

Museum Essentials: Working with Collections

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Contemporary collecting for social history museums and National museums in particular is crucial.

That's how we keep our collections relevant, up to date and current.

The role of a museum is more than just to preserve the dead past under glass.

They need to adopt contemporary collecting policies and practices as part of their curatorial work.

After the First World War we started to bring in material from the conflict into the collection.

Although we perhaps tend to think of contemporary collecting as a new phenomena, we've been collecting the contemporary for over a century.

As a contemporary curator, I kind of almost see myself as a journalist in residence here as well, in that I've got to look out for stories, be at events.

We did a lot of collecting around the Welsh response to Donald Trump's inauguration, the Women's March, and it's taken the museum beyond the four walls.

A lot of the material from rallies and events is quite ephemeral, they may not make it into the collection at all.

It's a resource that I can accession if it's needed and if it's deemed to be significant.

We find that people really do embrace the idea of leaving their mark in the gallery.

As counterpoints to some of the historic collections we have on display, we often have contemporary questions that mirror some of the issues that are reflected in the collection.

We archive the content every week, so people's responses to the materials that they see in the gallery become part of the collection as well.

So, the idea is to collect history with the people of Wales rather than for the people of Wales.

It's constantly evolving, constantly changing and that's what makes being a curator so exciting really.