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Artbank Collection Plan

2023 - 2025

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Artbank Collection Plan 2023-25

The Artbank Collection Plan presents the proposed collecting priorities for Artbank in 2023-25. The Collecting Plan is written in accordance with the criteria and procedures set out in the Artbank Collection Acquisition Policy.

Artbank is an Australian Government initiative within the, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications and the Arts. Established in 1980, Artbank is an arts support program for Australian contemporary artists that encourages engagement with and appreciation of Australian contemporary art by the broader community. With a collection of over 10,000 artworks in a variety of artistic modes, media and styles, Artbank provides direct support to living Australian artists through the acquisition of their work; and promotes the value of Australian contemporary art by making this work available through an art leasing scheme.

Purpose

This plan will enable the Director and the curatorial team to recommend acquisitions based on an assessment of the current Australian primary contemporary art market – with acquisitions broadly representing the diversity of practising artists, while taking into account the unique requirements of works to support the Artbank art rental scheme. This plan remains open to the exceptional opportunity that may arise, but may not be articulated in this strategy, and will be reviewed annually to ensure targets continue to reflect Artbank’s priorities.

Acquisitions are the primary avenue for Artist Support for the Artbank Program. We acquire work broadly within the criteria set out below, predominantly from established, reputable and ethical commercial galleries, art centres, public regional galleries, art prizes, significant curated group exhibitions and biennales, and from art market hubs such as festivals and contemporary art fairs

Collection Significance

The Artbank collection tells a unique story of Australian art. Established in 1980 with an initial endowment of 600 artworks from the National Gallery of Australia’s Loan Collection, Artbank has grown into a significant collection that is unique in both its breadth and depth.

Artbank is one of the largest collections of contemporary Australian art in the world and includes some of the best examples of Indigenous and non-Indigenous artwork produced over the past four decades. With over 11,000 artworks across diverse media, the Artbank Collection reflects the diversity of artists practicing around Australia.

Artbank is the national government lending collection used in government buildings and residences around the world, as well as corporate and private clients around Australia.

Collecting Budget

Artbank’s annual collecting budget is supported from Artbank’s annual operational budget, which is tied to the annual rental income of the previous financial year. At the outset of the new financial year, departmental approval of the proposed budget is required prior to processing acquisitions.

Criteria for Acquisition

The acquired artworks must represent a high standard of artistic achievement within contemporary Australian art. Each work should be recognised for its excellence and be a good example of its kind. The work must represent outstanding artistic achievement within the artist's practice, and their current career stage. Artbank applies three eligibility criteria for the acquisition of artworks for the Artbank Collection as referenced in the [Artbank Collection Acquisition Policy](#).

Australian Artist

The artwork is produced by a living Australian artist,

- A. To be classified as an Australian artist, the artist must be either born in Australia; an Australian citizen; in Australia as an approved temporary resident for a minimum of two years, and/or a permanent resident of Australia;
- B. The artist may be living in Australia or overseas as long as at least one of the above stated criteria are demonstrable; and
- C. Where the artwork is produced by an artist collective or collaboration, no less than fifty percent of the contributors must meet criterion A.

Significance

The artwork has aesthetic, historic, cultural, social and/or national significance that relate to contemporary Australia. Each work should be recognised for its excellence and be an exemplary example of its kind and/or represent outstanding artistic achievement within the artist's practice.

Suitability to Collection

The artworks must be appropriate for potential rental through the art leasing scheme, including:

- Being appropriate for display in public spaces; and
- Being in intrinsically sound condition and reasonably resistant to deterioration in the routine operations of Artbank including display, packing and transportation.

Collecting Summary

Artbank is an artist support scheme committed to collecting art produced by living Australian artists. Artworks acquired by Artbank are used to provide the broader community with direct access to a diverse collection consisting of some of the best examples of Australian contemporary art access through a public leasing scheme.

Artbank is committed to having represented in collection a broad cross-section of Australian artists. Five primary markers of breadth are used when assessing works for acquisition: collecting areas; region; diversity; career stage and markets.

Artbank is also attentive to the realities of collection management, storage and handling of artwork, which needs to remain dynamic, efficient and manageable. These factors are taken into consideration when acquiring artwork.

Collecting Areas

Artbank proudly collects across a wide cross-section of media in Australian contemporary art. Artbank’s collection is dominated by two-dimensional artworks, including painting, photography, works on paper and print as these media are well suited to display at clients’ premises. As an artist support program, other media is acquired by Artbank and is regularly leased by clients including sculpture, textiles, glass, ceramics and time-based media.

The table below illustrates that the popularity of specific media fluctuates within a range of approximately 20% and articulates the collecting priorities for Artbank over the coming year. This confirms Artbank’s continued acquisition of works across all collecting areas.

Collecting Area	Target for 2023-2025	% of total acquisitions in 2022/23	Current % of collection represented by this Collecting Area by volume (units)	% of media leased by Artbank clients as of July 2023	Rationale for Target 2023-25
Painting <i>Including, but not limited to, synthetic polymer paint, oil, enamel, resin, Tempera and ochre on various supports including canvas, board and bark.</i>	40%	46%	43%	54%	This target seeks to maintain the current representation of painting in the Artbank collection, noting it is one of the most popular and practical mediums for the leasing scheme.
Photography <i>Including, but not limited to, traditional photographic methods, cibachrome, C-type photograph, Cyanotype, digital</i>	15%	12%	9.4%	42%	This target seeks to increase the representation of photography in the Artbank collection as a popular leasing medium.
Sculpture <i>Including, but not limited to, bronze, wood, ceramic, concrete, fibre objects, metal, neon, plaster and stone</i>	10%	8%	7.3%	38%	This target seeks to maintain the representation of sculpture in the Artbank collection. Areas of interest within sculptural practice include larrakidj/lorrkin poles by female artists and mid to large-scale sculptures for foyers. Consideration of installation and storage requirements inform collecting in this area.
Textiles <i>Including, but not limited to, basketry,</i>	5%	4%	1%	23%	This target seeks to increase the representation of textile works in the collection. Close

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<i>embroidery, knitting, quilting, tapestry, weaving,</i>					consideration will be made to the display requirements of these works to ensure they are viable options for the leasing scheme. This increase reflects a renewed interest by artists in textile-based practice including tapestry, weaving and embroidery that Artbank would like to support. This includes the recognition of Indigenous fibre art which has been recently reappraised for cultural and artistic importance.
Print media <i>Including, but not limited to, monoprint, relief, intaglio, stencil and digital</i>	10%	1%	19%	32%	This target is a significant increase to last year's acquisition of print media to reflect the popularity and accessibility of this medium and the. Artbank is currently undertaking a project for the flexible framing of the print collection and this target will work in support of this project to freshen what is an ageing collection.
Time-based work <i>Including, but not limited to, animation and video</i>	5%	7%	1%	2.6%	This target seeks to maintain the current representation of time-based media in the collection Time-based media is an increasingly popular medium for contemporary artists and this target seeks to support this maturing artistic practice. These acquisitions will coincide with a strategic plan to increase client accessibility of this medium.
Works on paper/drawing <i>Including, but not limited to, charcoal, collage, conte, drawing, graphite, ink, watercolour, pencil, pastel</i>	10%	11%	14%	27%	This target seeks to collect works on paper/drawing at a moderate rate in 2023-25. Due to the fragility of this medium and the demands of the Artbank leasing scheme, it is important to collect responsibly in this area. This also reflects a relatively low interest by current clients in this medium. If the number of residential clients increases, consideration will

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					be given to increasing this collecting area.
Ceramic and Glass	5%	8%	1.4%	35%	This target seeks to maintain the current representation of glass and ceramic in the Artbank collection, taking into consideration the relatively low interest by current clients but the need for support of artists practising in this area.
New developments in artistic mediums <i>Including: Indigenous art forms that are new to the contemporary art market Virtual Reality (VR) artworks Algorithmic/computational art</i>	To be strategically considered in 2023-2025	0%	n/a	n/a	Artbank seeks to consider how to strategically acquire works in emerging and contemporary forms. We would balance the need to service the leasing scheme effectively while at the same time offering support to artists working in these areas. Artbank has a role to play in educating and exposing these forms to the public.

Diversity

Artbank actively seeks to maintain and increase a diverse representation of artists through the acquisition of works by artists identifying across different groups. This will include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists
- Culturally and linguistically diverse artists
- Gender diversity
- LGBTQIA+ artists
- Professional artists who identify as living and working with a disability

Regional diversity

As a national program, Artbank seeks to collect across all states and territories to ensure representation of professional artists from each state and territory. We endeavour to have a good balance of urban, rural and remote representation.

State/Territory	State population as percentage of total Australian population ¹	Current percentage of representation in Artbank collection ²	Percentage of number of works acquired by state of artist 2022-23
NSW	31%	34%	20%
Victoria	26%	25%	17%
Queensland	20%	8%	20%
South Australia	7%	7%	6%
Western Australia	11%	9%	20%
Tasmania	2%	4%	3%
Northern Territory	1%	11%	12%
Australian Capital Territory	2%	3%	3%

An analysis of regional diversity from recent acquisitions and historical data has identified that all regions are to be maintained and Queensland needs to be increased to balance collection in 2023-2025.

Career stages

Artbank acquires works by emerging, mid-career and established artists. Artbank has come to be recognised for the important role it plays in acquiring works by early career practitioners, offering support and validation at a critical stage in an artist's career.

This section outlines the importance of collecting from all three stages of an artist's career and signals the differing collecting modes relevant to each stage. It suggests a guide for budget allocation to each stage that can be altered within reason for exceptional opportunities.

- a) Established artists | 10-20% of budget 2-4 acquisitions

This section recognises the importance of continuing to strategically collect works by established artists. Established artists are generally represented in larger institutional exhibitions and collections and have a significant profile. These proposals are to be made with research that assesses the importance of a work within an artist's practice, proven major track record in exhibiting and collecting, and in the context of their peers.

It may reflect a major career development. It may be assessed as significant in terms of scale, as relevant.

- b) Mid-career artists | 60-70% of budget

This section recognises that a high proportion of Artbank's collecting occurs in the mid-career stage of an artist's career. This stage is characterised by a strong and continued record of representation in the small to medium sector. This stage is often precarious for artists and is a significant way for Artbank to realise its artist support scheme as well as acquire works by artists whose practice is well-developed and popular. Works in

¹ ABS, 2022, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/dec-2022>

² Note, percentages are estimates based on data in collection database

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this section are likely to be acquired through commercial galleries, art fairs, institutional exhibitions and commissions.

c) Emerging artists | 20-30% of budget

This section enables Artbank to be responsive to new emerging artists, generally in their first 10 years of practice. Acquisition of works from emerging practitioners is likely to occur through ARI exhibitions and artist studio visits. We expect the value of work by emerging artists to be relatively low, thus this budget allocation can still capture a large volume of artists.

Markets

Artbank recognises its responsibility to acquire work from a diverse cross-section of artists. Artists are represented by different sectors of the Australian art market. Through acquisition, Artbank helps support the sustainability of commercial galleries, art centres, artist run initiatives, unrepresented artists, art fairs, arts festivals and biennales. Purchases directly from artists are also pursued through exhibitions at artist run initiatives and studio visits.

ART FAIRS

Artbank acquires artworks at a number of art fairs across Australia. Art fairs support artists represented by both commercial galleries and art centres and provides an efficient means of viewing a number of artists in a short period. The budget allocated for each fair is outlined below, as a draft guide, and may be reviewed each year:

Fair	Date	Rationale
Sydney Contemporary	September 2023	Represents Australia's leading galleries and inclusion and works exhibited are peer-reviewed.
	September 2024	
Melbourne Art Fair	February 2024	Represents Australia's leading galleries and inclusion and works exhibited are peer-reviewed.
	February 2025	
Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair (incl. NAATSIAs and Salon des Refuses)	August 2023	This figure has increased since 2022-23 as the acquisition budget has increased and as art centres submit their best works to the NATSIAAs and subsequent Salon des Refuses. This percentage to be reviewed following annual acquisition budget for 2024-25.
	August 2024	
Cairns Art Fair	July 2023	Artbank's participation at Cairns Art Fair is an important opportunity to target Far North Queensland.
	July 2024	
Spring 1883	September 2023	Spring 1883 presents an opportunity to buy high quality work by emerging and mid-career artists from smaller commercial galleries, and at a more domestic scale.
Desert Mob (Alice Springs)	September 2023	Represents leading artists from the central desert region and is an excellent setting to purchase high quality indigenous art this both suitable and popular with clients.
	September 2024	

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MAJOR VISUAL ART EVENTS

Arts festivals, major exhibitions and biennales also present an opportunity for Artbank to acquire high quality major works. These events include:

- Biennale of Sydney, New South Wales
- Tarnanthi, Adelaide, South Australia
- Dark Mofo, Tasmania
- The National, Sydney, New South Wales
- Fremantle Biennale, Western Australia
- Asia Pacific Triennial, Brisbane, Queensland