



Town Hall Gallery Collection Acquisition Policy

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Installation view of *Marker: 10 Years of the Town Hall Gallery Collection 2013*. Photograph by Matthew Stanton.

Background

Located in Hawthorn Arts Centre, the Town Hall Gallery (THG) is the public gallery space for the City of Boroondara. Spanning three gallery spaces, the Town Hall Gallery features a diverse range of contemporary and innovative curated exhibitions, public programs and exhibits drawn from the Town Hall Gallery Collection, showcasing six to eight major exhibitions per year.

The Town Hall Gallery Collection is Boroondara's evolving narrative of local arts and culture, capturing ideas and moments in time, both small and great. The Town Hall Gallery Collection represents art works about Boroondara, by Boroondara artists or artists with a focus on Boroondara's features events and culture.

The Collection combines artworks, historical and civic memorabilia from the past municipalities of Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell. The Collection actively acquires new art works to expand the Collection and historical items to maintain the cultural heritage of Boroondara.

Collection Acquisition Policy

The Collection Acquisition Policy encompasses the management and growth of the Town Hall Gallery's art, history, local government and public art collections.

In particular it describes the management of the current Collection via conservation, research, interpretation and display of individual items, as well as methods of acquiring new works.

The THG Collection Acquisition Policy is enhanced by the THG Collection Framework (**Attachment B**), which provides guidelines that outline the direction of the Collection. The THG Collection Framework forms an appendix to this policy.

1. Purpose of Policy

To provide a framework for the acquisition of artworks that will become part of the permanent Art Collection for Boroondara City Council, known as the Town Hall Gallery Collection. This does not include Public Art Commissions or acquisitions which have specific commissioning processes despite forming part of the Collection.

2. Objective of Policy

This policy defines the scope and limitations for acquiring works for the Town Hall Gallery Collection. The policy is established to ensure:

- The development and maintenance of a high quality Collection
- The preservation and documentation of the Collection
- The purpose, significance and aims of the collections are described
- Access, enjoyment and understanding of the Collection is increasingly shared
- The Collection assists in shaping Boroondara's cultural identity
- Town Hall Gallery follows public gallery professional standards across all areas of operations

The Gallery adheres to the:

- International Council of Museums (ICOM) Code of Ethics for Museums;
- UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970.

3. Application of Policy

The achievement of the Collection Policy directions must be considered in the context of community-wide priorities and the allocation of finite resources. As representative of the community, Council will consider resource parameters in the annual budget process. The ability to acquire additional works into the THG Collection requires ongoing funding allocation and is dependent on the availability of suitable artworks and cultural items for acquisition.

The Collection

Purpose of the Collection

The aim of the Town Hall Gallery Collection is to nurture a sense of community and shared history within Boroondara. The Collection also aims to enhance public spaces and community well-being. The Town Hall Gallery's art and history collections have the potential to tell a unique story about the role of local government in the evolution of the social and cultural life in Boroondara.

The Town Hall Gallery Collection is divided into four components; Art Collection, History Collection, Local Government Collection and Public Art Collection. Each collection has its own unique focus to interpret the cultural heritage of the area.



Installation view of *Dialect*, works from the Collection 2016.
Photograph by Christian Capurro.

1. Town Hall Gallery Art Collection

- To represent contemporary art in the City of Boroondara.
- Illustrate cultural values held by individuals and community groups who have been active in Boroondara.
- Represent the diverse cultural interest of the whole community.
- Document aspects of the artistic production in Boroondara around the turn of the century.
- Represent works of art of quality by significant artists.
- Support local and emerging artists of note through the acquisition of their work.

2. History Collection

- To represent the social history of the municipality with reference to the local history collection held by Library Services.
- To maintain items of significance which may be disposed of if not held for safe keeping within the collection.

3. Local Government Collection

- To collect items that relate to the history of the local governments that have been active in the municipality.
- To represent past and present local governments in Boroondara.

4. Public Art Collection

- Commission visual art works of a permanent or temporary nature to enhance the City's civic spaces and the urban environment.
- Integrate works into sites of significance across the municipality.
- Promote the municipality and encourage cultural tourism.
- Provide access and equity for the community to experience art in public spaces.

Town Hall Gallery Collection Advisory Committee

The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice to Council in the development of the Town Hall Gallery Collection. The Committee considers proposed acquisitions to the Collection provided by the THG Curatorial team, assists in pursuing potential donors or bequests to the Collection, makes recommendations regarding the care of the Collection and informs the decision making process to ensure public access.

The Town Hall Gallery Collection Advisory Committee has an important role in ensuring appropriate stewardship of the Collection is maintained. The Committee is governed by Terms of Reference that have been endorsed by Council. **(Appendix 1)**

Membership

Membership of the Committee is open to all interested parties who live, work or study in the City of Boroondara.

The Committee shall consist of up to twelve members, including up to three Boroondara City Council councillors, who will be appointed by the Council annually. Also included will be three Boroondara City Council officers, comprising the Manager Arts Facilities Business, Senior Curator and Assistant Curator, Town Hall Gallery.

The remainder of the Committee shall reflect the differing perspectives of the arts and heritage community. The membership of the Advisory Committee is decided by Council and may include representatives with:

- Professional curatorial expertise;
- Professional historical expertise;
- Professional visual arts expertise;
- Knowledge of local visual arts; and
- Knowledge of local history.

The number of ordinary members of the Committee shall be a minimum of four and a maximum of six, not including any Councillors or staff that may be appointed ex-officio.

Acquisition Process

To be eligible for acquisition into the Town Hall Gallery Collection, items must meet the acquisition criteria set out for the relevant collection category. All items must meet the following standards:

- Item must be in good condition
- A clearly established and verifiable provenance
- The capacity to be displayed without breaching the artist's moral rights.

When considering acquisitions to the Collection, the Town Hall Gallery Collection Advisory Committee will refer to the Town Hall Gallery Collection Acquisition Policy, the budget parameters, and the following criteria:

- the relevance of the item to broader culture and arts objectives
- existing documentation of the item, its provenance, the item's condition
- storage and display facilities for the item
- duplication of the item in the Collection
- any legal requirements and other restrictions associated with acquisition of the item.

The Town Hall Gallery Acquisition Methodology Chart (**Appendix 2**) outlines the key steps for all acquisitions, both through purchase and donation.

Role of Town Hall Gallery Curatorial Team

The Senior Curator has delegated authority to acquire artworks, with reference to and in accordance with this policy, through:

- Purchase, where funds are identified and available for this purpose
- Assessing proposed artworks donations or gifts on a case-by-case basis.

This policy recognises that action is sometimes required at short notice to capitalise on acquisition opportunities where:

- Artworks are available for purchase in a competitive environment (eg exhibitions, auctions)
- Timing deadlines require immediate action to secure funding, donations or gifts.

The Senior Curator is authorized to pursue acquisitions, but is required to prepare a written Acquisition Proposal. This proposal must:

- Explain the 'rationale for acceptance' of the work into the Town Hall Gallery Collection
- Demonstrate compliance with the Town Hall Gallery Collection Acquisitions Policy
- Include an independent valuation of the proposed acquisition.

This report will form the basis for an accession file that will contain key information about the acquisition to support its ongoing management and conservation.

Role of Town Hall Gallery Collection Advisory Committee

Once the proposed acquisition has been assessed by the Senior Curator and an acquisition proposal prepared, the acquisition is considered imminent.

The Senior Curator will then present a written Acquisition Report to members of the Town Hall Gallery Collection Advisory Committee, in advance of the nearest meeting, for the information of members and their assessment of the acquisition's compliance against the Acquisition Policy.

Endorsement of the proposed acquisition is required by the majority of the THG Collection Advisory Committee members. A motion that is moved and seconded by two members and carried by a majority of the Advisory Committee members is required and represents the means in which an artwork is formally accepted into the collection.

The Advisory Committee will follow a similar process as per the deaccessioning of artworks from the Collection with final endorsement provided by Council on deaccessioned works.

Conflict of Interest

The Town Hall Gallery Curatorial team and Advisory Committee members must declare any real or perceived conflict of interest prior to consideration of proposed acquisitions and have this declaration documented in the minutes.

It may be necessary for a Committee member to abstain from participating in the assessment process when a conflict of interest is identified.

Conflict of interests include, but are not limited to:

- Acceptance of a gift from an artist, vendor or donor, pre or post acquisition.
- Owning or planning to buy an object by an artist whose work is proposed for acquisition.
- Personal friendship or extensive professional association with an artist whose work is proposed for acquisition where this may impact on an impartial assessment of the object's significance.
- Involvement in the art market where this relates in any way to the proposed object.

Methods of Acquisition

The method of acquisition of art and history items may include:

- purchase via Council acquisition funds
- commission of artwork by Council
- donations in perpetuity by an external source, bequest of artefacts
- donation via the Cultural Gifts Program.

The Town Hall Gallery Collection Advisory Committee will approve all donations and purchases. No artwork or object will be acquired unless it meets collection acquisition criteria and procedures. There must also be proof of valid ownership applied to that item.

In the event that the THGCAC members cannot reach a consensus regarding recommendation relating to accessioning/deaccessioning, the proposal will be forwarded to the relevant officer under delegation of authority.

Town Hall Gallery Collection will not accept permanent or long-term loans.



Helen Maudsley(b. 1927) *Through the Never Country. Going; Rushing Along. Here and There and Never Was.* (2010) oil on canvas 34 x 54 cm. Gift of the artist, 2013.

Donations to Town Hall Gallery Collection

All donations offered to the collection must follow the same acquisition criteria as a purchased acquisition. All donations must be approved by the THG Collection Advisory Committee.

Donations may be received by the following means:

- Outright donation to the Town Hall Gallery Collection
- Donation via the Cultural Gifts Program.

Cultural Gifts Program and Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) Status

Gifts donated to the collection must adhere to the conditions of the Cultural Gifts Program and Australian Tax Office.

Acquisition of Public Art

Public Art forms an important element of the Collection. Such artwork provides a pivotal focus in a public space for enjoyment by residents and tourists alike.

Commissioning of works of public art takes place outside of the Town Hall Gallery Collection acquisition budget. Acquiring Public Art is undertaken through a public tender process. The tender evaluation panel determine the preferred tenderer in this process. However the THG Collection Advisory Committee are invited to participate in presentations from shortlisted artists to inform the decision to determine the preferred tenderer. The views of the THGCAC members do not form part of the formal evaluation.

Acquisition Criteria

In order for the Town Hall Gallery Collection to grow and develop, the following acquisition criteria will be followed:

Town Hall Gallery Art Collection

- Collect innovative contemporary art that reflects Boroondara's culturally diverse community.
- Collect art by significant Australian artists who have lived or worked in the municipality.
- Collect two and three-dimensional art in all media with reference to the existing strengths of the collection.
- Works will be acquired within the broad parameters of Australian Art with priority given to works by artists from the City of Boroondara.
- The art collection will be developed on principles which value: contemporaneity, excellence, innovation, high aesthetic quality, relevance and authenticity.

History Collection

- Collect items that reflect the cultural and social heritage of past and present municipalities.

Local Government Collection

- Collect items that reflect the history and working life of the Mayor, Councillors and staff of local governments active in Boroondara.
- Collect items depicting the topography of the region in particular from 1854 when Boroondara Shire was first established, to the present day.

Public Art Collection

- To commission and collect visual art works of a permanent or temporary nature to enhance the City's civic spaces and the urban environment.

Care of Town Hall Gallery Collection

Documentation of the Collection follows a standardized process to show evidence of the following records: acquisition details/receipts, registration book, movement records, catalogue sheets and database, research results, conservation histories and deaccession details.

Storage areas for collection items are maintained pest free. All storage areas have temperature and humidity control, secure/controlled access, tungsten lighting, adequate storage materials and fittings.

Conservation and restoration of collection items to be carried out by trained personnel (professional conservators) with expertise in the relevant medium or object type.

Valuation and Asset Management

Details of future items acquired by Town Hall Gallery will be included on the City of Boroondara Fixed Asset Register. The register will be reviewed annually to ensure location details are current and items are appropriately recorded. An audit of the Collection is also conducted to confirm all items are in good condition.

An independent valuation of the Collection for insurance purposes and to ensure the asset register is accurate will be conducted by an approved valuer every three years. Items that have been acquired since the previous valuation will be sighted in person by the valuer, with previous items undergoing a desk top valuation. The Collection will undergo a sighted valuation to ascertain condition by an independent valuer every twelve years.

Removal of items from the Collection

To de-accession an artwork or object from a public collection is to officially remove that object from the registered and accessioned holdings of the Collection, especially for sale or disposal.

The Senior Curator may nominate a registered Collection item for de-accession and disposal. The nomination will consist of a written report, evaluating the object against the accession and de-accession criteria and recommending a disposal method.

The item nominated for de-accessioning will be held for a twelve month cooling-off period from the date of a report being accepted before disposal occurs.

An item may be considered for de-accessioning by the Town Hall Gallery Collection Advisory Committee if:

- The item does not meet the current acquisition criteria

- It does not comply with the current Collection Policy key outcomes
- It is damaged beyond repair
- The conservation and storage costs are beyond the means of Town Hall Gallery
- It is a lesser quality duplicate of an object the City already holds
- It lacks any supporting information to enable proper identification or to establish its relevance to the collection
- A substantiated request for the return of the object to its owner/donor is received.

Councillors, Council staff, volunteers, committee members and their families are prohibited from purchasing, or otherwise obtaining, an object de-accessioned from the Collection.

A de-accessioned item must be disposed of by the following methods listed in priority order:

1. Returned to the donor or family
2. Transferred to another appropriate institution by gift
3. Sold by public auction, where appropriate
4. Destroyed or recycled, if appropriate.

Funds acquired from the sale of a de-accessioned item should be redirected to fund further acquisition of relevant objects for the Town Hall Gallery Collection.

Exceptions

Works obtained through the Cultural Gifts Program must follow the conditions set by the program and Australian Tax Office. These include:

- Any item obtained through the Cultural Gifts Program cannot be returned to the donor as they have already obtained a tax benefit for their donation.
- If the item is sold, the proceeds are to be deposited into the Town Hall Gallery Collection Gift Fund to be used to fund further acquisition of relevant objects for the Town Hall Gallery Collection.

Implementation of Town Hall Gallery Collection Policy

The general day to day exhibitions, care, management and monitoring of the Collection shall be the responsibility of the Town Hall Gallery curatorial team.

Responsibility of ensuring proper storage and display facilities rests with City of Boroondara Council.

The collection shall remain the property of City of Boroondara Council.

Review mechanism

The Town Hall Gallery Collection Acquisition Policy will be reviewed every five years with reference to current museological standards and peak social and historical issues.

Legislation and other references

For further information related to this policy refer to:

- Cultural Gifts Program guidelines

This policy is implemented with the following documents:

- Town Hall Gallery Framework document
- Town Hall Gallery Collection Advisory Committee Terms of Reference
- Town Hall Gallery Collection Acquisition Methodology Chart

Glossary of terms

Accessioning

Accessioning refers to the receiving or adding of objects or materials into a permanent art collection.

Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which someone in a position of trust or authority finds themselves with competing professional and personal interests. Such competing interests may make it difficult for the individual to be objective or impartial. If they were not to declare their potential conflict of interest, or remove themselves from this situation, it may be interpreted as an act of impropriety or unethical behaviour.

Contemporary visual art

Contemporary visual art refers to recent artworks across a range of media and styles. It usually refers to new works engaging with current artistic, cultural and social developments and trends. Contemporary visual artworks often utilize the materials and techniques of their time.

Curator

The term refers to the person in charge of a museum or art collection and who organizes temporary exhibitions.

De-Accessioning

De-Accessioning refers to the process by which materials or objects are formally removed from a permanent art collection.

Ephemeral artwork

An ephemeral artwork is created to be temporary or impermanent. It is often made out of biodegradable materials or materials that fade and disintegrate over time.

Exhibition

This refers to the public display of objects or artworks.

Provenance

As it relates to artwork, provenance means the history of ownership of an object. It is important to know the history of the object when acquiring art to ensure that it is not stolen and that it has been created and offered for sale, donation or bequest in an ethically sound manner.