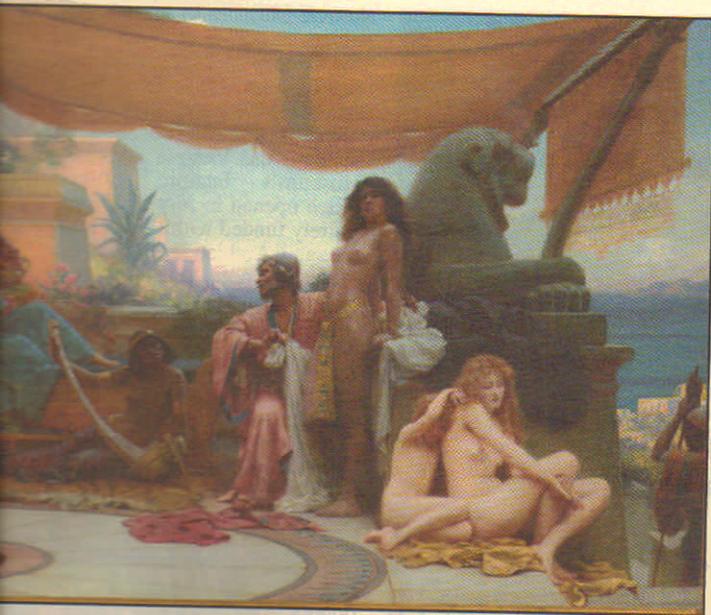


United Kingdom

How to curb disposals

Plans for greater safeguards against rash sales



Normand, sold by a regional museum

regulation is to create an expert panel that would review proposed deaccessions, an idea explored in detail by Edward Manisty and Julian Smith in the journal *Art Antiquity and Law*. Such a panel would act along the lines of the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art (see box below).

Minister for culture Ed Vaizey, who is due to deliver a keynote speech at a seminar at the National Gallery in London next May to discuss deaccessioning, said: "It is primarily for museum professionals to navigate through these complex issues, but Government has an interest in the wider public policy context."

So is an expert panel needed? Maurice Davies thinks not: "The last thing we want is another committee. And it would require legislation." Diane Lees, the director general of the Imperial War Museum, who is also due to speak is also doubtful. "Arbitration is more helpful than a big mechanism for exceptional examples."

Bendor Grosvenor, another planned speaker at the seminar, who is a director of Philip Mould and a former advisor to the Conservative Party on museums, supports the idea: "Government would be well placed to look at setting up an expert panel," he said, adding: "If you had a panel it could help regional museums make decisions—and to get best value for sales."

Fred Hohler, who set up the Public Catalogue Foundation to document the nation's collection of paintings, said: "These collections are assets and they could be economic assets [to cities] if they were enhanced." He also warned: "It's not just the Titians, Veroneses and Botticellis, it is the 'unimportant' paintings [that should be protected] that are going to become increasingly important as a visual record of the world before photography—even more so when you add watercolours and drawings."

Javier Pes

Temple of nation's art

Gallery planned in London mansion

LONDON. A new gallery to showcase art from UK regional collections is to be set up in the extraordinary mansion built by Lord Astor in 1895. Two Temple Place, set beside the Thames in the City of London, is one of the capital's hidden architectural gems. Designed in a neo-Renaissance style, its interior includes an imposing great hall and other grand rooms which will provide exhibition space.

The Bulldog Trust, the charitable organisation that owns the building, is planning the inaugural show in October 2011 about William Morris. Loans will come from the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow, north-east London, which is closing in April 2011 for a 15-month refurbishment and extension. On 27 September it was announced that the Heritage Lottery Fund had granted the Morris gallery £1.5m towards the £5m project.

The idea for a gallery to display highlights of Britain's regional collections (those outside central London) was originally put forward by Fred Hohler, the chairman of the Public Catalogue Foundation, a charity which is publishing a series of catalogues on publicly-owned paintings. Earlier this year he proposed the conversion of the former Theatre Museum in Covent Garden as the venue, as *The Art Newspaper* reported (February, p5). However, this failed to materialise because of planning issues.

The Bulldog Trust supports other charities with funding and



Two Temple Place, a hidden gem of high Victorian design

expertise. It was set up by banker Richard Hoare in 1983, and bought Temple Place in 1999. The building's interior is now being adapted for exhibitions, with upgraded lighting, environmental controls and security. The rooms are currently let out for corporate events to raise funds, and this function will continue.

Besides backing the Morris exhibition, the trust hopes to hold annual shows which will run for three to four months. Admission will be free, so finding sponsorship will be another challenge, as it is proving difficult to generate in the present economic climate. The focus will probably be on attracting individual donors.

David Barrie, the former director of the Art Fund, is the curatorial advisor for the project. Martin Bailey

Courtauld enhances its endowment

LONDON. The Courtauld Institute of Art in London has raised just over £7m towards the £8.25m it needs to secure matched funding of £2.75m from the Higher Education Funding Council of England. It needs to find the remaining £1.25m by next July. The grant is part of a scheme to raise awareness of how vital private philanthropic support is to British educational institutions—the Courtauld relies on donations for nearly a third of its income. If the money is raised it will go towards the institute's endowment, which it wants to increase to £50m. M.B.

for reforming museum deaccessioning

"Grade II" only when compelling circumstances were demonstrated. Unlisted items might be sold with minimum formality.

Supervisory committee

A supervisory committee would be established which would report to the Secretary of State with whom ultimate decision-making would reside. The committee would meet on a regular basis to discuss proposals for deaccessioning.

authorised, prima facie, unless a purchaser within the sector emerged to acquire at market value, disposal would take place on the open market.

Protecting the proceeds

The proceeds of deaccessions would be ring-fenced to ensure they are spent enhancing the collection and not used to plug

proceeds to be applied solely towards the enhancement and expansion of the collection. A similar regime governing independent museums and semi-public bodies which are members of the Museums' Association would be enshrined in revised ethical guidance. Compliance by bodies falling outside either of these two

Pains and penalties

Again, following the planning precedent, these would be introduced to secure compliance with the new listing code. There would be financial and other criminal penalties, combined with additional sanctions involving enforcement action and injunctive relief.