



PERMANENT COLLECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Purpose of the Policy

This document identifies principles, policies and procedures governing the acquisition, de-accession, and disposal of works of art in the University's permanent collection of art, as well as the care and management of the collection.

2. Role of the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery

The Art Gallery manages the permanent collection of art held by Mount Saint Vincent University. The collection reflects the University's mission and priorities set by the Art Gallery's exhibition program.

Through its exhibitions and programs, the Art Gallery functions as a visual arts resource to the University, communities served by the University, and art publics everywhere.

The Art Gallery reflects the University's educational aims by devoting a significant part of its activities to the representation of women as cultural subjects and producers. This program focus is balanced with exhibitions on themes in visual culture that are relevant to university academic programs and/or constituencies served by the Art Gallery. Artists and artisans from the Atlantic region are represented, often in the early stages of their careers.

3. Principles

3.1 The contents and uses of the permanent collection reflect priorities set by the University's mission and by the Art Gallery's public exhibition and education programs. Because it is a public collection, the responsibility for preserving the art will be balanced against the goal of making the collection, and information about it, accessible to the campus community and off-campus publics.

3.2 The permanent collection is a museum collection held by the University in public trust. Members of the Board of Governors are the trustees of the collection.

3.3 The Board of Governors delegates to the Art Gallery Director the authority to manage the permanent collection in conformity with standards accepted in the professional Canadian museum community.

Parts of this policy have been adapted from the University of Lethbridge's *Art Collection Policy*.

3.4 The permanent collection is made up of cultural assets whose significance is independent of their monetary worth. "Items accessioned to the permanent collection are excluded from the definition of capital assets." (Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, 1996.) The permanent collection is not a resource available to meet the financial obligations of the University by conversion into currency or as security to raise monetary loans. Acquisitions are made with a view to permanency; the purpose of disposal will be avoided at all times.

3.5 All works of art acquired by Art Gallery for the University belong to the permanent collection of art. No work will be acquired for the permanent collection unless on the recommendation of the Art Gallery Director and approval of the Acquisitions Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Campus Planning Committee.

4. Acquisitions for the Permanent Collection

4.1 Criteria for acceptance into the permanent art collection

The acceptance of an art work will be based on the following criteria:

- i. artistic merit and authenticity;
- ii. relevance to the collection, present and future, to the University's mission and to the Art Gallery's mandate;
- iii. physical condition and stability;
- iv. relevance for exhibition;
- v. adequate resources for the maintenance, conservation, storage, access for research and display of the art work;
- vi. unrestricted terms of donation, bequest or sale; and unencumbered and clear legal title.

4.2 Purchases

All purchases of works will be initiated and brought forward by the Art Gallery Director to the Acquisitions Committee for consideration and approval. There must be sufficient funds and resources to support all costs related to the purchase.

4.3 Gifts and Bequests

The Art Gallery Director will assess potential gifts and bequests and bring forward her recommendation to the Acquisitions Committee, which will decide whether to accept the gift and/or bequest. The Art Gallery Director will report annually to the Acquisition Committee regarding all proposed donations. All gifts and bequests shall be in accordance with the *Gift Acceptance Policy*.

4.4 Commissions

- 4.4.1 Commissions of art works must be recommended by the Art Gallery Director and approved by the Acquisitions Committee prior to the commission being granted.
- 4.4.2 For public art works or other forms of major commissions, the Vice-President (Academic) and the Vice-President (Administration) will jointly appoint a specially-formed Public Art Commissioning Committee which will be co-chaired by the Vice-President (Academic) and the Vice-President (Administration) and include the Director of the Art Gallery, a member of the Acquisition Committee, and other members to be determined by the Vice-President (Academic), the Vice-President (Administration), and the Director of the Art Gallery. The specially-formed committee will create and approve the terms and conditions of the commission and select the short-list, if necessary, and the final art work. Professional standards for commissioning an art work shall be followed. Proposals selected for the short-list and the final art work must fulfill all criteria for purchase and acceptance into the University permanent collection and the proposal selected by the committee must be approved by the Acquisitions Committee prior to the commission being granted.

4.5 Public art

If an art work, whether a purchase, gift, bequest, or commission, is intended for permanent or long-term situation beyond normal gallery display, particularly if it is intended for an outdoor location, there are additional factors that must be considered, including location, installation, safety, and on-going maintenance. In addition to the criteria applicable to all objects in the permanent collection, the acquisition, management and care of public art will require approval from the Vice-President (Academic), the Vice-President (Administration) and the heads of relevant university units, such as Facilities Management.

4.6 Conflict of Interest Guidelines for the Acquisition Committee

- No work of art created by a committee member or his/her immediate family may be acquired, whether by purchase or donation, by the University while that member is serving on the committee.
- No member of the committee may sell a work of art to the University while serving on the committee.
- Committee members may not propose acquisitions unless in the following circumstance: members wishing to donate works of art that they own but have not created, or who have direct or indirect pecuniary or professional interest in such work, must disclose this information to the Chair and the Director before any discussion of the donation of the work. If the proposal is presented to the committee for consideration, the prospective donor must absent herself from the meeting during

discussion of the art work and refrain from voting, or trying to influence the voting, on the acceptance or rejection of the art work.

- The Art Gallery Director shall not deal in works of art for personal profit, gain or other advantage.

5. Care and Management

5.1 The Art Gallery undertakes to maintain the permanent collection exclusively for the purposes of preservation, education, research and presentation to publics served by the University and the Art Gallery, in accordance with museological standards.

5.2 The care and documentation of the permanent collection are responsibilities delegated by the Board of Governors to the Art Gallery Director.

5.3 Records on the collection are entered and kept according to detailed procedures set out in the Art Gallery *Registration Manual*. Information concerning new acquisitions, exhibitions of the collection, and loans to other museums is published in the Art Gallery *Annual Report*.

5.4 All works in the permanent collection whose value can be established are insured under the University's Fine Arts Floater policy while on campus or in transit when on loan. The University provides for this expense in a specific budget line in the Art Gallery's departmental operating allocation. Annual updating of the insurance list and occasional insurance claims are initiated by the Art Gallery and handled through the Procurement Office.

5.5 The Art Gallery Director alone may authorize the exhibition of works from the permanent collection and loans of works to other exhibitors (normally, museums and art galleries).

5.6 The Art Gallery maintains inventory records, and from time to time its staff will conduct a physical audit. When works are reported to be missing, the President of the University, the Chair of the Acquisitions Committee, the Police Department, MSVU Security, and the insurer will be notified.

5.7 The work areas, art storage rooms and display spaces used by the Art Gallery are among the assets of a museum for which the Board of Governors assumes responsibility. When improvements and repairs are implemented by Facilities Management, the Art Gallery Director will be consulted on matters related to her professional custodial responsibilities.

5.8 The Board of Governors assumes responsibility for ensuring that the Art Gallery's equipment and physical plant are adequate to the safety needs of Art Gallery staff and the permanent collection works under its care.

6. De-accession and Disposal

6.1 As the trustee of a permanent art collection, the University acts as a custodian for the public interest. The removal of an object from the permanent collection will be undertaken only with a full understanding of the potential loss of public trust. The decision to de-accession is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, which is delegated to the Acquisitions Committee. Complete records will be kept of such decisions and the works involved, including the written recommendation of the Art Gallery Director.

6.2 Any monies received by the University from de-accessioning will be used for the benefit of the collection, normally for acquisitions. University employees, the Board of Governors, or their families or close associates may not receive de-accessioned works offered through public auction, trade, gift or private sale.

6.3 Criteria for de-accession: Provided there is no legal impediment, works will be removed from the permanent collection under any of the following conditions:

- The work is so damaged or deteriorated that it cannot be exhibited or usefully studied, or that its repair would falsify it, or that the Art Gallery can no longer properly preserve or care for the work.
- The work is no longer relevant to the collection, is a duplicate of another work in the collection, or is positively identified as a copy or fake.

6.4 Criteria for disposal:

The disposal of a work after its removal from the permanent collection will be determined as follows:

- If the work is deteriorated beyond usefulness or is a copy or a fake, it may be destroyed.
- If the work may be more suitable to the collection of another public institution, it may be transferred to that institution.
- If the work is of such significance that it should remain in the public domain, the priority will be to offer it to another art gallery, museum, or educational institution in exchange for a work or works of comparable value.
- If the work should not or cannot be held in the public domain, it may be sold at public auction. Disposal by private sale or trade could seriously compromise the University's reputation as trustee of a public collection.

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