



Collecting Policy

Signed off by Board of Trustees/ January 2025 | Version no. 1

Next Review Date	Q1/2029	Review Frequency	5 years
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Policy Overview

1. Policy Statement

1.1 This policy defines themes and priorities for acquisition and review, with detail for the individual collecting departments. This policy sets out the collecting priorities for the period from September 2024 to September 2029. It also defines the legal and ethical boundaries, governance, and processes for acquisitions to and disposals from the collection.

Policy Principles

The National Heritage Act, 1983, established the Board of Trustees of the Victoria and Albert Museum to care for, preserve and add items to the collections, exhibit them to the public, make them available for study or research, promote enjoyment of art, craft and design, provide education, undertake research and to preserve and increase the utility of the collections.

The V&A's mission is to be recognised as the world's leading museum of art, design, and performance, and to enrich peoples' lives by promoting research, knowledge, and enjoyment of the designed world to the widest possible audience. The V&A's collections are international, diverse and inclusive, reflecting multiple voices and viewpoints of gender, age, race, class, sexuality and ability.

While focusing on the current collecting priorities, the Museum will continue to remain open to unforeseen opportunities for acquisitions including art market purchases (including auctions), and legacy giving.

Policy Details

Collecting Priorities 2024-2029

Africa and Diaspora

1. The art and design of North Africa, from Egypt to Morocco, has been collected since the founding of the Museum, and the V&A holds a notable collection in this area, which we continue to extend, mostly through contemporary acquisitions. The rest of Africa and its diaspora is under-represented, although there are areas of strength, including a significant number of historic and contemporary works from Ghana and Ethiopia, contemporary fashions from 22 of the 54 African nations, along with prints and photographs from southern Africa. Artists, designers and makers from the Caribbean or of Caribbean heritage are represented by works in fashion, textiles, furniture, prints, drawings and photography. The global focus of the collection also extends to the work of African American artists. **Each of the museum's collecting departments is committed to enriching this area and amplifying representation of Africa and its diaspora in the galleries, exhibitions and displays.**

Digital

2. The V&A holds more than 3,000 digital art and design objects dating from the 1950s to the present. These include works created by individuals through to large-scale corporations. **Digital design (as process, interface and object) is central to most areas of contemporary art and design practice and is, therefore, represented at some level in each of the collecting departments.** AAPD collects born-digital and hybrid digital-analogue objects and those that reflect wider consumption patterns, from mobile phones and personal computers to smart thermostats and drones. In VARINALA, both the NAL and Archives collect material in digital formats; the Archives in particular developing the *National Video Archive of Performance and Theatre Voice*, working with curators in PFTF who lead on commissioning and curating the recordings which are added to the Archive after editing. We are also developing a strategy for collecting and storing born-digital material for the V&A Wedgwood Collection focussing on representing Wedgwood's digital design process. The importance of digital products in contemporary childhood cannot be understated, and it is likely to increase in coming years. YVA aspires to further develop its collection of digitally designed, digitally born and digitally interfaced objects. This includes objects designed for play, learning, and childcare.

V&A East

3. Situated in Stratford's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, V&A East Storehouse opened in 2025. It is a unique new museum experience making the V&A's stored collections accessible to everyone. A short walk across the park, opening in 2026, V&A East Museum celebrates making and creativity's power to bring change. **Departments are working closely with V&A East curators to acquire material that will be on public**

display at the V&A East Museum. Typically this material is made by contemporary practitioners and reflects themes and issues of pressing relevance, including climate change and sustainability, projects connected to East London and design from the Global South. V&A East and Young V&A's permanent galleries share related themes, presenting them for different audience age ranges. Young V&A works closely with V&A East's curators to identify and present appropriate projects and objects which can fulfil our shared approaches to design education, for the present and for future displays, exhibitions, and rotations.

Acquisitions relating to upcoming capital projects, exhibitions, and displays

- 4. The exhibition programme exerts a strong influence on acquisitions with departments responding to the needs of specific projects and topics as they arise. Alongside this, we collect objects that allow for the rotation of sensitive material such as textiles and works on paper.** We also prioritise rotations for the contemporary collections in order to keep them up to date with current thinking and practice. For the purpose of display rotations, we need to increase the depth of our Fashion holdings, parts of the Textiles and of the upholstered furniture collections owing to their inherent fragility. Other acquisition priorities include objects for the refurbishment of the Korea and South Asia galleries while AAPD are collecting towards a refresh of the Architecture Gallery and Paintings Galleries, and for rotations for *Design: 1900 to Now* and *The Photography Centre*. There are three permanent galleries at the Young V&A site (Play, Imagine and Design), and we develop our collection to service rotations and redispays within these spaces. YVA also hosts one temporary exhibition each year and collects appropriately in support of each show. Furthermore, we are eager to support capital projects, temporary exhibitions, rotations, redispays and refreshes of galleries at all other V&A sites.

Acquisitions via Arts Council England (Acceptance in Lieu, Cultural Gifts Scheme, export stops) and other external funding and grants

- 5. The V&A actively seeks opportunities to collect through the schemes offered by ACE and other external sources of funds and is proactive in making sure lenders and potential donors are aware of the schemes available to them.** The Asia department acquires pieces through specific funded projects, current priorities being Contemporary Chinese Crafts (Art Fund New Collecting Award) and Contemporary Japanese Lacquer (Art Fund Sir Nicholas Goodison Award). Asia also acquires objects through the Jameel and Sarikhani Endowments. AAPD is collecting work by artists with trans identities supported by an Art Fund New Collecting Award.

Augmenting Existing Collections

- 6. In the case of the existing collections, departments continue selectively to augment and enrich the existing collections with securely provenanced works.** Where

opportunities arise we will acquire exceptional works that relate to the history of the V&A or provide context to other historic collecting areas across the museum.

Departmental Collecting Priorities

Asia

Summary of current collections and collecting priorities

7. The Asia Department's collections comprise around 163,000 objects and are world-renowned, spanning the wealth and diversity of artistic creativity across the continent. The scope of these collections is extremely broad chronologically, geographically and in terms of media. Dating from 3,500 BC to the present day, they cover the Middle East, South Asia, South-East Asia, Central Asia and East Asia as well as North Africa, Islamic Spain and the Caucasus republics. They include paintings in oil, watercolour and ink on canvas, paper and cloth; prints, drawings and photographs; sculpture and carvings in stone, metal, wood, ivory, jade and other hardstones; dress, textiles and carpets; ceramics; glass; enamels; metalwork; jewellery; arms and armour; scientific instruments; furniture; and lacquer. The Middle East collection is distinguished by its holdings of ceramics, textiles, metalwork and woodwork; the South and South-East Asia collection by its textiles, paintings, sculpture, and Mughal court arts; the East Asia collection by its ceramics, textiles, lacquer, Japanese prints and Chinese export arts.
8. The Asia Department continues to build and develop its collections through the acquisition of objects that illustrate and document the history and practice of art and design throughout Asia. In spheres where designers are active in international arenas, we work in consultation and collaboration with the museum's other curatorial departments. In the last few decades there has been a consistent focus on the acquisition of modern and contemporary works by artists, designers and makers in Asia and the diaspora. We aim to acquire objects that resonate with our historic holdings, but also reflect major currents in art and design across Asia and the rapidly changing political, social, and cultural landscape of the continent. Current priorities, in addition to the institutional ones above, are fashion and textiles, jewellery, craft and product design. We are particularly interested in the work an emerging generation of artists and designers who incorporate innovative technology into the making process and whose work addresses concerns about sustainability. We acquire pieces from the Jameel Prize, the international award for contemporary art and design inspired by Islamic tradition. We are also working with colleagues in the Photography Section of AAPD to acquire contemporary Asian photography.

Art, Architecture, Design and Photography

Summary of current collections and collecting priorities

9. Numbering over 1.2 million objects, AAPD collections range from highly valued works of art to ephemeral items. Chronologically, they span the medieval to the contemporary. Geographically, historical collections are largely British and European with some material from the Americas, while contemporary collecting has a global remit. AAPD has responsibility for pre-eminent collections of Architectural Drawings; British Watercolours and Drawings; Commercial Graphics including Posters; Computer and Digital Art; Engraved Ornament; Pastels; Photography (including the Royal Photographic Society collection); Portrait Miniatures; and the work of John Constable (1776–1837). It is the lead department for Rapid Response Collecting, an acquisition strand that is reactive to international events, and enables the collection and immediate display of objects that articulate important moments in contemporary design and manufacturing.
10. The collections are divided into five sections: Architecture and Design; Design and Digital; Paintings and Drawings; Photography; Prints. Areas of collecting interest across these sections include hand-drawn, born-digital and hybrid designs; computer-generated design and art from the 1950s onwards; watercolours, miniatures, and pastels to add to our historic collections, with a particular interest in art by women and diasporic and other under-represented groups; contemporary painting and drawing that addresses issues of identity, landscape and the Anthropocene; illustration (concentrating on the VILLA award); photography acquisitions that are international, concentrating on emerging and mid-career artists, female practitioners and contemporary digital practice; fine art prints from the earliest period to today; printed ephemera; commercial and political/social graphics; and collections of international significance such as fashion plates and wallpaper.

Decorative Art and Sculpture

Summary of current collections and collecting priorities

11. DAS has around 180,000 objects, complemented by the long-term loan of the Gilbert Collection. It comprises Ceramics, Glass, Metalwork, Jewellery and Sculpture drawn mainly from the western world with items dating from Prehistory to the present day. Each part of the collection is internationally pre-eminent with strengths in medieval stained glass; European pottery and porcelain c.1500-1900; modern and contemporary ceramics and glass; and English and European metalwork and jewellery. It has the most comprehensive holding of post-classical European sculpture in the world. The V&A Wedgwood Collection comprises ceramics, paintings and archival material from manuscripts and designs to photography.
12. Our Contemporary collecting contributes much to the Museum's profile in this area. DAS actively collects in studio practice and in product design. Priority is given to the best examples of work from the most significant artists, reflecting ambition and excellence, and prioritising new strategies in making. Acquisitions are selected to reflect aesthetic and technical innovation, and the response to changing social and cultural demands. Our collecting strategy includes 20th-century and contemporary sculpture to align with the chronologies and priorities of other parts of the collection.

Performance, Furniture, Textiles and Fashion

Summary of current collections and collecting priorities

13. The PFTF collections number over 170,000 objects. Theatre and Performance covers a wide variety of object types from the seventeenth century to the present day devoted to the history, craft and practice of the performing arts, both live and recorded. The focus is on performance in the UK, or where productions with a strong UK component or subject have been staged around the world, but also includes non-UK work from companies or individuals who have some link to UK performance. The Furniture collection comprises mainly western European furniture, woodwork, musical instruments and interiors from the medieval period to the present-day, with American holdings starting from the Victorian period. In terms of geographical coverage, the UK furniture collections are especially important. The Textiles collection is the world's largest and most-wide ranging, with examples from across the globe (the exception being Asian textiles which are held in the Asia Department collections), the majority from western Europe from the third century CE to the present day. The Fashion collection consists mainly of European fashionable dress and accessories from the last 500 years with a growing collection of contemporary African fashion. It has dramatically increased since the 1970s and is one of the world's largest.

V&A Research Institute, National Art Library and Archives

Summary of current collections and collecting priorities

14. The collections of the V&A Research Institute, National Art Library and Archives comprise around a million books and around 1000 archives. The department holds large and growing collections of born-digital material, including the National Video Archive of Performance. The collections support research into histories of design, making and collecting across practices of art, design and performance, and are made available to readers through the NAL and (with the opening of V&A East) study rooms.
15. The National Art Library curates and provides universal access to over a million print, manuscript and digital items. Broadly addressing art, design and performance and their histories, in harmony with the Museum, it also has significant literary and allied holdings. Remarkable collections showcasing book arts include calligraphy, illumination, illustration and bookbinding. Distinctive holdings include works beyond the book form such as paper peepshows, handmade artists' books and book objects; the UK's widest international comics collection; manuscripts including artists' letters and diaries, country house inventories, art historians' papers and literary examples such as Dickens' novels; the UK's largest collection of children's books; over 140,000 auction catalogues, and exceptional holdings of exhibition catalogues.
16. The Archives comprise V&A Archive and Registry containing the institutional records and working papers of the museum across all sites, dating from 1837 to the present day; the Archive of Art and Design with around 350 archives representing the design process from conception to consumption for individual artists and designers, businesses and institutions involved in the production, marketing, promotion and study of art and design; the Theatre and Performance Archives which constitute one of the oldest and most significant repositories dedicated to the history, craft and practice of the live performing arts; Young V&A Archives of practitioner or company archives related to design for children; and the V&A Wedgwood Collection Archive.
17. The National Art Library maintains distinctively broad collecting of, and signposting of access to resources to support and inspire original research into the subjects represented by the V&A's mission. We prioritise materials not held elsewhere in the UK, remaining overtly international in focus and inclusive in languages collected. Most collecting is of contemporary material, though distinctive historical acquisitions are made. Collecting interests include Artists' Books with a focus on the response of artists to the concept and format of the book, prioritising creative engagement with contemporary social issues; Comics with titles evocative of aspects of contemporary life or with innovative layout and titles about artists and art; contemporary and modern Illumination that interplays with historic works: extraordinary examples of bookbinding art.
18. Across the Archive Collections we aim to document the creative process that underlines all work within art, design and performance. For this reason, we do not seek to collect

research papers but prioritise archives strong in process. We are particularly focused on developing our holdings relating to contemporary practice, on diversifying the collections (within their UK-based remit) to improve representation, and on strengthening underdeveloped subject areas such as jewellery, ceramics and fashion designed for the male body (AAD) and stage craft and technology (T&P). We also acknowledge a moral obligation to accept accruals to our existing archival collections to prevent archives being dispersed unnecessarily; however, we always consider suitable alternative homes before acquiring for the V&A. Specifically, we direct architects' archives to RIBA and fine arts archives to Tate, and archives with strong links to a particular locality are directed to a local authority repository. We work towards increasing the comprehensiveness of the institutional archives, considering accruals from internal sources or quasi-internal routes, such as building on the Curators' Lives oral histories archive.

Young V&A

Summary of current collections and collecting priorities

19. Young V&A (YVA) holds a pre-eminent collection of objects relating to children and childhood, comprising more than 35,000 items of varying type, size, date, and origin. The collection is especially strong in its holdings of dolls, children's clothing, games, paper models and furniture, and boasts an internationally important collection of dolls' houses. YVA is the only UK institution which specialises in collecting child-centred design and through this practice supports the V&A's mission to recognise design excellence. In support of the themes of its permanent galleries (Play, Imagine and Design) YVA also acquires objects which enable and encourage creativity in children, and which have a specificity to children's lives, as well as creative outputs by children and young people.
20. YVA will collect objects that encourage creative thinking in its core audience of 0–14-year-olds; provide new and audience-relevant objects for the Play, Imagine and Design galleries; and continue to build and maintain an internationally significant collection of children's design and creativity. Furthermore, YVA is open to collecting objects co-designed/produced with children, as well as objects which reflect and amplify young voices. This collecting policy underpins YVA's gallery themes of Play, Imagine and Design, with the development of the collection split into three broad categories of Design for Children, Children's Creativity and Inspirational Objects. As with the rest of the V&A, its collections are international, diverse and inclusive.

Acquisitions

21. Under the National Heritage Act 1983, the Board of Trustees “may acquire (whether by purchase, exchange or gift) any objects which in their opinion it is desirable to add to their collections”, in order to “promote the public’s enjoyment and understanding of art, craft and design”.

Criteria for Acquisition

22. To qualify for inclusion in the collections, material must fulfil the mission and statutory scope of the V&A. Acquisitions should also fit within the priorities laid out in the Collecting priorities 2024-2029, above,

23. Acquisitions outside the stated collecting policy will be made only in very exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the Museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.

The V&A and other British Institutions

24. The Board of Trustees recognises that the national heritage is preserved in a network of British museums and other institutions in the public and private sectors. The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, about the appropriate placement of an item, to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

25. The Board of Trustees sees its responsibility not only in acquiring material for the V&A but also in stimulating and supporting other institutions to acquire items. It does this through a network of formal and informal agreements with other bodies, including the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund. The Board of Trustees will consider joint purchases with other museums.

26. Government, external bodies and funders, other museums and organisations draw on the significant expertise which V&A staff have in the broad range of the museum’s international collections.

Legal and Ethical Boundaries for Acquisition

27. The Museum will not acquire any unworked biological or geological material except that comprised in an item which meets the collecting priorities.

28. The Museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and the use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard.
29. The Museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any item unless it is satisfied that it can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
30. In particular, the Museum will not acquire any item unless it is satisfied that the item has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned, including the United Kingdom) in violation of that country's laws.
31. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the Museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The Museum will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.
32. The Museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the Museum has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.
33. Any exception to the above will only be because the Museum is either:
- (i) in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.; or
 - (ii) acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or
 - (iii) acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
 - (iv) acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin.
34. In these cases the Museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.
35. The Museum will not usually acquire human remains from any period. In such cases where acquisition is considered it will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005.
36. In accordance with the 1998 National Museum Directors' Council's (NMDC) 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions' (2016 revision), the Museum will conduct provenance research

with regards to the years 1933-45 to satisfy itself that the item was not lost by its rightful owners as a result of Nazi persecution without restitution or commensurate reparation having taken place subsequently.

Organisational limitations for acquisition.

37. The Museum will also consider limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements:

Physical Condition

38. If necessary preservation measures are not feasible, an item will not normally be acquired.

Space

39. If suitable storage space is not available, an item will not normally be acquired.

Access

40. If public access cannot be enabled, an item will not normally be acquired.

Resources

41. The total cost of an item covering the purchase price, transport and handling charges, costs of conservation, documentation, imaging, curation, display and storage should be considered when assessing the acquisition of an item.

Copyright

42. Where copyright applies, the copyright owner should be identified, wherever possible, and a copyright licence obtained.

Governance of Acquisitions

43. Responsibility for all acquisitions is delegated by the Board to the Director and by the Director to the Director of Collections and Chief Curator. The exercise of judgement on the suitability of items for each collection is the responsibility of the Keeper of that collection. The Keeper will ensure by consultation with the Director of Collections Care and Access that the implications for the care and management of each acquisition have been properly considered.

44. Authorisation from the Director is required for all object and archive acquisitions, which is managed through Collections Group. When acquisitions pertaining to Young V&A are subject to debate, the Director of Young V&A and Chair of Young V&A Trustee Committee will be consulted on referral from the Director. All acquisitions over £500,000 require the approval of the Board of Trustees, on recommendation of the Trustees' Collections Committee. The case for such acquisitions will be prepared by the Keeper in consultation with the Director of Collections and Chief Curator. Where a gift or bequest is made subject to any condition it should be referred to the Director of Collections and Chief Curator.
45. Governance of acquisitions is managed via the Acquisition Procedure, which forms part of the Collections Management Procedures Manual.
46. Progress on all acquisitions is monitored by the Director of Collections and Chief Curator and reported to the Executive Board and Board of Trustees through the Trustees' Collections Committee. Records of all acquisitions will be monitored by the Head Registrar (Documentation & Systems) who will report annually to the Director of Collections and Chief Curator and Director of Finance and to the Board of Trustees through the Trustees' Collections Committee. The Annual Report of the Board to Parliament will include a section drafted by the Director of Collections and Chief Curator on the development of the collections over the period since the last report.
47. The majority of acquisitions for the National Art Library (NAL) are of lower cost items to provide context and research support for subjects of interest to the V&A. Responsibility for such purchases is delegated to the Chief Librarian, who maintains oversight of title selection by a professional team, and monitors spending. For rarer, unique or distinctive items which would be stored and made available to readers as Special Collections, all potential acquisitions are discussed by an internal NAL group chaired by the Chief Librarian, with purchase decisions agreed by the Chair, and in consultation with the Director of VARINALA. Approval to proceed and then to acquire is always sought from Collections Group for items offered through acceptance in lieu, items to be paid for in part or in whole with central V&A or external funds, items with a purchase price of £1,000 or more, and any donations where the total value is judged to be over £1,000. The Chief Librarian and/or the Director of VARINALA may also solicit the advice of the group on any other acquisitions as they consider appropriate. Lists of purchases of all categories are maintained and available to the Director of Collections and Chief Curator, and the Board of Trustees.

Disposal

48. By definition in the National Heritage Act 1983, the Museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives but is permitted to dispose of objects under specific circumstances. The Board of Trustees accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons for disposal must be established before consideration is given to the disposal of any items in the Museum's collection and will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

Governance of Disposals

49. Responsibility for disposal from the collections is delegated by the Board to the Director and by the Director to the Director of Collections and Chief Curator. The exercise of judgement on the suitability of objects for disposal is the responsibility of the Keeper of the relevant collection.

50. To maintain an adequate safeguard against injudicious disposal a formal Disposal Board must consider each case. The Board is chaired by the Director of Collections and Chief Curator, and consists of the Keepers of the disposing Collections, the Director of Collections Care and Access, and the Director of Finance and Resources. The recommendations of each Disposal Board are presented to Collections Group, Executive Board and Trustees' Collections Committee for approval. If the current market value of the disposal is greater than £500,000 it must be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.

51. Full records will be kept of all disposal decisions and the items involved and retained in perpetuity within the Museum archive. Proper arrangements will be made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable.

Motivation for Disposal

52. Under the National Heritage Act 1983, as amended by the Museums & Galleries Act 1992, the Board of Trustees may dispose of an object by sale, exchange or gift, unless specific restrictions apply, only if it falls into one or more of the following categories:

- (i) The disposal is of an object which is a duplicate of another object in the V&A's collection.
- (ii) The object is unsuitable for retention and can be disposed of without detriment to the interests of students or other members of the public.
- (iii) Although not falling into the above categories, an object may be given, sold to or exchanged with an institution specified in Schedule 5 to the Museums & Galleries Act 1992 supplemented by subsequent Statutory Instruments. Any

object may be disposed of in this manner, notwithstanding a trust or condition, subject to the terms of Section 6 of the 1992 Act.

- (iv) The disposal (by whatever means, including destruction) of an object if it has deteriorated beyond usefulness for the purposes of the collections, because of damage, physical deterioration or infestation by destructive organisms and if it cannot be conserved or preserved within a reasonable time scale or with the use of available resources. An object may be disposed of in this manner notwithstanding a trust or condition prohibiting or restricting the disposal of the object.

58 The 2004 Human Tissue Act allows the Museum to de-accession human remains under 1000 years old. In taking this decision, the Museum will follow the 'Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums' issued by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2005.

59 If the Museum becomes aware that an item in its collections may have been lost by its rightful owners as a result of Nazi persecution without restitution or commensurate reparation having taken place subsequently, it will follow the principles set out in the 1998 National Museum Directors' Council's (NMDC) 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions' (revised in 2016). In accordance with the 2009 Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) Act and Holocaust (Return of Cultural Objects) (Amendment) Act 2019, the Museum can 'return certain cultural objects on grounds relating to events occurring during the Nazi era' in cases in which this is recommended by the Spoliation Advisory Panel and authorised by the Secretary of State.

Methods of Disposal

60 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons, the method of disposal may be gift, transfer, exchange or sale. The museum will prioritise disposal by gift or transfer over disposal by exchange or sale.

61 The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

62 Where the motivation for disposal is deterioration, the destruction of the item will be conducted in a manner approved by the disposal board.

Requirements placed on the Museum for all Disposals

63 The Museum will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item and agreements on disposal made with donors will be taken into account.

- 64 Where an item has been acquired with the aid of external funding any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 65 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors, including the public benefit, the implications for the Museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. External expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and sources communities and others served by the Museum will also be sought.

Additional requirements for Curatorially Motivated Disposals by gift or transfer

- 66 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining the item within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift, to accredited museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 67 If the material is not acquired by any accredited museum to which it was offered directly as a gift, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Find an Object web page, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.
- 68 The announcement relating to gift will indicate the number and nature of items involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other accredited museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the Museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

Additional requirements placed on the Museum for Disposal by method of sale

- 69 The museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of material by sale, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Find an Object web page, and in other specialist journals where appropriate for a period of at least two months. The announcement will indicate the number and nature of items involved. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other accredited museums. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the Museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

- 70 Any monies received by the Museum from the disposal of items will be applied for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from Arts Council.
- 71 The proceeds of a sale will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation Standard.

Routine disposals from the National Art Library

- 72 Where the Chief Librarian is satisfied that the material in question is unsuitable for retention and can be disposed of without detriment to the interests of students or other members of the public, the Chief Librarian is formally authorised to dispose routinely and systematically of material which falls into the following categories, without needing to convene a disposal board to consider individual cases.
- (i) Superseded issues of directories, almanacs, timetables, yearbooks, and similar reference works which are issued on a regular basis, so that previous issues are entirely superseded by successive ones, whose primary focus is not art-related, and whose subject content is such that long-term retention of outdated issues is not felt to be desirable. Directories which relate primarily to the art world, artists, galleries, or museums will normally be kept, as they may be useful to researchers in years to come.
 - (ii) Superseded editions of bibliographies and other reference works which are acquired primarily as working tools for the NAL or one of its sections (e.g. national listings of books in print, lists of publishers or booksellers).
 - (iii) Duplicate copies of reference material or periodicals, which are acquired for the library's working needs but which have served their purpose and are either no longer required or superseded by later issues.
- 73 Titles for disposal must be approved by the Director of VARINALA and a list of such titles must be maintained and presented to Disposal Board for information. Disposal cycles will be recorded on the NAL catalogue.
- 74 This policy includes material held in the departmental libraries of the V&A. Books that are staff 'working tools,' regardless of whether they have been stamped or catalogued, should not be regarded as collection items and can be disposed of when obsolete or unnecessary with the approval of the relevant Keeper.
- 75 All non-routine library disposals will follow the formal Disposal Board approval process.
- 76 The preferred disposal method will be transfer or gift to another Library or institution where it might have value. For periodicals, the NAL has recently joined the UK Research Reserve, operated by the British Library, which ensures that rare print periodicals are retained by an appropriate depository. Withdrawn serials are always offered to the

UKRR and the V&A will abide by their decision. For all book content, lists will be circulated through professional networks and offered to other libraries.

77 In regard to this specific category of material, it is considered that destruction is a legitimate means of disposal where no further useful life can be found for items.