
Fact Sheet

Art Collections

February 2019



Art Collections

Overview

Many of Victoria's public art galleries manage extensive collections. Collectively, they hold over 750,000 items with a combined worth of nearly \$5 billion. These collections are held by some of Australia's oldest regional galleries such as the Art Gallery of Ballarat, Warrnambool Art Gallery, Bendigo Art Gallery and Geelong Gallery. Important collections of ceramics are held by Shepparton Art Museum, textiles held by Ararat Gallery TAMA and decorative arts and watercolours held by Hamilton Art Gallery.

Collections vary in size and content. They are an expression of cultural identity, document historical and contemporary creative practice and are a source of inspiration. Public galleries engage new audiences and inspire new creative works by activating their collections.

Increasingly, public galleries are making their collections available online to the community for viewing and research. In 2015, around 20 per cent of public collections were available online.

Why Collect?

Collections provide an important insight into the social, cultural, political and economic development of a community, council area or region. Collections reflect the changing fabric of communities and build identity within them.

Collections provide inspiration and offer access to knowledge for communities. Whether collectively or via iconic items, significant collections attract cultural tourism and in turn generate economic benefits for galleries and local communities, for whom they often become a source of great pride.

Loaning such collections to other public galleries increases their reputations, while promoting the galleries involved. When collections or items within them are featured in publications, the provenance of the works are enhanced, further enriching each artist's profile and the gallery that owns the collection work.

Collections Need Support:

- appropriate accessible, secure and climate- and pest-controlled storage
- suitable spaces to present collection items to the public and other stakeholders
- access to the collection through accurate cataloguing and digitisation processes
- appropriate human resources for management, handling and maintenance of collections
- specific training and professional development of collection management staff
- resources for preservation and restoration of collection items
- resources for the effective administration of loans of collections items

Additional Resources

Online resources concerning collection management and associated document templates can be found here:

<https://mgnsw.org.au/sector/resources/online-resources/>

reCollections is a valuable and reliable six-volume Australian publication about caring for a wide range of collection materials. It was developed by Artlab and Australian conservators for the Heritage Collections Council and includes information about collection storage, display and handling. It also contains a glossary.

<https://aiccm.org.au/conservation/collection-care>

PGAV

The Public Galleries Association of Victoria (PGAV) is the peak body representing fifty art galleries and art museums across metropolitan and regional Victoria. Our role is to support, develop and promote public galleries in Victoria and within the national context.

Our Vision

Is a vibrant, cohesive, professional network of public galleries across Victoria that deliver inspiring visual art experiences which are relevant and accessible to the whole community.

Our Mission

Is to build and strengthen the capacity of public galleries in Victoria to deliver valuable cultural, social and economic returns to their communities. To achieve this mission we act as a broker between our members, the three-tiers of government, the private and philanthropic sectors, education and research institutions, the media and the community.



