

## **MUSEUM LONDON**

### **BOARD POLICY**

#### ***COLLECTIONS***

##### **Preamble**

Museum London is dedicated to acquiring, conserving, researching, interpreting, promoting, and exhibiting its collections. The purpose of the collections policy is to establish Museum London's guidelines for:

- The methods of acquiring objects, including artifacts, works of art, and articles of vertu for the collections.
- The care of the collections.
- Maintenance of a comprehensive, accessible system of record-keeping for all objects in the collection and being considered for the collection.
- The deaccessioning of objects.
- The lending of objects to or borrowing of objects from, other museums, institutions and private sources.

Although Museum London may accept loans of objects for purposes of research, teaching, public programming and exhibitions, the following policy applies only to objects that have been accessioned. Efforts made to maintain the same level of safeguards for incoming loans as for accessioned objects, are addressed in the Exhibitions Policy.

##### **Policy**

Museum London will maintain and expand the accessioned collections according to the following priorities:

- Visual art by Canadian artists, with emphasis on London, and by other artists whose work directly informs or has a direct relationship to the development of Canadian art.
- Historical artifacts that document the culture and history of London.
- Particular attention is paid to expanding the collections with works of art and historical artefacts that reflect traditionally neglected narratives and subjects, including the art, culture, and histories of Indigenous groups, racialized and marginalized communities, and LGBTQ+ people.

##### **Conditions of Acquisition**

Objects will be accessioned into Museum London's collections only under the following conditions:

- The objects must be consistent with, and relevant to, Museum London’s mission to *“inspire and educate our community by preserving and sharing our art and history.”*
- Museum London must be able to provide proper care and storage for the objects. Objects must be in good/stable condition and no object should be considered for acquisition if its physical condition exceeds Museum London’s ability to provide for its proper care, preservation and display.
- Objects for donation must be present for the appropriate acquisition committee to vote on formal acceptance into the collection. Objects offered for donation may be accepted “in principle” however they will not be accessioned into the permanent collection until a formal vote has been undertaken with said object present. No tax receipt will be dated or offered to the donor prior to official acceptance of objects into Museum London collections.
- The donor must certify that the donor has good legal title in order to donate the objects to Museum London.
- Insofar as possible, the objects must be accompanied by a good record of provenance and must be authenticated by an expert recognized by Museum London.
- Donations must be free and clear of conditions and restrictions or use imposed by the donor.
- All donations to Museum London’s collections are irrevocable upon the formal transfer of title to Museum London.
- Museum London is satisfied that any objects to be acquired (whether by donation, transfer, or purchase) are not stolen or otherwise illegally acquired or collected.

### **Care of the Collections**

Museum London will allocate an annual budget for funding the continuing care and preservation of objects in its collections. Proper storage and exhibition facilities, together with adequate environmental-control systems, will be maintained by Museum London at all times. These issues are addressed further in the Conservation and Physical Plant policies. A properly trained individual will be given the responsibility for managing the collections.

Museum London will make all reasonable efforts to care for the collections and see that they are adequately protected against fire, flood, pests, theft, vandalism, and natural disaster. These issues are addressed further in the Risk Management and Emergency and Disaster Planning Policies.

Museum London will establish and maintain a comprehensive system of records that will include the following information:

- Documentation pertaining to the provenance and legal title of an object.
- All ongoing correspondence, documents, and other materials pertaining to an accessioned object.

- Accessioning and cataloguing data.
- Photographic documentation.
- Condition and conservation history.
- Insurance records.
- Current location (through random physical checks).
- Loan records.
- Deaccessioning information.

Duplicate (electronic) copies of all essential records pertaining to Museum London's collections will be stored off Museum premises in a secure and appropriate location.

### **Deaccessioning**

Museum London reserves the right to deaccession any object under any of the following criteria:

1. Poor quality.
2. Unrestorable condition.
3. Duplication (particularly in the case of prints).
4. Forgeries, fakes and copies of no documentary value.
5. An object is no longer relevant within the collection, exhibition, or research programs of Museum London.
6. An object was acquired illegally or unethically. All avenues towards the repatriation of these items will be explored.
7. An object has failed to retain its physical integrity or authenticity and cannot be properly preserved, stored, and used.
8. For the purpose of acquiring objects of similar but better quality for Museum London's collections.

The public relations impact must be carefully assessed prior to the approval of any deaccession. Museum London will follow all requirements and regulations set by the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board and Canada Revenue Agency as related to deaccessioning as applicable. Registration will maintain all records pertaining to deaccessioned objects.

In the case of an object by a living Canadian artist, every effort will be made to notify and consult the artist prior to the object being deaccessioned.

In the case of an object purchased with the assistance of a funding agency, every effort will be made to contact the relevant body to determine the appropriate course of action prior to the object being deaccessioned.

## **Disposals**

Disposal of deaccessioned objects will be pursued, as possible, in the following order::

- Exchange with or transfer to another museum or public, charitable institution.
- Donation to another museum or public, charitable institution.
- Sale to another museum or public, charitable institution.
- Sale at public auction without listing Museum London's name or the object's accession number.
- Sale through an agent or secondary market dealer conducted in a manner consistent with Board policy and in a transparent and accountable process.
- Destruction, in the case of objects that are damaged or have deteriorated beyond repair.

For artworks originally acquired by donation, in accordance with the Canada Revenue Agency Guidance CG-016 ("Qualified donees – Consequences of returning donated property"), deaccessioned artworks will not be returned to the original artist, donors or estates as a gift.

Insofar as is possible, deaccessioned objects should be disposed of in a manner that keeps them in the public domain. A deaccessioned object may be destroyed if it is not salvageable or is no longer of interest to either Museum London, or if a new home cannot be found for it.

No member of the Board of Directors or other volunteers, Museum London employee, or their representative or immediate families may be given, sold, or otherwise knowingly obtain deaccessioned objects. Deaccessioned objects may not be directly sold to private individuals and/or corporations.

All monies realized from the sale of any object or collection will be used by Museum London only to add to or upgrade Museum London's collections, preferably in the curatorial department from which the sold objects were deaccessioned.

## **Loans**

Museum London may borrow objects from other museums, galleries, and private sources for the purposes of exhibition, research, or public programming and education. Museum London may also lend objects from its collections to similar institutions for the purposes of exhibition, research, or public programming and education. Outgoing loans are an important aspect of Museum London's responsibilities and allow Museum London's collections to be used and enjoyed more widely in Canada and elsewhere.

All loans must be subject to a formal written agreement between the lender and the borrower, which ensures appropriate coverage of all insurance obligations. Prior to approving any outgoing loan from the permanent collection, Museum London will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that the borrowing institution meets necessary criteria for the care and safety of the object(s). The borrower must comply with all restrictions and conditions imposed on borrowed objects from the Museum's collection.

Loan agreements must specify the purpose and time period of the loan and address copyright and reproduction rights.

### **Approval Levels**

Decisions regarding Museum London's acquisitions, deaccessions, and disposals are made by the curatorial staff, acquisitions committees, Head of Collections, Exhibitions, and Programs, and the Executive Director/Chief Curator in consultation with the Board of Directors. Decisions made for outgoing loans are made by the Executive Director in consultation with the curatorial staff.

### **Conflict of Interest re: Personal Collections**

Museum London recognizes that its employees, Board, and Committee members may and do collect artifacts and works of art for their personal enjoyment. The Museum's employees, Board, and Committee members (in particular those closely associated with the Museum's curatorial functions and collection) occupy positions of trust in this regard, however, and must exercise care to assure that no conflict of interest can arise between themselves and the Museum.

Museum London employees, Board and Committee members are to follow museum ethics guidelines and must not collect objects in competition with the Museum. Should an employee, Board or Committee member have an opportunity to acquire an object for his/her own personal collection that is reasonably likely to be of interest to the Museum for its collection is expected to place the interests of the Museum ahead of his or her own in acquiring the object.

Accordingly, in all such cases, employees shall bring the availability of the object to the attention of the Head of Collections, Exhibitions, and Programs; or if the employee is the Head of Collections, Exhibitions, and Programs, to the attention of the Director; or if the employee is the Director, to the attention of the Chair of the Acquisition Committee, in order to give the Museum the first opportunity to acquire the object.

In all such cases, Board and Committee members shall bring the availability of the object to the attention of Acquisition Committee in order to give the Museum the first opportunity to acquire the object.

If this is impossible, as for example when the employee/Board or Committee member learns of an object under circumstances in which it must be purchased immediately or not at all, the employee/Board or Committee member is expected, if successful in acquiring the object, to give the Museum the opportunity to acquire the object within a reasonable time (not to exceed two months) from the employee/Board or Committee member at cost.

Similarly, if an employee/Board or Committee member desires to sell from his or her personal collection an object that is reasonably likely to be of interest to the Museum for its collection, the employee/Board

or Committee member is expected to give the Museum the first opportunity to purchase the object within a reasonable time (not to exceed two months) at whatever price the employee/Board or Committee member believes to be its then fair market value. The Museum will take whatever steps it deems appropriate to determine the fairness of the price proposed. If the Museum declines to purchase at the price proposed, the employee/Board or Committee member may not thereafter sell or exchange the object (except at public auction) to a third party for a lower price unless the Museum has declined to purchase it at such lower price.

### **Explanation of Terms**

*Accession:* The formal process or procedure of recording an addition to the collections; the status assigned to the object.

*Acquisition:* The act of gaining legal title of an object or a collection of objects.

*Collections:* Objects including artifacts, works of art, photographic, sound, and video recordings, digital media, and any other movable cultural property that has been formally accepted and accessioned by Museum London.

*Deaccession:* The formal process or procedure that records the permanent removal of an accessioned object or group of objects from the collections.

*Disposal:* The permanent physical removal from the collections of any catalogued object, usually by exchange, donation, sale, or destruction.

*Loan:* An object that is lent or borrowed; the act of furnishing an object or a collection to another party for temporary use, for an agreed specific purpose, with specific conditions regarding the handling and care of the object and its insurance, and on the condition that the object is returned by a specified date.

*Safeguarding:* Includes the conservation, preparation, and preservation of objects; collections management, and security.

**Last Revised Date:** 25 November 2020

### **MONITORING:**

#### **Adherence**

The Executive Director will report to the Board on any areas of non-adherence within a timely manner.

#### **Policy Review**

*Method:* Internal Report

*Responsibility:* Policy Committee

*Minimum Frequency:* Three Years