

**XXX Museum of Art  
XXX College/University  
Collections Management Policy**

**XXX, 20XX**  
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## **I. GENERAL COMMENTS**

The XXX Museum of Art, XXX College/University (the “Museum”) is committed to the development of a focused collection of works on paper with particular emphasis upon historical and contemporary prints and photographs. The Museum, as caretaker of a public sculpture garden of modernist works, limits collecting of sculpture to objects intended for outdoor display and ones that fit within its current preservation capacity.

## **II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION OF COLLECTION**

### **A. Mission Statement**

(Insert Mission Statement Here)

### **B. Vision Statement**

(Insert Vision Statement Here)

### **C. Description of Collection**

(Insert Collection Description Here)

## **III. CODE OF ETHICS**

This Code of Ethics pertains to all staff, board members, and volunteers of the Museum. Individuals having an affiliation with the Museum are expected to be familiar with and to abide by the Code of Ethics adopted by the Museum.

### **A. Responsibility to the Collection**

The Museum’s mission statement acknowledges that the Permanent Collection is a fundamental element of the Museum’s programs and functions. The possession of these works of art incurs legal, social, and ethical obligations to provide proper storage, management, and care for the Permanent Collection and associated documentation. For these reasons, the Museum is responsible for assuring that the Permanent Collection is aligned with the Museum’s mission, that its growth is balanced with available resources, and that the appropriate allocation is made of personnel, facilities, equipment, services, and support to address the on-going needs of the Permanent Collection.

### **B. Discretion and Confidentiality**

Individuals associated with the Museum have unique responsibilities related to maintaining the Museum’s image, trust, and credibility to the public. For this reason affiliated individuals must 1) represent properly the Museum and their position when interacting with others; 2) exercise professional discretion about activities and concerns of the Museum; and 3) hold in confidence relevant information concerning matters such as the collection, financial information, personnel, and security.

### **C. Conflict of Interest**

Individuals having an affiliation with the Museum must avoid situations that may be construed as a conflict of interest. Concerns about potential conflicts of interest should be conveyed to the Director. The purpose is to prevent the actual or perceived conflict between interested parties and the objectives of the Museum. Potential conflicts of interest include: 1) personal collecting within the curatorial area of the Museum’s collection; 2) using Museum affiliation, Museum resources, or the influence of one’s position for personal benefit, or solely to serve the interests

of persons outside the Museum; 3) placing the Museum in a situation that compromises its missions, policies, functions, practices, or philosophies; 4) placing the Museum in a situation where it competes unduly with outside parties; and 5) participating in employment that compromises one's ability to perform in a timely and professional manner.

#### IV. DEFINITIONS

Accessioning is the process used to accept an object into the Permanent Collection

Accessions Committee is the standing art acquisitions committee of the XXX Museum, the committee is advisory to the director and meets, at least, twice a year (late fall, late spring).

Collections Committee is comprised of the Director, Manager of Exhibitions and Facilities, Registrar and Senior Curator.

Collections Staff is comprised of the Director, Associate Curator, Manager of Exhibitions and Facilities, Registrar and Senior Curator of the Museum.

Custody Item is an object that is not owned by the Museum, but is left temporarily in the custody of the Museum under circumstances constituting a loan; for example, for attribution, identification, examination or for consideration of accession.

Deaccessioning is the process used to permanently remove an object from the Permanent Collection.

Deed of Gift is a contract that transfers ownership of an object or objects from a donor to the Museum.

The XXX Director is the title of the Director of the museum and is hereinafter referred to as the "Director"

Loan is the temporary transfer of work from the Permanent Collection or a temporary transfer of a work of art to the Museum for Museum purposes such as exhibitions or research. A loan does not involve a change in ownership.

Trustees of XXX College/University: The Board of Trustees of XXX College/University establishes policies for the governance of the College/University and is responsible for general oversight of the management of the institution. The major responsibilities of the Board include: 1) advancement of the College/University; 2) protection and enhancement of assets; 3) preservation of institutional integrity; 4) Board/President relations; and 5) functioning of the Board.

Permanent Collection is a term used to designate all works of art carried on the accession records of the Museum, and owned by the Trustees of XXX College/University.

#### V. ACQUISITIONS AND ACCESSIONING OF ART OBJECTS

##### A. Criteria for Acquisitions

1. Objects acquired by the Museum must complement the existing collection or substantially offer a wholly field for the collections; fill presently existing gaps in the collection; and are relevant to and consistent with purposes and programs of the Museum.

2. The Museum is committed to acquire only works for which it can provide proper storage and care.
3. The Museum shall not accept any item if substantial doubt exists about the donor's ownership of the item or the donor's ability to transfer legal title.
4. The Museum will make efforts to obtain information concerning the object's history of ownership. When an object is of foreign origin, research will be conducted to ensure it has not been illegally imported into the United States and that there are no legal or ethical considerations which would make its accession undesirable.
5. An object must be of museum quality and proven to be authentic beyond a reasonable doubt.
6. Prior to the Accessions Committee meeting, the Museum's registrar and curators will note to the director any conservation, repair, display and maintenance costs for consideration in determining whether or not the work is acceptable of acquisition. Outside conservators may be consulted for this purpose.

## **B. Method of Accessioning**

It is the Director's responsibility to add works of art to the collection and his/her decision for acceptance is firmly guided by the Museum's mission and strategic plan and its declared collection goals. The Director and Senior Curator share responsibility for the collections enhancement and expansion. Additionally, the Director has a standing Accessions Committee to offer advice and serve as a sounding board for decisions. When appropriate, the Director and Senior Curator will consult with experts, scholars, legal counsel, and other persons as he/she may see fit.

Potential acquisition to the Museum shall be referred first to the Director or Senior Curator then go before the Accessions Committee for review. If the item is delivered to the Museum, the Registrar shall treat it as a custody item pending final action.

### **1. Donations**

- a. It is the general policy of the Museum that no object may be accepted unless its ownership by the Museum will be free of all restrictions and conditions. It is recognized that exceptional circumstances may arise in which strict enforcement of this general policy would not be in the best interests of the Museum. Any such exception must however, have the advance consent of the Director with the advice of the Senior Curator and Accessions Committee. Every attempt should be made to hold restrictions or conditions to a practical minimum and to obtain the consent of the donor that the restrictions will terminate after a finite time limit. Under no circumstances will the Museum agree to conditions requiring the retention or display of an object or collection in perpetuity. If any restrictions or conditions are accepted, they must be in writing executed by both the donor and the Museum Director on the Deed of Gift and must be included in the object's records.
- b. An item offered under express provision that it may be sold for the benefit of the Museum should first be considered for accession into the Permanent Collection. The Museum may accept gifts of works of art specifically for purposes of sale, while such donations are treated as tangible property and the proceeds of their sale may be used for any Museum purpose or need. When feasible, such funds generated by sale may also be used for art acquisitions. Regardless, the intent must be made clear in writing at the time of the donation by the donor and Museum.

### **2. Purchases**

The Director may make purchases in consultation with the Senior Curator with funds established and made available in the Museum's annual operating budget and approved by the Office of the Provost. When feasible, these works will be brought to the Advisory Committee for review and recommendation prior to actual purchase.

### **3. Bequests**

- a. Objects bequeathed to the Museum are reviewed by the Director and Senior Curator in the same manner as other potential acquisitions.
- b. Upon notification to the Museum that it is a beneficiary under a will, the Registrar shall obtain a copy of the will, or a copy of the section that outlines the bequest, and pictures of the object(s) when possible.
- c. Acceptance of a bequest requires the advice of the Accessions Committee.
- d. Should a bequest not possess sufficient merit for inclusion in the collection, the Museum may request that the bequest be made with full understanding that the object(s) can be sold and the proceeds used to the benefit of the Museum as determined by the Director. In the case of a group of objects, the Museum may accept some and refuse, sell or trade others.
- e. Proposals for potential bequest are to be referred to the Director and Senior Curator for review.

### **C. Credit to Donors**

When a work of art is accessioned into the Permanent Collection of the Museum whether by donation, purchase with donated funds, or trade, the donor shall be given credit to the extent feasible. The Museum shall endeavor to determine the donor's wishes as to the exact terminology and use of such credit.

## **VI. DEACCESSIONING OF COLLECTION OBJECTS**

The XXX Museum is acutely aware of its role as caretaker of the Permanent Collection for the benefit of the College/University and the Museum's diverse audiences. The Museum normally purchases or accepts donations of works of art with a view of retaining them indefinitely as part of the Permanent Collection, a commitment from which it does not lightly depart.

Deaccessioning works of art for the purpose of refining or enhancing the Permanent Collection is a vital part of the Museum's responsibility to its mission. The philosophy and mechanism for deaccession is as thorough and controlled as for accession. While all proceeds raised from the deaccession of objects from the Permanent Collection will be treated as acquisition funds, deaccession is not to be viewed as a routine method to generate purchase funds, but as an option to be exercised only in rare and very specific instances for purposes of refining or defining the Permanent Collection. The overall quality of the Museum's collection is maintained primarily by accession, not by deaccession.

**A. Criteria for Deaccessioning**

1. The decision to deaccession a work of art should be made based upon consideration of its physical condition, overall quality, and relationship to mission, rather than contemporary trends or fashion, or the personal taste of the institution's current caretakers.
2. It is appropriate to deaccession an item when there exists any reasonable question of continuing ability to preserve or protect it; or when it has deteriorated beyond reasonable usefulness for present or future purposes or activities of the Museum.
3. It is appropriate to deaccession an item when it is clearly unlikely that it can be used or displayed in the foreseeable future, or that it has not reasonable relevance or usefulness for present or future proposed activities of the Museum.
4. It is appropriate to deaccession an item by sale or exchange in order to obtain a similar item of higher quality.

**B. Method of Deaccessioning**

1. A decision for deaccession of any item from the Permanent Collection of the Museum shall be made by the Director in consultation with curators and the Accessions Committee. For objects with a monetary value greater than \$5000, the Director will seek the approval of the Trustees of XXX College/University. Prior to making such decision, the Director may also consult with art dealers, appraisers, experts, scholars, legal counsel, and other persons as the Director may see fit, and shall review and consider the authenticity, quality, condition, and significance of the item, and its appropriateness and contribution to the permanent collection, either presently or in the future.
2. Before any object is deaccessioned from the collection, reasonable efforts should be made to ascertain that the Museum has clear title and is free to do so.
3. The process of deaccession of any item should be conducted in an open and forthright manner. No Museum affiliate, staff member or volunteer, and no College/University affiliate, trustee, faculty, staff or administrator may purchase a deaccessioned work of art from the collection.
4. Appropriate consideration should be given to the feelings of any donor of an item proposed for deaccession, even if no restrictions upon its disposal have been imposed. Wherever possible, the donor should be notified of any such deaccession and should be given an explanation of how the action will benefit the Museum and aid in achievement of its goal.
5. In the event the Museum holds an item subject to specific restrictions, written permission from the donor to release the restrictions must be obtained prior to final action by the Committee.
6. All records on deaccession must be in writing. No such transactions should occur on a verbal basis without written confirmation. All records on deaccession (including correspondence with the donor, and the donor's written acquiescence or refusal) shall be kept and maintained by the Registrar.

**B. Manner of Disposition**

1. Permanent removal and disposition of deaccessioned objects from the collection shall be done in an ethical and legal manner.
2. A recommendation for the method for deaccessioning of an item from the Collection shall be made by the Director and Senior Curator. Each such proposal shall set out the precise method of disposal recommended; if sale is proposed, the price expected and if exchange is proposed, all objects and other considerations to be received in exchange.

3. The choice of method (public auctions, private trade, private sale, etc.) will be handled on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Director and Senior Curator. Financial considerations are not the sole and exclusive consideration in determining the method of disposal.

#### **D. Allocation of Proceeds**

Funds realized through sale or other methods of deaccessioning items should be used exclusively as acquisition funds.

#### **E. Credit to Donors**

1. When a work of art is acquired for the Collection, wholly or partly out of funds realized from the sale or other disposal of deaccessioned items, the names of the original donors, singularly or severally, shall be transferred to the newly-acquired item to the extent feasible.
2. To the extent feasible, all original donors shall be notified of the substituted donor credit, and appropriate record thereof shall be made part of the permanent records of the Museum.

### **VII. CARE AND DOCUMENTATION**

#### **A. General Comments**

1. XXX College/University and the Museum staff are responsible for the care and preservation of the artworks housed on Museum premises for living and future generations.
2. Members of the staff with direct responsibilities for the collection are governed by professional procedures and standards to insure alertness and care in handling, exhibiting, and otherwise caring for the collections.

#### **B. Physical and Environmental Protection**

It is the responsibility of XXX College/University and the XXX Museum staff to insure that the collections are adequately protected against fire, theft, vandalism, natural disasters, and environmental degradation. Whether on exhibition or in storage, precautions must be taken and procedures established to insure their safety. This will be accomplished by the following provisions:

1. Adequate buildings, exhibition and storage facilities to insure safe physical accommodation;
2. Adequate systems (heating, air-conditioning, air filtration, humidity controls) to secure a safe environment;
3. Tight temperature controls (between 68-72° Fahrenheit and relative humidity between 45-55% unless other requirements relating to specific temporary exhibitions are preferable).
4. A security staff and systems to guard against fire, theft, vandalism.

#### **C. Conservation**

Conservation of the collections is accomplished through provision of an annual budget to conduct an ongoing program of preservation, repair, and restoration. Conservation needs will be assessed annually and decisions will be made by the Collections Committee.

#### **D. Handling of Collections**

Collection, loan and custody items within the Museum may be handled only by trained art handlers under the supervision of one of the members of the Collections staff. Normally, the movement of collection items from one place to another is the responsibility of the registrar.

**E. Packing and Shipping**

It is the responsibility of the registrar to supervise packing and shipping works of art, both those belonging to the museum and those borrowed from outside sources.

**F. Location of Objects**

It is the responsibility of the registrar to maintain a system for recording the location of all collection items at all times, whether on exhibition or in storage. If an item is temporarily removed from exhibition, a signed and dated removal form is substituted for the item until it is returned. Only the Collections Staff has the authority to remove a collection item from either the exhibition or storage.

**G. Access to Collections in Storage**

Only the Director, Manager of Exhibitions and Facilities, Registrar, Senior Curator and Security Coordinator have keys and are allowed unlimited unaccompanied access to secure storage areas. Other staff members, interns, and visitors may enter secure storage only when accompanied by an authorized person.

**H. Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**

The Museum does not collect or have in its custody human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony. If any of these objects are found in the collection, the Museum will comply with any and all law regarding these objects.

**I. Provenance**

The provenance research of collection objects is ongoing. The Museum is dedicated to determining the provenance of objects under its care including objects created in Europe prior to the end of World War II. If an object is discovered to have questionable provenance during the aforementioned period, the information will be made public by means including but not limited to listing the object(s) on the XXX Museum website and on the American Association of Museums Nazi-Era Provenance Internet Portal, with which the Museum is registered.

**VIII. COLLECTION RECORDS**

Professional collections management relies heavily upon the development and maintenance of records pertaining to the collections.

**A.** An object file consists of but is not limited to correspondence pertaining to the item, exhibition history, publication history, provenance, photographic documentation, and any other records of the item's use and movement within the Museum or while on loan. Confidential items are documents recording the legal status of the item (Bill of Sale, Deed of Gift, etc.), valuation and insurance records, conservation history, and in some instances donor records and correspondence.

**B.** The object files are the responsibility of the registrar. Access to them is permitted by the registrar.

**C.** Electronic files will be kept on each item in the permanent collection. These files may be printed out either completely or selectively. The registrar will have primary responsibility for data entry.

- D. The object files will be maintained by the registrar. They shall not be removed from the museum premises.

#### **VIV. INVENTORIES OF COLLECTIONS**

Although location records and other control methods are useful and necessary, there is no substitute for periodic physical inventories to insure the location and condition of recorded collection items. The registrar will insure that a physical inventory of collection items is conducted as frequently as necessary, but at least once every three years on a rotating schedule.

#### **X. INSURANCE**

It is the policy of the Museum to maintain all-risk fine arts insurance on its collection items in such amounts as shall be determined from time to time by the Director. It the responsibility of the Director and registrar to negotiate and secure adequate fine arts insurance under favorable competitive conditions.

##### **A. Valuation of the Collection**

Initially, collection items will be valued at their fair market value at the time of acquisition. Thereafter, items will be reviewed under the direction of the Senior Curator and Director and collection files will be adjusted accordingly. When an item from the collection is placed on loan, its valuation generally shall be updated at the expense of the borrower.

##### **B. Insurance records**

Insurance records will be maintained by the registrar. One copy shall be stored outside the museum as a security precaution.

##### **C. Claims**

1. Any impending claim or potential liability shall be immediately reported to the Director.
2. A claim shall not be filed with the insurance carrier without first seeking the advice of the Director.
3. The registrar shall assist the Director in filing and processing a claim and notify XXX College/University Department of Risk Management as soon as a claim is filed.

#### **XI. REPRODUCTIONS FEES AND REPRODUCTION RIGHTS**

It is the responsibility of the registrar to develop and maintain a schedule of fees to be charged for reproducing collection objects, supplying photographs and granting reproduction rights. Particular care must be taken in respect to the intellectual property rights (copyright, patent, trademark, or trade secret) with which collection items may be restricted or encumbered.

#### **XII. LOANS**

##### **A. Outgoing Loans**

The Museum lends works of art from its collection to professionally managed museums and institutions within the United States and abroad. The collection is not lent for study or classroom purposes nor for purposes of décor. All loans are approved by the Director for purposes consistent with the best interests of the Museum and at the Museum's convenience. The registrar is responsible for monitoring all outgoing loans of objects in the Permanent Collection. The following procedures shall be followed for outgoing loan requests.

1. No loans will be made directly to individuals.

2. A collection item shall not be loaned if in the opinion of the Collections Committee the loan presents a hazard to the object for reasons including but not limited to: the current condition of the object, inherent fragility, danger presented by transport, or physical shortcomings of the borrowing institution as reflected in their Facilities Report.
3. Upon receipt of a loan request, the collection item shall be reviewed and a condition report completed.
4. If it is determined that the object is in stable condition and can be loaned a Facilities Report shall be obtained from the borrowing institution.
5. The loan agreement form shall be signed by the Director.
6. The borrower will bear all costs, including preparation, shipping and insurance.
7. Wall-to-wall insurance shall be carried on the object(s) and the Museum shall determine whether the Borrower insures the objects or whether the Museum insures them and invoices the Borrower for the premium. A certificate of insurance may be requested at the discretion of the registrar.
8. Transportation arrangements shall be approved by the registrar.
9. Borrowers shall sign an outgoing receipt upon receiving shipment, note any changes in objects' condition, and return one copy to the registrar.
10. Upon return of loan items, the condition shall be recorded and an incoming receipt sent to the borrower.
11. The registrar shall record all outgoing loans in the appropriate collection files and computer database as part of the item's permanent exhibition history.

## **B. Incoming Loans**

The Museum shall not be responsible for preservation and safekeeping of objects on loan beyond that which they exercise for their own collections. The Museum shall not store objects belonging to others that are not required for exhibition, study, or research.

1. A loan agreement shall be completed in duplicate and signed by the Director. One copy is to be retained in the exhibition loan file, the other is sent to the lender.
2. The registrar shall make all arrangements for transportation and provide a facilities report and/or a certificate of insurance if requested by the lender.
3. All incoming shipments of loan items shall be directed to the registrar.
4. The registrar shall oversee all unpacking and shall issue a receipt to the lender and complete a condition report. In the case of long-term loans, the condition reports shall be reviewed at least once per year, with notice of any change in condition sent to the lender.
5. In no event shall the repair or restoration of a work on loan be undertaken without the prior written consent of the lender. When a necessary repair is of such urgency that a verbal consent is accepted, a written confirmation will be sent to the lender immediately.
6. At the conclusion of the loan period, the condition report shall be reviewed and revised if necessary. The registrar shall oversee all packing and shall make all outgoing transportation arrangements. An outgoing receipt shall be sent under separate cover to the lender. This is signed by the lender and returned to the registrar.
7. During the planning and course of the exhibition, the registrar shall maintain loan files distinct from the general exhibition files. These will contain such items as copies of loan forms, bills of lading, receipts, facilities reports, insurance papers and condition reports and be filed in the exhibition archive at the close of the exhibition.

### **XIII. CUSTODY ITEMS**

- A.** The Director and Senior Curator may accept items for study, attribution, identification or other official College/University purposes. An incoming receipt shall be issued to the owner or department for every item thus entering the Museum and an outgoing receipt shall be obtained upon release of the item from the Museum.
  
- B.** Custody items are accepted and held exclusively at the owner's risk; however, the Museum will exercise the same care to these objects as it does objects in its permanent collection. The Museum shall not be responsible for insuring any such item. A written release of all liability, signed by the owner or his authorized agent, shall be obtained at the time any such item is taken into custody by the Museum.