

# Making real changes in collections development

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Curator Edith Ojo in front of Aso-oke, a Celebration of Style display case. Credit: James Pike, Royal Pavilion & Museums, Brighton & Hove

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Understanding the impact of our Collecting Cultures programme, and a look ahead to our new campaign, Dynamic Collections.

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[Collecting Cultures Evaluation Report](#) 364.56 KB

From 2008 to 2019 we invested more than £8million in 45 long-term collections acquisition projects through two rounds of our Collecting Cultures programme.

The programme – aimed at museums, libraries and archives – intended to:

- support the development and use of collections
- improve the professional knowledge and skills of staff
- increase the [resilience](#) of the funded organisations

We've recently completed an [evaluation of the second round of Collecting Cultures](#), which saw £5.1m awarded to 23 projects.

We are building on the knowledge gained from Collecting Cultures to develop our Dynamic Collections campaign.

*Melissa Strauss, Interim Head of Museums Libraries Archives Policy, The National Lottery Heritage Fund*

The report found that alongside the aims above, our support also:

- contributed to **real changes in collecting policy and practice**, and wider organisational developments
- led to skills and knowledge development for volunteers and members of the public who took part in collecting decisions and interpretation
- helped forge connections between collecting institutions, artists, collectors and dealers, and helped raise collectors' profiles



Comic book artist Jamie Smart leading a talk. Credit: The Cartoon Museum

## Organisations making change

**Jane Austen's House** decided to only collect items connected with people Austen herself knew – and to rehome items that did not fit this requirement.

The Robots project helped the **Science Museum Group** to establish an effective process for digitising its collections.

[Royal Pavilion & Museums Trust Brighton & Hove](#) developed a diverse collecting panel of specialist advisers for its Fashioning Africa project – an approach it has committed to in all future collections projects.

## Learning and creating together

The **Museum of London's** Beyond Documentary project included a significant volunteer and educational element, focusing on young people aged 16-24.

**Birmingham Museums Trust** involved communities, artists, curators and experts in events and consultation. This led to more than 1,800 new objects being purchased or donated.

[The Cartoon Museum](#) involved volunteers in every aspect of its Comic Creators project. One social media volunteer went on to get a paid museum job.

## Building connections

[Saving Treasures, Telling Stories in Wales](#) transformed relationships between detectorists and local museums.

For its In a Different Light project, **Autograph ABP** used a third-party negotiator to help improve relationships with older photographers who had experienced poor treatment and institutional racism.

**The Scott Polar Research Institute** developed new and existing relationships with collectors and the descendants of those involved in the Shackleton expedition, and was able to convert loans to donations.

## Championing dynamic collections

Melissa Strauss, the Heritage Fund Interim Head of Museums Libraries Archives Policy, said: "These projects have developed collections to better reflect diverse communities and engage new audiences in a really exciting way.

"They also developed skills in staff and volunteers, new partnerships and community collaboration, with a real long-term impact.

"We are building on the knowledge gained from Collecting Cultures in our new Dynamic Collections campaign. We will support museums, archives and historic libraries to take a creative and sustainable approach to developing, managing and using collections. We also want to see greater public involvement and relevance to a wider range of people."

## Find out more

[Find out more about Dynamic Collections.](#)

## **Our research and evaluation**

We regularly conduct research to discover what is happening in the heritage sector, and we evaluate our work to better understand the change we are making. [Read more of our insight.](#)