

GUILDHALL ART GALLERY



CONSERVATION AND COLLECTIONS CARE POLICY

Created:

Date: 26.9.2016

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Date approved by Culture Heritage and Libraries Committee:

Date: 24.10.2016

Date for Review:

Date: 24.10.2019

Conservation and Collections Care Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Guildhall Art Gallery (GAG)'s policy on the care and conservation of its Collection and defines an overall framework which GAG adopts to ensure that the Collection is cared for to the highest appropriate professional standards, while at the same time balancing the needs of access and long-term preservation of the Collection, in line with best practice as defined by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's (MLA's) '*Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Libraries and Archives Self-Assessment Checklist*' (2011). Conditions for GAG's Collection will, as a minimum, meet the 'basic' requirement.

2. PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION

Preventive conservation is defined as the planned and controlled change to the environment and surroundings of an object to reduce or eliminate, as far as possible, the known aspects of that object's deterioration. The following measures will be implemented to achieve this with detailed arrangements for the implementation of these measures given in the **GAG Conservation and Collections Care Plan**, which is managed and updated by the GAG Conservation Team:

- Provision of suitable building conditions;
- Environmental monitoring;
- Environmental control;
- Housekeeping;
- Handling, moving and transport;
- Disaster planning; and
- Surveying the Collection.

3. INTERVENTIVE (REMEDIAL) CONSERVATION

Interventive or remedial conservation is the active treatment of an object to stabilise its condition, or to enhance its condition, or some aspect of its significance for study and interpretation. GAG will work in accordance with the following principles:

- Only appropriately qualified and experienced conservators and collections care staff will be employed to carry out conservation work.
- Conservation work should be underpinned by knowledge and understanding of the object. Critical to this is documentation of its condition and treatment, and a long-term plan for the care of the object.
- Conservation work should be planned and carried out in consultation with curatorial staff and undertaken by an appropriately qualified person, or under the supervision of an appropriately qualified person.
- Work undertaken by GAG conservators will conform to the standards set down in the code of ethics of The Institute for Conservation (ICON) and will be in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act.
- For external conservation support, GAG will only use ICON accredited or suitably trained and experienced conservators
- All treatments will be photographed and documented and records will be maintained.

4. LOANS

Lending and borrowing objects is an integral part of GAG's work, to make its collections accessible to a wide range of audiences. Objects may be loaned for exhibition, research, study and educational purposes. Loans may be arranged on a short-term basis eg for a temporary exhibition, or as a long-term loan, to complement accessioned material in GAG's own collection.

Loans out

GAG will loan material to Registered/Accredited museums or public exhibition venues that can demonstrate equivalent standards in care, both nationally and internationally.

Loans are approved by the Curatorial and Conservation staff.

The borrowing institution must provide information about transport and environmental and security conditions in the exhibition. The condition of the object, when measured against this information, will determine the approval of a loan.

Loans out are for a fixed period of time, agreed in advance with the borrowing institution.

All loans out will be covered by written loan agreements.

Only objects in a stable condition will be loaned out. A condition check will be made before the object is loaned, and on its return. If any conservation treatment is required for an object to be loaned, the costs will normally be met by the borrower.

The curatorial staff has responsibility for arranging and carrying out packing and shipping of objects. Where appropriate, specialist art handlers may be used. Handling standards will be stipulated as part of the contract.

The curatorial staff has responsibility for the creation and maintenance of loan records and supporting documentation such as export licenses, and monitoring the status of loans.

Loans in

GAG accepts material on short-term loan for temporary exhibitions, and long-term loans.

Loans are approved by the Curator.

Long-term loans are accepted where they bring substantial benefit to the collections in the view of GAG staff and advisors.

Loans in are for a fixed period of time, agreed in advance with the lender.

All loans in will be covered by written loan agreements.

All loans in will have a condition check when they enter GAG and before their return.

Conservation work on loaned items will only be arranged in exceptional circumstances, in full co-operation with the lender.

All objects loaned to GAG will receive the same standards of care as that of GAG's own collections.

Nail-to-nail insurance for short-term loans for exhibitions is available. A valuation total for all material borrowed for exhibition should be calculated as part of the exhibition planning process. Objects may be insured under the Government Indemnity Scheme if necessary.

Long-term loans are not usually insured by GAG.

The curatorial staff has responsibility for the creation and maintenance of loan records, and monitoring the status of loans.

5. EXPERTISE, ADVICE AND SERVICES

GAG employs professional conservators of both paintings and frames to provide both preventive and interventive/remedial conservation of the Collection. It is committed to encouraging and supporting its conservation staff to gain professional accreditation.

GAG is committed to continuing professional development of its staff and to the building of relevant knowledge and expertise.

Caring for the collections is the responsibility of all staff. The Curatorial and Conservation team is committed to training and to raising awareness of collections care issues. By promoting these to staff members, paid and voluntary, GAG will communicate the message that safe handling and use of the collections will preserve them for the future and in doing so allow access to them for longer.

All guidelines and information relating to collections care practices and procedures will be held on a central computer network drive which will be accessible to all staff via the GAG network.

The Curatorial and Conservation team will provide advice and information to the public and to other museum professionals regionally, nationally and internationally.