

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

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.](#)