



Documentation Procedural Manual and Collections Management Policy

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1. Introduction

This procedural manual provides instructions to help standardise the recording of information about the collection at Falmouth Art Gallery.

This manual will be revised periodically as necessary as well as being formally reviewed at least every five years (due for review no later than 2013).

The manual serves the following purposes:

- It enables information about the documentation systems to be passed on to gallery staff and volunteers.
- It ensures continuity of practice and standardisation of procedure.
- It saves time as well as helping new staff and volunteers.
- It provides a permanent written record of our documentation system;
- It helps to ensure that *SPECTRUM* standards are met;

Responsibility for documentation and collections management lies with the Director in consultation with the Collections Manager and other trained staff and volunteers.

2. Documentation Procedures at Falmouth Art Gallery

The entire collection of Falmouth Art Gallery is fully documented with images. In the past the collection has been catalogued on card index then in 2000 the collection was electronically catalogued on MODES. The gallery now uses a digital catalogue system designed for the specific needs of Falmouth Art Gallery, its staff, volunteers and visitors. This has enabled the entire collection to be accessible on the World Wide Web on www.falmouthartgallery.com

2.1 Object Entry

SPECTRUM Definition

The management and documentation of the receipt of objects and associated information which are not currently part of the collections. Any object entering the art gallery which does not currently have an accession number assigned should be dealt with within this procedure.

The procedure should:

- *Establish the terms and conditions under which objects will be received for deposit*

- *Identify the newly received object or associated group of objects providing each item with a unique number*
- *Ensure the museum is able to account for all objects left in its care*
- *Provide a receipt for the owner or depositor*
- *Help establish the extent of the museum's liability*
- *Indicate the reason for the receipt of the object*
- *Determine a finite end to, or a programme of review of, the deposit*
- *Enable the object to be returned to the owner or depositor as required*
- *Allow for objects and associated records to be checked on entry to ensure that they correspond to any accompanying inventory and/or transfer of title documentation supplied*
- *Help establish legal title to the object in case of subsequent acquisition*
- *Capture key information about the object, to be augmented in the future*
- *Inform the decision making process*

Falmouth Art Gallery Procedure

Falmouth Art Gallery documentation procedures vary depending on whether the object is entering the gallery as an acquisition, loan for temporary exhibitions or long-term loan.

The gallery has a strong presumption against leaving items for identification. There is currently enough expertise at the gallery for these queries to be dealt with on the spot and without appointment. If gallery staff do not have the required knowledge then the owner will be referred to other experts. This eradicates the common museum problem of low value identifications not being collected by owners despite reminders.

Initial Actions

1. A standard MDA Museum Object Entry Form (triplicate) is completed with key information regarding the object, owner and reason for entry.
2. The form is given a unique number consisting of the staff or volunteer's identifying initials followed by the date of entry and a unique number signifying the object's place in order of objects received that day (e.g. AH 05.01.2008.3).
3. The top (white) copy of the Entry Form is put into the 'Entry Form file' with the object's location. The second (pink) copy is given to the depositor/donor. The bottom (blue) copy is put with the object.
4. The procedure now varies depending on whether the object is an acquisition or a temporary exhibitions loan.

2.2 Acquisitions

SPECTRUM Definition

Documenting and managing the addition of objects and associated information for the permanent collection.

The procedure should:

- *Ensure that written evidence is obtained of the original title to an object and the transfer of the title to the acquiring institution.*
- *Ensure that a unique number is assigned to, and physically associated with, all objects.*
- *Ensure that an accessions register is maintained, describing all acquisitions and listing them by number.*
- *Ensure that information about the acquisition process is retained.*
- *Ensure that donors are made aware of the terms on which their gift or bequest is accepted by the museum and have signed a gift form agreeing to those terms (please refer to Appendix 1 for Gift Form).*
- *Ensure that collecting complies with the museum's collecting policy and does not contravene any local, national or international law, treaty or recognised code of practice.*
- *Ensure the creation of a history file for the object or group of objects.*
- *Be in accordance with the MLA Accreditation Scheme Guidelines and the Museum Association's Ethical Guidelines.*

Falmouth Art Gallery Procedure

1. The decision to acquire any object, whether by donation, bequest or purchase, is made in accordance with the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy.
2. The decision to acquire an object by donation, bequest or purchase is made by the **Director** in accordance with the Acquisition and Disposal Policy set by Falmouth Town Council and in consultation with other gallery staff.
3. Where relevant, further research is undertaken to clarify the provenance of the object prior to accepting it for acquisition.
4. A Falmouth Art Gallery Gift Form must be completed for all objects being accepted for the collection. Donors will be asked to specify any special wording to be used or other conditions (e.g. Presented in memory of Mrs Hilda Smith).
5. If the object is to be accessioned, then its full details are entered on the gift form, which is filed with its history file after the work has been fully

documented according to SPECTRUM standards and given a unique accession number with the prefix FAMAG: followed by a sequential number based on the year of accession and its place in the sequence of accessions for the year (e.g. FAMAG: 2008.15). If the object is one of a number donated at the same time by the same donor then it will include a sequential point number (eg. FAMAG: 2008.15.2). This process is done as soon as possible and is regarded as a priority.

6. The unique accession number is attached or marked on the object in accordance with the Marking and Labelling Procedure (see 2.9).
7. Donors are contacted in writing to thank them for their gift and to formally confirm acceptance.
8. History files are usually filed in alphabetical order under artist, although in rare cases may be filed in the gallery's subject index. When applicable it is the role of the gallery's volunteer archivist to cross reference history files.
9. Details from the Falmouth Art Gallery Gift Form are entered on the digital catalogue system at the earliest opportunity.

10. For security purposes a backup on CD of the digital collection catalogue is performed once a month and the discs are stored in a fire and water proof safe on the premises. There is also a hard copy of the digital collection catalogue stored in the gallery's office.

2.3 Loans in

SPECTRUM Definition

Managing and documenting the borrowing of objects for which the institution is responsible for a specific period of time and for a specified purpose, normally display, but including research, education or photography.

The procedure should

- *Establish the purpose for which a loan is being requested.*
- *Enable the same high standards of care for the borrowed object as if it were part of the permanent collections.*
- *Include appropriate written agreements signed by both the borrower and lender before the loan commences.*
- *Ensure that the terms and conditions of loan are adhered to.*
- *Ensure that all loans are for fixed periods.*
- *Ensure a written record of the loan is retained.*
- *Enable effective control of the loan process.*
- *Enable the provision of information about the borrower and the loan as requested by the lender.*

- *Provide insurance or indemnity cover for the loan period.*
- *Ensure that up-to-date information about the location of borrowed objects is maintained.*
- *Ensure that up-to-date information about the security of borrowed objects is maintained.*
- *Ensure that up-to-date information about the physical well-being of borrowed objects is maintained, including the environment and condition of objects.*

Falmouth Art Gallery Procedure

1. All loan requests are assessed according to Falmouth Art Gallery *Loans and Temporary Exhibitions Policy*.
2. Loans are received by Falmouth Art Gallery both on a short-term and on a long-term basis. There is however, a presumption against loans other than for temporary exhibitions or displays, other than in exceptional circumstances.
3. If a long-term loan was to be accepted this would be for a renewable fixed term of no longer than five years and a contract would be agreed. This is to be signed by the object owner and the Director.
4. For short-term temporary exhibition loans from private collections or other museums and galleries, lenders are informed of the purpose and duration of the loan period, and any other information required. Insurance arrangements are made clear.
5. The lender is also provided with two copies of Falmouth Art Gallery's *Loan Agreement Form*, which they complete, sign and return, keeping one copy for their own reference. The loan form allows for the owner to state any special conditions relating to the loan (e.g. private collection). If the lender is an Accredited museum or gallery with their own MDA approved *entry/exit forms* then these may be photocopied rather than duplicating separate forms.
6. When the object is collected or delivered to Falmouth Art Gallery, its condition is examined and recorded. Any special requirements are noted and adhered to, e.g. Curatorial and/or Technical staff ensure that any packing, handling and hanging requirements are adhered to and lighting levels are set, monitored and maintained at specified levels.
7. For temporary exhibitions loans from contemporary artists an *Artist Entry and Caption Form* is used. The artists are sent the form with conditions of exhibiting. This invites them to be part of the exhibition and communicates all relevant information such as the period of the loan, insurance, commission etc. The artist then returns the completed form, copies of which act as a receipt for both gallery and artist.
8. Paper copies of all *Loan Agreements* and *Artist Entry and Caption Forms* are kept securely by the gallery.

9. Insurance or indemnity cover is put in place for the loan period from receipt by the gallery or its agents.
10. At the end of the period of loan safe return of items are signed for.

2.4 Location and movement control

SPECTRUM Definition

The documentation and management of information concerning the current and past locations of all objects or groups of objects in the institution's care to ensure the museum can locate any object at any time. A location is a specific place within the institution's custody.

The procedure should:

- *Provide a record of the location where an object is normally displayed or stored*
- *Provide a record of the location of an object when it is not at its normal location*
- *Enable access to location information by object number and by location name*
- *Provide an up-to-date record of the relocation of an object within the physical or administrative boundaries of the organisation*
- *Provide an up-to-date record of any movement of an object across the physical or administrative boundaries of the organisation*
- *Provide a record of the person responsible for moving an object*
- *Provide a record or a statement of the members of staff responsible for authorising object removal*

Falmouth Art Gallery Procedure

1. The location of any accessioned object is recorded on the digital catalogue system, and is updated if and when the object is relocated.
2. Location records specify the storage area and (when applicable) the gallery in which it is on display.
3. The catalogue records can be searched by object number, artist, collection, subject and by location.
4. Catalogue records are updated to provide a record of the location of an object when it is not at its normal location, including when out of building for conservation or exhibition.

5. Regular audits of the collection are made using the duplicate copy of the catalogue to prevent theft or fraud.

2.5 Cataloguing

SPECTRUM Definition

The compilation and maintenance of primary information describing, formally identifying or otherwise relating to objects. Catalogue information can be created and maintained by way of one or both of the following:

- *Documenting the continuing assessment of, and research into, an object and its contents*
- *The provision of access to collections management documentation, e.g. loans, acquisition, conservation*

Cataloguing information should provide:

- *A level of description sufficient to identify an object or group of objects and its differences from other like objects*
- *An historic archive relating to an object*
- *A reference system for use by the public, staff, researchers and the media*

Falmouth Art Gallery Procedure

1. Falmouth Art Gallery uses a digital cataloguing system to catalogue its collections. This system has been designed for the specific needs of Falmouth Art Gallery, its staff, volunteers and visitors.
2. Each record comprises information about the individual object including:
 - Details – FAMAG Number, Title, Person, Medium, Dimensions, Inscription, Signed and Dated, Caption, Published, Details
 - Acquisition – Acquisition Method, Acquisition Date, Donor, Collection (e.g. Children's Illustration Archive), Condition, Copyright, Credits
 - Documentation – Archive File, Location, Conservation, Specialist, Insurance, Gallery Exhibitions, Other Exhibitions, Literature, Notes
 - Index – Classification, Theme, Place, Event, Sitter, Tags, Period
 - Images
3. Where relevant, separate paper files are maintained and developed for individual artists, which are kept in the history files stored in the Education Room.

5. The catalogue list is updated and edited by trained staff and volunteers.
6. The Simple Name Index is used as a terminology list in conjunction with relevant reference books (e.g. oil painting, watercolour, drawing etc.)
7. Falmouth Art Gallery's entire digital catalogue is available on the World Wide Web on www.falmouthartgallery.com
8. The digital catalogue can be searched in the following fields: Accession Number, Artist, Author, Catalogue, Classification, Collection, Colourist, Donor, Engraver, Event, Lithographer, Period, Photographer, Place, Printer, Publisher, Theme, Sitter.

2.6 Loans Out

SPECTRUM Definition

Documenting and managing the loan of objects to other institutions for a specific period of time and for a specific purpose, normally display, but including research, photography and education.

The institution must have a policy covering the assessment of loan requests and a standard set of conditions which borrowers must meet.

The procedure for documenting and managing loan out should:

- *Ensure that all loan requests are assessed according to the institution's policy*
- *Ensure that there are written agreements signed by both borrower and lender before the loan commences*
- *Ensure that the loan is for a finite period*
- *Ensure that the institution maintains and retains a record of all loans, including details of the borrower, the venues, the loan period and the purpose of the loan*
- *Enable effective control of the loan process*
- *Ensure that the borrower confirms their intent and ability to provide an acceptable level of care, security and safekeeping for the object and to conform to the conditions of loan specified*
- *Ensure that the loaned objects are covered by insurance or indemnity as appropriate for the duration of the loan*

Falmouth Art Gallery Procedure

1. All loan requests are assessed according to Falmouth Art Gallery Loans Policy.

2. Once a loan has been agreed by the Director in consultation with the Loans Policy agreed by Falmouth Town Council the borrower is sent two copies of the Standard Conditions of Loan. These must be signed by both borrower and a member of Falmouth Art Gallery staff before the loan commences.
3. Up-to-date insurance valuations are obtained prior to the period of loan and the borrowing venue must demonstrate that they have put the appropriate level of insurance or indemnity in place for the duration of the loan.
4. The loan period and expected return date must be specified in advance and this information is added to the object's catalogue record.
5. If the loan is high value or particularly vulnerable, or if there are any concerns regarding the ability of the borrowing venue to meet the Conditions of Loan, a member of Falmouth Art Gallery curatorial staff will act as courier, travelling with the loaned object and overseeing its unpacking and installation.
6. If an object is lent to a touring exhibition, the *Standard Conditions of Loan* will be sent to each of the tour venues.
7. If an object is subject to a long-term loan, periodic reviews will be carried out to establish the borrowing institution's continuing ability to meet the conditions of loan.

2.7 Deaccession & disposal

SPECTRUM Definition

The management of disposal (transfer, sale, exchange or destruction of objects) and of de-accession (documenting the disposal).

The institution must have a policy covering the disposal and deaccession of objects. The procedure and documentation must:

- *Ensure that the decision to dispose is carefully considered and that all relevant evidence and opinions are sought according to the institution's policy and statutory legal requirements*
- *Ensure that the institution makes every effort to determine title to objects involved and that they are free from relevant special conditions attached to the original acquisition*
- *Ensure that the decision to dispose does not rest with an individual and the action is formally approved by a governing body*
- *Ensure that preference for transfer be given to institutions provisionally or fully registered/accredited by Arts Council England*
- *Ensure that title to the object is transferred to any receiving institution*
- *Ensure that objects disposed of are marked as such on the accessions register*

- *Ensure that all decisions and actions are fully documented*

Falmouth Art Gallery Procedure

1. The decision to dispose of an object is made by the Director in consultation with the Acquisition and Disposal Policy laid out by Falmouth Town Council. Objects will only be disposed of in consultation with Arts Council England, and after receiving independent advice through a period of consultation.
2. Any object recommended for disposal is first offered directly to other Registered/Accredited Museums who are known to have relevant collections and displays; priority is given to Museums within Cornwall.
3. If no Museum approached directly is able to accept the object or if there is no obvious connection to any individual Museum, the object for disposal is advertised in the Museums Journal and offered **free of charge** to any other Registered/Accredited Museum.
4. If more than one Museum expresses interest in the object, the decision to transfer will be made by the Director, in consultation with curatorial staff and specialists, based on the receiving Museum's ability to care for the object and make it accessible in the most appropriate context.
5. If the object is to be transferred to another institution, a transfer agreement is issued, which is signed by both the Director of Falmouth Art Gallery and the officer in charge of the receiving institution.
6. If, after a two month period from the publication of the advertisement, no expressions of interest have been received, Falmouth Art Gallery will consider offering it to non-registered Museums or other publicly accessible collections.
7. Objects may then be sold as long as any monies received are used for acquiring new works or conservation of the existing collection.
8. In the last resort, the object may be disposed of as refuse.
9. A full record is made and kept of the disposal process and a record is kept of the deaccessioned object both on computer and on paper; the paper record is kept in the gallery's office (Curator's office).

2.8 Retrospective Documentation

SPECTRUM Description

The improvement of the standard of information and the production of new information for an existing collection.

The institution must have a policy covering the retrospective documentation of objects.

A statement of the museum's policy to eliminate basic documentation backlogs within a stated timescale is a minimum requirement of the Arts Council England Registration/Accreditation scheme.

The institution should review the standard of its information regularly to ensure that it meets the Minimum Standards throughout SPECTRUM where they apply to the institution's activities.

Falmouth Art Gallery Procedure

1. The entire Falmouth Art Gallery collection is fully catalogued with photographs.
2. All objects that have been back accessioned have a prefix of 1000 e.g. FAMAG: 1000.1.
3. If any additional information or a previous number is found at a later date the object will generally not be re-numbered, but the information will be recorded in the digital database and on the history file.

2.9 Labelling and Marking

Falmouth Art Gallery Procedure

1. Labelling and marking is carried out by trained staff and volunteers according to MDA guidelines.
2. All marking is invisible to display.
3. Works on paper and other appropriate agents are numbered in pencil on the back of the work and on the back of the mount.
4. Oils are marked on the back of the frame and the stretcher. If the frame is dark then ink will be used and if necessary an opaque white label.
5. Sculptures are marked on the base.

3. Collections Management at Falmouth Art Gallery

3.1 Storage

The art collection, when not on display, is stored on the mezzanine floor which has full wheelchair access via the lift. It is situated next to the research/education room, with an adjoining door so that works can be shown to visitors.

Considerable improvements have been made in recent years to the store, particularly as a result of refurbishment carried out with grant-aid through the Heritage Lottery Fund. Nevertheless, long-term planning is necessary to ensure that the gallery continues to set national standards of best practice for small museums.

The store is small, which later could curtail expansion of the collection. The moveable racking should be reserved for oil paintings, and works on paper contained in significant historical frames.

It is the policy of the gallery that other material should be de-framed, mounted in acid free museum mount to standard sizes (11 x 16 ins (28 x 40.7 cm), 16 x 22 ins (40.7 x 55.8 cm), and 20 x 27 ins (50.8 x 68.6 cm)) and stored in solander boxes of the correct size.

Solander boxes should not contain a mix of conserved and unconserved works, because of risk of contamination.

Our collecting policy should favour works that can be mounted and stored in solander boxes.

All standard frames are fitted with museum glass which reduces over 90 per cent of ultra violet light. All gallery lights have similar U.V. filters.

These frames must continue to be stored in environmentally monitored conditions to ensure that there is no risk of contamination to conserved works.

3.2 Environmental Controls

The environmental conditions of the galleries and store are monitored by Meaco Museum Monitor – Radio Telemetry system, with a programme of regular servicing and testing. There is less than one per cent of variance per year, and a programme of renewal in place. Dual channel receivers/sensors in all sensitive areas and anywhere art is stored. Radio transmitters transmit temperature and relative humidity to computer. It is serviced twice a year or on demand. The environmental conditions are alarmed, and recorded on Java software, but visual checks are also undertaken.

The granite façade building is set within an old quarry bank and has naturally good environmental conditions.

Temperature: In winter we use water based radiators run by gas and electricity. They are controlled by manual Honeywell T6360/4360 thermostat. We also have ceiling fitted Vent-Axia Airtrak ACM In-line Mixed Flow Fans and a Fujitsu Room Air Conditioner- Window Type- Cooling Model AKY7A/9A to ensure air flow with no weak pockets.

Humidity: We have 10 mobile dehumidifiers (Mitsubishi Electric Dehumidifiers MJ-E16PX and MJ-E16VX-E1) and a fixed dehumidifier (Dryfast Major Dehumidifier from Air Quality Products LTD) in the roof that discharge's

outside the building. There are ceiling fans and fixed fans in the roof to ensure airflow. These fans move air through purpose built ventilation ports at ceiling level. We also have 6 mobile humidifiers (brune B250 electronic). These were fitted with the advice of Robert Child, Head of Conservation, the National Museum of Wales.

Both humidity and temperature are electronically and visually monitored regularly throughout each day.

The building has regular visual checks undertaken by the curatorial staff.

The art store meets humidity level standards recommended by conservators for oil paintings, acrylics and works on paper.

As pigments contract and expand with variations in temperature, permanent damage can be caused, although such damage may not manifest itself to the naked eye for a number of years. The ideal temperature for the storage of an art collection comprising oil paintings, acrylics and works on paper is 18 degrees centigrade, with a range of between 12 – 20 degrees centigrade being acceptable as long as fluctuations are gradual. The art store meets these requirements.

The risk of insect damage is monitored regularly by the use of traps, and by visual inspections and audits. As yet this has not posed a problem.

Dust levels are also monitored, although it is clear that dust does not accumulate quickly.

3.3 Access

Falmouth Art Gallery has an open stores policy and allows viewing of works not on show without prior appointment. As a result of this the collection is constantly organised, updated and ready for public inspection.

3.4 Temporary Exhibitions

Temporary exhibitions run the risk of contaminating the collection and all works are inspected prior to entering the Mezzanine level, they may also be stored in the Isolation store, which has been specifically cleared for this purpose.

3.5 Conservation costs

The cost of conservation for new works is always taken into account in decisions of acquisition.

This policy was passed by Falmouth Town Council on 18th June 2012