

**Birmingham Museums &  
Art Gallery**

**COLLECTING  
POLICY  
2009 - 2013**



# CONTENTS

- Section 1 Executive Summary**
  - 1.1 Background
  - 1.2 Context
  - 1.3 Collecting Priorities 2009-2013
  - 1.4 Process of Collecting
  - 1.5 Review of Collecting
  
- Section 2 The Context for Collecting**
  - 2.1 The existing collections
  - 2.2 The Birmingham context
  - 2.3 Regional Context
  - 2.4 National and International Context
  - 2.5 The BMAG Context
  - 2.6 How the collections are used
  
- Section 3 Key Collecting Areas 2009 – 2013**
  - 3.1 Collecting Priorities 2009 – 2013
  - 3.2 Collecting Objectives 2009 – 2013
  
- Section 4 The Process of Collecting**
  - 4.1 General Guidelines
  - 4.2 Thinktank
  - 4.3 Formal Approval For Acquisition
  - 4.4 Resources
  - 4.5 Acceptance In Lieu
  - 4.6 Accreditation Standard – Acquisition
  - 4.7 Other Pertinent Guidelines
  - 4.8 Types Of Collecting Activity
  - 4.9 Responsibility For Collecting
  - 4.10 Handling Collections
  - 4.11 Loans
  - 4.12 Conservation Issues
  - 4.13 Accreditation Standard – Disposal
  - 4.14 Restitution
  - 4.15 Equal Opportunities
  
- Section 5 Review of Collecting 2003 - 2008**

# Section One

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The collections of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (BMAG) form a powerful and important expression of the cultural interests and ambitions of the people of Birmingham since the 1860s, and play an essential role in defining the city's identity. The process of collecting animates the collections and engages contemporary communities in their continuing evolution. The development of the collection through acquisition is the primary means of ensuring the long-term validity of the museum in a time of new cultural expectations and demographic change. As a visible example of cultural investment, the collections play a key role in enhancing the city's national and international cultural profile.

BMAG's Collecting Policy is a formal document that sets out the Museums Service's vision and collecting priorities for the next 5 years. It will guide all collecting activity and acquisition and disposal decisions. It will also guide potential donors as to the suitability of BMAG as a recipient of material offered by gift or bequest. It will support applications for grant aid by demonstrating how a potential acquisition meets BMAG's collecting priorities and objectives. The Collecting Policy is also a requirement for BMAG's Accreditation with MLA, the Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives.

The Collecting Policy will be available on the website [www.bmag.org.uk](http://www.bmag.org.uk). The Executive Summary will be available at each site open to the public with the full Collecting Policy available on request.

### 1.2 CONTEXT

To set these priorities in context, a brief account of major projects and programmes and principal partnerships is outlined in Section 2 together with statements on the political and social contexts in which BMAG operates. A detailed history of collecting in Birmingham and a summary description of BMAG's collections are available online at [www.bmag.org.uk](http://www.bmag.org.uk) as well as on request.

The Collecting Policy must be seen in the context of BMAG's vision statement, to be:

*World class museums at the cultural heart of Birmingham*

Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, is part of Museums & Heritage Services and is within the Leisure Sport & Culture Division, set within the Directorate of Environment & Culture for Birmingham City Council. The Collecting Policy consequently supports the following key priority areas of the Birmingham City Council Plan 2008-13:

- **Succeed Economically** – encouraging people, businesses, and funding organisations to invest in the city's collections; developing outstanding collections that support formal and informal learning for people of all ages.
- **Be Healthy** - developing inspiring collections that support a range of social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs; developing collections that can serve as a catalyst for culture.

- **Enjoy a High Quality of Life** – improving our cultural facilities through developing world-class collections.
- **Make A Contribution** - promoting greater understanding between communities, faiths and generations
- **Achieving Excellence** – ensuring that BMAG’s collections are developed to equally reflect and represent the cultural identities, histories and interests of our diverse society; and consulting with the public on the development of our contemporary collections.

In addition, the Collecting Policy is set within the context of wider strategic initiatives, in which Birmingham City Council is a key partner. Taking Birmingham Forward, the Birmingham Cultural Strategy 2007 – 2010, and the Birmingham City Council Heritage Strategy 2007-12 all provide important frameworks for collection development.

Collecting is also set in the context of a number of national initiatives, and is a significant subject of national cultural activity and debate. Such contexts are described in detail in Section 2 of the Collecting Policy.

Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery is actively supported by the Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery and the Public Picture Gallery Fund, two charitable organisations founded with the specific intention of supporting the museum service. Whilst BMAG has a limited purchase grant from Birmingham City Council this is creatively, energetically and highly successfully extended by curatorial staff through the negotiation of additional grant aid. The support of a wide range of grant-giving agencies is essential to the development of BMAG’s collections.

The success of grant support as a form of inward investment to the city can be seen in the fact that during the period of the Collecting Policy, 2003 – 2008, of an expenditure on acquisition purchases of £1,407,000 BMAG raised £1,321,874 in grant aid.

### **1.3 COLLECTING PRIORITIES 2009-2013**

The aim of this Collecting Policy is to establish a framework to support the development of the collections as a cultural catalyst and as a sustainable resource. Such a resource is finite. Therefore to ensure the highest standards of interpretation, access, care and management collecting activity will be directed specifically to delivering BMAG’s Collecting Priorities 2009-2013, as set out below:

Three strategic priorities have been identified:

#### **1.3.1 Collecting Priority 1:**

##### **Supporting major Museums and Heritage Services projects:**

A series of major projects are scheduled for development and implementation during the life of this Collecting Policy, both as part of Phase II of the BMAG 20-Year Plan, and as part of the ongoing development of our community museums. In particular, collecting activity will support:

- The Birmingham History Galleries.
- The Matthew Boulton bi-centenary exhibition in 2009 and the development of collections at Soho House Museum.

- The creation of new galleries and displays at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter.
- The creation of new displays at Aston Hall relating to the history and culture of Aston and its communities.

### **1.3.2 Collecting Priority 2: Developing contemporary art collections**

The representation and celebration of our own time and society is a fundamental priority for the Museum Service. BMAG plays a key role in driving the West Midlands region as a vibrant centre for the development of collections which engage with and represent contemporary culture. Varied partnerships in programmes and collecting between Arts Council England, Tate, the Contemporary Art Society, BMAG, Ikon and the art galleries of Wolverhampton, Walsall and the University of Warwick all actively support contemporary collecting. Particular priorities in this Collecting Policy are:

- Delivering the Art Fund International programme
- Continuing to build on the collections of painting and metalwork established through the CAS Special Collection Scheme

### **1.3.3 Collecting Priority 3: Reflecting diversity**

BMAG aims to develop world class collections that represent an individual's creative talents or personal history, regardless of their age, gender or sexual orientation. A key priority of BMAG is to develop collections which reflect the cultural identities, histories, beliefs and concerns of the increasingly diverse society in which it operates. Disability is particularly under-represented and with the Paralympics of London 2012, there is an opportunity to build strong partnerships and develop increased representation of disability across the collections. Collecting will, therefore, particularly focus on:

- Strengthening the representation of disability across all collections
- Acquiring material to reflect the cultural interests of different communities and faiths within the city.
- Strengthening the representation in the art and applied art collections of works by Black and Asian artists and makers.
- Strengthening existing collections of material originating from or representing Muslim cultures.
- Increasing the representation of the work of women artists and makers.

## **1.4 PROCESS OF COLLECTING**

This section sets out the guidelines governing the procedures for collecting to ensure that the Accreditation Standard and audit requirements are met for acquisition and disposal. It is closely informed by the model Acquisition and Disposal Policy, version 2, 2008 established by MLA as part of its Accreditation guidelines. It sets out the legal and ethical framework in which the museum operates, and cites key documents established by national agencies by which the museum's actions are directed. It sets out who does what at different stages of the collecting process and highlights particular duties and responsibilities.

## **1.5 REVIEW OF COLLECTING 2003 – 2008**

Four collecting priorities were identified for the period 2003 – 2008:

1. Contemporary Collecting
2. Celebrating cultural diversity and increasing representation
3. Celebrating the history of Birmingham and its people
4. Developing the breadth, depth and significance of the collections

Collecting activity delivered against all of the above. Key collecting achievements are set out against the relevant priorities.

The policy concludes with an account of key supporters of BMAG's acquisition programme and a summary of grant aid received during the period.

## **Section Two**

# **CONTEXT FOR COLLECTING**

The collections of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery are a major cultural asset for the city and wider region. They have been perceived as key cultural motivators in, for example, the Birmingham G8 conference, the bid for Capital of Culture, and the up-coming Cultural Olympiad. Their significance and breadth of historic and global reference gives them a unique status within the West Midlands region. Their Designation by DCMS as collections of outstanding quality and significance acknowledges this cultural authority.

### **2.1 THE BMAG CONTEXT**

#### **2.1.1 Summary description**

Museum collections have been developed by the local authority in Birmingham since the 1860s. They embrace the interests and ambitions of Birmingham collectors, philanthropists, industrialists and workers, and, collectively, represent one of the great cultural expressions and achievements of the people of Birmingham. They also embody changing emphases within the museum profession, from design and industrial reference to didactic exemplar to cultural place-maker.

Today, the collection numbers over one million items. One of the great public collections in Europe, it encompasses objects from prehistory; the ancient and classical worlds; European fine art, applied art and social history; Birmingham history; world cultures; science and industry and the natural world.

A detailed history of BMAG's collecting activity and a description of the collections are available online at [www.bmag.org.uk](http://www.bmag.org.uk) or on request.

#### **2.1.2 Renaissance in the Regions**

In 2003 BMAG in partnership with Stoke on Trent, Coventry, Wolverhampton museums' services and Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust bid successfully to become the regional museums hub for the West Midlands. £24.2m was received for the period 2003-2008. The recognition and implementation of a regional framework for museums that receive funding from central government has had a significant effect on services. Renaissance in the Regions funding has provided additional resources to support and develop key services and promote the regional importance of BMAG. Birmingham's collections have always had a regional significance and BMAG is seen as the regional centre of expertise in particular collection areas. Specifically Renaissance has supported the refurbishment of the Conservation Studios and enabled access to stored collections at MCC.

#### **2.1.3 BMAG 20 Year Plan**

The 20 Year Plan will give the Service a new sense of purpose and direction in the light of the new developments in the renaissance of the City. Short, medium and long term plans for gallery development at BMAG need to be focused on both a city and regional context. A development brief and feasibility study alongside a programme of consultation with visitors and non visitors has informed the 20 Year Plan. Bids were made to HLF in 2007 and

then 2008 for the development of the second phase of the capital programme concentrating on the Birmingham History Galleries. The initial bid was unsuccessful but BMAG will learn the results of the second bid in December 2008. Collecting will retain an important role in developing and supporting the 20 Year Plan. The plan divides the Museum & Art Gallery into four zones:

- Birmingham History
- Art and Design
- Exploring the world and its peoples
- Ancient Peoples

#### **2.1.4 Birmingham History Galleries**

The development of an ambitious range of new Birmingham History Galleries has been prioritised by BMAG in response to public demand recorded in consultation studies and a current lack of adequate representation of Birmingham history both in the museum and in the city as a whole. It will meet the demand from our current and potential audiences for high quality Birmingham-related displays and will significantly add to the visitor offer at BMAG. The development comprises Phase II of BMAG's 20 year Plan, in which a new gallery displaying Birmingham History from 1700-1830 will unite the museum's most significant Designated collections with an extraordinarily dramatic period of Birmingham's unique history. *Birmingham 1700-1830* will be the first gallery to be developed in the planned Birmingham History Galleries Wing. Located in Gallery 40 of the Museum & Art Gallery, it will ultimately form part of a sequence of 5 inter-linked galleries telling the story of Birmingham history from medieval times to the present. The project will provide a benchmark for the establishment of subsequent Birmingham history galleries, creating new facilities that will enable our users to gain access to the richness and diversity of the local and social history collections held by the museum.

Following an unsuccessful bid in 2007, a second bid was submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2008 (results will be made in Dec. 2008) for the development of the full wing of Birmingham History Galleries. A successful application to the DCMS/Wolfson Foundation Museums & Galleries Improvement Fund for Birmingham 1700-1830 was submitted in 2008, with BMAG being awarded £300,000.

#### **2.1.5 Museum Collections Centre**

Development of the MCC must be seen alongside the priorities outlined in the 20 Year Plan for the Museum & Art Gallery and development plans for the Community Museums.

Improvement of facilities at MCC has included refurbishment of the workshop, transfer of School Loans Service to operate from MCC, installation of improved storage units allowing public access and for the development of a programme of training for the WM region in collection care and management.

Storage requirements will continue to be assessed as part of the acquisition process.

### **2.1.6 Collections on-line**

The development of an on-line collection database and implementation of a networked collection information and management system (MINISIS) for the service was supported by the Designation Challenge Fund. BMAG has a commitment to increase on-line availability of collection information. Partnerships with Birmingham Library & Information Service, Thinktank, University of Birmingham and University of Central England have all helped to develop and increase the on-line resources from all areas of the collections. Renaissance in the Regions Business Plan has supported the development of joint learning resources and enabled further improvements to [www.bmag.org.uk](http://www.bmag.org.uk). Funding from JISC 2007-9 for the Pre Raphaelite research resource will ensure access to images of the majority of one of BMAG's most important collections. An upgrade of MINISIS is also planned for 2008.

### **2.1.7 Aston Hall development**

Aston Ward has been successful in obtaining funding from New Deal in the Community for a major development of the hall and park. A successful funding bid was made for Phase II of the scheme to refurbish and develop the Stable Block, undertake associated landscaping works, develop education and community facilities and improve site security/visitor safety. The programme is due to complete in 2009.

### **2.1.8 Museum of the Jewellery Quarter development**

A lease has been taken on 80 Vyse Street, the next door building to MJQ. A successful bid was made to the DCMS/Wolfson Foundation, which together with Renaissance funding will provide additional facilities and increased museum displays for the historic jewellery collections and the important gemstone collections currently in store.

### **2.1.9 Science & Industry collections**

Around 2000 objects from BMAG's Science and Industry collections are on loan to Thinktank, Birmingham science museum which opened in September 2001, bringing together the past, present and future of science. Thinktank is an independent museum and registered charity. Thinktank Trust's mission and purpose is to advance the education of the public and increase public understanding of, and opportunities for learning about science and technology.

The loan of objects from BMAG's Science and Industry collection is covered by the Loan Agreement with Thinktank and the Science Curator works closely with BMAG on the development of the collection. Joint projects funded by the Designation Challenge Fund have enabled web access to science collections and community based outreach and engagement.

In 2008 BMAG and Thinktank agreed a joint Collections Engagement Strategy 2008-13, setting out a vision to extend and deepen engagement with Birmingham's rich collections of history, science and industry and natural science in the context of both organisations' development plans for the next five years. The strategy outlines how BMAG and Thinktank will work together in developing distinctive, complementary interpretive approaches: the history

of Birmingham and its people (at BMAG); and the impact of scientific change and technological innovation on people and the environment (at Thinktank).

Objects from the Science and Industry collections will play significant roles in the planned display development programmes at both BMAG ('Birmingham - A City in the Making') and Thinktank ('Science for All Seasons'). Acquisitions for long term display at Thinktank which meet conditions set out in the Loan Agreement will be considered.

#### **2.1.10 Natural Sciences collections**

Thinktank, Birmingham science museum opened in 2001 and currently has a Wild Life gallery exhibiting over 250 specimens from BMAG's Natural Science collection. The loan and use of these specimens is covered by the Loan Agreement and joint Collections Engagement Strategy with Thinktank (see section 2.1.9). Remaining natural science displays at BMAG were removed by 2003 but free access to the Natural Science collections is now provided at MCC and stored collections are currently being relocated from the central Museum & Art Gallery.

In 2007 Thinktank appointed the first Natural Science Curator in the city for a decade, and its future plans include the development of a new natural science gallery, with a substantial increase in the number of specimens on display.

Discussions with the University of Birmingham Lapworth Museum of Geology are nearing completion regarding a long-term loan of BMAG's Geology and Palaeontology collections to the University. There is now a three-way strategic partnership between BMAG, Thinktank and the Lapworth Museum to secure the future of the Natural Science collections. Proactive collecting will not take place, but acquisitions for long term display at Thinktank which meet conditions set out in the Loan Agreement will be considered.

## **2.2 THE BIRMINGHAM CONTEXT**

### **2.2.1 Birmingham Museums and Heritage Services** vision is for:

*World class museums at the cultural heart of Birmingham*

### **2.2.2 Birmingham City Council Plan 2008-13**

BMAG is part of Museums & Heritage Services and set within the Leisure Sport & Culture Division within the Directorate of Environment and Culture for Birmingham City Council. The Collecting Policy therefore must also be seen in the context of the Birmingham City Council Plan 2008-13, in which it supports the following key areas:

- ***Succeed Economically***
  - encouraging people, businesses, public and private funding organisations to invest in the city's collections
  - developing outstanding collections that support formal and informal learning for people of all ages
- ***Be Healthy***

- developing inspiring collections that support a range of social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs
- developing collections that can serve as a catalyst for culture
- **Enjoy a High Quality of Life**
  - improving the city's cultural facilities through developing world-class collections
- **Make A Contribution**
  - promoting greater understanding between communities, faiths and generations
- **Achieving Excellence**
  - Through developing BMAG's collections to equally reflect and represent the cultural identities, histories and interests of our diverse society
  - through consulting with the public on the development of our contemporary collections.

### 2.2.3 Community and Cultural Strategies

Birmingham City Council is a key partner in the Birmingham Strategic Partnership. The BSP's **Taking Birmingham Forward** provides the context for the development of the collections through their stated objectives:

*We will promote opportunities for people to enrich their understanding of Birmingham's heritage and of the heritage and cultures of Birmingham's many diverse communities. (CSL3)*

Within the Community Strategy the Birmingham City Council has also developed a Cultural Strategy and a Heritage Strategy.

The **Birmingham Cultural Strategy 2007-2010** sets out the vision for the city:

*Our vision is for Birmingham to be a continually surprising city where the vibrancy and diversity of its culture inspire the people who live, work in and visit the city, and bring economic success and international recognition.*

The themes within the Cultural Strategy are:

1. We will increase opportunities for you to enjoy cultural facilities and activities throughout Birmingham
2. We will support you to be involved in your community
3. We will make it easier for you to make the most out of your creative skills
4. We will strengthen the distinctiveness of the city
5. We will work to raise the profile of the city to make it an even more appealing place to live in, work and visit

### 2.2.4 Birmingham City Council Heritage Strategy 2007-2012

The Strategy was approved by the City Council on 5 June 2007.

Birmingham has a remarkably rich and diverse heritage reflecting over two thousand years of historic development. This heritage includes museums and archives and their collections, the historic environment, libraries, natural

habitats and the stories of its people and communities. Although by no means the only agency involved in the preservation of Birmingham's heritage, the City Council is responsible for a significant proportion of these heritage 'assets'.

The purpose of the Birmingham City Council Heritage Strategy is to provide a framework and context for how we preserve, manage, interpret and promote the Council's heritage assets, and how they are taken forward during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

- To provide a strategic framework for the City Council's heritage activity.
- To highlight the wider contribution heritage can play in the development and regeneration of the city.
- To identify the pressures facing the City Council's existing heritage assets and make recommendations as to how these might be addressed.
- To devise a mechanism for prioritising future heritage projects, and to identify City Council and other funding streams to enable us to deliver them.
- To promote access to the City Council's heritage assets and extend the diversity of its heritage activity.
- To make proposals for an effective national and international marketing and tourism strategy for the city's heritage assets.

#### **2.2.5 Local Partnerships**

BMAG works in partnership with institutions within the city on a wide range of projects that include acquisition, loan, display and interpretation of collections. These include formal agreements and informal networks that influence collecting, including:

- Birmingham Library and Information Service (BLIS) with relation to contemporary collecting in photography, oral history and digital media, archival material.
- Thinktank with relation to the loan agreement for science collections and the receipt of curatorial expertise in the acquisition of science and industry artefacts.
- The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, the University of Birmingham with relation to areas of collecting in fine and applied art.
- The University of Birmingham with relation to areas of collecting in the natural sciences.
- The West Midlands Archaeological Collection Research Unit and the operation of the Portable Antiquities Scheme in the West Midlands which is co-ordinated by BMAG.
- The West Midlands Natural Sciences Collections Group in relation to agreements on collecting and rationalisation for natural sciences.
- Ikon Gallery plays an advisory role as a formal, third partner in The Art Fund International scheme involving BMAG and New Art Gallery Walsall that focuses on collecting international contemporary art (see 2.3.3 for more details).

Early discussions are currently under way regarding the feasibility for developing a Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) in Birmingham in the longer term, that possibly focuses on developing and displaying collections of international contemporary art. As England's largest local authority museums service and the custodian of the city's collections BMAG would seek to be a key partner in any further development of such proposals, in partnership with Ikon Gallery. The collecting remit for a MoCA in Birmingham would need to be developed in the context of the BMAG's existing contemporary collections and future collecting aims. See 2.3.3 for details about BMAG's Art Fund International scheme and its potential relationship with a new Museum of Contemporary Art.

### **2.2.6 Charitable Stakeholders**

Birmingham Museum is actively supported by two local charitable organisations:

- The Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery is a key agent in providing additional grants for the whole range of BMAG's acquisition programmes. With over 1200 members, the Friends' organisation is also an important and active advocacy group for the museum at a local and regional level, engaging in volunteer programmes and offering broad support for BMAG's activities.
- The Public Picture Gallery Fund, established to support BMAG's first fine art acquisitions in the nineteenth century, continues to provide a major source of funding, expertise, advice and encouragement, as well as playing a decisive role in the development of the Fine Art collection.

## **2.3 THE REGIONAL CONTEXT**

Collecting activity makes reference to a range of partnerships and collection relationships within the West Midlands:

### **2.3.1 Renaissance in the Region, West Midlands Hub Partners**

Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery is the lead member of the West Midlands Hub, and plays a key role in the strategic planning and delivery of Renaissance in the Regions programmes within the region. This includes extensive training in the fields of collections and contemporary collecting. BMAG is working with its Hub partners, the museum services in Stoke, Wolverhampton, Ironbridge and Coventry, towards a common approach and harmonisation of policy.

### **2.3.2 A Regional Centre for Collections of World Cultures**

BMAG is a regional centre of excellence for its representation of world and ancient cultures. The collections of European Prehistory, Ethnography, American Archaeology, numismatics, and material from the ancient world are unparalleled in the Midlands. BMAG has consequently attracted collections, particularly, of Egyptology and Ethnography from smaller regional museums who have neither the collection context nor curatorial expertise to support such material.

### **2.3.3 Regional Contemporary Collecting**

The West Midlands region is a vibrant centre for the development of collections which engage with and represent contemporary visual culture. Varied partnerships in programmes and collecting exist between Arts Council England, Tate, the Contemporary Art Society, BMAG, Ikon and the art galleries of Wolverhampton, Walsall and the University of Warwick. All actively support collaborative contemporary collecting.

Between 1998 and 2006, six regional galleries participated in the Contemporary Art Society Special Collection Scheme, and collaborated in the publication of a joint catalogue and research programme. We continue to work with our regional partners (The Potteries Museum, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, the New Art Gallery, Walsall, the Mead Gallery, University of Warwick and Worcester Art Gallery and Museum) in the development of the specific collections developed through the scheme.

In 2007, BMAG together with New Art Gallery Walsall as equal partners, received £1,000,000 from The Art Fund for the development of collections of international art over five years, under the Art Fund International scheme. With the additional support of Ikon as a third partner in an advisory capacity, the partnership is seeking to purchase international contemporary art on the theme of 'the modern metropolis'. The intention is to develop a cohesive and coherent collection of material in the West Midlands.

The development of an international contemporary art collection is also perceived as a complimentary move in the context of early discussions about the feasibility for developing a Museum of Contemporary Art in Birmingham in the longer term. The region's Art Fund International collection could potentially be drawn upon for loans to such a museum (subject to the usual loan conditions) if it were to be developed at any point in the future.

#### **2.3.4 Historic industry collections**

The West Midlands is one of the great manufacturing centres of the world, and regional collections have developed which reflect local historic industries. BMAG actively consults with these museums to avoid conflicts of interest or duplication of effort; with particular reference to: Broadfield House Glass Museum (glass); The Potteries Museum (ceramics); Wolverhampton Art Gallery (enamels and japanned ware), Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (industrial history and ceramics), Sandwell Museums Service (Ruskin pottery).

#### **2.3.5 Designated Collections**

The collections of Art, Science & Industry, Birmingham History, Numismatics and the Pinto collection of Treen are all Designated by the Department of Culture, Media & Sport as collections of national importance and significance.

BMAG has a relationship with other Designated museum and archive collections nationally and specifically within the West Midlands (Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham Libraries, Compton Verney, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Lapworth Museum of Geology, Museum of British Road Transport Trust (Coventry), Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Royal

Shakespeare Company, Stoke-on-Trent Museums Service, Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern Manuscripts (University of Birmingham), Modern Records Centre (Warwick University), and Wedgwood Museum Trust. As a participant in the Regional Designated Collections Group, BMAG has played a leading role in projects including the Your Icons website (<http://www.youricons.org.uk>)

## 2.4 THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The Collecting Policy makes reference to the model Acquisition and Disposal Policy published by the MLA in April 2008. The Collecting Policy also acknowledges the likely impact on standard practice in collecting of the BSI Code of Practice for the management of cultural collections, currently in the course of development, and EU guidelines and policy.

It is anticipated that contemporary art collecting will be influenced by the current draft National Strategy for Collecting Contemporary Art.

Collecting is also set in the context of national initiatives following reports from the Museums Association Collections for the Future, 2005, and two reports for the Department for Culture Media & Sport Understanding the Future: Museums and the 21<sup>st</sup> century, 2005 and 2006.

### 2.4.1 Collections for the Future

This MA report sets out the current context for thinking about collections and collecting and has influenced the following reports by DCMS on the future of museums in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The key findings show not only how powerful collections can be, but also how museums need to be more proactive in developing access and engagement with their collections. In this respect a recent study showed that BMAG was one of the leading museums in the country for providing access to stored collections at the MCC.

### 2.4.2 Understanding the Future

DCMS has produced a series of consultative reports investigating the key issues facing museums at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Following the initial consultation in 2005 the report "Understanding the Future: priorities for England's museums". This sets out 5 areas for development:

*Museums & Learning: thinking and doing*

Museums will fulfil their potential as learning resources providing programmes of acknowledged quality and excellence to their users

*Finding our place in the world: the building blocks of belonging*

Museums will work with diverse communities to challenge, explore, celebrate and debate issues of identity and belonging

*Living collections*

Museums will develop and manage their collections so that they are relevant and engaged with contemporary society

*Maximising the potential of people*

Through developing a highly skilled, representative workforce and focused leadership museums will be enabled to develop innovative and dynamic organisations for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

*How Museums fit together*

Clear public benefit will be derived from effective partnership working and networking within and outside the sector.

**2.4.3 National Relationships**

Museum collecting is a significant subject of national cultural activity and debate. BMAG contributes to independent reports, such as the Goodison Report to the Treasury, and maintains important external relationships with the MLA, Art Fund, the Contemporary Art Society, The Visual Art Galleries Association, Arts Council England, the Crafts Council, and other agencies and advocates of museum collections. As a member of the National Museum Directors' Conference, BMAG is a key influencer of national museum policy and strategy.

BMAG works in collaboration and in partnership with national museums, for example it has established formal working partnerships with the V&A, the British Museum and The Tate. These can take the form of joint projects, loan agreements, touring exhibitions, research, advice on collection care and management.

BMAG will also seek to build partnerships with national organisations in fields such as disability and cultural and religious interests to provide knowledge and expertise in support of our activities in delivering our collecting priorities (see Section 3 below).

**2.4.4 National Funding Relationships**

BMAG receives a small purchase grant from Birmingham City Council. This is creatively, energetically and highly successfully extended by curatorial staff through the negotiation of additional grant aid. The support of grant-giving agencies is essential to the development of BMAG's collections. Throughout the period of the previous Policy, the museum received extensive support from, in particular, the Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, the Public Picture Gallery Fund, the Art Fund, The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Arts Lottery Fund (through The Contemporary Art Society), Government Funds administered through the V&A/MLA Purchase Grant Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund and The Crafts Council. In addition to these public bodies, the museum also receives support for specific acquisitions from smaller private trusts and grant-giving charitable organisations, as well as owners, dealers and their agents.

Birmingham City Council acknowledges its gratitude to these organisations for the vision, professionalism and capacity which they bring to the museum's collection development.

The success of grant support as a form of inward investment to the city can be seen in the fact that during the period of the Collecting Policy, 2003 –

2008, of an expenditure on acquisition purchases of £1,407,000 BMAG raised £1,321,874 in grant aid.

#### **2.4.5 International Partnerships**

BMAG maintains active contact with museums around the world in collection research and development. In the past five years, this has included fieldwork in South Africa and the Caribbean, contemporary Chinese ceramic collecting with Guangdong Museum, and policy agreement with the Speed Museum, Kentucky.

Major project partnerships with the National Art Gallery of Sweden, Stuttgart Art Museum, and the Yale Center for British Art also contribute to BMAG and the city's profile, and the development of collection knowledge and specialism.

#### **2.4.6 MLA Accreditation statement:**

The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other 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 specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

### **2.5 HOW THE COLLECTIONS ARE USED**

#### **2.5.1 Audiences**

The collections serve a variety of audiences from those in Birmingham, to the wider region, nationally and internationally. BMAG actively monitors and consults with its audiences in all areas of service delivery, including collection development. Key documents include the reports of QA Research 2004-5, Vector Research 2007, and Morris Hargreaves Macintyre 2007-08. Audience development targets inform collecting priorities, and acquisitions support key museum projects and programmes. In the current Collecting Policy, for example, priorities in the acquisition of material relating to Muslim cultures and Birmingham's African Caribbean communities are specifically intended to increase and extend the cultural representation and the organisation's engagement with these communities (see Section 3).

BMAG's collections, in development since the 1860s, have a long-term purpose in the education and inspiration of the museum's users. In addition to serving current audiences, BMAG has a duty to preserve the collections for future generations, and to manage and develop the collections to ensure their value, validity and use in future society.

#### **2.5.2 Access to the collections**

Objects are made accessible through displays and exhibitions in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, our Community Museums and Thinktank and through loans to other museums and approved venues. Managed and assisted visits provide access to stored collections at the MCC and BMAG, on open days and through booked appointments for special interest groups, schools, societies, organised groups and research students. Access to stored material is increasing year on year as facilities at the MCC improve and a greater proportion of the collection is made available.

Temporary exhibitions provide opportunities to present collections in a new light and to bring out stored collections (for example the fine textiles and dress collection that currently lacks a permanent display space) and to show vulnerable or fragile collections for short periods (for example the watercolours and drawings collection). Collections which are particularly vulnerable for reasons of conservation or security, such as textiles, works on paper or coins, are supported by access programmes, such as the Print Room service, or the accessible storage of the dress collection at MCC.

Loans are made from the collections on a regular basis to museums in the UK, other parts of Europe, the Americas and the Far East. These loans raise awareness of the City and its museum collections across the world, and are a strong advocate for Birmingham's status as an international city and major cultural centre. During the period 2003-2008 exhibitions containing loans from BMAG's collections received 14,000,000 visitors worldwide. Co-operation with borrowing institutions can often assist in the negotiation of future loans for our own exhibitions, as well as offering potential for collaboration in collection research and joint cultural programmes.

### **2.5.3 Access to information on objects**

In addition to providing access to the objects themselves an important function of the museum is to provide access to information on the objects. The Museum's enquiry and opinions service provides information via the telephone, letters, e-mail and in person.

BMAG has developed on-line resources through the website [www.bmag.org.uk](http://www.bmag.org.uk) via the BMAGiC collection database. Images and text are searchable across the collections with an ever-growing amount of material being made available.

Traditional print media in the form of catalogues and publications provide further access to collections. In 2000 *World Art from Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery* was published providing a chronological journey from prehistory to present day. The Public Catalogue Foundation's publication on paintings in public collections in the West Midlands (2007), a project in which the curatorial team at BMAG were the key coordinating partner, provides an outstanding and comprehensive reference to all paintings in the fine art and history collections. Guidebooks to each of the museums within the service are available as well as short guides to specific areas of the collection (Holy Grail Tapestries, Pre-Raphaelites). There are also Teachers' resource notes on curriculum-relevant areas of the collections. Teachers' information on collections and sites is available on [www.schoolsliaison.org.uk](http://www.schoolsliaison.org.uk) including pre-visit and follow up work.

Collaboration with specific projects such as the Jewish Holocaust project and the City Sound Archive, or the digitisation of topographical prints and drawings of Birmingham for the Digital Handsworth project enable aspects of the collections to be highlighted and the results of research to be made available in either web based or print media. The Pre-Raphaelite collection is

in the process of being fully digitised and made available through a programme supported by the Joint Information Systems Council (JISC). Listings of works by Sir Edward Burne-Jones and illustrations by J E Millais are complete. Works by Ford Madox Brown will be completed this year (2008).

The Picture Library provides over 1400 images, in black-&-white negative or colour transparency & digital format, across the collections for purchase, both for personal study use & for commercial reproduction purposes. Information on Reproduction fees, & terms & conditions of use, plus ordering forms are available on [www.bmag.org.uk](http://www.bmag.org.uk).

The Birmingham Stories website [www.birminghamstories.co.uk](http://www.birminghamstories.co.uk), a joint BMAG and Thinktank project funded by the Designation Challenge Fund, provides online access to many of the significant artefacts in the Science & Industry collections.

#### **2.5.4 Research Programmes**

BMAG is actively involved in research programmes with universities both nationally and internationally, gaining and sharing information on collections. Partnership with Birmingham University has achieved considerable grant support for research through the Arts & Humanities Research Council, including 'Suburban Birmingham: spaces and places: 1880-1960', a project running until 2011. Other collaborations include work with Birmingham City University, and the universities of Wolverhampton, Glasgow and Toronto.

## **Section Three**

### **KEY COLLECTING AREAS 2009-2013**

The aim of this Collecting Policy is to establish a framework to support the development of the collections as a cultural catalyst and as a sustainable resource. Such a resource is finite. Therefore to ensure the highest standards of interpretation, access, care and management, collecting activity will be directed specifically to delivering BMAG's Collecting Priorities 2009-2013, as set out below:

There is a presumption against any form of collecting which does not support the delivery of these priorities. Objects of pre-eminent quality, which stand outside these priorities, but still contribute to the development of the breadth, range and quality of the collections will be considered on an individual basis. For the purposes of this Policy, the definition of the term pre-eminent is that used by the DCMS/MLA in the evaluation of cultural property for Acceptance in Lieu:

*“of particular historical, artistic, scientific or local significance, either individually or collectively, or associated with a building in public ownership, such as a National Trust property, which will be expected to have public access for at least 100 days each year”.*

### **3.1 COLLECTING PRIORITIES 2009-2013**

Three key collecting areas have been identified.

#### **3.1.1 Collecting Priority 1:**

##### **Supporting major Museums and Heritage Services projects:**

A series of major projects are scheduled for development and implementation during the life of this Collecting Policy, both as part of Phase II of the BMAG 20-Year Plan, and as part of our ongoing development of our community museums. In particular, collecting activity will support:

- The Birmingham History Galleries. This is a landmark project, offering the first opportunity for many years to use the Museum's collections to tell the story of the city of Birmingham and its people. Funding for the first stage has already been obtained from the DCMS Wolfson Foundation, and an application is currently with the Heritage Lottery Fund for completion of the full scheme. Beginning with the development of Gallery 40: *Birmingham 1700 – 1830* from early 2009, the project will continue until 2012, including galleries relating to Birmingham pre-1700, Birmingham 1830-1889, Birmingham 1889-1945 and the city from 1945 to the present.
- The development of collections which represent Birmingham society and communities from 1945, establishing new processes for collecting and engaging with the city's communities. These collections will reinforce the service's key role in expressing the cultural identity of the city today.
- The Matthew Boulton bi-centenary exhibition in 2009 and the development of collections at Soho House Museum. In particular, the development of fine art collections to reflect Boulton's tastes and art activities.
- The creation of new galleries and displays at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter from 2009 relating to the history of jewellery and silversmithing in Birmingham from the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- The creation of new displays at Aston Hall relating to the history and culture of Aston and its communities.

#### **3.1.2 Collecting Priority 2:**

##### **Developing contemporary collections**

The representation and celebration of our own time and society is a fundamental priority for BMAG. The Museums Service plays a key role in driving the West Midlands region as a vibrant centre for the development of collections which engage with and represent contemporary culture. Varied partnerships in programmes and collecting between Arts Council England, Tate, the Contemporary Art Society, BMAG, Ikon and the art galleries of Wolverhampton, Walsall and the University of Warwick all actively support contemporary collecting. Particular priorities in this Collecting Policy are:

- Delivering the Art Fund International programme, including the research and acquisition of works of international contemporary art in accordance with the terms of the AFI Scheme.
- Continuing to build on the collections of painting and metalwork established through the CAS Special Collection Scheme up to 2004/05.

This initiative provided BMAG with outstanding collections of contemporary material of national significance. A momentum in collecting in these fields must be maintained if the collections are to retain their purpose and capacity.

### **3.1.3 Collecting Priority 3: Reflecting diversity**

BMAG aims to develop world class collections that represent an individual's creative talents or personal history, regardless of their age, gender or sexual orientation. A key priority of BMAG is to develop collections which reflect the cultural identities, histories, beliefs and concerns of the increasingly complex society in which it operates. Disability is also under-represented and with the Paralympics of London 2012, there is an opportunity to build strong partnerships and develop increased representation of disability across the collections. Collecting will, therefore, particularly focus on:

- Strengthening the representation of disability across all collections
- Acquiring material to reflect the cultural interests of different communities and faiths within the city.
- Strengthening the representation in the art and applied art collections of works by Black and Asian artists and makers.
- Strengthening existing collections of material originating from or representing Muslim cultures.
- Increasing the representation of the work of women artists and makers.

## **3.2 COLLECTING OBJECTIVES 2009-2013**

Specific collecting objectives have been identified to support the delivery of these priorities and to provide balanced, targeted and manageable collection development:

### **3.2.1 Collecting Priority 1: Objectives Supporting major Museums and Heritage Services projects**

- To develop and extend the displays at Soho House Museum through the acquisition of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century prints and decorative art especially by Birmingham engravers associated with Matthew Boulton (e.g. John and Francis Eginton).
- To extend the representation of Matthew Boulton's activity and taste and the artistic milieu of late 18<sup>th</sup> century Birmingham through the acquisition of major works by Boulton's friends and associates Antonio Zucchi, Angelica Kauffman and P J de Louthembourg.
- To develop collections associated with Birmingham working life from 1945 to the present day. In particular: working life of immigrant communities, decline of manufacturing industry, rise of the service industries.

## COLLECTING POLICY 2009–2013

- To develop collections of material from the 18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century relating specifically to key immigrant communities; Birmingham veterans of major conflicts; Birmingham working class life (also Priority 3).
- To develop community-led collections activity focussed on Birmingham's African Caribbean Community (also Priority 3).
- To develop collections of numismatics to support the Birmingham History Galleries, in particular coins and associated material made in Birmingham; coins, tokens, checks used in Birmingham; and early medieval coins minted in the West Midlands region.
- To acquire a major textile work by Birmingham-trained Michael Brennand-Wood for display in the 'How Art Is Made' display at the Museum & Art Gallery.
- To research, identify and acquire at least one new work by artists working in wood, to extend the collection and contribute to new displays of the Pinto collection.
- To collect other such material with a direct provenance to any of the community Museum sites

### **3.2.2 Collecting Priority 2: Objectives** **Developing contemporary art collections**

- To research, identify and negotiate the acquisition of works of international contemporary art working with partners in the Art Fund International scheme, on the theme of 'the modern metropolis.'
- To research, identify and acquire new works to build on the collection of contemporary painting established through the Special Collection Scheme.
- To research, identify and acquire new works to build on the collection of contemporary metalwork established through the Special Collection Scheme.
- To develop the collection of works by contemporary artists with strong Birmingham connections through the acquisition of paintings by Peter Phillips and Barbara Walker, photographic work by Max Kandhola and video work by Keith Piper (also Priority 3).

### **3.2.3 Collecting Priority 3: Objectives** **Reflecting diversity**

## COLLECTING POLICY 2009–2013

- To increase BMAG's engagement with issues relating to disability through the research, identification, acquisition and, if required, commissioning of a minimum of 5 works by disabled artists or which relate to disability.
- Increase the representation of women artists in the fields of Pre-Raphaelitism, British Modern, St Ives School and Surrealism, through the acquisition of paintings or drawings by Marie Stillman, Rebecca Solomon, Barbara Leigh Smith, Evelyn De Morgan, Sylvia Gosse, Vanessa Bell, Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Ithel Colquhoun, Eileen Agar, Grace Pailthorpe.
- To increase the representation of Muslim cultures in BMAG through the acquisition of a representative group of Islamic coinage, a major ceramic work by Halima Cassell, a body of historic metalwork from the sultanates of the Deccan, including a major example of bidri ware.
- To extend cultural representation in the contemporary ceramics collections through the acquisition of major current works by Magdalene Odundo, Chun Laio and Yuki Hayama.
- To increase the representation of Black artists and designers through acquiring a body of work by West Midlands-born fashion designer Gavin Douglas, and a painting by Guyana-born artist Aubrey Williams.
- To research and acquire examples of European folk art which will enable BMAG to engage with new immigrant communities, and extend the range of existing collections.
- To research and acquire objects reflecting the cultural interests of difference faith groups throughout Birmingham (also Priority 1).
- To research collaborative approaches to collecting with members of indigenous source communities and their representative bodies taking into consideration concerns over the reassertion of identity and affording communities the opportunity of shaping how they are represented in overseas museums.

### **3.2.4 Other collecting activity in 2009 – 2013**

- To acquire finds and associated documentation from archaeological excavations within the boundaries of the city of Birmingham
- To acquire historical and archaeological coins found in the Birmingham area.
- Collecting specifically for long term display at Thinktank in accordance with the Loan Agreement.

## **Section Four**

# **PROCESS OF COLLECTING**

### **4.1 GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- 4.1.1** The Policy relates in the first instance to the existing permanent collections as they have been acquired, whether by purchase, gift or bequest, for over 150 years. The Collecting Policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. The date when the policy is next due for review will be May 2013.
- 4.1.2** The MLA will be notified of any changes to the Collecting Policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of existing collections.
- 4.1.3** The special nature of museum collections is the “realness” of an object or specimen, its associations and provenance. As far as practicable, all material acquired will be original material. Acquisitions will include material which is representative as well as unique, rare or of outstanding significance. Judgements on quality will be based on an item being best fitted to meet the purposes required of it, not solely on prevailing views on aesthetic quality.
- 4.1.4** The museum recognises its responsibility, in acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that adequate care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Accreditation Standard. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 4.1.5** There must be a presumption against material being accepted for the permanent collections where specific conditions or restrictions pertain to that material. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances, and then only after proper consideration by the governing body of the museum itself, having regard to the interests of other museums.
- 4.1.6** BMAG has a networked collection information and management system, MINISIS that covers all procedures relating to collection documentation and which complies with SPECTRUM, the UK Museum Documentation Standard (MDA, version 3.0, 2005) and Accreditation standards. All acquisitions will be entered onto MINISIS and a programme of retrospective documentation is in place to transfer manual information to MINISIS. An up-graded version of MINISIS, offering enhanced functions and performance, is due to be introduced during the autumn of 2008.

### **4.2 THINKTANK**

In general, it is anticipated that acquisitions will enter the collections of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery and be loaned to Thinktank. However, items identified as being significant to Thinktank displays, but which do not represent appropriate additions to BMAG's collections would be the subject of

separate loan agreements between Thinktank and the lender. BMAG will consider acquisitions for display at Thinktank which meet conditions set out in the Loan Agreement. As with all proposals, such acquisitions will be assessed in light of BMAG's resources and its ability to accommodate them within its existing storage systems in the longer term.

### **4.3 FORMAL APPROVAL FOR ACQUISITION**

- 4.3.1** The responsibility for seeking formal approval for all acquisitions lies with the Curatorial Services team of BMAG. Individual curators will work closely with colleagues in Community Museums, Thinktank, Audience Development, Learning and other Museum teams as appropriate in the development of acquisition proposals.
- 4.3.2** An Acquisitions Group, comprising the Curatorial Services Manager, The Head of Collections Services, the Head of Collections Management, the Head of Interpretation and Exhibitions, the Head of Museum Operations and a representative of the Community Museums team, will monitor and approve collecting activity and ensure that the process of collecting is appropriately managed and complies with audit requirements.
- 4.3.3** The curator responsible for initiating an acquisition must demonstrate that the proposed acquisition meets the current criteria as laid down in this Collecting Policy. An acquisition proposal form is prepared on MINISIS which must be authorised by the relevant Curator, the Curatorial Services Manager and the Head of Interpretation and Exhibitions. All proposals will be reviewed by the Acquisitions Group. Approved acquisitions are presented to the Senior Management Team for final ratification.
- 4.3.4** Delegated authority for approval of purchase acquisitions rests with the Head of Museums & Heritage Services and with the Head of Exhibitions & Interpretation.
- 4.3.5** Once the proposal has been approved, an Entry form containing the acquisition details and a formal statement of transfer of title is prepared and printed out in duplicate. This is signed by the object's owner or their official agent and as an acknowledgement of receipt by museum staff. When the object has been formally accepted into the collections it is given the status "Accessioned". Further details are then entered on MINISIS with reference made to any paper documentation.

### **4.4 RESOURCES**

BMAG has a limited purchase budget for acquisitions. The service would not be able to pursue a programme of active collecting without the generous support and grant funding provided by the Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, the Public Picture Gallery Fund, The Art Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund, V&A/MLA Purchase Grant Scheme, PRISM Fund and many other trusts. (See section 5.6).

Receipt of grant funding for acquisition places an enduring responsibility on BMAG in relation to the criteria under which the grant was made and the

conditions attached to the grant. In general, conditions relating to grant funded acquisitions cover:

- Co-ordination of publicity relating to the acquisition
- Acknowledgement of grant funding on all information provided on the acquisition
- Permission sought if the object is to be transferred to another institution or disposed of
- Full repayment of grant, including incremental interest from the date of receipt, if the object is sold.

Further criteria apply to specific agencies, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, and can include requirements relating to the display, interpretation and loan of an acquisition.

#### **4.5 ACCEPTANCE IN LIEU**

Historically, BMAG has benefited from the acquisition of major works of art through the process of acceptance in lieu of tax. This process is managed by the Capital Tax Office, the DCMS and the Cultural Property office of MLA, the Council for Museums, Archives & Libraries. Objects offered to BMAG under the terms of this Scheme will continue to be accepted, where appropriate, and provided that the object complies with the collecting priorities set out in this policy, unless extenuating circumstances prevail.

Objects offered by MLA “*in lieu in situ*” will not be accepted because of the very limited benefit to BMAG and its visitors.

#### **4.6 ACCREDITATION STANDARD – ACQUISITION**

This section is taken from the MLA Acquisition and Disposal Policy model, Version 2, 2008.

- 4.6.1** The museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, nor will it borrow any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question. The Museum has produced a Due Diligence Policy in accordance with *Combating Illicit Trade: Due diligence guidelines for Museums, Libraries and archives on collecting and borrowing cultural material* published by DCMS October 2005. The Policy is available on the Museum’s website, at: [www.bmag.org.uk](http://www.bmag.org.uk)
- 4.6.2** In particular, the museum will not acquire or borrow any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country’s laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph ‘country of origin’ includes the United Kingdom).
- 4.6.3** 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

governing body 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.

**4.6.4** The museum will not proactively acquire any material which would fall within the remit of 'Natural Science', however acquisitions for long term display at Thinktank which meet conditions set out in the Loan Agreement will be considered.

**4.6.5** The museum will not acquire or borrow archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures. In England, Northern Ireland and Wales the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996.

**4.6.6** Any exceptions to the above clauses 4.6.2, .3 and .5 will only be because the museum is either:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
- 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
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
- in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

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.

**4.6.7** As the museum holds or intends to acquire human remains from any period, it will follow the procedures in the *Guidance for the care of human remains in museums* issued by DCMS in 2005.

**4.6.8** Any exception to the above clauses will only be because the museum is either:

- Acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
- 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
- Acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
- In possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970

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.

**4.6.9** There is a general presumption against duplicate material being acquired for the permanent collections. Handling collections are referred to separately in section 4.9.

**4.6.10** As the museum holds/intends to acquire archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the *Code of practice on Archives for Museums & Galleries in the United Kingdom*, (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2002).

## **4.7 OTHER PERTINENT GUIDELINES**

BMAG and the Birmingham City Council have adopted the following guidelines and codes of practice relating to the acquisition and disposal of museum collections:

- Museums Association Code of Ethics 2007
- Code of Practice on Archives for Museums in the United Kingdom (1990, revised 1996)
- SPECTRUM, The UK Museum Documentation Standard (MDA, version 3.0, 2005)
- Society of Museum Archaeologists
- Museum Ethnographer's Group

## **4.8 TYPES OF COLLECTING ACTIVITY**

**4.8.1** Acquisitions may result from either active collecting, by purchase, commission or focused collecting programmes, or passive collecting through gifts or bequests. By setting out specific collecting objectives and ambitions within the Collecting Priorities (Section 3), this Policy places a much greater emphasis on active collecting than previously. The intention is actively to address particular issues, so that collection development is driven forward by BMAG's strategic priorities.

**4.8.2** Active collecting may be directed towards specific objectives, such as a proposed exhibition, a research project, or a stated departmental priority. Material acquired through active collecting may include purchases, gifts, fieldwork, excavation, appeals etc. Such collecting may involve fieldwork by staff or contract researchers or consultants.

**4.8.3** Passive collecting, mainly through gifts and bequests, will both build on recognised strengths and contribute to stated curatorial collecting objectives as set out in this policy. Where supporting material is available this will strengthen the case for acquisition, increasing the potential for interpretation. Individuals considering bequests to BMAG are encouraged to discuss these with the relevant curatorial staff prior to the preparation of any legal documents.

**4.8.4** Where items are already well represented in the collections there will be no further acquisitions. Advice will be provided to potential donors on the most

suitable institution for their donation. Potential donors will also be made aware that collecting priorities may change as a result of future revisions of this policy.

- 4.8.5** The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums 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 specialist areas, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources (see section 2. 3, above).

## **4.9 RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING**

- 4.9.1** Collecting activity is the responsibility of curatorial staff.

Decisions on acquisitions should be taken in consultation with other museum staff (i.e. curators in relevant sections, including Thinktank, Curator Managers, conservators, education staff etc.). Where an object might be of legitimate interest to another curatorial section or Community Museum the process of acquisition will be agreed between the relevant curatorial sections.

- 4.9.3** Where particular knowledge is unavailable within the museum service through want either of highly specialist expertise in a narrow field or of relevant cultural perspective, it may be necessary to employ appropriate consultants to assist in specific collecting activity or acquisition decisions (see para. 2.4.3, above).

- 4.9.4** Where a collecting priority has been identified in which additional knowledge or support is required to meet that priority, BMAG will engage in specific research programmes to develop curatorial skills and knowledge.

## **4.10 HANDLING COLLECTIONS**

- 4.10.1** Material acquired for the express purpose of handling by the public should normally not be considered as part of the permanent collections. All handling collections should be identified with a unique number and entered on MINISIS as handling collections. Material from the permanent collections may, however, by prior arrangement, be made available for handling by visitors under the supervision of curatorial staff.

- 4.10.2** Schools Liaison Service accepts items for handling and loan to schools via the Schools Loan system on the following conditions:

- The item is a gift not a loan
- The donor is informed that children and students will handle the item carefully, under supervision
- The donor is informed if the item is to be part of a loans box to go into schools
- The donor is informed that the item will therefore be subject to wear, and will not remain in its present condition forever. However it will be part of an important learning experience for students.

- 4.10.3** All school handling/loan items are identified with a unique number and entered on MINISIS as part of the classroom handling collection.

**4.10.4** Replica objects are purchased for use by the public during activity or handling sessions. These objects may be purchased by curatorial or public programmes staff and are paid for from existing budgets or, when available, project funds. Replica objects are made available for handling by visitors under the supervision of public programmes or curatorial staff. All replica items are identified with a unique number and entered on MINISIS as part of the handling collection.

## **4.11 LOANS**

**4.11.1** There is a presumption against entering into any loans into the museum unless it is for immediate display (e.g. special or temporary exhibitions) or research (for photographic recording, comparison with BMAG specimens).

**4.11.2** Loans may be acquired for a fixed period not exceeding five years and must be entered on MINISIS. Long-term loans may be renewed for further five-year periods. An Application for Approval for Loan In form will be completed by the curator and authorised by the Curatorial Services Manager and Head of Interpretation & Exhibitions.

**4.11.3** Objects may be acquired for short-term displays or short-term exhibitions, subject to institutional approval for the display or exhibition. An Application for Approval for Loan In form will be completed by the curator and authorised by the Curatorial Services Manager and Head of Interpretation & Exhibitions.

## **4.12 CONSERVATION ISSUES**

**4.12.1** Wherever possible a conservator's condition report should be obtained prior to acquisition of an object.

**4.12.2** The cost of caring for the work should be considered at the time the acquisition is proposed and should acknowledge future costs of conservation

**4.12.3** Where contemporary collecting is concerned conservation advice on long-term preservation is required at the earliest possible stage in the process particularly regarding inherent problems of medium, construction, size/weight etc. Information relating to the method/materials of construction and technique of production should be obtained from the maker, artist (if living) or originating community. The views of the artist or maker regarding future conservation of their work should be recorded and whether or not they would wish to be involved or approve any conservation of the work.

**4.12.4** All acquisitions should be examined by a conservator on entry (or as soon afterwards as possible) and a conservation record made with recommendations for storage, optimum environmental conditions, handling etc.

## **4.13 ACCREDITATION STANDARD - DISPOSAL**

This section is based upon the MLA Acquisition and Disposal Policy model, Version 2, as part of the Accreditation Standard documentation and procedure guidelines.

#### **4.13.1 Preliminaries**

The governing body will ensure that the disposal process is carried out openly and with transparency.

By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for society in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore 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.

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.

When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, 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.

#### **4.13.2 Motivation for disposal and method of disposal**

The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons. When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined in paragraphs 12g-12s will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale or exchange.

The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body 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 source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought as appropriate.

#### **4.13.3 Responsibility for disposal decision-making**

A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff and not of the curator of the collection acting alone.

#### **4.13.4 Use of proceeds of disposal**

Any monies received by the museum governing body 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. Any monies received in compensation for the

damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from MLA.

Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be ring-fenced so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard.

#### **4.13.5 Disposal by gift or sale**

Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain, unless it is to be destroyed. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.

If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museums to which it was offered directly as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material, normally through an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal, and in other specialist journals where appropriate.

The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects 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.

#### **4.13.6 Disposal by Exchange**

The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

#### **4.13.7 Documenting disposal**

Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

#### **4.13.8 Circumstances for consideration of Disposal**

In general, disposal would only be considered in the following exceptional circumstances:

- where intact or partial objects or specimens, through their nature, pose a danger to staff, visitors, collections or premises;
- where an item is too deteriorated to be of any future collections use;
- where BMAG has received a request to return human remains, significant culturally specific objects or specimens to a country or people of origin (see below, section 4.14).
- Where there is a planned programme of evaluation and rationalisation overseen by an external Advisory Board of experts in the subject area

Such decisions would be made on a case by case basis.

#### **4.13.9 Process of de-accession**

Once the decision is made to dispose of an object, the process of de-accessioning and disposal will be recorded in accordance with SPECTRUM guidelines and entered on MINISIS.

Prior to final de-accessioning a conservation report on the object's condition will be recorded. Photographs of the object will be taken and linked to the object record on MINISIS. On de-accessioning the Object Status will be amended to read "De-accessioned". The date and method of disposal are recorded in the Object Description. If applicable the recipient institution or the sale price will be recorded in the Provenance fields. All paper records relating to the object are annotated to show the date of disposal and method of disposal.

### **4.14 RESTITUTION**

#### **4.14.1 General Principles**

The restitution of cultural property, human remains, spoliated artefacts will be considered on a case by case basis. Details of the research process of restitution will be recorded on MINISIS Research fields of the relevant object records. Formal approval and agreement for restitution must be obtained from the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture & Sport. If restitution is approved, the de-accessioning process and return of the object to the appropriate party/ies will be recorded as detailed in the process for disposal.

Existing collections contain both human remains and artefacts that may hold religious or cultural significance for the inheritors of the community or country from which these items originated. Reference will be made to the following codes of practice: *Recommendations on Professional Guidelines concerning the Storage, Display, Interpretation and Return of Human Remains in Ethnographical Collections in United Kingdom Museums* (Museum Ethnographers' Group); *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission); *Guidelines on the Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections* (Society of Museum Archaeologists).

#### **4.14.2 Human Remains**

The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the Guidance for the care of human remains in museums issued by DCMS in 2005) , objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance

#### **4.14.3 Spoliation**

In 2001 BMAG produced a Spoliation Action Plan. Updated in 2002, the plan identifies works of art and artefacts for which there is a gap in provenance for the period 1933-1945. UK museums are researching their collections to

identify where there could be evidence that such objects could have been looted from their original owners during the Holocaust or World War II.

The Spoliation Action Plan is updated regularly and can be viewed on the BMAG website [www.bmag.org.uk](http://www.bmag.org.uk).

The following areas have been completed:

Paintings

Sculpture

Drawings

Watercolours

Applied Arts – high value items only

Antiquities

#### **4.14.4 Archaeological Material**

The code of practice outlined in “*Guidelines on the Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections*” (Society of Museum Archaeologists) will be followed when deciding to dispose of material from an excavation archive prior to the archive being accessioned into the permanent collections.

#### **4.15 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The collections contribute to meeting the Museum's Equal Opportunities objectives in a number of ways:

- By reflecting the broader cultural heritage of Birmingham's ethnic minority communities and by illustrating the dynamic inter-relationships that have existed between the city and different cultures in the past.
- By preserving and presenting the creative and industrial history and heritage in Birmingham in ways which are relevant to its present day citizens and by representing the histories of all Birmingham people, and exploring the complexity of Birmingham's society, past and present.
- By reflecting the ways in which Birmingham's history has been an integral part of, been influenced by and impacted upon, the rest of the world, past and present.
- By promoting and celebrating the creative achievements of other world cultures.
- By illustrating and exploring different interpretations of the past and addressing myths, stereotypes and misconceptions.
- By undertaking contemporary recording and collecting methods that are participatory, consultative and inclusive.

## **Section Five**

# **REVIEW OF COLLECTING, 2003 – 2008**

### **5.1 SUMMARY**

Four collecting priorities were identified for 2003 – 2008:

1. Contemporary Collecting
2. Celebrating cultural diversity and increasing representation
3. Celebrating the history of Birmingham and its people
4. Developing the breadth, depth and significance of the collections

Key collecting achievements are listed under each priority. The period began with the acquisition by Birmingham Museums and Birmingham Archives of a very significant collection of material from the Watt family estate, relating to James Watt, James Watt Junior, Aston Hall and Soho House. Material included furniture by George Bullock, a portrait of Matthew Boulton by Sir Thomas Beechey, early products of the Soho Manufactory, furniture and designs by Richard Bridgens relating to Aston Hall as well as family memorabilia. Other outstanding acquisitions include the portraits of Edward and Elizabeth Holte, Lawrence's portrait of James Watt, the 8-piece sculpture, *A Man and His Sheep* by Ana Maria Pacheco, *Desk Murder* by R B Kitaj, *Tattooed Woman* by Lucien Freud, and material acquired through the Cultural Vibes programme. The Museum was the beneficiary of a series of outstanding collections of art and museum objects during course of the last collecting period, including the Franklin and the Swift/Waller collections of Chinese art and design, material associated with the IMI and Birmingham Mints, works by the print-makers June Wayne, Harry Eccleston, Ron King, Leonard Marchant and Michael Rothenstein, The Tovey Collection of caddy spoons and the Stanford Collection of candle snuffers. Very significant bodies of work by Birmingham artists were also acquired, including Raymond Cowern, Arthur Lockwood and Keir Smith.

The period also saw the final purchases of the ground-breaking Special Collection Scheme initiative, set out below.

### **5.2 CONTEMPORARY COLLECTING**

#### **5.2.1 Contemporary Art Society Special Collection Scheme:**

Between 1998 and 2005, BMAG was one of 15 museums in England benefiting from a scheme to develop collections of contemporary fine and applied art. Administered by the Contemporary Art Society and funded by the Arts Council Lottery Fund, the Scheme provided £30,000 per year to support identified collections over a five year period. Birmingham identified two collections, those of painting and metalwork. The Scheme was strongly supported by the Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery, who provided 25% of the costs of the Painting scheme and 12.5% of the Metalwork scheme. The remaining costs for Metalwork were met by the Crafts Council. Although the works acquired are placed with BMAG, under the terms of the Scheme, ownership of the works rests with the Contemporary Art Society until 2012, when ownership will revert to BMAG.

Objects acquired between 2003 and 2008 include:

### **Painting**

IAN DAVENPORT, *Untitled (Orange)*, 1988

Davenport is leading member of YBA group who put UK at centre of contemporary practice in late 1980s/90s. This work was shown at the landmark Freeze Exhibition organised by Damien Hurst in 1988. It is one of Davenport's first experiments with industrial paints. This is a prime example of resurgence of painting as medium in late 1980s. Davenport is one of UK's leading abstract painters with international reputation.

TOBY ZEIGLER, *Comfort or Death*, 2004 oil on nylon coated fabric

Zeigler has international reputation as one of most significant and original young British painters. Acquired as part of the CAS/SCS "approaches to painting" collection to illustrate contemporary developments in the medium. Zeigler uses computer generated imagery as the basis of his work and paints on industrial day-glo fabrics.

### **Metalwork**

Ane Christensen (b.1972), *Symbiosis No.1*, Bowl on stand. 18 ct gold and stainless steel, 2003

David Clarke (b.1967), *All the 3s 33*, Dish, silver, sawn and soldered, 2005

Rebecca De Quin (b.1958) Set of flatware, sterling silver, 2003; Jug, 925

Silver, scored folded and manipulated, 2004, Jug with Handle, 925 Silver, scored folded and manipulated, 2004

Andreas Fabian (b.1957), Bowl, silver and felt, 2000

Rajesh Gogna (b.1976) Iced Tea Pot, electroplated gilding metal, 1998

Maria Hanson (b.1967), *A New Communion*, silver partly gilt and black acetyl, 2000

Simone ten Hompel (b.1960), *Leuchtende Schatten (Glowing Shadows)*, Container, mixed metals, 2005

Adrian Hope (b.1953), *Reliquary for a Traveller*, silver and gold, 2003

Michael Lloyd (b.1950) *Spring Vase*, Britannia silver, 2004; *Oak Bowl*, 22ct gold, 2003

Junko Mori (b.1974), *Organism # 30*, Fine silver, 2004

Michael Rowe (b.1948), *After Euclid : Server*, silver, 2003; *After Euclid : Serving Plate*, silver, 2003

Tore Svensson (b.1948), Bowl, steel, hammered and partly gilt, 1995; Series of 4 Bowls, steel, hammered and partly gilt, 1995

#### **5.2.2 Further Contemporary and modern acquisitions include:**

Karl Weschke, *Caliban* (1978), oil on canvas

Weschke was one of the most significant émigré German artists who contributed to

the development of painting in the UK in the post-war period. The acquisition of this work develops the breadth and depth of the collection, especially the St Ives school

which is one of the strongest parts of the BMAG Modern British collection.

Very few European-born artists are included in the collection.

Ron Dutton, Set of Medals in cast Bronze: (i) Final Metamorphosis (1995); (ii) Loch Broom Drift (1994); (iii) High Stile Light (1982). While there are no examples of contemporary bronze sculpture in relief within the fine art collections, this group joins a fine collection of early 20<sup>th</sup> century art medals in the Applied Art collections and directly complement the BMAG Numismatic collections demonstrating modern approaches to the medal format. Dutton is a leading practitioner in this medium and resident in West Midlands. Also Priority 3.

Andrew Tift, *Repeat* (1995), oil on steel panel

An important example of painting by leading West Midlands based artist. An example of painting on pre-formed industrial material (car body panel), the work complements existing "approaches to painting" in the contemporary collection formed through CAS/Speciall Collections Scheme.

John Walker, *Kew*, oil on canvas 1987 (Gift of the Contemporary Art Society from the Tom Bendhem Collection)

John Walker was born and trained in Birmingham and is the most famous living painter from the city with an international reputation. Now professor of Painting at Boston University USA. This work joins two other paintings by Walker from 1970s and 90s and now allows us to illustrate the development of his work over three decades. Walker is one of the leading UK abstract painters of the post-war era and the presence of this work greatly improves our contemporary/modern collection of British Art. Also Priority 3.

Ana Maria Pacheco, *A Man and his Sheep* (1989) eight life size figures in wood on marble floor. Also Priority 2

Lucien Freud, *Woman with an Arm Tattoo*. This is considered to be one of Freud's most memorable and ambitious prints to date. The subject stands on its own as an independent image, while formally Freud has found a real sense of placement for the sitter on the paper surface. The model is Sue Tilley, chief benefits officer in a job centre, known to friends as 'Big Sue', and here portrayed as unnamed and contemporary.

Ann Sutton, *Rotating Spectrum Bands* (1986) and two *Small Mollington Knot Cushions* (c 1975), presented through the Contemporary Art Society.

*Bittersweet* (2001) and *Twist and Turn*, by Felicity Aylieff.

The collection of national and international contemporary graphic art benefited from a series of outstanding gifts including collections of work by Ron King and the Circle Press, June Wayne, Harry Eccleston, Leonard Marchant and Michael Rothenstein – presented by the Rothenstein family, joining major archive.

The collection of artists' books received significant support through the Birgit Skiold Memorial Fund, and included acquisitions by Massimo Danielis, Chisato Tamabayashi, Sumi Perera, Kurt Johannessen, Astrid Kogler, Jean Louis Espilit-Aubaines, Tracey Bush, and Heather Hunter.

Purchases included *An explanation on the desk in The Hall of the Nine Ancient Vessels of what is called 'dignity'* by Wang Chao, an important addition by a contemporary Chinese artist, as well as *Invisible City*, a series of 6 digital prints by Catherine Yass and the *Camouflage* series of prints by Jane Dixon.

### **5.3 CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INCREASING REPRESENTATION**

A major work, *Cretin*, by the surrealist artist Edith Rimmington.

Oral testimonies collected through the Cultural Vibes project in 2004/5 in relation to the history and development of urban music and Birmingham and West Midlands Afro-Caribbean community. Also Priority 3

A collection of contemporary South African beadwork was acquired through fieldwork in South Africa during the summer of 2005. This material offers an important compliment to the museum's fine collection of historic beadwork, showing the adaptation of traditional patterns to new forms (e.g. mobile phone covers), and the incorporation of new patterns (e.g. company logos) into traditional media.

A collection of material relating to musical cultures of the Caribbean, especially in their reference to black music in Birmingham since the 1950s was acquired through fieldwork in Jamaica in summer 2006 as part of the Cultural Vibes project. (Also Priority 1)

An oil painting by the Australian aboriginal artist Malcolm Jagamarra, *Warlu Warlu*, was purchased from the Rachel Hossack gallery. Representing dreamtime motifs of water and snake, this work makes an important bridge between the museum's significant ethnographic collection of Australian material and contemporary indigenous culture. In particular, it begins to address the representation of non-industrial cultures as living and developing societies, rather than finite, historic specimens.

The Franklin Collection of Chinese Art & Design:

Over 800 items, primarily ceramic but including fine painted silk album leaves and scrolls, and small groups of metal and hardstones. Built up by Mr Andrew Franklin since the 1940s, the collection includes outstanding groups of enamelled Qing and later porcelains, as well as a fine review of earlier wares. The collection was allocated to Birmingham by the Capital Tax Office and the Minister of Culture, Media and Sport in lieu of tax, at Mr Franklin's request.

The Swift Waller Collection of Chinese Cultural Material

Over 400 items, collected since 1984 by Mrs Joan Waller, during her teaching career in China, and presented to BMAG in 2006. This extraordinary body of material offers an insight into Chinese society during a period of great change, and includes – very unusually for a western collection – extensive representation of different Chinese regions and nationalities. The collection ranges from outstanding luxury textiles to ephemeral popular culture.

These two collections have provided a key resource for the museum in building partnerships and programmes with the Chinese community in Birmingham, and in representing Chinese culture in the year of the Beijing Olympics.

Through the Cultural Vibes project in 2005, material was acquired relating to Birmingham's African Caribbean community, including a 'Blue Spot' gramophone, and photography of local musicians or visiting musicians in Birmingham, all of which is currently on display in Gallery 33. Also Priorities 1 and 3.

The major collection of Near Eastern dress was developed through the gift of 5 Syrian dresses, c 2005 and 2 Palestinian dresses and accessories.

British, and particularly Birmingham and Black fashion was represented through the Blackstock gift of 5 items of dress & accessories, 1990s. Also Priority 3.

#### **5.4 CELEBRATING THE HISTORY OF BIRMINGHAM AND ITS PEOPLE**

The Tovey Bequest of Caddy Spoons

216 silver caddy spoons, collected by Mr and Mrs Raymond Tovey. Although they range in date from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century to 2000, the great majority fall between the dates 1790 and 1830, and include a very significant group of Birmingham-made pieces. Birmingham small silver is poorly represented in the museum's collections, in spite of the significance of the industry, and this collection addresses that imbalance. It is anticipated that major groups from this bequest will support the new displays under development at the Museum of the Jewellery Quarter and in the Birmingham History Galleries.

Cornelius Johnson (Cornelis Janssen), *Portraits of Edward and Elizabeth Holte of Aston Hall* (1636), oil on canvas

These two portraits represent the missing generation in the Holte ancestor portraits at Aston. Edward Holte was wounded in the Civil War and died of plague at siege of

Oxford - the picture illustrates the family's Royalist convictions relating to the siege and sack of Aston in 1643. Johnson (or Janssen) is regarded as the founder of the English school of portrait painting.

Sir Thomas Lawrence, *Portrait of James Watt* (1813), oil on canvas

A major addition to the BMAG collection of British portraiture, and a significant acquisition in terms of Birmingham's industrial and intellectual history.

The Tempera Colour Box of Joseph Southall (about 1910) mixed media (Gift

of Mrs Cynthia Griffiths)

Southall was one of the most prominent Birmingham artists of the late 19th and early 20th century with an international reputation as founder of the tempera painting revival in Britain. This colour box contains samples of all the

artist's hand made and commercial colours (100 glass vials plus oils and spirits) in a studio box designed by himself. BMAG houses the most important collection of Southall's work in the UK and the box will enable us to interpret Southall's work more effectively alongside other items of his studio equipment, sketchbooks and paintings.

The Roberts Bequest of furniture, made by Arthur Roberts for his family during the 1920s and 1930s, is an important group of Birmingham-made and designed domestic furniture, representing a major local industry.

A collection of Star Wars figures were donated to the Museum in 2004 by Arshad Hussain, who collected and played with them as a child in Birmingham. Although Star Wars toys are not specific to Birmingham, they were/are part of an international phenomenon, they are also indicative of celebrating Birmingham's cultural diversity and increasing representation within the museum.

Trade catalogue purchased in 2005 of the Japanning and tin ware manufacturer, Taylor, Law & Co of Aston. The catalogue consists of hand drawn and painted illustrations of products the company made from 1890's.

Sculptor Lawrence Broderick donated the maquette, of the 'Bullring Bull' to the museum in 2005. The maquette is currently on display in the Bull Ring gallery. He also allowed the museum to copy of his photographic and design archive.

An oil painting of Sophia Sturge was donated to the museum in 2003. Sophia was the daughter of Joseph Sturge and was a great supporter of conscientious objectors during WWI. The portrait was painted by Mr Delle, a conscientious objector and inmate of Dartmoor prison during WWI.

A collection of watercolours and drawings of the city by local artist Arthur Lockwood, drawn between 1988 and 2002, were donated to the museum in 2004 by the artist. Arthur Lockwood is an artist of major local and regional significance. Both drawings and watercolours from this collection have already appeared in an exhibition of the artists work, and there are plans to exhibit his work in an exhibition in 2009. Items have recently been photographed and are in the process of being added to Bmagic.

3 watercolours by local artist Arthur Sheldon Philips were purchased in 2005, with funding from the Friends. Two of the watercolours show panoramic views of Birmingham in 1970's

Collections of the work of the Birmingham artists and teachers Raymond Teague Cowern and Keir Smith join an important body of work by 20<sup>th</sup> century artists associated with Birmingham School of Art.

Thirty-six pen and ink drawings by various Birmingham-associated artists for woodcut illustrations of 'The Quest', the showcase magazine of the magazine

of the Birmingham School of Art and the Birmingham Guild of Handicraft, 1894-1896, and published by the Cornish Brothers of New Street, Birmingham. This is a rare and comprehensive collection of illustrations by leading members of the Birmingham Arts and Craft Movement at the end of the nineteenth-century, and their less well known students who were not previously represented in the Museum Collection. The artists include: Joseph Southall, Henry Payne, Charles March Gere, Sidney Meteyard, Ernest Treglown, Violet M Holden, E N New and G T Tarling. The collection complements the six published issues of The Quest magazine already in the prints and drawings collection

Four substantial collections relating to Birmingham numismatics were acquired, including a specialist collection of tokens issued by the Birmingham Workhouse, The Alan Lowe collection of material from the IMI/Birmingham Mint, the IMI gift of IMI/Birmingham Mint material and two collections from the Birmingham Mint – their historic die collection, and the large residual collection of dies, coins, designs, tokens and archival material.

There were also a small number of acquisitions of technological and industrial material from the 1970s onwards. Items collected included an early 1990s briefcase laptop computer (on display at Thinktank) formerly used by a business in the Stirchley area, a Philips V2000 video recorder (a format comparable to VHS and Betamax), patterns for castings made in the Jewellery Quarter and surveying equipment used in highways engineering.

## **5.5 DEVELOPING THE BREADTH, DEPTH AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COLLECTIONS**

All of the above acquisitions contributed to this priority.

The silver gilt steeple cup purchased from the Cassel Collection in 2005 was an important addition to the silver collections. Hallmarked for London, 1641, the work is an outstanding example of mid-17<sup>th</sup> century design, and was acquired to strengthen BMAG's representation of English silver and also to complement displays both in the Museum and Art Gallery and at Aston Hall. The purchase of the Cassel Collection of silver and gold by a consortium of British galleries, comprising the V&A, the Ashmolean Museum, the British Museum, the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Museum of London, the National Museum of Wales, Leeds City Museums and BMAG, represented an unprecedented collaborative effort to save a major aspect of UK heritage from commercial sale and distribution to purchasers abroad.

## **5.6 SUMMARY OF GRANT AID**

Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery spent £1,407,000 on purchases during the period 2003 – 2008. This sum is offset by grant income of £1,321,874. This income breaks down as follows:

	£
Friends of Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery	164,678
Public Picture Gallery Fund	88,570

## COLLECTING POLICY 2009–2013

Heritage Lottery Fund	547,468
Art Fund	255,136
Government Funds via the MLA/V&A and PRISM	199,597
Individual Gifts and Charitable Trusts:	66,425

This summary does not include acquisitions through the Special Collection Scheme, for which accounts will not be complete until ownership is transferred in 2012.