

MUSEUM LONDON

BOARD POLICY

CONSERVATION

Preamble

The basis of Museum London's existence is its collections; hence, their conservation must be of the highest priority within the activities of the Museum. Art and artifacts are entrusted to Museum London with the understanding that they will be available to future generations in optimum condition. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that the art and artifacts are housed, cared for, exhibited and interpreted in the safest possible way. There are two functions of conservation:

- Preventive conservation: action taken to maintain the condition of artifacts and to protect them from harm.
- Conservation treatment: action taken to remedy previously caused damage.

Accepted standards of practice for conservators in Canada will be followed as a guide in the handling and treatment of all art and artifacts.

Policy

Priorities

Museum London will strive to employ preventive conservation methods as a first priority, on the understanding that the least amount of intervention necessary in the treatment of an object is desirable. Active conservation treatment is second priority and only undertaken when preventive methods are not effective.

Preventive Conservation Practices

Environment

Museum London will strive to provide the best environmental conditions within its control for the preservation of the collections, in storage, on exhibit and in work areas. Environmental conditions of relative humidity, light, temperature and air cleanliness will be maintained to meet accepted museum standards set by the Canadian Museums Association. Environmental conditions will be monitored by the staff assigned to conservation duties and the Executive Director and Head of Collections and Exhibitions will be notified of deviations from the acceptable ranges.

Loss and Damage

Museum London will protect the collections from loss or damage through fire, water, theft, vandalism, accidents, insects and vermin in compliance with the Physical Plant Policy and the Emergency and Disaster Planning Policy. All staff will be familiar with emergency procedures relating to the aforementioned problems that are described in the Collections Management Manual.

Storage

Museum London will provide secure storage areas sufficient and appropriate to house existing collections. Access is determined by the Executive Director or designate. Physical access will be ensured both for maintenance and study. Storage areas will not be used to house anything other than art and artifacts.

Security

Museum London will provide sufficient and appropriate security to safeguard existing collections, while on exhibition and in storage.

Exhibition

Museum London will ensure that art and artifacts are exhibited in a safe and secure manner appropriate to their form, materials, function, and artist-designated interactivity.

Handling

Museum London will ensure that all staff members involved in the care and handling of art and artifacts have been properly trained. Preventive conservation procedures will be outlined in the Collections Management Manual, which will be available to all staff. Proper equipment will be available to safely move and store objects as required.

Documentation

As part of the ongoing documentation, Museum London will regularly monitor and record the condition of art, artifacts and buildings, with the aim of minimizing the need for conservation treatment.

Loans

Museum London will ensure that all out-going loans will be protected from damage in transit and provided with environmental conditions at the borrowing institution that are satisfactory to the Museum.. Incoming loans will be afforded the same protection as Museum London's collections, will be fully insured under Museum London's fine arts insurance policy and in accordance with any specifications outlined in the loan agreement.

Responsibility

Preventive conservation practices are the responsibility of all staff.

Conservation Treatment Practices

Priority

In accordance with the availability of resources, priority for attention will be given to art and artifacts in the following categories (in descending order):

- Those objects requiring emergency treatment or stabilization.

- Those objects required for exhibition.
- Those objects required for programming.
- Those objects of particular historic or artistic significance.
- All other objects in Museum London's collection.

Responsibility

Curatorial staff and a professional conservator together will determine conservation treatment to be undertaken. Only a professional conservator may carry out conservation treatment. The conservator may designate museum staff at his/her discretion to perform specific treatment, which will be carried out under his/her supervision on a per treatment basis.

Extent of Treatment

The extent of treatment will be decided by the Executive Director or designate, together with the appropriate curatorial staff and professional conservator, based on considerations of the ultimate use of the art object or artifact, its state of preservation and its duplication within the collection. Also considered will be maintenance of the historic integrity of the object and the principles of minimal and reversible intervention as governed by applicable standards of practice.

Documentation

Appropriate documentation of any conservation treatment performed on an art object or artifact will be recorded and kept in both text and visual format.

Conservation Training and Information

Museum London will provide ongoing training and information regarding preventive conservation for staff, volunteers and the general public.

Last Revised Date: 28 September 2011

MONITORING:

Adherence

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

Policy Review

Method: Internal Report

Responsibility: Policy Committee

Minimum Frequency: Four Years