



Office of the Director

PO Box 112700
SW 34th Street and Hull Road
Gainesville, FL 32611-2700
352.392.9826
352.392.3892 fax
www.harn.ufl.edu

Collections Management Policy

July 2007

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janie Fouke".

Approved
Janie M. Fouke, Provost and
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Aug 4, 2007
Date

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction

The Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art (Museum) Collections Management Policy establishes policies for the acquisition, deaccession, loan, care and use of the collections of the Museum. The policies of the Museum shall not replace any University of Florida (University), State or Federal law, statute or regulation under which the Museum is legally or ethically bound to operate.

B. Mission Statement

The Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art promotes the power of the arts to inspire and educate people and enrich their lives. To this purpose the Museum builds and maintains exemplary art collections and produces a wide variety of challenging, innovative exhibitions and stimulating educational programs. As an integral part of the University of Florida, the Museum advances teaching and research and serves as a catalyst for creative engagement between the university and diverse local, state, national and international audiences.

C. Adherence to Ethical Standards

In all practices and procedures, the Museum adheres to the strictest ethical codes as established by the American Association of Museums, the Association of Art Museum Directors and the International Council of Museums.

Museum employees shall refrain from all activities that may be construed as creating a conflict of interest between their professional responsibilities as regards the collection and outside interests. The Director shall be made aware of any possible conflict of interest and take action as appropriate.

D. Committee on the Collections

Duties and Responsibilities

The Committee on the Collections is an advisory body serving as witness on behalf of the University of Florida to the actions and decisions taken by the Director and Curators of the Museum. The Committee is responsible for reviewing and monitoring Museum activities specifically affecting the University's art collections entrusted to the Museum's care, including acquisitions, deaccessioning, conservation, utilization, location, loans etc., and where necessary, to advise the Director and staff on appropriate courses of action.

Committee Size

The Committee shall consist of seven voting members, plus the incumbent Dean of the College of Fine Arts, who shall serve ex-officio and without vote.

Representation on the Committee will be as follows;

- 3 (three) from faculty (at least 2 (two) to be from art faculty)
- 2 (two) from the community at large
- 1 (one) from the University of Florida Foundation
- 1 (one) from Academic Affairs

Appointment

The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall appoint the Committee on the Collections upon the recommendation of the Director of the Museum.

Terms of Office

Each member shall serve for a three-year term, with the option of renewal for additional terms. The first appointees shall receive staggered terms by lot of one, two and three years with automatic renewal for a second, full three-year term. Renewals shall be determined by the Provost upon the recommendation of the Director.

Meetings

The Committee on the Collections shall meet a minimum of two times per year, scheduled by the Office of the Director. Additional meetings will be scheduled by the Director of the Museum, as needed. Museum staff shall be invited by the Director to attend, as deemed necessary to the work of the Committee.

Quorum

A simple majority of 4 (four) voting members will constitute a quorum to make the meeting official.

Voting

A majority vote of members present, if there is a quorum will be considered final. Tie votes may be broken by the Director of the Museum.

Recording

The Committee shall appoint one member to serve as Recording Secretary, who may be assisted by professional Museum staff in the recording and production of minutes. The minutes of the Committee's discussions shall be regularly submitted to the Provost's Office and shall be a permanent part of the records of the Museum.

II. SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

A. History of the Collection

In 1965, the University of Florida College of Fine Arts established the University Gallery to collect and display works of art in support of the University's educational mission. Over more than 20 years of operation, the University Gallery amassed holdings of approximately 3000 objects covering a broad range of cultures, genres, and historical periods. In 1988, custody of the University Gallery collection was transferred to the newly established Museum. Under the guidance of the Museum's Director and curators, the collection has subsequently been refined and expanded so that as of 2004 the Museum's holdings number around 6200 objects representing five main collecting areas: Modern Art, Contemporary Art, Photography, African Art, and Asian Art.

B. Existing Collection

As noted above the Museum's current holdings can be divided into five main collecting areas:

Modern – includes paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures from the Americas and Europe, from approximately 1850 to 1950. Current strengths are American paintings from the 1920s, 30s and 40s and American prints from the 1930s and 40s.

Contemporary – includes international art from 1950 to the present reflecting contemporary art's engagement with subjectivity, social and political concerns, process and materials and conceptual ideas. Current strengths are in American painting and sculpture and international photography after 1965.

Photography – Includes over 300 photographs from historic daguerreotypes to current works by over 75 photographers. The majority of works are American from the second half of the twentieth century. Jerry Uelsmann is the only photographer represented in depth with over 160 works.

African Art – includes a wide range of sub-Saharan pieces of varying dates, mediums and culture groups and a core group of Ethiopian Orthodox liturgical objects. Current strengths are woodcarvings, specifically those from Nigeria, as well as South African beadwork.

Asian-includes a diverse range of objects from many cultures and representing many genres and historical periods. Current strengths are in Chinese, Japanese, and Indian art from the 16th century to the present.

In addition to these five main collecting areas, the Museum also possesses significant holdings of Oceanic and Pre-Columbian art that are no longer actively growing. The Museum does not currently possess, and has no plans to develop, significant holdings of pre-modern European Art, Ancient Mediterranean Art, Middle Eastern Art, or Folk/Outsider Art.

C. Master Plan, Museum Collections

Plans for future development of the Museum collection are spelled out in a collection development master plan prepared and revised regularly by the Museum's curators and Director. This plan is presented to the Committee on the Collections and formally approved by the Director on an annual basis. A copy of the most recent version of this plan is appended to this document.

D. Criteria for Acquiring and Disposing of Works of Art

Acquisitions

The responsibility to acquire works of art for the Museum's collection rests with the Director acting upon the majority recommendation of the curatorial staff, whose responsibility it is to seek objects that further the Museum's mission.

All works of art acquired for the permanent collection (accessioned works) will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: art historical importance, aesthetic quality, pedagogical value, conformity to the Museum's declared collecting interests, and physical condition. The Museum will also adhere to all applicable legal requirements and to the ethical guidelines established by the Association of Art Museum Directors. In general the Museum will not pursue acquisitions, either through purchase or gift, to which significant restrictions are attached.

Works acquired for purposes other than the permanent collection (non-accessioned works) must meet the criteria outlined in the Status of Collections section below.

Disposal

In the interests of improving the collection and maintaining its high intellectual and aesthetic standards, the Museum retains the right to deaccession any object.

Criteria that justify deaccessioning an object include: lack of art historical importance, low aesthetic quality, redundancy, lack of conformity to the Museum's declared collecting interests, and poor physical condition.

Deaccessioning is guided by the Museum's long-term policies and goals and should not reflect the popular trends of a given period or the personal tastes of the people involved. The criteria applied to deaccessioning and disposal are as stringent as those applied to the Museum's acquisition process, and reflect the professional standards and ethics as established by the Association of Art Museum Directors and the American Association of Museums.

Proposals for deaccessioning objects from the Museum collection will originate with the Director and curatorial staff and will be reviewed and approved by the Committee on the Collections.

III. USE OF THE COLLECTION

A. Status of Collections

Works of art owned by the Museum (or owned by the University of Florida Foundation for the benefit of the Harn) are considered to be either **Accessioned** or **Non-accessioned**.

Accessioned

The term accessioned is used to designate works that the Museum believes worthy of adding to the permanent collection. It indicates careful thought and consideration on the part of the Museum staff, with the conclusion that an object meets or exceeds the established criteria and demonstrates the Museum's intention to preserve the objects for the foreseeable future. The highest standards of care are applied to these objects and extend to other custodians, as in the case of loans. In order to change a work's status from that of accessioned, the work must go through the formal deaccession procedure.

Works deemed by curatorial as unlikely to be used in the galleries may be designated for the Campus Loan Outreach Program. These selected works will be made available for display to units on campus that can provide adequate care for the object as outlined in the campus loan procedures.

Non-accessioned

The term non-accessioned is used to designate works of art owned by the Museum (or owned by the University of Florida Foundation for the benefit of the Harn) that do not meet the standards required for the permanent collection (accessioned items) but can still be of use in fulfilling the Museum's mission. In order to avoid confusion with accessioned items all non-accessioned works are managed by the Registration Department in the same manner as accessioned items. These works may fall into one of several categories:

Educational Hands-on Collection (EHOC)

The Educational Hands-on Collection (EHOC) allows the Museum to obtain materials used in educational programming that can be handled by visitors with certain restrictions to be determined by the Education department staff. The collection is made up of materials that are inappropriate for the permanent collection, typically because they are not considered to be authentic but which still embody the aesthetic of genuine items (i.e. a reproduction item manufactured for popular consumption) or materials that are authentic but not of sufficiently high quality for the permanent collection. The EHOC is considered expendable and may eventually be damaged or rendered unusable through use. The standard of

care for this collection is the same as for any other education materials in that there is there is a level of responsibility, but the items will not be insured under the Museum's fine arts insurance policy.

Prop Collection

The Prop Collection allows the Museum to obtain property that may be used in exhibitions and other programming as needed to support and supplement the display of accessioned works. The standard of care is similar to that of exhibition furniture to allow for continued use of the pieces.

Asset Collection

The Asset Collection allows the Museum to obtain property that will be sold to raise funds for the Museum. The standard of care for these works is the same as that of the permanent collection while the objects are in the Museum's care.

B. Loans and Temporary Custody

Outgoing Loans

In order to make the works of art from our collection accessible to a wider audience the Museum has a generous policy of lending to non-profit and educational institutions that can provide the loaned objects the care and protection normally expected in a museum environment. Loan requests are reviewed by curatorial and registration staff with the Director having final approval.

All outgoing loans are documented by formal agreements that must be signed by the Director prior to the loaned works leaving the Museum's custody.

Incoming Loans

In addition, the Museum routinely borrows works of art from other museums and private collectors for research, to enhance exhibitions of its own collections, or to mount entire exhibitions. A member of the curatorial staff or the Director must request incoming loans.

All incoming loans are documented by formal agreements that must be signed by the Director.

Temporary Custody

The Museum may take custody of works without formal agreements for study, assessment or consideration for loan or donation. The Director and curatorial staff, or the registration and preparation staff on their behalf, may accept these works. Works held in temporary custody are documented through the issue of Temporary Custody Receipts.

Works should not be retained by the Museum as temporary custody items for longer than 6 (six) weeks.

C. Access to the Collections

The Museum makes collection materials available through exhibition and interpretive programs. Special access for scholarly purposes is available by appointment.

Only staff¹ members with specifically designated authority shall have access to the permanent collections, storage areas and collection records of the Museum. Others shall not be allowed in storage areas unless under the supervision of an authorized staff member.

The Museum reserves the right to refuse access to or use of its collections.

D. Designated Harn Display Areas

Objects from the permanent collection may only be displayed in public areas including gallery spaces, the auditorium, the Director's office suite, and some administrative areas NOT to include staff offices, kitchens, hallways, restrooms, the café or classrooms.

¹ Staff refers to paid staff, interns and volunteers.

IV. CARE OF THE COLLECTIONS

The Museum recognizes its role as being responsible for the safety and maintenance of the collections it holds in the public trust for the University through the University of Florida Foundation.

Under delegated authority from the Director the Registrar shall exercise oversight and supervision of the Museum collections. The Registrar shall be operationally responsible for the management and care of all collections owned by, on loan, and in the temporary custody of the Museum. Care of collections includes the documentation, security, physical protection, conservation, storage, access, inventory, and records systems in accordance with generally accepted museum practices. The Registrar shall advise the Director on procedures necessary to insure proper management of the collection.

Under the direction of the Registrar all appropriate personnel shall be made aware of their basic and continuing responsibilities to preserve and protect collections objects on exhibition and in storage. The Registrar, in consultation with appropriate staff, shall maintain a collections management procedures manual that shall be updated as required.

A. Art Handling

Artwork is handled only by trained Museum staff with the registrar's office supervising all movement. Staff is trained in art handling by the Registrar and Chief Preparator. This training involves readings, instructional videotape, personal training with another staff member and close supervision.

Gloves are worn at all times when handling objects. The Registrar may exempt objects that cannot be handled safely with gloves. In storage rooms, the only writing instruments permitted are pencils and eating or drinking is strictly prohibited. Dollies, carts, J-bars and ladders are provided for safe and secure movement of objects.

B. Insurance

Insurance coverage for the fine arts collection is paid with private funds and carried as a safeguard because the University self-insures for such property. The amount of insurance carried covers a portion of the permanent collection, not to drop below 25% of the total value, and items on loan or in the custody of the Museum as indicated in individual agreements.

C. Inventory

The Registrar is responsible for performing a complete inventory of the collection every six years. Inventory of collection departments will be done on a yearly rotating basis and a complete inventory will be performed every six years. The inventory schedule will be performed as follows:

Year 1: Asian Art

Year 2: African Art

Year 3: Contemporary Art

Year 4: Modern Art and Photography

Year 5: Other/Oceanic/Ancient American

Year 6: Complete collection inventory: All departments

Glossary

Accessioned – acquired by the Museum as part of its permanent collection

Acquired – given to or purchased by the Museum, not necessarily accessioned

Deaccessioned – an object removed permanently from the permanent collection; Museum may retain ownership

Non-accessioned – acquired items not considered part the permanent collection

Permanent Collection – objects the Museum has collected and intends to maintain and preserve for the foreseeable future