



IMMA Acquisitions Policy 2023-2027

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INTRODUCTION

Mission statement

IMMA is Ireland's National Cultural Institution for Modern and Contemporary Art under the auspices of the Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media. IMMA holds in trust for the public the National Collection of Modern and Contemporary Art. The museum's mission is to continue to build a collection of modern and contemporary Irish and International art practice as part of the National Collections of Ireland. IMMA is responsible for the development, care, preservation, display and dissemination of all its artworks and archives for the use and enjoyment of Irish and global audiences.

Remit of the IMMA Collection

IMMA collects artworks and related archival material from the 20th century to the present moment. Its remit is to reflect key developments in contemporary visual culture, and to keep them in the public domain for future generations.

IMMA collects Painting, Drawing (in diverse forms), Sculpture, Installation, Performance, Photography, Time-Based-Media, Digital Media, Textile, Prints and printed matter.

IMMA collects archival material relating to artworks in the Collection and connected to IMMA's programming history.

The Collection is lent to national and international institutions when conditions are suitable, in keeping with IMMA's Loans policy.

Current context of the IMMA Collection

IMMA recognises that it is part of the changing tide of global culture. It is deeply rooted in Ireland but is globally focused with its partnerships, collaborations, and programming. IMMA acknowledges the burgeoning acquisition of Irish contemporary practice by other national, publicly-funded organisations. While continuing to acquire significant works by Irish artists, IMMA is building on a more global focus.

IMMA will purchase and commission artworks by international contemporary artists. This will activate the museum's existing holdings of global art practice and expand the critical context for the consideration of contemporary Irish practice.

IMMA will extend relationships with selected international museum networks through the co-purchasing of artworks where curatorial vision, policies and collection management principles align with IMMA's.

IMMA will look to artists whose gender, race, sexuality or background impacts the visibility of their work within the current and past ecosystems of the artworld and whose lives and work are of research interest and relevance to contemporary Irish and International artists.

IMMA will seek out 20th century works to enhance early modernist and vernacular thematics in the Collection to reflect the genealogy of Irish contemporary practice.

IMMA will collect artists' archives that relate to artworks and artistic practices represented in the Collection, particularly those that employ Performance as a medium and archival material relating to IMMA's own 30-year programming history.

This aim is in keeping with the Strategic Plan (2023-2027) to establish a Global Learning & Access Centre with IMMA Collection & Archive as a global learning resource. (See: Strategic Plan 2023-27; Archives Policy).

NOTE: The lifespan of this Acquisitions policy is a function of the emerging Strategic Plan and will be reviewed from time to time so that it reflects IMMA's strategic objectives.

Three overarching research principles inform the current context for new acquisitions, including:

- Pursue the aims of IMMA's Strategic Plan (2023-2027), which proposes a radically inclusive and globally connected perspective.
- To grow existing strengths within the Collection, in terms of medium, subject matter and practices
- To address absences, including:
 - the under-representation of the diverse perspectives and identities within contemporary Ireland;
 - the lack of an accurate reflection of the diversity of media in contemporary artistic practice, including digital media artworks, performance and installations;

- the under-representation of key moments in Irish and International artistic expression omitted during years of limited acquisition funding.

CRITERIA FOR ACQUISITIONS

Guiding principles

IMMA collects artworks and related archival material which:

- respond to and create new and urgent narratives within Irish life and society
- reflect the values of the institution including equity of gender representation, decolonising the museum, environmental responsibility, climate justice and civil rights.
- explore how and where Irish artists are working in the world.
- are produced within global communities and geographies that have particular resonance for Irish artists and audiences.
- distinguish IMMA's remit and role from those of the other Irish collecting institutions as part of the national infrastructure.
- may stand outside market forces; reflect forgotten histories; that extend de-colonial thinking.
- position IMMA as a leader in the collection and preservation of Performance art.
- grow the Collection as an international resource in the development and preservation of new media, born-digital and time-based media art in general, as well as in new technologies.

- embed IMMA's programming history within the memory of the museum.
- animate the historic building and site of IMMA in the 48 acres of the RHK.

Care and access

The following areas form part of the decision-making process:

- Degree to which access can be facilitated: the viability of the museum to present or loan the artwork, in terms of cost, space constraints, health & safety, political context, human resources and technical capabilities
- Adequate storage space
- Suitable climate conditions for the particular medium.
- An understanding of the futurity of the physical condition of object, having regard to types of artworks with built-in ephemerality or reliance on equipment that risks obsolescence.
- The legal rights of the museum to present and share the material, including copyright and other permissions.

For full consideration of the needs of the Collection in relation to care and access, please see the current Collection Management Policy (including conservation policy) (2020); the Registration Procedural Manual (2019) the Temporary Exhibitions Policy (tbc); Engagement and Learning Policy (tbc); Security Policy (tbc).

Due diligence

Through research and due diligence IMMA will exercise ethical responsibility in all its dealings regarding artwork provenance and prospective philanthropic funding sources.

All donated artworks must come without conditions and require signed transfer-of-ownership forms.

ACQUISITION PROCESS

Collections & Acquisitions Sub-committee

The Director, the Head of Collections, and the Collections & Acquisitions Committee, are responsible for the collections policy and acquisitions brief, with the benefit of research input gathered from across the IMMA curatorial team.

The Collections & Acquisitions Committee meets a minimum of three times a year, the schedule being agreed between the Board, the Director's office, the Head of Collections and the Senior Registrar. The Committee comprises 4 board members (including Chair), 1 external specialist, IMMA Director, Head of Collections, Head of Programming and Head of Research & Learning to discuss possible acquisitions, long-term loans, collection policy documents and other issues relevant to the management and care of collections. The Committee's role is to ensure good governance and transparency in all processes. Artworks and archival material approved by the Committee are presented in a written report at the next board meeting for sign-off by the IMMA Board.

Works of art and archives are acquired by the following methods:

- Purchase
- Assisted Purchase
- Heritage Gift (Section 1003)/Heritage Fund
- IMMA Commission
- Donation
- Bequest

Re Donations and Bequests please note:

IMMA does not acquire works by living artists through the secondary market. IMMA will consider donations of deceased artists' works that have been sourced through the secondary market if the work enhances the Collection and is in keeping with the Collections & Acquisitions Policy.

If thinking of bequeathing artworks to IMMA we kindly ask that you please contact IMMA in advance to establish if the offer is compatible with IMMA's Acquisitions Policy.

All works of art or archives proposed for acquisition are considered through the same procedure, whether offered as purchase, gift or bequest, or allocated by the Government in lieu of tax.

Loan offers are accepted by the Collections & Acquisitions Committee only where artworks may be suitable for curation for imminent display. Collection storage space is limited and costs of insurance preclude our borrowing all but the most desirable artworks.

(See Registration Procedural Manual (2019) and Collections & Acquisitions Committee Terms of Reference for more details).

Acquisitions workflow

The workflow for acquisitions is outlined below:

- All acquisition proposals are submitted to the IMMA Director and the Head of Collections for preliminary approval. Proposals for acquisitions come internally from programming staff at IMMA and externally via international curatorial peers, artists, gallerists, collectors and other individuals.
- The Director and Head of Collections review proposals at an internal pre-Acquisitions meeting. Proposals are considered in the context of the artist's practice and career to date, whether the artwork(s) fits with the criteria of the IMMA Acquisitions Policy.
- If, at the internal meeting, the artwork(s) are deemed to be unsuitable for acquisition, then an explanatory letter from the Head of Collections will be issued and the file will be archived in a folder with declined acquisitions by year.
- If, at the Pre-Acquisition internal meeting, the artwork(s) proposed are deemed suitable to be considered for acquisition, then an information sheet is prepared.
- As much as possible staff will physically view the artwork, including a conservator as necessary.
- materials being considered will be brought into the museum to be presented to the acquisition board.
- Relevant information on the management of the artwork is sourced by the Collection Department staff in conversation with the artist/artist's agent, a conservator and the technical

team at IMMA. The information gathered includes any additional costs that would be incurred with the acquisition – i.e. equipment, framing, transport, conservation needs as well as research into the futurity of the artwork in the collection. These are added to the agenda for the next Collections & Acquisitions committee meeting and circulated to the Committee in advance.

- Proposals are formally presented at a Collections & Acquisitions meeting for consideration and a decision is made on how to progress.
- If accepted, a letter will be issued by Head of Collections to confirm the acquisition.
- Artworks and archival material approved by the committee are presented in a written report at the next Board meeting for sign-off by the IMMA Board
- Where proposals are declined by the Committee, an explanatory letter will be sent by the Head of Collections and the file will be archived in a folder with declined acquisitions by year.

In time-sensitive cases where an artwork is purchased between Committee meetings, the Director and/or Head of Collections will contact the Committee by email and seek written approval from at least three Committee members. The formal approval of the acquisition will take place at the next committee meeting.