



## WANGARATTA ART GALLERY COLLECTION POLICY

Responsible Officer: <b>Gallery Director</b>  Authorising Officer: <b>Director Community Wellbeing</b>	Document No:	53
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### Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection Policy 2012

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- **Background**
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  - **Collection Content and Guidelines**
  - **Procedures for Selection and Acquisition of Art Works**
  - **Gifts, Bequests, Donations to the Collection**
  - **Acquisitions Process**
  - **De-accessioning Process**
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#### **Background**

The Wangaratta Art Gallery's Collection of works of art (including all items of decorative art or craft within this description) began to be assembled on a casual unrecorded basis after the establishment of the Gallery in 1987.

Works were acquired primarily through donation and/or through acquisition after funded projects instigated by the Gallery. This led to the accumulation of a relatively small representation of works (principally photographs) by artists practicing in the region whether they were professional or amateurs. In 2004 the Gallery Collection Policy was approved by the Rural city of Wangaratta Council and since then works have been acquired into the collection on a regular basis.

The 'content' referred to in this document provide restrictions relating to the types of art to be collected.

The 'guidelines', referred to in this document provide parameters for the development of a permanent and significant visual art collection and to ensure that the Gallery is positioned as a centre of excellence with regard to its collections.

The term, 'works of art', for the purpose of this policy, includes any item of visual art, decorative art, craft or design made using traditional processes or any art which is produced using the processes of contemporary electronic technology.

The Gallery is perceived as having a distinctive role within the region as a public art gallery for temporary exhibitions. The continued establishment of a permanent Public Gallery Art Collection, that reflects the collection rationales of other similar institutions, operates to enhance the role of the Gallery within the region and State, offering opportunities for bequests, donations and gifted items potentially benefiting from the Tax Incentive Scheme and the Federal Government's Cultural Gifts Program.

It should be noted that the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection is separate from the Rural City of Wangaratta Collection and the Public Art Collection.

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## **The Extent of the Collection**

The Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection includes all works of art currently in the possession of the Wangaratta Art Gallery that have been accessioned into the collection.

Gallery management acknowledges the need to assist with, and offer advice in the care and maintenance of art works held by the Rural City of Wangaratta Art Collection [a separate collection from the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection], its Public Art Collection [also separate] and other works situated within its various departments.

Items from the Rural City of Wangaratta Art Collection can only be accessioned to the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection if inclusion occurs through a formalised process of selection, recommendation and acquisition by the Gallery Director with opinion sought from a panel of community visual arts experts.

Works of art in the Rural City of Wangaratta, which are not officially part of the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection: including: public art/sculptures/installations, historical or contemporary art, as well as paintings, items of decorative art and craft, and ephemera are not subject to these policy guidelines.

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## **Content and Guidelines**

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### **Content**

The Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection shall be comprised of original works of art and craft of excellent standard and quality.

The Collection content will be comprised of:

- i. Textiles, Fibre, [including indigenous fibre and textile art and objects], art objects made of Wood, and Small Sculpture of highest significance by regional, state, national living and deceased artists which reflects contemporary trends and interests.
- ii. Two and three dimensional images and objects including works on paper, which reflect general interest relating to the local landscape and the social history of the north-east of Victoria region, including themes of wildlife, flora, heritage and environment.
- iii. A Collection of north-east Victorian regional visual art and craft of highest significance and contemporary in nature, in any media, including painting, printmaking, drawing, sculpture, textiles, fibre, digital and electronic media, wood, ceramic, glass and precious and base metals.
- iv. Two and three-dimensional images and objects of highest significance by regional, state, national living and deceased artists, whose work reflects contemporary trends and interests.

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## Key Guidelines

Guidelines relating to the collecting of art:

- The policy stipulates the acquisition and maintenance of works of art considered of high significance in terms of content, subject matter and execution.
- A specific emphasis should also exist on the acquisition of key historical and contemporary works which depict/document aspects of the natural and man-made environment of north-east Victoria - early indigenous art, heritage, landscape, flora and fauna.
- The Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection is to be representative of historical and contemporary art from Australia, particular attention should be directed towards the collection area of contemporary textile and fibre art [including indigenous textile and fibre art], works of art/craft created with wood, and small sculpture.
- Irrespective of subject matter the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection should also acquire the work of significant artists' resident, or working in north-east Victoria.

The above guidelines refer to all works of art in any medium that exists now or in the future until such time as this policy is revised/rewritten.

Photography and cinematography, film, video taping, DVD [digital video disc] recording or the results of computer generated images and trans-media works of art are also valid acquisition categories.

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## Procedure for Selection, Acceptance and Registration of Works of Art

- Irrespective of the manner of acquisition, (by bequest, donation, purchase etc.), art works intended for the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection will be acquired following initial selection by the Gallery Director as per Council delegation.
- Works of art recommended to proceed to the acquisition process via direct purchase, donation of funds for purchase, or gifted items shall be represented by:
  - The actual item in question, or
  - Accurate photographs, digital imagery or transparencies of the item.
- The Gallery Director is to prepare supporting documentation for all acquisitions referring to the policy guidelines.
- The following 'significance' criteria should be referred to in order to produce some semblance of objectivity in the acquisition of works:
  - Relevance to the Gallery Collection via this Policy;
  - General aesthetic merit indicated by quality of technique and execution, composition, statement and content;
  - Historical value, either in terms of maker or subject matter;
  - The reputation of the artist in local, regional, or national terms (note: refers only to recognition of production not 'moral' reputation);

- The condition of the work. Poor condition with potential conservation expenses may outweigh the above values (unless additional funding is accessible);
  - The relevance of the work/s to existing items in the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection, (e.g. a work may augment historical documentation or an artist's development);
  - Purchase cost. If funds exist to enable purchase of a work considered highly relevant to the Gallery Art Collection then price should not be seen as a deterrent to the purchase; and
  - Unacceptable conditions of display or acknowledgement will lead to the rejection of a potential acquisition.
- The Gallery Director will establish a panel to provide expert advice on the appropriateness of acquisitions. Following the acquisitions process and recommendations from the expert panel the Gallery Director will make the final decision and if appropriate proceed with the acquisition.
  - Payment for the work of art with funds allocated from appropriate accounts is made, the previous owners should acknowledge payment, and then the item is to be registered:
    - in the Art Collection registration book;
    - in the Art Collection electronic data base; and
    - via a paper profile which should then be established to hold the results of further research into the provenance, etc. of the item or details of the continuing career of the artist for reference.
  - The item should then be digitally photographed and appropriately filed, in hard and soft copy.
  - The image of the work of art will have a condition report to provide information for any possible future conservation work that may be required. This report will be included in the relevant paper file.

### **Gifts, Bequests, Donations**

- Gifts, bequests of works of art for the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection or monetary donations assisting in the purchase of works for the collection should be encouraged.
- Gifts, bequests and works purchased with donated funds will be considered under the acquisition criteria
- Gifts, bequests or funds offered for the purchase of works for the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection will not be accepted under the following conditions:
  - That the work to be acquired will be permanently on display;
  - That the work to be acquired will be on display at specific times;
  - That the work to be acquired will be displayed or stored in perpetuity within a designated space occupied by the Wangaratta Art Gallery when the work was acquired;
  - That the work to be acquired is not permitted to be a component in a touring exhibition organised by the Gallery or any other organisation unless the condition of the work makes this inadvisable; and

- That the work to be acquired is to be loaned to another organisation not approved by the Gallery Director.
- Potential donors of works of art or money for the purchase of works should be made aware of the existence of the Gallery Art Collection De-accessioning segment of this policy.
- The Gallery holds Tax Deductible Gift Recipient Status with the Australian Taxation Office.

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## **Acquisitions Process**

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- **Scope**
  - **Selection/Nomination of Works of Works of Art for Acquisition**
  - **Expert Panel Membership**
  - **Acquisition Meetings**
  - **Recording and Care of Acquisitions**
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### **Scope**

All acquisitions of works of art to the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection are to be subject to the acquisition process outlined in this document.

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### **Selection/Nomination of Works of Art for Acquisition**

- I. The Gallery Director will select/nominate works for acquisition into the collection and present to a panel of expert community members (the 'panel') with appropriate art related qualifications to provide an opinion on the selected work(s) to the Gallery Director.
  - II. The acquisition of art will relate to, and adhere to, the content of the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection Policy Key Guidelines (as outlined in this document).
  - III. The Gallery Director will not deviate from the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection Policy in the selection/nomination and approval of works of art for collection.
  - IV. The 'panel' may also be required to give their expert opinion to the Gallery Director about the de-accession of collection items as per the de-accessioning segment of this policy. The Gallery Director also has delegated authority to make the final decision regarding all proposed items for de-accession.
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## **Expert Panel Membership**

Membership of the 'panel' is to be made up of professional practicing artists and visual arts professionals made up of the following:

- 1 member from the "Friends of the Gallery Association Incorporated";
- 1 member from the Rural City of Wangaratta "Arts, Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee", and
- 5 community representatives.

Members will be selected on relevant and extensive experience, knowledge and qualifications relating to the visual arts. (i.e. Visual or Fine Art Degree, History of Art Degree, or recognised professional practicing visual artist).

The panel will be appointed for a four years period from the date of commencement.

Nominations to the 'panel' will be called for via an advertisement placed in relevant newspapers. The Friends of the Gallery and the Arts Culture and Heritage Advisory Committee will nominate one qualified representative from each committee.

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## **Acquisition Meetings**

The panel shall meet (4) four times a year or as required.

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## **Recording and Care of Acquisitions**

Upon the acquiring of a Work of Art, the Gallery Director will be ultimately responsible for the cataloguing, care, conservation and storage of said work as per Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection Policy Guidelines.

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## **De-accessioning Process**

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- **Scope**
  - **De-accessioning**
  - **De-accessioning Gifts**
  - **Expert Group Membership**
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### **Scope**

The de-accessioning of works of art from the Wangaratta Art Gallery collection is to be subject to a de-accessioning process outlined herein.

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### **De-accessioning (removing works of art from the collection)**

- Works in the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection may be de-accessioned following a final decision of the Gallery Director and an opinion sought from the 'panel' of experts (refer above).

- The aim of de-accessioning is to maintain a Gallery Art Collection of the highest possible quality by cautiously disposing of works which:
    - fall outside the Collection guidelines and criteria;
    - are of little or no historical significance;
    - are of little aesthetic value;
    - are of no value to research relating to the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection;
    - are not useful for the education programs of the Gallery; and
    - have fallen into disrepair.
  - The issue of restricted display or storage space is not accepted as being within the criteria for de-accessioning consideration.
  - De-accessioning will not be a means of raising funds for any activity in the Gallery's program other than for additional acquisitions for the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection.
  - The agent through which the work is to be disposed should be clearly indicated in the proposal. The agent should be encouraged to maintain confidentiality.
  - When a work has been de-accessioned, details are to be recorded in the expert 'panel' meeting minutes. These records will be available for inspection by appointment by any person.
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### **De-accessioning Gifts**

- Where the Wangaratta Art Gallery has received gifts deemed as inappropriate to the Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection, the Gallery Director may dispose of the works under the following conditions:
  - The approval of the donor is obtained;
  - If the donor is deceased, approval should be obtained from his/her executors if possible; and
  - Any income derived from the disposal of gifts must be used to purchase a work or works in lieu of the original gift. The original donor's generosity must continue to be acknowledged with the replacement of former Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection items with works bearing suitable text (eg. 'Purchased from the .....Fund'). The acknowledgement of past donors should guard against the discouragement of prospective donations.

When de-accessioning becomes contentious, the proposal for disposal should be deferred or abandoned.

Members of staff of the Wangaratta Art Gallery as employees of Council, Councillors or Officers of the Rural City of Wangaratta Council or members of their families, shall not be permitted to acquire de-accessioned collection works of art or items, nor benefit financially from de-accessioning in any form.

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## **Glossary of Terms**

### **Ephemera**

- non-permanent material;
- lasting for only a short time;
- transitory; and
- short lived.

### **High Significance**

- the best available work in the artist's oeuvre (i.e. body of work);
- reputation and history of the artist and his/her work;
- is of consequence or importance;
- the state or quality of being significant;
- has or expresses meaning; and
- is notable or momentous.

### **Wangaratta Art Gallery Collection**

- works of art collected through the guidelines of this policy.

### **Rural City of Wangaratta Collection**

- works of art that are not part of the Wangaratta Art Gallery collection that are owned by the Rural City Council.

### **Public Art Collection**

- works of art in external environments, such as outdoor sculpture.