

## Fitzwilliam Museum

### Loans Policy

The Fitzwilliam Museum is the principal museum of the University of Cambridge and has the guardianship of the fine art, applied art, coins and medals, books and manuscripts collections of the University. Governance is delegated to the Syndicate of the Fitzwilliam Museum under the terms of the Statutes and Ordinances of the University of Cambridge (Statute D, Chapter XI; Ordinances Chapter X, "Institutions under the Supervision of the Council – Fitzwilliam Museum").

The Director is required "to take charge of the collections and the library, to keep a register of all accessions to the collections, and to take measures under the sanction of the Syndicate that they be properly protected, kept in order, and exhibited".

The Senior Management Team and Syndicate may choose to lend any object from the collections apart from those identified as part of the Foundation bequest of Richard, 7<sup>th</sup> Viscount Fitzwilliam: by the terms of the Will dated 18 August 1815 the pictures, portraits, prints, drawings, engravings, and their frames, books (printed, engraved or manuscript), music, busts, statues, medals, and bronze of Fitzwilliam's collection may not be removed from the Museum. Nonetheless, the bequest was made to the University "for the purpose of promoting the increase of learning and the other great objects of that Noble Foundation". In the spirit of this intention, the Syndicate may authorise the loan from the collections acquired since 1816, for the purposes of public exhibition, study, research, scientific examination, or publication, to any institution worldwide.

The loan of objects from the collections plays an important part in achieving the following Strategic Objectives set by the Syndicate:

- Maximise access to the collections;
- Stimulate new research, build the museum's international networks, influence and support through exhibitions, publications and loans;
- Use exhibitions, temporary displays and redisplay to foster new research, publications and public engagements with the permanent collections;
- Foster and disseminate research on the collections by museum staff and others;
- Work with colleagues across the University of Cambridge Museums to raise the profile of collections research and its dissemination;
- As a lead partner in the University of Cambridge Museums, develop local and national partnerships that maximise impact, and outcomes that increase the value of public investment;
- Develop the role and profile of the Fitzwilliam and other UCM as the most prominent part of the University's engagement with the wider community;
- Enhance the fund-raising capacity and support base of the Museum.

In addition the Syndicate has adopted the Access Policy, identifying the Museum's core purposes: to safeguard the designated collections, to make them widely accessible for study and enjoyment, and to preserve them for future generations.

In deciding whether or not to lend an object, and in determining the time for which and the conditions subject

to which an object is to be lent, the Syndicate shall give special consideration to a request to borrow an object for public exhibition. Subject to that, the decision to lend in principle is made on the basis of:

- The academic and intellectual integrity of the exhibition or project;
- The physical suitability of the object for transport and display;
- The resources required to make the object available;
- The risks surrounding a loan being assessed and moderated to the Syndicate's satisfaction;
- The impact on the Museum's own displays of any withdrawal of objects for loan.

Loans may be made on a short-term basis (initially less than one year) to one or more venues, or on a long-term basis. For long-term loans, the maximum first loan period is three years, after which the loan is reviewed and may either be returned or renewed.

Formal requests for loans are made in writing to the Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum. The applicant must identify the objects requested, the dates of the exhibition, the venue address, the names of key staff involved, and a clear rationale for the inclusion of the objects in the exhibition, display or project. The formal request should be received at least twelve months before the opening date of any exhibition. Informal contact with the Museum usually takes place prior to the formal request, in order to identify appropriate objects. Normally, priority is given to institutions staging public educational exhibitions and projects.

From that point, the loan request process is managed centrally by the Registrar and Assistant Registrars who

coordinate the Museum's response. Museum stakeholders are:

- Collection departments, for the intellectual justification for the inclusion of the objects, prior commitments and technical and courier requirements;
- Department conservators and the Hamilton Kerr Institute, for the condition of the object and essential interventions, with related costs, required to make an object fit for transport and display;
- Registrars, for space in the Museum's future loan schedule and ongoing negotiation of terms and conditions.

Advice is obtained from the department Keepers, in consultation with conservators. All requests are discussed at the Loans Group, who meets every other month, where a recommendation is put forward to the Syndicate or SMT. The request is then tabled at the earliest available Syndicate or SMT meeting. Where objects are valued at less than £1,000,000 and/or have no other additional considerations attached (e.g. method of acquisition), the Syndicate delegates the decision to the Museum's Senior Management Team and Director, monthly. Following the meeting, the prospective borrower can expect to receive a decision in writing from the Deputy Director, Collections. The Syndicate or SMT will approve the loan, with special conditions as it sees fit to add, such as the requirement for a Museum courier to accompany and or/oversee handling, or additional security or environmental safeguards. Should the loan request be declined, it will be on the grounds of:

- an object belonging to the Founder's Collection or other collection with condition attached;
- prior commitments for the object or a clash of dates with other projects;
- inadequate justification for a particular object to be lent;
- the fragility or physical condition of the object;
- lack of notice of the loan request
- excessive pressure on Museum resources.

When a loan is approved, the Registrars guide the borrower through the

practical aspects of the process and remain the single point of contact at the Fitzwilliam Museum. They negotiate environmental and security conditions, display requirements, the loan agreement and insurance, and transport and courier requirements. Management and moderation of the physical risk to the object is emphasised at each stage of the loans process: the Museum reserves the right to withdraw approval for a loan if specific security and display concerns cannot be addressed.

At the close of the exhibition or project, the Fitzwilliam Museum expects to receive a statement of the total visitor figures, at least one copy of any catalogue or publication produced, or the benefit of the results of any examination or research undertaken.