Ministry of Defence

Ministry of Defence
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Our Ref: FOI2015/04979

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30 June 2015

Dear ██████████████

Thank you for your email of 8th June 2015 requesting the following information:

"1. What is the total number of works of art owned by your organisation?

2. What is the total insurance value of these works of art?

3. How many of the works of art that you own are on public display?

4. For the five most valuable items, where the data is readily available:

a) If purchased by the organisation, what was its purchase price, year of purchase and reason for purchase

b) What is its current value?"

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence, and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

1. The MOD Art Collection currently comprises 2145 items, including fine art, prints, maps, photographs, manuscripts, sculptures, furniture and clocks.

2. As government property (and in line with other national collections), the MOD Art Collection is not insured as a whole. See also the response to 4, below.

3. A number of items are on loan to institutions on a long term basis for the purpose of public display. There are 178 items with the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (which includes the Royal Observatory). 173 items are with the Royal Yacht Britannia Trust. Three items are with the National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth. One item is with the Fusilier Museum, Bury. The paintings in the collection can be viewed online at www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/galleries/locations/ministry-of-defence-5995. In some circumstances, other items in the collection can also be viewed by appointment.

4. Like other national collections, the MOD Art Collection is not treated as a financial asset. The current monetary value of a work of art can be accurately assessed only at the time of purchase or sale by professional valuation. The Collection is not actively traded; it would not be justifiable expenditure of public funds to maintain current valuations for the Collection as a whole. Therefore, we do not hold information that identifies the five most valuable items in the collection.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that many of the items in the MOD Art Collection are displayed across the Defence Estate, and some other government departments (Cabinet Office – 26 Whitehall, Department for International Development – 22 Whitehall) where these buildings were previously part of the Defence Estate. Such buildings are open to the public from time to time, for example as port of the Open House London weekend scheduled for this year on 19th and 20th September. More information can be found at www.openhouselondon.org.uk.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, 1st Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, http://www.ico.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

DDC Secretariat Parliamentary