor, Sharon. *The Raphael Tapestry Cartoons* (London, 1996)

Parkinson, Ronald. *British watercolours at the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1998)

Parkinson, Ronald. *Constable: The man and his art* (London, 1998)

Coombs, Katie. *The portrait miniature in England* (London, 1998)

Mark Evans, *The Painted World: from Illumination to abstraction*, (Victoria & Albert Museum, London 2005)

Charles Newton, *Images of the Ottoman Empire*, (Victoria & Albert Museum, London 2007)

Saunders, Gill, ed. *Recording Britain* (London, V&A, 2011)

Coombs, Katherine. *British Watercolours 1750-1950* (London, V&A, 2012)

Owens, Susan. *The Art of Drawing. British Masters and Methods since 1600* (London, V&A, 2013)

### Catalogues

Reynolds, Graham. *Catalogue of the Constable Collection* (London, 2nd ed.1973)

Kauffmann, C.M. *Catalogue of foreign paintings* (2 vols., London, 1973)

Ward-Jackson, Peter W. *Italian drawings* (London, 1979-80)

Hamilton, Jean. *British Watercolours in the Victoria and Albert Museum: An illustrated summary catalogue of the national collection* (London, c.1980)

Parkinson, Ronald. *Catalogue of British Oil Paintings, 1820-1860* (London, 1990)

Murdoch, John. *Seventeenth-century English miniatures in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1997)

ed. A. Ellis & S. Roe, *Oil Paintings in Public Ownership in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London 2008)

Evans, Mark, and Browne, Clare, eds., with Arnold Nesselrath. *Raphael. Cartoons and tapestries for the Sistine Chapel* (London, V&A, 2010)

Evans, Mark. *John Constable: oil sketches from the V&A* (London, V&A, 2011)

ed. A. Ellis & S. Roe, *Oil Paintings in Public Ownership in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London 2008)

Shoaf Turner, Jane, and White, Christopher; Evans, Mark, ed. *Dutch & Flemish drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum*. (London, V&A, 2014)

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

### Introductions

Haworth-Booth, Mark and Coe, Brian. *A Guide to Early Photographic Processes* (London, V, 1983)

Haworth-Booth, Mark, ed. *Personal Choice: A Celebration of 20th century photographs* (London, 1983)

Haworth-Booth, Mark, ed. *The Golden Age of British Photography 1839-1900* (Millerton, 1984)

Haworth-Booth, Mark and McCauley, Anne. *The Museum & the Photograph: Collecting photography at the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1853-1900* (Williamstown, Mass., 1998)

Haworth-Booth, Mark. *Photography: An independent art, photographs from the Victoria and Albert Museum 1839-1996* (London, 1997)

Haworth-Booth, *Things: A Spectrum of Photography 1850-2001*, (Jonathan Cape Publishers, 2004)

Barnes, Martin, *Benjamin Brecknell Turner. Rural England through a Victorian Lens*, V&A Publications, 2001.

Barnes, Martin, *Shadow Catchers: Camera-less Photography*, V&A Publications / Merrell Publishers, 2010, revised and expanded edition 2012.

Brown, Susanna, *Queen Elizabeth II: Portraits by Cecil Beaton*, V&A Publications 2011

Weiss, Marta, *Light from the Middle East: New Photography*, Steidl / V&A Publications, 2012

## **PRINTS**

### Introductions

Lambert, Susan. *Image multiplied: Five centuries of printed reproductions of paintings and drawings* (London, 1987)

Saunders, Gill. *Picturing Plants: an analytical history of botanical illustration* (1995; revised ed., London and Chicago, 2009)

Timmers, Margaret, ed. *The Power of the Poster* (London, 1998)

Timmers, Margaret, ed. *Impressions of the 20th century: Fine art prints from the V&A collection* (London, 2001)

Lambert, Susan. *Prints Art and Techniques* (London, 2001)

Saunders, Gill. *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration* (London, 2002)

Saunders, Gill and Miles, Rosie. *Prints Now: Directions and Definitions* (London, V&A, 2006)

Timmers, Margaret. *A Century of Olympic Posters* (London, V&A, 2008; revised ed., 2012)

Kuittinen, Riikka. *Street Art: Contemporary Prints* (London, V&A, 2010)

Flood, Catherine. *British Posters: Advertising, Art & Activism* (London, V&A, 2012)

Saunders, Gill, and Whitley, Zoe. *In Black and White: prints from Africa and the Diaspora* (London, V&A, 2013)

### Catalogues

Hamilton, Jean. *Wallpapers: A history and illustrated catalogue of the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1982)

Hamilton, Jean. *Playing cards in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, HMSO, 1988)

Miller, Elizabeth. *Sixteenth-century Italian ornament prints: The Lafrery volume* (London, 1998)

## THE ART AND DESIGN OF THE BOOK

### Introductions

Bettley, James, ed. *The Art of the Book: From medieval manuscript to graphic novel* (London, 2001)

Harthan, J. P. *Bookbindings*. (London: HMSO, 1985). 3rd ed.

Hogben, Carol, and Rowan Watson, eds. *From Manet to Hockney: modern artists' illustrated books* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1985)

Hobbs, Anne Stevenson, ed. *Fables* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1986)

MacRobert, T. M. *Printed books: a short introduction to fine typography* (London: HMSO, 1971). 2nd imp.

Watson, Rowan. *Illuminated manuscripts and their makers* (London, 2003)

*Word and Image: art, books and design from the National Art Library* (London, 2014)

### Catalogues

Haldane, Duncan. *Islamic bookbindings in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1983)

Hobbs, Anne Stevenson, and Joyce Irene Whalley, eds. *Beatrix Potter: the V & A collection: the Leslie Linder bequest* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum and Frederick Warne, 1985)

Meriton, John, ed., with Carlo Dumontet. *Small books for the common man: a descriptive bibliography of chapbooks* (London: Oak Knoll Press and the British Library, 2010)

Rowan Watson and Elena Foster, *Blood on Paper* (London: Ivory Press & V&A Publications, 2008)

Rowan Watson, *Western illuminated manuscripts: a catalogue of works in the National Art Library from the eleventh to the early twentieth century, with a complete account of the George Reid collection* (London, 2011)

Whalley, Joyce Irene, and Tessa Chester. *A history of children's book illustration* (London: John Murray with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1988)

Whalley, Joyce Irene, and Vera C. Kaden. *The universal penman: a survey of western calligraphy from the Roman period to 1980*. (London: HMSO, 1980)

## **7. AFRICA COLLECTING STRATEGY**

The V&A has a remarkable collection of material that was made in Africa or has a strong African connection, including important historic artifacts from Egypt, Ghana and Ethiopia as well as ceramics, textiles and glassware from North Africa. These African collections were given new prominence by the African Diaspora research project which the Museum undertook with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2005–8. In the course of this project, 4300 objects were identified, including many exceptional items that are on display in the Museum's galleries, although not under an African rubric. These and other objects acquired or identified since have been made accessible through the Africa subject hub and 'Search the Collections' on the V&A website.

Curatorial responsibility for these objects is shared by a number of departments. One important component of the collections is the art of North Africa (Morocco to Egypt) in the Islamic period, which has always been collected as part of what we now call Islamic art. Since 2002 these collections have been the responsibility of the Middle Eastern section in the Asian Department. Other significant holdings of material are curated by the Word and Image Department where the curators of prints and photographs have included works from Africa and the African diaspora in their collecting as a matter of course.

An Africa Curators Group (with representatives from Collections, Research and Learning) was established in 2009 to co-ordinate the Museum's approach to curating and developing the holdings of Africa-related art and design. The term 'Africa-related art and design' is interpreted very broadly. As well as work done in Africa, acquisitions include work done elsewhere by Africans or people of African descent, i.e. by the African diaspora. This diaspora has had a profound effect on the non-African world, and acquisitions will also show the impact of African ideas on the work of non-Africans. Acquisitions also encompass work done for Africans by others, as in the case of British printed cottons made for the African market, for example.

In enhancing its Africa-related collections, the V&A will avoid duplicating the activities of other British institutions as far as possible. This can be achieved by developing the collection along lines that reflect the distinctive role and remit of the V&A, following the precedent set by the Prints and Photographs sections.

We will develop our existing historical collections primarily through gallery-, publication- and web-based projects rather than through collecting. The exception is North Africa, for which the

Museum will continue to expand both its historical and its contemporary collections along the same lines as Asia.

For the rest of Africa, for the African diaspora and for the African impact on non-African art and design, we will concentrate collecting activity in 20th-century and contemporary design (including fashion), graphic arts, photography, performance arts, architecture and other fields for which the V&A holds a nationally recognized remit.

We will prioritise work that demonstrates Africa's position within – and contribution to – a global culture of art and design. We seek to acquire work that is innovative, original and exemplary, with an emphasis on examples that push the boundaries of methods and materials, and areas of practice in which the fine and applied arts intersect. It is recognised that this approach may generate greater collecting activity in some media than in others.

Where it is appropriate to display historic or modern traditional African objects in the Museum, this can be achieved through partnership with other institutions, borrowing material where necessary.

Ideally the African collections would have independent status within the Museum, with dedicated, professionally experienced curators. Until this situation can be achieved, collecting African and Africa-related materials is integrated into the collection plans of the existing departments. Wish lists of desirable Africa-related acquisitions are currently held departmentally. The Africa Curators Group continues to champion and publicise the V&A's ongoing commitment to developing the Africa collection.

## **8. LATIN AMERICA COLLECTING STRATEGY**

The V&A's historic collections from Latin America are small in number, and mostly reflect European colonial influence. In 2012, a study of the collections noted that records exist for over 700 objects either produced in Latin America and the Caribbean, or attributed to a person or group originating from this region. They include textiles, furniture, ceramics, sculpture and metalwork. Latin American objects are found in all collecting departments, with the exception of Asia Department. Recent exhibition, display and programming contacts with Brazil have strengthened V&A contacts with museum colleagues in the region. Significant contacts with the Museo de la Moda, Santiago de Chile, have been developed.

Highlights from among early acquisitions include Colombian jewellery exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and Peruvian and Mexican ceramics acquired in the 1870s. Significant furniture, textiles and metalwork is also a focus of current research, and is finding display space in recent galleries, including the Furniture Galleries (2012) and the Europe 1600-1800 Galleries. The Museum's current focus is on building knowledge of and contacts with the major Latin American countries in order to strengthen our contemporary holdings of Latin American design. We are strengthening our research into the historic holdings of Latin American art and design,

and aiming to recover forgotten histories of such objects in the collection. Where future collecting is concerned, we will give priority to fields where work from Latin America has international standing, such as architecture, furniture, and textiles.