



Collection Development Policy

Museum of Design in Plastics

Arts University Bournemouth



Research
England



ARTS UNIVERSITY BOURNEMOUTH

Name of museum:	Museum of Design in Plastics (MoDiP)
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Name of governing body:	Arts University Bournemouth Corporation
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Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:	22 March 2023
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Policy review procedure:	The collections development policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.
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Date at which this policy is due for review:	22 March 2028
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Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

The content of this policy is an Accreditation¹ requirement.

¹ The Accreditation Scheme sets nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK. - See more at: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme-0>

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

1.1 The museum's statement of purpose is:

MoDiP is the only accredited museum in the UK with a focus on plastics. It is the UK's leading resource for the study and interpretation of design in plastics and a specialist research resource within the Arts University Bournemouth. It has a mission to increase understanding and appreciation of the use and significance of plastics in design. Its purpose is to collect, research, interpret and present objects made of, or including components of, plastics, and therefore add unique value to the Arts University Bournemouth as a learning resource, a resource for collaborative, experimental and interdisciplinary research, and as a gateway to the AUB's wider environment.

1.2 The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

1.3 By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

1.4 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

1.5 The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using Spectrum primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

1.6 The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, 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.

1.7 The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

2. History of the collections

- 2.1 From 1988 objects were gathered together by Kirsten Hardie, from the Cultural and Historical Studies department of the then Bournemouth and Poole College of Art and Design as a teaching and learning resource. Initially these objects had a graphic design focus and were known as the Design Archive.
- 2.2 By 2001 the collection had grown sufficiently, with additions contributed by other members of staff, for it to become a Registered museum entitled the Design Collection Museum.
- 2.3 2003 saw a successful AHRB bid for funding to develop a project under the title 'Plastics network'.
- 2.4 A review of the collection was carried out in 2006. This review demonstrated that there was considerable strength in objects made of plastics. As such, the decision was taken to focus on the plastics materials group.
- 2.5 On 1 September 2007 the name of the museum became the Museum of Design in Plastics (MoDiP). At the same time the term 'Studio Collection' was coined to describe the objects excluded from the Plastics Collection, mainly objects not made of plastics.
- 2.6 To strengthen the focus of the museum towards the Plastics Collection, a rationalisation programme was started in 2015. This programme will see the Studio Collection disposed in line with section 5 of this policy.
- 2.7 This strengthening of the Plastics Collection has seen the fulfilment of the museum's ambition be awarded Designated Outstanding Collection status by Arts Council England.

3. An overview of current collections

- 3.1 At the time of writing the collection consist of 11,608 objects, alongside the 3245 studio collection objects which are subject to the aforementioned rationalisation programme.
- 3.2 The museum defines plastics as materials that can be moulded into required shapes by the application of heat and /or pressure, whether thermosetting or thermoplastic. All plastics are polymers: materials made up of many smaller base

units, different configurations making plastics with different properties. The collection includes natural, semi-synthetic and synthetic plastics.

3.3 The Plastics Collection includes two long term loans:

- A collection of 673 artefacts made of horn, a natural plastic, dating from the 17th century to the present, on loan from the Worshipful Company of Horners.
- A collection of 450 plastic artefacts dating mainly from the first half of the 20th century on loan from the Plastics Historical Society.

3.4 The collections include objects that fit into one or more of the following classifications:

3.4.1 Animals and pets; including grooming equipment and saddles.

3.4.2 Archival material; including photographs, brochures, and other printed material relating to industry.

3.4.3 Audio visual; including radios, televisions, record players, tape recorders, personal stereos, records and picture discs.

3.4.4 Artist or designer work; including work made by AUB students in response to the collection, and one-off or limited designer-maker pieces.

3.4.5 Construction and building services; including fixtures and fittings, plumbing services and street furniture.

3.4.6 Fashion and costume; including clothes, hats, footwear, hosiery, handbags and accessories.

3.4.7 Health, care and grooming; including toothbrushes, glasses, razors and syringes.

3.4.8 House and garden; including kitchen and tableware, furniture and furnishings, and lighting.

3.4.9 MoDiP reference library; including books and journals relating to plastics design, manufacture, industry, and place in society.

- 3.4.10 Office and workplace; including IT and office equipment, desk furniture and safety equipment.
 - 3.4.11 Packaging and materials handling; including carrier bags, food and drink packaging, and product packaging.
 - 3.4.12 Photographic; including movie and video cameras and associated photographic materials.
 - 3.4.13 Plastics and the environment; including products made from recycled plastics, and those designed to care for the environment.
 - 3.4.14 Plastics samples and industry; including sample swatches, and photographs relating to the Plastics Industry.
 - 3.4.15 Printed, written and drawn material; including magazines which include plastics related content.
 - 3.4.16 Promotional material; including objects designed to promote people, companies, and other products.
 - 3.4.17 Smoking; including cigarette lighters, ashtrays and match box containers.
 - 3.4.18 Sports, leisure and hobbies; including specialised equipment and clothing.
 - 3.4.19 Telecommunications; including telephones and phone cards.
 - 3.4.20 Textiles; including fabric, dressmaking and needlework, haberdashery, and knitting and crochet.
 - 3.4.21 Toys and games; including dolls, construction toys, creative play and puzzles.
 - 3.4.22 Travel and holiday; including transport, travel accessories, food and drink, and travel keepsake and ephemera.
- 3.5** Objects in the collection date predominantly from the 20th and 21st century and are especially strong post 1950.
- 3.6** The collections are international in remit.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

4.1 The museum's objective with the collections is to build an internationally representative collection of, and research resource on, the use and significance of plastics in design. To this end, to qualify for inclusion an item must meet two criteria: one relating to plastics and the other to its design, use or documentation.

4.2 To meet the plastics-related criteria it must conform to one of the following:

- be made entirely of plastics.
- have plastics components specifically designed for it.
- have standard plastics components which contribute to its form.
- have standard plastics components vital to the function of the product.
- provide information on the manufacture, marketing or reception of plastics products.

4.3 To meet the design, use or documentation criteria, it must conform to one of the following:

- be a design of interest, for example:
 - an especially good or bad design, or one that exemplifies an interesting design theme.
 - a design that increases understanding of a particular manufacturing technique.
 - a design that increases understanding of the potential of a particular plastic.
- provide insight into the society of which it was a part, for example:
 - reflect the way of life or taste of a certain period.
 - evoke responses (good or bad) in audiences surrounding contemporary and historic relationships with plastics.
 - raise issues relevant to the society of which it was/is a part, for example environmental issues today.
- be documented in such a way as it adds to plastics history, for example:
 - be designed by a known designer or manufactured by an identified factory.
 - have a provenance that contributes to an understanding of the consumption of plastics artefacts.
 - be precisely datable.
 - be accompanied by production/sales facts and figures.

- 4.4 Collecting priorities are explored in the museum's Collecting Plan which is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.
- 4.5 Duplicates will not be purchased unless they are objects that can be displayed in different formations or if they have a relevance for the handling collection. The handling collection is a focused group of objects gathered together in themed 'grab boxes' as a learning resource for internal and external museum users.
- 4.5 Design operates on a global level and thus the MoDiP's collection includes objects designed and made across the world for diverse markets.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 5.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.
- 5.2 The procedures used meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.

6. Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

- 6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

7. Collecting policies of other museums

- 7.1 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 specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

- 7.2 Specific reference is made to the following museums and organisations all of which are members of the Plastics Subject Specialist Network which is led by MoDiP:

British Museum, London; Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery; Bradford Museums, Galleries and Heritage; Design Museum, London; Fleet Air Museum; Gunnersbury Park Museum; Hampshire County Council Museum and Archives Service; Hereford Museum & Art Gallery; Imperial War Museum, London; Manchester City Art Gallery; Museum of Science and Technology, Manchester; National Museum of Media, Bradford; Poole Museum; Portsmouth City Museum; Royal Cornwall Museum; Tate, London, Liverpool and St Ives; Science Museum, London; Thackray Museum, Leeds; University of Southampton; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Wakefield Museum.

8. Archival holdings

- 8.1 As the museum holds archival material, including photographs and printed ephemera, it will additionally be guided by the Archive Service Accreditation² standards.

9. Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

That proposed objects are reviewed by MoDiP staff against the criteria for acquisition described at 4 above. An account of acquisitions (gifts and purchases) is presented annually to the MoDiP Steering Group which reports to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

- 9.2 The museum will not acquire 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).
- 9.3 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

² <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/archive-service-accreditation/>

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.

10. Human remains

10.1 The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

11. Biological and geological material

11.1 So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

12. Archaeological material

12.1 The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

13. Exceptions

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

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. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14. Spoliation

14.1 The museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

15. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains

15.1 The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, may take a decision to return 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. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.

16. Disposal procedures

16.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.

16.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

16.3 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.

16.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.

16.5 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 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. 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.

16.6 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 or manager of the collection acting alone.

- 16.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. 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.
- 16.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered 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 a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 16.9 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.
- 16.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly 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 the Arts Council England.
- 16.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 16.12 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.

Disposal by exchange

16.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.

16.15 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.

16.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.

16.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.

16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.