Art Collection Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') maintains and develops a permanent collection of works of visual art and craft as part of the CDU Art Collection. The collection serves to provide cultural enrichment to students, employees and the wider community and as a resource for teaching, learning, research, enjoyment and place-making.

(2) The CDU Art Collection comprises more than 3,600 works of art and is the third largest collection of art held by a public institution in the Northern Territory. On a national scale, it may be classified as a small to medium sized Australian regional collection.

(3) The CDU Art Collection is designed to complement rather than compete with other public art collections and collecting institutions in the region.

Section 2 - Purpose

(4) This policy provides a framework for the development and management of the CDU Art Collection. It encompasses the management of works of art, whether they form part of the permanent collection or are on loan to the University for display, research and/or acquisition assessment. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Art Collection Procedure.

Section 3 - Scope

(5) This policy applies to employees and students of the University and the wider community.

Section 4 - Policy

Principles

(6) The University aims to develop a significant and well-regarded institutional art collection that:

a. ensures the preservation and documentation of art, from and relating to the Northern Territory and Southeast Asia, for the well-being of future generations.
b. demonstrates the University's commitment to the enjoyment, study, patronage and advancement of the visual arts;
c. supports the teaching and learning, and community engagement programs of the University within the region of Northern Australia and Southeast Asia;
d. fosters a general awareness, appreciation and understanding of the visual arts and its wider cultural value, among the University community and members of the general public through its display, publication, and use in educational programs;

e. enhances the University environment and facilitates place-making at University campuses and centres through the delivery of the CDU Art Collection On-campus Display Program;
f. creates healthy partnerships within the University and beyond, between students, employees, artists, research institutes, communities, community organisations, cultural and scientific institutions and supporters; and
g. enables research and vocational training in the disciplines of visual arts, art history and museology.

Collection objectives

(7) The University endeavours to collect works of art that reflect cultural innovation and diversity by First Nations and other artists, to be accessioned into the CDU Art Collection.

First Nations artists

(8) The University seeks to acquire works that demonstrate the emergence of various schools of art, stylistic trends and cultural influences, by significant and influential individual practitioners or communities of artists, practising in or influenced by their experiences in and of Northern Australia.

(9) The University will acquire art by First Nations artists in acknowledgement of the lands on which the University's campuses and centres are located or that recognise the networks that exist between First Nations students, employees, community members, and the University.

Non-First Nations artists

(10) The University will acquire works by non-First Nations artists that reflect their responses to Northern Australia - its landscapes, cultures, people and the art or objects made by them.

(11) In particular, priority will be given to non-First Nations artists with a longstanding association or residence in Northern Australia, of ten (10) years or more or those artists who have established a career as visual artists and are alumni of the University.

Cultural innovation

(12) The University also seeks to acquire art that reflects particular periods of cultural innovation or political, social and historical importance in Northern Australia and adjoining Asian regions – created in the early 1980s or since, that reflect:

a. the period immediately preceding and following Self-Government in the Northern Territory (1978 onwards);
b. the establishment of local or regional artists' collectives, studios or organisations;
c. exchanges between or relationships with Southeast Asia;
d. episodes or instances of travelling artists' engagement with Northern Australia, in particular the Northern Territory;
e. other distinct historic or social movements or activities, such as the establishment of ethnic minority communities and their presence in the Northern Territory; and
f. a connection to the University's namesake, Charles Darwin.

Cultural diversity

(13) The University also seeks to acquire art that reflects the make-up of the University's international student body, and the broader NT community.

Acquisition

(14) The University will acquire works of art and objects for the CDU Art Collection by purchase, donation, gift, transfer

and bequest, in accordance with the collection objectives. The University reserves the right to not accept works of art offered as gifts or donations. Works to be considered for acquisition will be physically sighted and assessed by the Curator prior to acquisition, in accordance with the Art Collection Procedure.

(15) The University's collecting priorities are as follows:

a. works of art by contemporary Australian artists including, but not limited to paintings on linen and canvas, works on paper (limited edition prints and drawings) sculptures, fibre art, textiles, ceramics, photographs and mixed media from the late 1970s to the present;
b. Australian political posters, prints and related graphic work dating from the late 1970s to the present;
c. works of art created by resident and visiting artists inspired by or connected to the Northern Territory from the early 1980s to the present; and
d. works of art by artists who are alumni of the University.

Legal and ethical obligations

(16) The University will only acquire works of art for the CDU Art Collection where provenance and clear legal title can be confirmed.

(17) Some First Nations art is sacred and restricted. The University will only collect works intended for public display or approved for display in consultation with appropriate First Nations representatives and communities. It is recognised that these categories of 'sacred and restricted' are fluid and every effort will be made to respond to any cultural sensitives as required.

(18) Gifts, donations, bequests and transfers will only be accepted where the donor has provenance and full legal title to the work and the gift is made on the basis of a total unencumbered transfer of ownership from the donor to the University.

Accessioning

(19) The University will assign a unique accession number to all works of art it acquires and record the works in its Collection Management System database.

Conservation and storage

(20) The CDU Art Collection will be conserved in accordance with accepted contemporary national practice and standards applicable to the safe and appropriate storage, management and handling of works of art.

a. Conservation treatments will only be performed by an experienced and qualified Conservator.
b. Unless on display, all works of art will be stored in an environmentally controlled and secure Art Store, in keeping with the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM) Environmental Guidelines for Australian Cultural Heritage Collections, 2018.

Security

(21) The University will provide a secure an environment for the storage, transportation and display of the CDU Art Collection.

Access

(22) The CDU Art Collection will be made available to employees and students for teaching and research wherever possible, and will more generally be made available to the broader community through:

a. exhibitions in the Art Gallery;
b. on-campus display of selected works;
c. loans to partner organisations with related/complementary art collections for special or travelling exhibitions;
d. the CDU Art Collection and Art Gallery website; and
e. the CDU Recollect database, pending appropriate permission from artists and artist's agents, and the payment of reproduction license fees, where applicable.

Loans

(23) The University will permit temporary incoming loans and outgoing loans of works of art, pending the approval of the Curator, into and from the CDU Art Collection, where:

a. the University has a distinctive contribution to make;
b. the benefits for the University are compelling;
c. University employees and students can be involved; and
d. the loan develops University partnerships and improved community and/or institutional relationships.

De-accessioning

(24) De-accessioning is recognised as a necessary tool to enable the maintenance, enhancement and focus of an art collection; therefore de-accession proposals will be prepared as needed.

a. A work of art deemed to be outside the scope of the CDU Art Collection and this policy, or formally approved for de-accessioning, will be de-accessioned and disposed of in accordance with the Art Collection Procedure.

(25) Where a de-accessioned work of art has been gifted or bequeathed, donor/s will be advised of this decision in writing by the Vice-Chancellor.

Disposal

(26) Works of art to be disposed of may not be sold, gifted to, or exchanged with, any person connected to the University, including employees, University Council or other Governance Committee members and/or their families, unless that person is the donor of the artwork being disposed of.

Loss/theft

(27) The University will record lost/stolen artworks on the Collection Management System database.

Responsibility

(28) The CDU Art Collection will be managed by the Curator who will acquire, conserve, research, communicate and exhibit art with guidance from the Art Gallery Advisory Committee and with support from the Exhibitions and Collections Officer.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(29) Non-compliance with Governance Documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct – Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct – Students.

(30) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(31) All employees have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	26th August 2024
Review Date	26th August 2027
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Responsible Executive	Steve Rogers Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Community Connection +61 8 89466890
Implementation Officer	Joanna Barrkman Curator
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Accession" - Accession means the formal inclusion of a work of art into the Art Collection including its transfer of legal ownership, its documentation and provenance and the attribution of a unique accession collection identification number.

"Conservation treatment" - Conservation treatment means any activity, including cleaning, repair of hanging systems and/or restoration that serves to maintain the optimum condition of a work of art and that ensures its long-term preservation and care.

"De-accession" - De-accession means the formal removal of a work of art from the Art Collection that includes an identified procedure for its disposal.

"Disposal" - Disposal means the physical removal and in some cases, the destruction, of an art work, which has been recorded as de-accessioned from the CDU Art Collection’s holdings.

"Incoming loan" - An incoming loan means any work of art or object borrowed by the University for a specific period of time, as specified in an Incoming Loan Agreement or similar Outgoing Loan Agreement provided by another cultural institution and signed by the University and the lender.

"Outgoing loan" - An outgoing loan means any work of art or object lent by the University for a specific period of time, as specified in an Outgoing Loan Agreement or similar Incoming Loan Agreement provided by another cultural institution and signed by the University and the borrower.

"Works" - Work/s means a work of art accessioned into the CDU Art Collection, or on loan to the University.

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