In 1881, aged 81, Thomas Holloway embarked on a two-year project to buy an art collection for his new college for women. He amassed a superb collection of British 19th-century paintings including William Powell Frith’s iconic The Railway Station (1862) and John Everett Millais’ psychologically intense Princes in the Tower (1878). These works are housed in the College’s magnificent Picture Gallery. When Bedford College merged with Royal Holloway the College inherited Lady Herringham’s eclectic art collection with works by leading women artists, significant Indian miniatures and early 19th-century Japanese wood block prints.

These two collections form the basis of the College’s art collections, which also include sculpture, furniture from the original interior of Royal Holloway, artefacts relating to both Royal Holloway and Bedford Colleges, and a number of contemporary paintings.

The Picture Gallery is accessible through tours and open days. Throughout the year there are also talks given by the curator on a variety of works in the collection. Items in store can be viewed by making an appointment with the curator.