
Athabasca University Art Collection Policy

Department Policy Number

Effective Date: April 1, 2004

Purpose

Museums are integral parts of the societies in which they exist. Museums reflect the cultures they represent, and serve as foundations for collective memory, continuity and social development.... One of the museum's primary roles is to offer lifelong learning opportunities for people of all ages to learn about themselves, each other, and their environment through material objects, specimens and tangible living traditions.

(Standard Practices Handbook for Museums 25)

Although Athabasca University's Art Collection does not constitute a museum in the traditional sense, it shares the roles and responsibilities of a museum.

The permanent Art Collection is a reflection of and is central to the University's mission, providing primary materials for research and education, contributing to the University's public service role, and enhancing the working environment for staff.

This Art Collection Policy outlines the frame of reference for the acquisition, management, and use of the Art Collection.

Definitions

Acquisition	An object to which the University has legal title; the documented transfer of such title to Athabasca University.
Appraisal	A formal estimate of the fair market value of an object.
Art Committee	The University's Art Committee is a standing committee reporting to the President. The committee reviews all acquisitions and deaccessions of objects for the University's Art Collection.
Art Collection	Objects of applied, decorative, and fine art representing a wide variety of media, styles, subject matter, and time periods that, because they are unique or rare, are irreplaceable or of limited access. Included in the Art Collection are works of art for which the University holds clear title as



well as objects that are the property of others but are held by the University conditionally on permanent or long-term loan.

Attribution	The assigning of authorship or creative origin to an object.
Collection(s)	An organized group of related objects.
Deaccession	The process of permanently removing an object or collection from the Art Collection. Deaccession includes formally reviewing, approving, and recording the removal. Deaccession is followed by disposition, the appropriate disposal of the object or collection by a formal transfer to another owner or by deliberately destroying and discarding it.
Donation	A voluntary transfer of property of value for which the donor expects and receives nothing in return. The term “gift” may be used interchangeably with “donation.”
Exchange	Trading of objects and their legal title between institutions.
Fair Market Value	The price at which an object might reasonably be expected to change hands between a willing seller and a willing buyer dealing at arm’s length.
Governing Council	Athabasca University Governing Council
Object	An artifact held in the Art Collection.
Provenance	The origin, source, and history of an object; its pedigree or record of ownership.
Public Trust	The obligation of the University to serve the general interests of the people at large, including the preservation of cultural resources for the long-term benefit of the public.
Transfer	A form of donation in which one institution gives an object and its legal title to another institution.

Policy

Institutional Responsibility

The Athabasca University Art Collection is a valuable cultural resource of local, provincial, national, and international significance.



The University acknowledges that it has an institutional responsibility for the Art Collection and that it oversees the collection in public trust. It will, therefore, endeavour to conserve the collection for posterity while making the collection accessible to the public, particularly to students, faculty, and staff. Where appropriate and feasible, the collection will be accessible to the larger public: to local communities, the province, the nation, and the international community.

The Art Collection will be insured in accordance with its appraised or estimated value.

The Art Committee will function as the coordinating service for the Art Collection, advise the University on all matters relating to the collection, and administer the collection on behalf of Governing Council.

Among other things, the Art Committee will advise the University on collection management, including acquisitions and deaccessions, conservation, storage, and display.

The Art Committee will facilitate access to and use of the Art Collection for such purposes as research and education, display and exhibition, and loans to other educational not-for-profit institutions provided the borrower can meet the terms outlined on the Art Committee's Loan Agreement Form.

The Art Committee will assist in communications and public programming related to the Art Collection.

Acquisitions

All objects must be acquired in compliance with this Policy and any subsequent revisions.

Objects may be acquired through purchase, donation, transfer, or exchange.

Acquisitions will be accepted only in accordance with this policy and upon the recommendation of the Art Committee. The Art Committee will not be responsible for objects acquired without its prior approval.

The Art Committee reserves the right to decline a recommended acquisition on the basis of acquisition criteria, collecting areas, or resource limitations.

The University recognizes the need to ensure that it has the necessary resources to care appropriately for all acquisitions and that the collection not outgrow those resources.

The Art Committee may choose not to review submissions made by individuals or commercial galleries.

The University will acquire and use objects in accordance with the provincial, federal, and international laws, conventions, treaties, and regulations governing the acquisition and use of cultural property. These include, but are not limited to, the UNESCO Convention on the Means of



Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (Paris, 1970); the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (Paris, 1971); the federal Cultural Property Export and Import Act (1988, 1995 C-93); the federal Copyright Act (1970 C-30; 1988 C-30; 1999 C-32); the Alberta Cultural Heritage Act (1984); the provincial Policy on Disposition of Museum Collections and Objects (1996).

Where applicable and feasible, the University will endeavour to obtain copyright as required for its purposes.

In acquiring objects for the Art Collection, the University will comply with ethical collecting standards and assure the probity of the collection.

Members of the Art Committee and others who work with the Art Collection will avoid conflicts-of-interest with the collection in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy.

To increase the value and usefulness of the Art Collection for research and educational purposes, and to document the legitimacy of the collection, the University recognizes the importance of maintaining accurate records of acquisitions.

Donations

Athabasca University will acquire donations in accordance with the Donation Acceptance Policy and the relevant provincial, federal, and international laws, conventions, treaties, and regulations governing the acquisition and use of cultural property.

The Chair of the Art Committee must approve all solicitations of objects for the Art Collection.

The donor must provide an appraisal based on the fair market value of the object. This appraisal must have been completed within one year of the offer to donate, and it must conform to current Canada Customs and Revenue Agency regulations.

The University reserves the right to obtain its own appraisal. The costs of appraisals obtained by the University are the responsibility of the University.

Acquisition Criteria

Criteria for the acquisition of objects to be held in the Art Collection include aesthetic quality, historical importance, physical condition, clear legal title and provenance (including ethical collection practices) and accurate attribution of the objects.

Within available resources, the Art Committee will acquire objects for the Art Collection in a variety of media, styles, time periods, and subject matter, including:

- contemporary and historical objects by Canadian and international artists



- objects by students or staff and other individuals with significant connections to the University
- objects that contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the University's history
- objects that contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the communities in which the University participates
- objects relevant to the University's role and mission

The Art Collection is intended to include primarily works by Canadian artists.

Deaccessions and Disposals

The Art Collection is held in public trust, and objects are to be acquired with the assumption that they will remain permanently in the collection. Should it be necessary, however, to deaccession an object or collection, the University will, whenever possible, ensure title and possession of the object(s) remain in the public domain.

The University may deaccession and dispose of objects that have been lost, stolen, or damaged, or that have deteriorated beyond repair or use; are not relevant to the purposes of the Art Collection or of the University; or have no provenance or attribution.

The University may deaccession an object if it can be demonstrated that another body, government, or identifiable group has a prior entitlement to the object that has not been extinguished by legal acquisition.

Deaccessioned objects may be disposed of by transfer, exchange, sale, or deliberate destruction.

All deaccessions and disposals of objects from the Art Collection are to be made in accord with pertinent ethical guidelines and all relevant provincial, federal, and international laws, conventions, treaties, agreements, and regulations, including the Province of Alberta Policy on Disposition of Museum Collections and Objects (1996).

Deaccessioning and disposal of objects may be made only on the recommendation of the Chair of the Art Committee, together with the approval of the Art Committee and the President on behalf of the Governing Council.

Deaccessioned objects of Canadian relevance are to remain in Canada.

Before any deaccessioned object or collection is considered for sale, it must first be offered at no cost to other appropriate public non-profit or government custodial institutions in Alberta that are able to provide proper care and access to the object(s).

Should more than one institution wish to acquire the deaccessioned object(s), the University will decide which institution will receive the deaccessioned property.



In the case of dispute as to whether or not any interested institution is appropriate to receive deaccessioned objects, the Minister of Community Development, on the advice of the Alberta Historical Foundation, shall determine whether or not the institution should be considered an appropriate candidate to receive the deaccessioned object(s).

If no appropriate Alberta public institution will accept custodial responsibility for the deaccessioned object(s), the object(s) will be offered to other appropriate public institutions within Canada, either as a gift, an exchange, or as a sale.

If no public institution in Canada will take the deaccessioned object or collection, the University may dispose of it by public sale.

Should an object be deaccessioned because it is damaged or has deteriorated beyond repair or use, as assessed by the Art Committee, the object will be destroyed before witnesses and permanently disposed of in a manner that prevents retrieval and restoration.

Should this destruction of an object be necessary, the University must, if possible, notify the artist and request that he or she agree to the destruction and sign a Waiver of Moral Rights form.

All deaccessions and subsequent disposal of objects must be recorded, and documentation on the deaccessioned object must be retained in the Art Collection's permanent records.

All identifying labels and property numbers referring to Athabasca University will be removed prior to the disposal of deaccessioned objects.

If the University should receive money from the disposal of any deaccessioned object, either as proceeds of the sale of the object, or as an insurance settlement, this money will be used only for acquisitions to enhance the remaining Art Collection or for services directly related to the curatorial care of the remaining Art Collection.

Reviews and Reappraisals

As part of its responsibility to the public trust, the University acknowledges the necessity of conserving the objects in the Art Collection.

The Art Committee will arrange for periodic reviews of the objects in the collection to determine their general repair and note any physical damage or other impairment. The findings of the reviews will be documented and, if applicable, acted upon as soon as possible. If resources permit, such reviews will occur annually, with approximately one-third of the collection being reviewed each year.

The Art Committee will arrange for periodic reappraisals of the objects in the collection to ascertain current market value.

References



Guidelines for the University of Alberta's Museums and Collections. Comp. Anne Hayward. Ed. Janine Andrews et al. Edmonton: Department of Museums and Collections Services, University of Alberta © 1992; revised 1993, 2001.

[Hayward, Anne.] Standard Practices Handbook for Museums. 2nd ed., 2nd printing. Edmonton: Museums Alberta © 1990, 2001, 2003.

Province of Alberta Minister of Community Development. "Policy on Disposition of Museum Collections and Objects" (March 19, 1996).

"Provincial Museum of Alberta Collections Policy." Edmonton: Provincial Museum of Alberta.

Regulation

Procedure

Approved By

Athabasca University Governing Council Motion 145-7; March 26, 2004

Amended Date/Motion No.

Related References, Policies and Procedures

[Donation Acceptance Policy](#)

Donation Agreement Form

Applicable Legislation/Regulation

Responsible Position/Department

President/Office of the President

Keywords