



ST. HUGH'S COLLEGE, OXFORD

ART ACQUISITION POLICY

Date Policy Ratified by Governing Body: 21 May 2025

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Date to be reviewed by: 21 May 2027

Art Acquisition Policy

Background

St Hugh's College art collection comprises paintings, drawings, prints, photographs and some sculpture collected over the course of the college's history. The number of significant works is fairly small and most are on display, for example the Burne-Jones drawing, Anne Redpath still-life, and portraits of Principals. Other works by less prominent artists are also displayed throughout the college. A proportion of the collection is not necessarily of high quality but is closely connected with former members of the college and has been retained for that reason. A cull was carried out in 2021-22, after which pieces were offered to college room holders for display in their rooms and offices. A programme of framing and conservation managed by the Archivist has taken place over the past year, and three paintings are currently being worked on off-site. The present storage in 80 Woodstock Rd is adequate. Ideally all pieces should be on display, with the picture store in 80 reserved for 'heritage' works; works unsuitable for long term display (watercolours etc.); artworks temporarily displaced by building and maintenance projects.

Care of the collection should be the first priority, with ongoing framing being the main cost, along with some spending on conservation. Recent conservation work has however brought that aspect up to date and the remaining non-urgent work can be paced.

A second aim is to acquire works of art of significant artistic and financial value that would constitute additional assets for St Hugh's long term.

Principles for displaying artworks

The selection of artworks for acquisition should be guided by potential for display, with the ambition of improving and enlivening the feel of the college's shared spaces through high-quality works that reflect and reinforce the college's history and aims. The main areas, all of which have fluid edges, are: main entrance and staircase; first floor landing and Morden Hall; small SCR and Boardroom; ground floor / SCR corridor; bursar's office corridor and MGA corridor; JCR / Library area; seminar rooms MGA and Hamlin.

These spaces could be treated as separate areas with different priorities regarding material, content, and 'look' of the works, with an emphasis throughout on visual and artistic quality. For example, there is enthusiasm across the college for displays that represent our engagement with intersectionality, diversity and the college's history as a former women's college, particularly through showing black-and-white photographic portraits of alumnae representing different generations, socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, intellectual aspirations and achievements.

This is currently delivered in the ground floor main corridor, which is highly appropriate given its proximity to the main entrance and the Principal's office. Other areas, for example the quite dimly-lit MGA corridor, might benefit from brightly-coloured, eye-catching works while the area around the JCR and library might display works selected by the JCR and MCR, and so on.

Methods of acquisition

Artworks are most likely to be acquired through one of the following:

Purchase directly from artists or owners (the latter subject to proof of ownership).

Purchase from galleries.

Purchase at auction.

Donations from alumni and college supporters.

Exhibition agreements could include offering one work from each exhibition as a donation to St Hugh's.

ACQUISITION POLICY

1 'Acquisitions' refers to works acquired by either purchase or donation and the two should be subject to the same criteria.

2 Acquisitions should be of high artistic merit.

3 Acquisitions should be suitable for display (see above).

4 Acquisitions should have financial potential.

5 Artworks may be disposed of as well as acquired.

6 If any member of College is approached with the offer of a donation of a work of art, no assurance of any kind should be given to the donor or their intermediary.

ACQUISITION PROCEDURE

1 Proposals for acquisition (purchases and donations included) should in first instance be sent to the Library Fellow and the Curator of Pictures.

2 They will recommend to the Library and Collections Committee either to reject or consider acquiring.

3 If the Committee agrees to acquire the work/s, then the costs of purchasing and / or shipping to be approved.

OR

If the Committee agrees to acquire the work/s, then the costs of purchasing and / or shipping to be submitted to GB for approval.

4 If securing a work is time-critical then **2** and **3** to be done by circulation.