

## **NATIONAL STRATEGY 2010 - 2015**

### **May 2010**

The National Strategy 2010-2015 reflects the changing context within which the Gallery works and the need for an approach to the National Programme that is active, imaginative and maximises impact by building on successful activity to date. At the heart of the Strategy is the desire for the Collection to be accessible to audiences around the country. The means of increasing knowledge and understanding about people, artists and their stories will be realised in research, learning and interpretation, through both direct access to the works themselves, and through digital means.

The following are key areas in which the Gallery's National Programme contributes to the Gallery's overall aims and objectives:

- Enabling the Gallery to respond to national agendas
- Allowing experimental and developmental partnership activity
- Developing imaginative approaches to audiences
- Sharing the national Collection with audiences around the country
- Fostering wider understanding and knowledge about portraits

Partnership working is paramount to the delivery of these aims and objectives and how the Gallery seeks new partners and continues to develop current partnerships will be the key to the Strategy's success. It is also important that partnership opportunities are 'two-way' with gains to the national Collection as well as to partner museums and galleries.

The key criteria for partnership and inclusion in the Gallery's National Strategy that apply across the board are:

- That partnerships have shared aims and objectives, and clear outputs and/or outcomes
- That there is a net gain to the understanding of portraits and portrait practice as it relates to the national collection
- That partnerships are properly planned and resourced
- That activity will be forward looking in approach and vision
- That knowledge gained will be widely shared
- The priority areas for collaboration (with the exception of long term regional partners) will be the North East Region and the South West Region

The suggested Strategy proposes that all national activity is grouped within three dynamic themes:

- Portrait Locations (Where can Portraits be seen?)
- How Portraits are Understood (What is Portraiture?)
- Portrait Future

#### **Portrait Locations (Where can Portraits be seen?)**

This strand will look to make connections for portraits of national importance where they have a resonance and relevance to locality. This may be defined as connections to local audiences, historical contexts, places of influence, or significance of the sitter to a local activity or enterprise.

In order to fit within this theme, activity will be judged against local significance and what it will bring to local audiences. As with all three themes, specific activities will explore new approaches to portraiture and how it is understood by different audiences. There will be a particular emphasis on knowledge feeding back into the national collection.

Existing activity that comes within this area:

- Unique Partnerships with Country Houses
- Work with National Trust, Bodelyyddan Castle Trust and potentially English Heritage
- Long term loans
- Effective Collections Scheme

**How Portraits are Understood (What is Portraiture?)**

This strand will explore questions about portraits and portraiture through collaborative approaches and partnerships. It is the area in which new and imaginative initiatives can be explored and developed through internal and external collaboration. Activity in this area will be initiated as a response to particular circumstances and will most usually be project funded. It is also the area in which the Gallery can respond to national agendas for the sector and act as a conduit for developments in portraiture in the UK. New thinking and types of collaboration come within this area and come with a responsibility to promote equal and reciprocal partnerships.

In this theme, activity will need to drive forward new approaches to portraiture and how it is understood through use of external opportunities or circumstances. How the activity responds to the needs of audiences will be paramount. The level of collaboration will need to be agreed and understood by all partners and the activity will need to fit within the Gallery's priority geographic areas, or if not, have clear reasons for falling outside them. It may also include projects initiated with partners being showcased at the Gallery in London.

Existing activity that comes within this area:

- Subject Specialist Network
- Strategic Commissioning Programme
- Display and Learning Collaborations South West and North East Museums Hub partnerships

**Future Portraits**

This third strand responds to future events, and questions how programme activities can influence the future development of portraiture. It responds to others' activity, promoting people and artists through exhibition loan requests or professional support. It also includes the 'future' for programme developed within the Gallery which will have a wider appeal. It is an opportunity to examine critically how the Gallery can develop its touring programme and activities.

Activity will need to look ahead and feed into the development of contemporary portraiture. The focus will be on how audiences perceive a sitter or artist, the process of making portraits, and the context in which they are seen. How portraits on loan help a regional collection will be a key question in determining this activity.

Existing activity that would come within this area:

- Touring Exhibitions
- Portrait Prizes
- Short term loans
- Professional support

- Touring exhibitions and displays.

**Monitoring**

The internal National Programmes Meeting will review new proposals and monitor existing activity.

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