National Fund for Acquisitions

Introduction

The National Fund for Acquisitions (NFA), provided by the Scottish Government and administered by National Museums Scotland, contributes to the acquisition of objects for the collections of Scottish museums, galleries, specialist libraries, archives and other similar institutions open to the public. The Fund can help with acquisitions in most collecting areas including objects relating to the arts, literature, history, natural sciences, technology, industry and medicine. Decisions on grant applications are made following consultation with curatorial staff at National Museums Scotland, the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland who provide expert advice to the Fund.

Funding

The annual grant from the Scottish Government for 2020/21 was £150,000. During the year, the NFA made 27 payments totalling £86,354 to 17 organisations. This included payment of grants which had been offered but not yet claimed at the end of the previous financial year. The total purchase value of the objects to which the Fund contributed was £215,354. On 31 March 2021, a further 13 grants with a total value of £49,172 had been committed but not yet paid.

The NFA supported acquisitions for collections across Scotland, covering museum services in 13 of Scotland’s 32 local authority areas, including nine local authority museum services, six independent museums and two university collections.

Applications received

During the year the Fund received 35 new applications. We aim to give a decision within fifteen working days; this was achieved for 86% of applications (allowing time for four applicants who were required to provide additional information). Four successful applications failed because applicants were outbid at auction. Five of the acquisitions supported by the NFA were also supported by Art Fund.

The average grant value was £3,198, higher than the figure of £2,883 for the previous year, while the average value of grants per organisation was £5,080, down on the previous year’s figure of £6,894. The table below shows the distribution of funds by value of individual grants. The second table shows the distribution of grants by amount awarded to individual organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of grant</th>
<th>2018/19</th>
<th>2019/20</th>
<th>2020/21</th>
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<tr>
<td>Over £20,000</td>
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<td>Less than £500</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of grant</th>
<th>2018/19</th>
<th>2019/20</th>
<th>2020/21</th>
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Covid-19 pandemic

NFA staff switched to working remotely at the start of the first Covid-19 lockdown in late March 2020 and continued to accept applications throughout the financial year that followed. We are grateful for the support of our colleagues at the National Galleries of Scotland and the National Library of Scotland who, together with curatorial staff at National Museums Scotland, continued to provide expert advice on applications. We experienced a slow start to the year during the first lockdown when staff in many Scottish museums were furloughed. While applications picked up later in the year, we received fewer applications than normal (35 compared with 50 in 2019/20). This was partly due to a decrease in Treasure Trove allocations while staff were unable to access finds and hold in-person meetings of the Scottish Archaeological Finds Allocation Panel (SAFAP). We have been greatly encouraged by the determination of staff in museums throughout Scotland to protect our shared heritage by continuing to develop their collections despite the many obstacles and complexities experienced throughout this difficult period. Several collections sought to document the defining experiences of this extraordinary year by pursuing acquisitions which reflected the impact of the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement.

Special Funding Scheme

In August 2020 we launched a Special Funding Scheme in response to a decrease in both the number and value of applications to the National Fund for Acquisitions in recent years. Our NFA survey in 2018 identified lack of local funding as the main barrier to applying to the Fund with most respondents having either no dedicated budget for acquisitions or very limited funds. The pressure on local budgets has been exacerbated by the pandemic with the result that many local museums are struggling to develop their collections. The new funding strand considers applications for grants of up to 100% to encourage and support museums which are unable to raise sufficient match funding to enable them to apply to the NFA. The scheme runs alongside the normal funding stream which offers grants of up to 50% of purchase price to museums which can contribute from their own budgets or identify other funding sources. We awarded the first grant under the new scheme to community museum Shetland Textile Museum for four pieces by contemporary textile designers working in Shetland. Between August and March, we received 15 applications to the scheme and paid nine grants worth £16,469 to six organisations. Two applicants were outbid at auction and a further four grants worth £3,084 had been offered but not yet paid on 31 March 2021. We are continuing to run the scheme throughout financial year 2021/22 to ensure that all Accredited museums in Scotland can have the opportunity to benefit from the National Fund for Acquisitions regardless of pressure on local budgets, enabling them to develop their collections and create new displays and visitor engagement as their venues reopen to the public following lockdown.

Acquisitions supported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number of grants</th>
<th>Amount of grant £</th>
<th>% of total grant paid</th>
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<tr>
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<td>67,101</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maritime history</td>
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Fine art

A total of 14 grants worth £67,101 were awarded to nine organisations for the acquisition of fine art.

The Hunterian acquired an oil painting on canvas, *Neidpath Castle*, c1770, by Jacob More (1740–1793). More’s early career included spells as an apprentice goldsmith, decorative housepainter and theatre stage-set painter before concentrating on landscape painting. In this early work More explored the picturesque possibilities of the landscape, one of the first Scottish artists to do so. He studied in London under Richard Wilson (1712/3–1782) before travelling to Rome where he established himself as a leading landscape painter. The painting is an important addition to the Hunterian’s collection of 18th-century Scottish art, including landscapes by Alexander Nasmyth (1758–1840) and Alexander Runciman (1736–1785) which were also acquired with NFA support.

Leisure and Culture Dundee acquired two portraits by George Chinnery (1774–1852) depicting Captain James Neish and his wife Mrs Katherine Ann Neish. As master of the vessel that imported the first jute from India to Dundee, Captain Neish is a significant figure in the history of the city; by the end of the 19th century, most of Dundee’s working population was employed in the jute industry. He left Dundee for India in 1807 and worked as a free mariner licensed by the East India Company. In 1826 he took command of the Fort William which was owned by the Indian businessman Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. It was on this vessel that he imported the first jute to Dundee in around 1832. By 1835, jute imported from Kolkata was being made into yarn in Dundee where it overtook the flax and linen markets. Mrs Neish travelled with her husband; their two daughters were born in Kolkata and their son was born at sea aboard the Fort William at Macau. Katherine Neish’s father, a headmaster, was known as the ‘Dominie of Dundee’ while her uncle, Sir James Wylie, served as an army doctor and court physician to successive Russian heads of state. Captain Neish retired around 1838 and built a house on the Tay, named Fort William, which is now the home of the Royal Tay Yacht Club. He died in 1867 and Katherine died the following year. The family’s pride in their maritime history is demonstrated in their memorial in Dundee’s Western Cemetery which bears a carving of Captain Neish’s clipper sailing up the Hooghly River in West Bengal. The paintings join Leisure & Culture Dundee’s Recognised Collection of fine art, including a portrait of the Neish children by Sir Daniel MacNee (1806–1882), and enhance their strong collection of objects associated with the jute industry.
Following the acquisition of the Neish portraits, an opportunity arose to acquire Captain Neish’s seaman’s chest and we were delighted to support the acquisition with a grant from the Special Funding Scheme. Unlike an ordinary seaman’s chest, this oak campaign chest is a substantial piece of furniture with several storage sections, lockable drawers with brass handles and a fold-down writing surface. The chest can be separated into three sections to facilitate transport and installation on board. It is believed to have been used by Captain Neish on the Fort William and will be displayed with the portraits at The McManus: Dundee’s Art Gallery and Museum.

The National Trust for Scotland purchased a portrait by Philip de László (1869–1937) at auction in Paris, at a cost of just under £89,000. The sitter, Lorna Woodroffe Lang, served as a Red Cross nurse at one of the family homes, Stoodley Knowle, where her father, Colonel Burn, was MP for Torquay. The house was a hospital for wounded officers during the First World War and to her family’s dismay, Lorna eloped with an officer in 1916, shortly after the portrait was completed. The resulting family rift meant that the portrait remained with the sitter and her descendants rather than being displayed at Lorna’s childhood home, Fyvie Castle in Aberdeenshire, where it now joins a large and fine collection of family portraits including works by Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787), Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788), George Romney (1734–1802) and Sir Henry Raeburn (1756–1823). De László, a friend of the family, painted Lorna’s father and a posthumous portrait of her elder brother, Arthur, who was killed in action at Ypres in 1914. The de László Archive Trust holds correspondence which provides a detailed account of the progress of the commission, including a letter in which Lorna informed de László of her marriage and confided her parents’ disapproval of the match. Born in Hungary, De László studied in Budapest, Munich and Paris. In 1900 he was awarded the Gold Medal at the Paris International Exhibition for his portrait of Pope Leo XIII. He moved to London in 1907 where he established himself as a society portraitist, in great demand by royal and aristocratic sitters throughout Europe.

West Highland Museum acquired an oil painting on canvas depicting the local landscape, *October in Knoydart*, by Sir David Young Cameron (1865–1945). Cameron had a close connection to the Museum of which he was a member and he helped to raise funds in 1928 by printing from the ‘Strange plate’. This etched copper plate was commissioned as the design for a Jacobite currency from Sir Robert Strange (1721–1792) by Prince Charles Edward Stuart in 1746, on the eve of the Battle of Culloden. It was found abandoned at Loch Laggan after the failure of the uprising and purchased by the Museum in 1928. The painting was acquired for display in the Museum’s Jacobite gallery alongside the Strange plate and two copies of the print which Cameron made from it.
Grants for fine art included 10 awards totalling £29,491 to five organisations for the acquisition of works by contemporary artists. City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries extended their Recognised Collection of Scottish art with the purchase of a portfolio of 29 artists’ prints from the Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop and paintings by Eric Cruikshank (b1975), James Lumsden (b1964) and Michael Craik (b1972). The University of Stirling Art Collection acquired two screenprints by Ciara Phillips (b1976) who studied at Glasgow School of Art and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2014.

In 2018 the NFA supported the Museum of the Royal Regiment of Scotland’s acquisition of three portraits of soldiers of the regiment by Tom McKendrick (b1948). They were created as part of the artist’s Soldiers series in which he set out to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War by painting 100 portraits of men and women who have served their country. In 2020 the NFA supported the acquisition by Clydebank Museum and Art Gallery of a further portrait from the series, depicting 2nd Lieutenant Michelle Ping QVRM MiD and her young daughter. A paramedic and Naval Reservist, Lieutenant Ping was called to serve in Afghanistan where her actions in saving the life of a young soldier under enemy fire earned her a mention in dispatches and the award of the Queen’s Volunteer Reserves Medal. The acquisition is a particularly appropriate one for the Museum; Clydebank, the artist’s home town, is the subject of much of his work and the Soldiers series was exhibited at Clydebank Museum and Art Gallery in 2018–19.

A public callout for donations of objects relating to the pandemic was complemented by targeted purchases for the collection and the Fund supported two of these. Locking Down the Line, an artwork by Gill Russell, was created as part of Covidly Walking, a project initiated in response to the onset of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown. At a time of great anxiety and uncertainty, Russell, in common with many others, found solace in walking and experiencing the natural environment. As she explored the countryside near her home in Aberdeenshire, she found that “eventually faint paths grew from places I had repeatedly walked and crossed over”. The artwork maps these paths and Locking Down the Line marks the halfway point of the project, recording 52 walks over 52 days. Two photographic series by Lee Garson were also acquired: Shopping, which shows shoppers in socially-distanced queues, an activity emblematic of the crisis, and Documentary which captures community activism in a Black Lives Matter protest in Aberdeen city centre.

Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums has been collecting objects which document the city’s experience of both the global pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement.
Reflecting the experience of the pandemic more widely, Glasgow Museums acquired five examples of Indian folk art created in response to Covid-19, part of Glasgow Life’s wider project to document the pandemic both locally and globally. Each work showcases a distinct style of art from a different region of India where rural folk art has traditionally been used to spread awareness within communities. One example, by Apindra Swain from Raghurajpur village in the Puri District of Odisha, contains the message ‘stay home’ spelled out with (masked) human figures in the Oriya pattachitra style. Find out more about this acquisition and the logistical challenges of collecting internationally in the context of a global pandemic in our NFA blog post by Patricia Allan, Curator of World Cultures at Glasgow Museums: nationalfundforacquisitions.wordpress.com/collecting-the-pandemic-covid-folk-art-from-india/

Two further acquisitions by Glasgow Museums reflect their recent collecting strategy which seeks to address gaps in their holdings of visual art by Black artists, creating dialogue around issues of race, diversity and Glasgow’s historic role in the transatlantic slave trade. As part of AfroScots: Revisiting the Work of Black Artists in Scotland through New Collecting, a project in collaboration with freelance curators Mother Tongue which received an Art Fund New Collecting Award, three prints and a film, created between 1990 and 1995, were acquired from the Estate of Maud Sulter (1960–2008). Of Ghanaian and Scottish heritage, Sulter grew up in Glasgow, referring to herself as ‘Glaswegian-Ghanaian’. The works address the legacies of slavery by exploring the collection of African art objects by western museums and were selected for their relevance to Glasgow Museums’ own notable collection of African art.

Empire of Love, 2020, by Camara Taylor, is a series of Zippo lighters engraved with excerpts from key Scottish anti-abolitionist texts, including James Boswell’s 1791 poem No Abolition of Slavery, or the Universal Empire of Love. Taylor’s work explores erased histories and the work of influential Scottish writers who supported the slave trade. Created for the exhibition Domestic Bliss at the Gallery of Modern Art, a building which was once the home of Tobacco Lord, William Cunninghame of Lainshaw, the artwork highlights and explores the narrative of Glasgow’s trade in tobacco and its historic links to transatlantic slavery, empire and colonialism.

Contemporary applied art

Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums acquired a 3D printed porcelain vase created in 2018 by Joan and Jack Hardie. Based in Cumbria and with many years of experience working as traditional potters, in 2014 they began experimenting with printing clay. 3D printers which could work in this way were not commercially available then, so they built their own. Their work is based on natural forms, captured and developed as a digital design which can be printed in wet clay. The printer extrudes very thin coils of soft clay which are pressed down in layers to build the finished piece. These potters continue to explore the potential of this medium, combining art, craft and technology to create their unique forms.

Shetland Textile Museum purchased four pieces from contemporary designers working in Shetland, a tweed length by Andy Ross of Shetland Tweed Company whose clients have included Chanel couture, a tweed blanket by Morwenna Garrick, a Fair Isle yoke jumper by Barbara Cheyne and a beaded lace wrap by Catherine Jacobson, an updated version of Shetland’s famous lace knitting. Each piece demonstrates a modern interpretation of Shetland’s strong weaving and knitting traditions, extending the Museum’s important historic collections to show how the industry is developing in the 21st century.

Treasure Trove

The Covid-19 pandemic severely curtailed Treasure Trove activity and allocations with only four grants worth £1,623 paid during the period of this report. They included a medieval penning of Olav III of Norway, found at Scatness and acquired by Shetland Museum and Archives. Only one other example of this coin is known from Britain, found at the Brough of Birsay in Orkney. It provides important evidence of trade with Norway at a time when Shetland was ruled from Scandinavia. Known as Olaf Kyrre, meaning peaceful, Olaf was present at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in 1066 when his father Harald Hardrada was killed in action. He ruled Norway from 1067 until his own death in 1093.

Other notable acquisitions

The Scottish Maritime Museum acquired at auction an 80-year-old bottle of whisky recovered from the wreck of the SS Politician which ran aground on the Isle of Eriskay in 1941 en route to America with a cargo to raise funds for the war effort. Subsequent attempts by islanders to salvage the whisky inspired Compton Mackenzie’s 1947 novel Whisky Galore! and the popular Ealing Studio comedy of the same title. Find out more about this acquisition and how the Museum is interpreting the story for their audiences in our NFA blog post by Abigail McIntyre, Senior Curator at the Scottish Maritime Museum: nationalfundforacquisitions.wordpress.com/uisage-beatha-galore/

Shetland Museum & Archives acquired a porthole and steering station from the Earl of Zetland which was built by Hall Russell & Co Ltd of Aberdeen in 1939. The vessel served as the passenger and freight service on Shetland’s North Isles route, connecting the islands of Unst, Yell, Fetlar, Whalsay and Skerries until it was replaced in 1975 by a road-ferry service. The items were rescued prior to the boat’s demolition and will enable the Museum to tell the story of a vital transport link for islanders before the introduction of modern car ferries.

Two regimental museums acquired campaign medals awarded to members of their regiment. The Gordon Highlanders Museum purchased at auction a Waterloo medal awarded in 1815 to Private Robert Watt, 1st Battalion, 92nd (Gordon) Highlanders. His Military General Service Medal, already held by the Museum, bears nine clasps which was the maximum number earned by any member of the regiment, reflecting the many campaigns in which he served. Born in Banff, Private Watt was enlisted on 24 May 1794 aged just nine years old, one of the first to join the regiment which was raised earlier that year. Wounded at the Battle of Waterloo, he was discharged from the regiment at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin, on 14 July 1818. The acquisition of the medal will allow the Museum to tell the extraordinary story of this boy soldier who saw service throughout the Egyptian Campaign and the Napoleonic Wars.

The Museum of the Royal Regiment of Scotland acquired a modern British Army campaign medal group awarded to Corporal Corrie Garrow (b1982); the NATO Medal 1994 with ‘Kosovo’ clasp, the Iraq Medal 2003 and the Operational Service Medal 2000 with ‘Afghanistan’ clasp, together with related documents. These are the first campaign medals to be acquired by the Museum and the inclusion of an Afghanistan medal represents the regiment’s biggest operational deployment to date. Corporal Garrow enlisted in the British Army in 1999 and served with the Black Watch where he saw action in Iraq before being transferred to the newly created Royal Regiment of Scotland in 2006. He was twice wounded on active service, on the second occasion being hit in the head by a Rocket Propelled Grenade in Afghanistan, sustaining wounds so severe that he was medically discharged in August 2009. Legal restrictions on the sale of medals by serving soldiers and the tendency to retain medals following service mean that contemporary medals rarely appear on the market. This medal group tells an emotive and deeply personal story of one soldier’s service and the impact of the life-changing injuries he sustained; as such they represent a significant acquisition for the Museum.
### Grants Paid 2020–2021

**Treasure Trove acquisition**

**Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museums**
- Photographs, *Shopping and Documentary*, 2020, by Lee Garson (Special Funding Scheme)  
  - £800
- Artwork, *Locking Down the Line*, 2020, by Gill Russell (Special Funding Scheme)  
  - £692
- 3d printed porcelain *Flame Vase*, 2018, by Joan and Jack Hardie (Special Funding Scheme)  
  - £324
- Silver *Wave Hoop* pendant and earrings by Megan Falconer (Special Funding Scheme)  
  - £216

**Culture Perth and Kinross**
- Early Bronze Age axehead from Blairgowrie; Iron Age tankard handle from Milnathort; Roman vessel mount from St Fillans; and medieval strap end from Kinclaven  
  - £138

**East Lothian Council Museums Service**
- Roman nummus and a cannonball fragment from Cockenzie and Port Seton and medieval harness pendant from Haddington  
  - £70

**Fife Cultural Trust**
- Hoard of 14 Roman denarii from Lindores; medieval sword pommel from Dunino; medieval harness pendant from Balmerino; two medieval seal matrices from Burntisland and St Andrews; papal bullas of Sixtus IV and Paul II from St Andrews; and medieval to post-medieval assemblage from Crail (Special Funding Scheme)  
  - £1,090

**Glasgow Life**
- Four artworks by Maud Sulter: three photographic prints, *Langston knew Paris well; Gwendolyn Bennett in Paris was homesick for New York; and Proverbs for Adwoa*, and artist’s film, *Plantation* (Supported by Art Fund)  
  - £12,750
- Five artworks on the theme of the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020, by Indian folk artists  
  - £1,107
- Artwork, *Empire of Love*, 2020, by Camara Taylor  
  - £435

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**City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries**
- Portfolio of 29 artist’s prints from the Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop  
  - £5,427
- Three oil paintings on paper, *Untitled I, Untitled II* and *Untitled III*, 2019, by Eric Cruikshank  
  - £1,980
- Two acrylic paintings on canvas, *Fugue (17/11)* and *Fugue (30/11)*, 2011, by James Lumsden  
  - £950
  - £750

**Clydebank Museum and Art Gallery (West Dunbartonshire Council)**
- Watercolour, acrylic and pastel, *Portrait of Michelle Ping, 2nd Lieutenant, QVRM, MiD, Royal Naval Reserve, and Ellena Rae*, 2018, by Tom McKendrick  
  - £1,000
### The Gordon Highlanders Museum

Waterloo medal, 1815, awarded to Private Robert Watt, 1st Battalion, 92nd (Gordon) Highlanders

£2,447

### Leisure and Culture Dundee

Pair of oil paintings, *Portrait of Captain James Neish* and *Portrait of Mrs Katherine Ann Neish*, by George Chinnery

£6,110

Oak seaman's chest believed to have belonged to Captain James Neish (Special Funding Scheme)

£3,318

### Museum of the Royal Regiment of Scotland

Campaign medal group (Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan) awarded to Corporal C R Garrow, Royal Regiment of Scotland

£496

### National Trust for Scotland (Fyvie Castle)

Oil on canvas, *Portrait of Lorna Marsali Woodroffe Lang, née Forbes-Leith*, 1916, by Philip de László (Supported by Art Fund)

£20,000

### Scottish Maritime Museum

Bottle of whisky recovered from the wreck of the SS *Politician* together with associated items including the diving helmet used in the recovery (Special Funding Scheme)

£7,579

### Shetland Museum and Archives

Porthole and steering station from the *Earl of Zetland* (Special Funding Scheme)

£1,700

Medieval penning of Olav III of Norway, c1065–1080

£325

### Shetland Textile Museum

Four textiles by contemporary designers: tweed blanket by Morwenna Garrick, woven wrap/tweed length by Shetland Tweed Company, Fair Isle yoke jumper by Barbara Cheyne and beaded lace wrap by Catherine Jacobson (Special Funding Scheme)

£750

### University of Glasgow, The Hunterian

Oil on canvas, *Neithpath Castle*, c1770, by Jacob More (Supported by Art Fund)

£5,000

### University of Stirling Art Collection

Two screenprints, *Eros and Psyche* and *Make It Last*, 2018, by Ciara Phillips (Supported by Art Fund)

£4,400

### West Highland Museum

Oil on canvas, *October in Knoydart*, by Sir David Young Cameron (Supported by Art Fund)

£6,500

**Total**

£86,354
National Fund for Acquisitions

Managed by National Museums Scotland
Funded by the Scottish Government

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Cover: Oil on canvas, Portrait of Mrs Katherine Ann Neish, by George Chinnery. © Dundee Art Galleries and Museums.