

POLICY FOR CARE OF THE COLLECTIONS

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 18 July 2012
Date of next review *July 2015* (extended to July 2017)

1. Introduction

This is a framework policy for collection care outlining how Tate fulfils its responsibilities under the Museum and Galleries Act 1992, guided by Tate's mission statement and vision. *Reference Principles for the Care of the Collection*, September 2010.

This policy outlines our approach to balancing preservation of and access to Tate's collections of artworks, archive and library materials. Our strategy is a pragmatic, risk assessment based approach in which we evaluate all activities in the context of resource, evidence and impact. Evidence is drawn from: research and analysis, published literature, testing, experience, knowledge and skills of staff, context and relevant legislation and with reference to guidance and standard practice in the sector.

Tate's risk assessment based approach is applied consistently, resulting in levels of appropriate care that vary from basic, through good, to best. In determining which level to apply in a specific case, we will consider the following factors:

- risk to the work, i.e. potential for change, deterioration or damage;
- resource (time, space, expertise, equipment and budget);
- environmental sustainability;
- contractual or legislative terms and conditions;
- ethical guidelines; external relationships;
- public benefit.

2. Preservation

Tate will

- 2.1 preserve the collections through appropriate storage, handling, collection management, preventive conservation and conservation treatments.
- 2.2 identify, monitor and mitigate the risks of deterioration and obsolescence for the collection and for individual artworks.
- 2.3 implement a preventive conservation approach, which we recognise as the most cost and resource effective way to care for collections in the long term. This will include measures to reduce damage or deterioration associated with known risks to the collections.
- 2.4 contribute to a safe, stable and sustainable environment for the collections.
- 2.5 undertake treatments to the highest standards with minimum risk. The level of intervention will vary, however, according to what is most appropriate.
- 2.6 give precedence for treatment to works which are requested through Tate's programmes (acquisition, display, exhibition, loans out and touring) or which require stabilisation.
- 2.7 undertake research, including scientific analysis, to increase our understanding of Tate's collections, support safer treatments and inform our approach to care and management.
- 2.8 introduce and implement emergency planning for the collections, working across the six Tate sites.
- 2.9 undertake the conservation of items which are under the gallery's duty of care.

3. Sustainability

Tate will

- 3.1 embed sustainability within its collection care operations, in line with Tate's Sustainability Strategy 2012-2015.
- 3.2 aim to monitor and analyse the environmental conditions in all areas used for the collections. The Collection Care division will work with Projects & Estates in controlling the environment.
- 3.3 continue to challenge, assess and research our methods and working practices to reduce further the environmental impact in context of caring for the Collection.
- 3.4 seek to influence the sector in-line with Tate's practice and actions in sustainability.

4. Access

Tate will

- 4.1 apply its policies and procedures to support both physical and digital access to the collections and associated documentation for the benefit of all audiences.
- 4.2 provide open public access through the Library and Archive Reading Rooms and Prints and Drawings Rooms to its library and archive collections and its works on paper collections whilst not on display.
- 4.3 aim to provide public access by appointment to the remainder of its collections whilst not on display, where possible and for the purposes of research. Operational constraints mean that access will be limited to paintings and works on paper only.
- 4.4 make concise catalogue information on all its accessioned collection items publicly available on Tate's website.
- 4.5 co-ordinate planning the use of Tate's Collections across sites and programmes.

5. Accountability, Governance and Standards

Tate will

- 5.1 maintain good governance and due diligence in the care, management and documentation of its collections.
- 5.2 meet all national and international statutory and legislative requirements governing the care of its collections.
- 5.3 refer to and consider all ethical guidelines, standards and practices relating to the care of its collections.
- 5.4 document our activities and findings in the field of collection care and provide access to this information.
- 5.5 create and store information about Tate's collections in a consistent way and will adhere to relevant national and international standards.

6. People and Partnerships

Tate will

- 6.1 continue to develop the skills and expertise of its staff to improve standards, efficiency and effectiveness in the care of its collections.
- 6.2 actively share expertise and knowledge with our colleagues in the wider museum and gallery sector.
- 6.3 respond to public enquiries in the field of collection care under the Freedom of Information Act and more generally, where resources permit.
- 6.4 provide expertise in collection care to support and develop its national and international initiatives, where resources permit.

7. Communication, Monitoring and Review

This policy is available to all Tate staff via the website.

The Director of Collection Care is responsible for the implementation, updating and review of this policy. A review will be carried out every three years by the Collection Care senior management team in consultation with other stakeholders, as required. The Director of Collection Care, as strategic risk owner, will provide regular assurance to the Board of Trustees on the effectiveness of controls to mitigate the risk of change, deterioration or damage to works in Tate's collections.