

# Professional Practices in Art Museums

Association of Art Museum Directors 2001

## Statement of Mission

Adopted by the membership of the AAMD, June 1996.

*The purpose of the Association of Art Museum Directors is to aid its members in establishing and maintaining the highest professional standards for themselves and the museums they represent, thereby exerting leadership in increasing the contribution of art museums to society. It serves as a forum for the exchange of information and the exploration of ideas, and as a voice with which museum directors may express their joint concerns and those of their institutions.*

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## Preface to the 2001 Edition

*Professional Practices in Art Museums* was first published in 1971, and has been revised every ten years thereafter. This edition represents a two-year effort on the part of the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) to revise and update the 1991 edition. Museum directors and others responsible for museum governance are urged to accept and be guided by the professional practices and code of ethics.

The principles set forth in this document are deemed by the AAMD as fundamental and applicable to all art museums. However, circumstances can affect the manner in which such principles apply. Recognizing this fact, the AAMD, through its officers and staff, is prepared to consult with any member, or any non-member representing an art museum, about the application of these principles in particular circumstances. Advance consultation can help avoid infractions of principles of professional practice and the imposition of sanctions such as those indicated in the code of ethics.

From time to time, the AAMD issues statements concerning aspects of the art museum profession, such as the Report of the AAMD Task Force on the Spoliation of Art During the Nazi/World War II Era. These statements are posted on [www.aamd.org](http://www.aamd.org).

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## Introduction

- 1 An art museum is a permanent, not-for-profit institution, essentially educational and humanistic in purpose, that studies and cares for works of art and on some regular schedule exhibits and interprets them to the public. Most, but not all, art museums have permanent collections from which exhibitions are drawn and upon which educational programs are based.
- 2 The board should appoint the director to be the chief executive officer of the museum. The administration of an art museum requires connoisseurship, discernment, and knowledge in dealing with works of art, as well as the judgment and experience necessary for the operation of a complex organization. Achieving an appropriate balance among these requirements is essential; without such a balance a museum could be faced with problems that could eventually undermine its professional performance and public service.
- 3 Museum directors, trustees, and others in positions of responsibility must be alert to situations in which conflicts of interest may occur. A conflict of interest is a conflict between an individual's private interests and his or her official responsibilities. Such situations can be difficult inasmuch as good intentions, being unprovable, are an inadequate defense against later charges of impropriety. Some such situations may be resolved through the withdrawal of those with real or perceived conflicts from the decision-making process. In other cases, disclosure of conflicts may suffice. Every effort should be made to anticipate and address situations in which there is the appearance of conflict of interest, even if no actual conflict exists.
- 4 The museum is governed by a body such as a board of trustees. (Hereafter the term "board" is used to refer to any form of governing body and its

appointees or designated committees legally responsible for a museum.) The museum is administered by a professional staff. The board and the staff must be united in their commitment to the institution's mission and responsibilities.

- 5 The board approves the general policies that govern the museum's operations. These policies should be a reflection of the goals established in the museum's statement of mission and in its long-range plan. The board is also responsible for the well-being of the museum's various resources, including its collections, physical plant, financial assets, and staff, as well as the public trust. The board acts collectively, generally by majority vote; it can delegate certain policy decisions to board-appointed committees that also act collectively. The board delegates the responsibility for day-to-day operations to the director. The board should make clear which types of issues must be brought before it.
- 6 The director is responsible for administration that is consistent with established policy. The director nurtures the intellectual and aesthetic philosophy of the museum. Working closely with appropriate staff members to refine that philosophy, the director delegates authority to achieve its implementation. The director fosters working conditions that enable staff members to perform to the full extent of their abilities. (Hereafter, references to the director mean the director in consultation with staff as appropriate.) (Also see APPENDIX A, p. 20.)
- 7 In certain cases, a paid president may also be appointed. Because such a double appointment can result in ambiguity—especially if the positions are defined as equal by the board—a clear definition of the responsibilities of each position is essential. However these positions are defined, the director should carry the ultimate responsibility for the artistic direction, collections, scholarship, and attendant programs.

## Mission, Policy, and Long-Range Plan

- 8 The purposes of most art museums are set forth broadly in their charters, articles of incorporation, and bylaws, as well as in their statements of mission. The statement of mission should relate the purposes of the institution to the main functions of an art museum as they are generally defined: acquisition, preservation, conservation, exhibition, scholarly study, and public education that fosters the understanding of works of art. The statement of mission must be formally approved by the board.
- 9 A museum's policy is the aggregate of the decisions and actions taken by the board to implement the mission. All policy development, changes, and additions should result from thorough discussions between the board and the director. Through its policies, the museum establishes a covenant with its constituency; with past, present, and future donors; with succeeding groups of board members; and with the staff. Such policy should be recorded in the minutes of board meetings, or a policy manual, and be periodically reviewed.
- 10 Every museum should have a clearly articulated long-range plan that is approved by the board and reviewed periodically. The long-range plan is an instrument by which an art museum reflects its mission, assesses its current resources, defines its goals, identifies future needs, and formulates strategies.

## The Collection

- 11 The development, preservation, conservation, documentation, study, presentation, and explication of the collection are cardinal responsibilities of a collecting museum.
- 12 The collection exists for the benefit of present and future generations. It should be made as accessible as is prudent for the protection of each object.

- 13 Every effort should be made to provide information about the collection, to visually document it, and to respond appropriately to serious inquiries regarding it.
- 14 A comprehensive plan for collection development should be formulated. The plan should use the existing collection as its point of departure.
- 15 The director and the curatorial staff are responsible for identifying possible acquisitions made through purchase. No work of art may be considered for acquisition without the recommendation of the director. The board, as a whole or through an authorized committee, must approve all recommendations for acquisition through purchase. The board may grant authority to the director to approve purchases within prescribed limits; the director must report these purchases to the board.
- 16 A similar procedure should be followed for acquisitions made through gift and bequest; these should be unrestricted whenever possible. No work of art should be accepted or acquired with conditions that restrict or otherwise interfere with the museum's obligation to apply the most reliable scholarly and scientific information available to questions of attribution, dating, iconography, provenance, and related matters.
- 17 When accepting gifts, the museum must stipulate that the responsibility for securing appraisals and furnishing this information to government agencies, such as the Internal Revenue Service, rests with the donor.
- 18 The director must ensure that best efforts are made to determine the provenance of a work of art considered for acquisition. The director must not knowingly acquire or allow to be recommended for acquisition any work of art that has been stolen, illegally imported into the jurisdiction in which the museum is located, or removed in contravention of treaties and international conventions to which the jurisdiction is signatory.

- 19 Cataloguing and documenting works of art in the collection are basic responsibilities of the museum. The information should represent sound scholarship and the staff's reasoned convictions, regardless of external pressures. Other scholarly opinions, including dissenting opinions concerning a work of art, should be recorded. Major changes in attribution, as well as serious questions concerning authenticity, should be reported to the board.
- 20 The preservation, conservation, handling, storing, and presentation of works of art in the collection are the responsibility of the director. To assure the board's full awareness of preservation and conservation as primary museum functions, the director should report periodically on the state of the collection.
- 21 Museums rely on one another for loans to exhibitions. Thus, a spirit of cooperation and collegiality that recognizes this interdependence should inform all decisions relative to such loans and the setting of charges and fees.
- 22 In any decision about a proposed loan from the collection, the intellectual merit and educational benefits, as well as the protection of the work of art, must be the primary considerations, rather than possible financial gain. The director recommends loans and advises the board about the relevant professional issues, but the ultimate responsibility for decisions on loan requests rests with the board.
- 23 Deaccessioning and disposal of works of art from the collection by sale, exchange, or other means require particularly rigorous examination and should be pursued with great prudence. There are circumstances in which the deaccessioning of works of art from the collection is justified; however, such deaccessioning must be governed by the museum's written policy rather than by exigencies of the moment. The procedure for any deaccessioning and disposal should be at least as stringent as that for purchasing works of art for the collection. (For a detailed discussion of deaccessioning and disposal practices, see APPENDIX B, p. 21.)

- 24 No work of art in the collection may be considered for deaccessioning without the recommendation of the director to the board, with which the final decision must rest. The director must provide full justification for deaccessioning to the board, and the reasoning should be recorded with particular care.
- 25 The funds (principal and interest) received from the disposal of any deaccessioned work of art must be used only for the acquisition of works of art. Similarly, funds (principal and interest) received from insurance claims for the loss of a work of art must be used only for the acquisition of works of art
- 26 Private collecting of works of art by the director and by other members of the museum staff is entirely appropriate. Such activity can enhance expertise to the benefit of the museum. However, no private collecting by the director, curators, or other museum staff directly or indirectly involved with the museum's own collecting program can be permitted if such activity conflicts in any way with the collecting interests of the museum (also see APPENDICES A, p. 20; and B, III-E, p. 24.)
- 27 The museum must have the opportunity to acquire for its own collection any work of art offered to the director or any member of the museum staff directly or indirectly involved with the museum's collecting program. When prompt action must be taken to secure a work before it can be considered by the museum, the work in question must be offered to the museum at the earliest opportunity by the staff member who has acquired it. The terms of the museum's acquisition of any such work must be at least as favorable to the interests of the museum as the terms on which the work was acquired by the director or other staff member.
- 28 In order to preclude any conflict of interest, the museum should have clear, written guidelines with regard to private collecting by the museum staff. The matter should be openly discussed with the board and those involved with the museum's collecting program.

## Public Programs

- 29 A museum's public programs serve its mission, reflect the goals of its long-range plan, and offer its audience edification and enrichment. Public programs present and interpret works of art and expand public understanding. Considerations of artistic quality and educational excellence rather than financial gain should drive a museum's public programs.
- 30 A museum should serve as broad and diverse a public as possible within the context of its mission.
- 31 A museum should offer a range of programs that comprise experiences with works of art and may include art classes, fellowships and training, community outreach, and interactive electronic communications. Programs should always be responsive to the issues of artistic quality, educational content, accessibility, and available technology.
- 32 The artistic and intellectual integrity of exhibitions is paramount, and their financial impact should not be the primary consideration in the selection of exhibitions. Ideas and information conveyed to the public must be based on the principles of sound scholarship and respect for artistic expression. Every effort must be made to avoid incorrect attributions and errors of fact. No commission from the sale of a borrowed work of art should be accepted by the museum except in the case of exhibitions specifically organized and clearly identified for that purpose.
- 33 Publications—whether printed or electronic, scholarly or popular—document and extend the reach of the museum's collections and programs and further the understanding of works of art. As with exhibitions, the ideas and information contained in publications must be based on the principles of sound scholarship and respect for artistic expression.

- 34 Judgments about programs should be made on a qualitative basis, although other indices, such as attendance and media response, are valid considerations.

## Finances

- 35 The board carries full responsibility for financial and investment policies and approves the budget of the museum. Any significant change in the museum's financial condition must be dealt with by the board in consultation with the director. Therefore, the director must regularly inform the board of any actual or anticipated changes in income or expenditures.
- 36 It is the director's responsibility to identify priorities of the museum that are consistent with its board-approved policy and to recommend the allocation of funds required to support them. The director prepares the budget of the museum and is responsible for submitting it to the board for approval before the commencement of each fiscal year.
- 37 In approving the budget, the board should recognize that expenditures consistent with the budget and subject to the availability of funds may be made by the director without further discussion. The latitude permitted the director within this structure should be defined by policy.
- 38 When it becomes necessary to alter the approved budget, the board and the director must be jointly engaged in the decision-making process.
- 39 Expenditures for purposes such as acquisitions and capital programs, which are not part of the budget, must be presented to the board for its approval. Exceptions, such as discretionary funds, should be governed by procedures defined in board-approved policy.

- 40 In developing a museum's fiscal policy, it must be recognized that while a museum may generate income to support its various programs, the museum is first and foremost a not-for-profit institution. Income must not be generated at the expense of the museum's mission or standards.
- 41 The collections a museum holds in public trust do not represent financial assets that may be converted to cash for operating or capital needs, or pledged as collateral for loans. To present fairly a museum's financial position, collections should not be capitalized.

## Fundraising and Earned Income

- 42 As part of its ultimate fiduciary responsibility, the board has the obligation to raise funds needed to satisfy the financial commitments of the budget, as well as any approved special expenses. The director must also be prepared to play a significant role in that effort. Particular care must be taken to assure that fundraising is conducted in a manner consistent with professional standards.
- 43 Museums are supported by a variety of sources, among them, endowments, government appropriations, grants, donations, membership dues, and money generated through admission fees, sales, and rentals. The museum may wish to present financial information to inform donors and the public about how the museum supports itself, and about the extensive financial investment it makes in the community.
- 44 Because museums exist to serve the public good and must earn and retain the public trust, they should avoid any practice that could damage the community's trust and respect for the institution. In fundraising, the concept of public benefit rather than individual benefit should apply, while recognizing that a variety of stakeholders may peripherally benefit, including sponsors, collectors, dealers, and artists. The museum must retain artistic control; sources of support must not be allowed to compromise the curatorial integrity of the program.

- 45 A museum should adopt a policy of acceptable practices for fundraising. Sources of support should be disclosed whenever possible. Inasmuch as anonymous donors are important sources of support for many museums, museums should respect requests for anonymity except where it would conceal a real or perceived conflict of interest.
- 46 Fundraising goals of volunteer auxiliary groups must be approved by the board and the activity monitored by the director.

## Legal Matters

- 47 Many legal matters arise in the operation of a museum. Among them are those pertaining to personnel and labor relations, collections, exhibitions, contracts, rights and reproductions, and events. Appropriate legal counsel must be available to advise on general matters, as well as specific issues. Although ultimate responsibility rests with the board, the director is responsible for the daily monitoring of the institution's compliance with regulations and laws. The board, the director, and counsel should share on a timely basis information about current legal issues and legislation relevant to the institution and the museum profession.

## The Physical Plant

- 48 The physical plant is usually among the assets of a museum for which the board assumes ultimate responsibility. Attention must be given to the preservation and security of the plant and its contents. The museum must provide a secure and accessible environment for its visitors and staff.
- 49 When museums are used for ancillary activities, the director must assure that these activities do not endanger facilities or collections or compromise the integrity of installations.

- 50 The director should submit for board review and approval such matters as revisions to the comprehensive facilities plan, the selection of architects or other professional consultants, plan objectives, development concepts, schematic and final designs, and the awarding of major construction contracts.
- 51 In accordance with the approved comprehensive plan, the director should be responsible for the construction, operation, maintenance, security, repair, renovation, and alteration of the physical plant; for planning capital improvements and related budgets; for public safety; and for such general facilities policies as the board may adopt.

## The Staff

- 52 The appointment of staff members in accordance with the budget is the director's responsibility. Ability and professional qualifications are the criteria for all employment-related decisions.
- 53 The staff is one of the museum's most valued resources and should be provided with compensation, benefits, working conditions, and opportunities for professional development consistent with national norms. The director should build and sustain a high level of staff morale and productivity.
- 54 The board is responsible for establishing policy relating to the rights and benefits of museum employees. The director develops and implements personnel practices in conformity with board-established policy. The museum should provide its employees with appropriate job descriptions, as well as regularly updated goals. Staff performance should be evaluated through a fair, consistent, and clearly understood process. Promotions and compensation should be based on the results of this evaluation or on other specific employee contracts.

- 55 Museum personnel policy must comply with relevant federal, state, and local laws. Such policy should take into account prevailing practices for comparable positions within the geographic area from which job candidates are drawn. For professional staff, the appropriate geographic area may be national or international.
- 56 In the event that a labor union is a recognized bargaining agent for certain museum employees, the director is responsible for the final contract, whether or not he or she takes a direct role in the negotiations. The board may review all labor agreements that have been negotiated and recommended by the director.
- 57 Employee personnel disputes and grievances not covered by a bargaining agent should be settled at the staff level through an established dispute-resolution procedure. If policy provides, an option for appeal may be made to the board. Such an appeal may be made only when the director is present.

## The Director

- 58 The director should be professionally qualified for the position by an appropriate balance of training in art history and/or knowledge of art, museum experience, administrative skills, and demonstrated leadership ability.
- 59 The responsibility of appointing a director should be exercised by the full board, although the search for a director and negotiations with the candidates may be delegated to a board-appointed committee. (For university and college art museum procedures, see APPENDIX C, p. 26.)
- 60 The director must have a clear understanding of the board-approved mission and policy and is responsible for implementing them.

- 61 In establishing the conditions of employment, it is in the best interests of both parties to disclose personal and institutional information pertinent to the management of the museum.
- 62 The board should confirm its selection and appointment of a director by delivering to the appointee a formal document, such as a letter or contract signed as authorized by the board. The letter or contract of appointment should treat such matters of mutual concern as salary, fringe benefits, retirement, pension plans, expense accounts, travel and allowances, time for research, sabbaticals, living quarters, length of appointment, performance reviews, conditions and notice of termination, and a procedure for the periodic review of these matters. The letter or contract should be accepted in writing by the appointee.
- 63 The salary offered should be commensurate with national professional norms and other indices.
- 64 The director should be present at all meetings of the board and of its executive committee, although on rare occasions the meetings may include executive sessions without the director's presence. The director has the right to be present at all meetings of the board's permanent standing committees. The director is responsible for informing the staff of board decisions. The ideas, concerns, and requests of the staff are communicated to the board by the director.
- 65 The director should have the full support of the board. Should this support become seriously diminished, every effort should be made to restore the relationship as soon as possible for the well-being of the museum.
- 66 Disagreements serious enough to result in erosion of board support for the director might be resolved by such successive efforts as a conference between officers of the board and the director, a special meeting of the full board, and

involvement of an outside arbitrator. Any conferences held to resolve such disagreements should be fully recorded. The board and the director must bear in mind the possible impact and outcome of the process on staff morale, as well as on the professional standing of the museum.

- 67 The director's employment may be terminated only by a vote of the full board. Notice of termination should be delivered to the director in writing. Normally a director should be given a minimum of one year's notice or one year's salary in lieu of notice. Such terms should be recognized in any employment contract or letter of agreement. Confidentiality in such matters should be maintained.
- 68 In a period of transition between directors, procedures should be established to assure that the museum's operation continues in as orderly a manner as possible. The board should determine which staff member or members will assume responsibilities customarily borne by the director. Without such a clearly defined procedure, departures from policy could occur, and these can create awkward precedents.

## University and College Art Museums

- 69 Art museums that are part of larger educational entities, such as universities or colleges, have grown in number and importance. Traditionally, they have somewhat different administrative patterns from those museums which are constituted as independent corporations. Because the broad goals and responsibilities of the independent art museum and the university or college art museum are essentially the same, the relatively few differences are considered in APPENDIX C (p. 26).

## APPENDIX A

# A Code of Ethics for Art Museum Directors

Adopted by the membership of the AAMD, June 1966; amended 1971, 1973, 1974, 1991, and 2001.

The position of a museum director is one of trust. The director will act with integrity and in accordance with the highest ethical principles. The director will avoid any and all activities that could compromise his or her position or the institution. The professional integrity of the director should set a standard for the staff. A museum director is obligated to implement the policy of the governing board for the benefit of the institution and the public. The director is responsible for ensuring that the institution adopt and disseminate a code of ethics for the museum board, staff, and volunteers.

It is unprofessional for a museum director to use his or her influence or position for personal gain. A director shall not deal in works of art or be party to the recommendation for purchase by museums or collectors of works of art in which the director has any undisclosed financial interest. The director shall not accept any commission or compromising gift from any seller or buyer of works of art.

If the director collects art, extraordinary discretion is required to assure that no conflict of interest arises between the director's personal collecting activity and the concerns of the museum. If there is perception of a conflict, the museum's governing board should be granted first option in acquiring for the museum the work or works in question. Gifts of works of art to the director by artists whose work is or may be shown or acquired by the museum can compromise the position of the director and of the institution and should be accepted only in special circumstances and with full disclosure. In such cases where there is the possibility of a perception of conflict of interest, the museum's governing board must be granted first option to accept these gifts for the museum. (Also see Paragraph 26, p. 11; and APPENDIX B, III-E, p. 24).

A museum director shall not provide—for a fee or on a retainer—any certificate or statement as to the authenticity or authorship of a work of art, or any statement of the monetary value of a work of art.

A museum director should not knowingly acquire or allow to be recommended for acquisition any object that has been stolen, removed in contravention of treaties or international conventions to which the United States is a signatory, or illegally imported in the United States.

A museum director shall not dispose of accessioned works of art in order to provide funds for purposes other than acquisitions of works of art for the collection (in accordance with Paragraph 25, p. 11).

AAMD members who violate this code of ethics will be subject to discipline by reprimand, suspension, or expulsion from the Association. Infractions by any art museum may expose that institution to sanctions, such as suspension of loans and shared exhibitions by AAMD members.

#### APPENDIX B

### Considerations for Formulating a Policy for Deaccessioning and Disposal

Adopted by the membership of the AAMD, January 1987; amended 1991 and 2001.

The board of an art museum should adopt a written policy pertaining to the deaccessioning and disposal of works of art from its collection. This policy should be consistent with the governing institutional purposes and collecting goals.

Both the deaccessioning and the disposal of a work of art from a museum's collection require exceptional care and should reflect policy rather than reaction to the exigencies of a particular moment. Standards applied to deaccessioning and disposal must be at least as stringent as those applied to the acquisition process and should not be subject to changes in fashion and taste.

## I. PURPOSE OF DEACCESSIONING AND DISPOSAL

- A Deaccessioning and disposal can be a legitimate part of the formation and care of collections and, if practiced, should be intended to refine and improve the quality and appropriateness of the collections.
- B Deaccessioning and disposal by sale shall not serve to provide operating funds. The proceeds from disposal must be treated as acquisition funds.

## II. CRITERIA FOR DEACCESSIONING AND DISPOSAL

There are a number of reasons why deaccessioning and disposal might be contemplated. Primary among these are:

- A The object is of poor quality, either intrinsically or relatively, in comparison with other objects of the same type in the collection. Items of modest quality, however, may have sufficient study value to warrant retention.
- B The object is redundant or is a duplicate that has no value as part of a series.
- C The museum's possession of the item is not legitimate, i.e., the work may have been stolen or illegally exported or imported in violation of applicable laws of the jurisdiction in which the museum is located. In such cases, the means of disposal will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- D The authenticity or attribution of the object is determined to be false or fraudulent and the object lacks sufficient aesthetic merit or art historical importance to warrant retention. In disposing of or retaining a presumed forgery, the museum shall consider all ethical issues including the consequences of returning the object to the market.

- E The physical condition of the object is so poor that restoration is impossible or will render the object essentially false. Objects damaged beyond reasonable repair that are not of use for study or teaching purposes may be destroyed in compliance with any applicable law or regulation.
- F The work of art is no longer consistent with the mission or collecting goals of the museum. Such a determination must not be based on fashion or taste.

### III. AUTHORITY AND PROCESS

- A Deaccessioning and disposal must comply with all applicable laws of the jurisdiction in which the museum is located and must observe any terms and obligations that pertain to the acquisition of the work by the museum.
- B The final authority for the deaccessioning and disposal of works of art rests with the board.
- C The process of deaccessioning and disposal must be initiated by the appropriate professional staff with full justification in writing to the director, who may, after appropriate review of the facts and circumstances, present the request to the board.
  - 1 The director shall exercise care to assure that the recommendations are based on authoritative expertise.
  - 2 Third-party review and appraisal are recommended in the case of objects of substantial value.
  - 3 In the case of work(s) by a living artist, special considerations may apply.
- D The director shall determine the time and method of disposal.

- E No member of a museum's board or staff, or anyone whose association with the institution might give them advantage in acquiring the work, shall be permitted to acquire directly or indirectly a work deaccessioned by the museum, or otherwise benefit from its sale or trade. (Also see Paragraph 26, p. 11; and APPENDIX A, p. 20.)
- F No action pertaining to deaccessioning and disposal should be undertaken that would impair the integrity and good standing of the institution within its community at large and within the profession.
- G For each object removed from the collections, complete and accurate records should be maintained, including photographs and documentation of the circumstances of the object's disposal.

#### IV. SELECTION OF METHODS OF DISPOSAL

The following may be taken into account in selecting a method of disposal:

- A Preferred methods of disposal are sale through publicly advertised auction, sale to or exchange with another public institution, and sale or exchange to a reputable, established dealer. Every effort should be taken to identify and evaluate the various advantages and yields available through different means of disposal.
- B In the case of a work of art by a living artist, special consideration might be given to an exchange with the artist.

- C In general, the disposal of an object, whether by sale or exchange, shall be conducted with a view toward maximizing the advantage and yield to the museum, without, however, compromising professional ethics.

#### V. INTERESTS OF DONORS AND LIVING ARTISTS

- A It is advisable to notify the donor of a work under consideration for deaccessioning and disposal. Circumstances may warrant extending similar courtesy to the heirs of a donor.
- B When a donated object is disposed of, the object newly acquired as a result of the proceeds should acknowledge the original donor(s).
- C When a work of art by a living artist is deaccessioned, consideration must be given to notifying the artist.

#### VI. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The AAMD recognizes that part of the mandate of a contemporary arts organization is to expand the definition of what constitutes a work of art, as well as to question traditional exhibition practices. Therefore, if the organization's written policy provides for the sale of accessioned works, the funds derived from such sales may in exceptional cases be used for purposes analogous to the purchase of works of art, specifically the creation of new works, including some that may not be collectible. Expenditure of these funds for general operating purposes must be precluded.

## APPENDIX C

# University and College Art Museums

Adopted by the membership of the AAMD, 1991; amended 2001.

University and college museums are an important part of the spectrum of art museums in the United States. These institutions arose from the belief that the benefits of education should be made available to all citizens, and that the opportunity to experience art is a vital part of education. University and college art museums often have responsibility for significant collections; in some communities they assume the role of the major museum for the municipality or the region. University and college art museums serve as links between the campuses and the surrounding communities and play important roles in the public service and outreach missions of the universities or colleges. At the same time, university and college art museums must be part of the central academic missions of the institutions and must participate fully in the education of students and the advancement of scholarship. The museum within a college or university functions best when this dual role is acknowledged and appreciated by the university or college and by the community.

Operating within a university or college setting offers some advantages and protections to directors that may not be enjoyed by directors in other museums, among them, sabbaticals, tenure policies, and traditions of academic freedom.

Because of their positions within academic institutions, university and college museum directors may face issues significantly different from other museums. This appendix recognizes some of those issues and offers professional practices appropriate for most art museums within a college or university structure. Although not all-inclusive, these practices address issues of special concern to university and college art museum directors at the time of the revision of this document.

## I. APPOINTMENT

- A The director should be appointed by the chief executive officer or designee and ratified by the governing body of the university or college, or appointed by whatever procedure is consistent with deans or other senior-level appointments at the university or college.
- B Salaries of college or university art museum directors (and all staff) should be consistent not only with faculty and administrative salaries within the institution, but also with professional salaries at comparable museums throughout the country.

## II. PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND DISMISSAL

- A The director's performance should be reviewed according to professional museum standards, and the director is subject to dismissal only after due process, offered according to the statutes of the university or college.

## III. REPORTING STRUCTURE

- A The director should report to the governing board of the university or college via the central academic administration of the university or college—rather than to a collegiate unit, department, division, program, or other unit of the university or college. Although it is recognized that some university or college art museums may operate satisfactorily under different reporting arrangements, reporting to the central academic officer is preferred. The position of the art museum within the central academic structure reconfirms and emphasizes the relevance of its collections and programs to all of the university or college rather than to any one part, and recognizes the public service and

outreach mission of the museum. If faculty or other college or university advisory committees for the art museum exist, it must be clear that they are not its governing body.

- B The public role of the museum within the community should be acknowledged. The director is more likely to be supported in that role if he or she reports to a senior officer who understands the relationship of the university or college to the community and the role the museum can play in strengthening that relationship. Equally, the central role the museum plays in the research mission of the university or college and in the education of students at the university or college must be acknowledged and supported. In many college and university museums, the office of the president, provost, executive vice president, vice president for academic affairs, or some similar office is the one most likely to understand and support both the academic and outreach mission of the museum.

#### IV. RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITY

- A As in other museums, the university or college art museum director is responsible for artistic direction and vision for the museum, as well as management and direction of the staff and the budget of the museum.
- B While the museum must be the director's primary responsibility, the director may also teach academic courses. The teaching of such courses should be mutually agreed upon by the director and the relevant academic unit. The director or the director's designee should participate centrally in the design and/or implementation of any art museum training curriculum offered by the university or college.
- C The director provides artistic leadership to the community and participates in community artistic affairs at his or her discretion. Participation on boards and committees of community arts organizations is part of the public-service

responsibilities of the director, so long as such participation does not involve a conflict of interest in fundraising, artistic affairs, or in any other part of the director's responsibilities to the museum or college or university.

- D The director is a leader and spokesman on art museum issues within the university or college and in the community.
- E The director is responsible for the development and implementation of policy related to all aspects of the museum's collections, including acquisition, deaccessioning and disposal, preservation, conservation, and exhibition, as well as scholarly research and interpretation. Recognizing that the university or college or its foundation owns the museum's collection, the director is responsible for making the governing authority of the university or college aware of its legal and ethical responsibilities to the art museum's collection, including issues of its use and the physical conditions under which it is maintained.
- F Deaccessioning and disposal from the collection must result from clear museum policies that are in keeping with the AAMD's Professional Practices (see also the section on The Collection p. 8; and APPENDIX B, p. 21). Deaccessioning and disposal from the art museum's collection must never be for the purpose of providing financial support or benefit for other goals of the university or college or its foundation.
- G Policies developed by the director with regard to acquisition and deaccessioning should be adopted or ratified by the central governing authority of the university or college.
- H Art may be acquired by the university or college outside the museum's collection, but the museum should be offered the right of first refusal for such acquisitions. If the college or university or its foundation disposes of art outside the art museum's collection, the art museum should be offered the right of first refusal to acquire the art for the art museum's collection.

- I It is the responsibility of the director to use the museum's collections for teaching and research without exposing the objects to undue risk. The director must have sole discretion as to how, when, and where objects from the museum's collection are used and under what conditions they are stored and exhibited.
  
- J While the museum's spaces may be made available to the college, university, or community for entertaining or other purposes, it is the responsibility of the director to determine what constitutes appropriate use of museum spaces, in keeping with his or her responsibilities for the safekeeping of the museum's collection, exhibitions, and programs. The director should develop a policy for use of museum spaces consistent with the physical limitations of the space and the safeguarding of the collections, exhibitions, and programs. If the museum rents some of its spaces to community, university, or college groups, the museum—rather than the central offices of the college or university or its foundation or another collegiate unit—should receive the financial benefits. Likewise, if the college or university art museum operates a museum store, financial benefits should accrue directly to the museum.
  
- K The director must be a central participant in any project that involves alteration, enlargement, or renovation of the museum's facilities. The director must be involved with the selection of an architect and the determination of the final building program and design.
  
- L While joint appointments of art museum staff with other departments may be desirable in some cases, the director must have sole discretion for hiring, reviewing, and dismissing art museum employees within the existing personnel policies of the university or college.
  
- M Community or alumni advisory groups are often central to building relationships and support. If the museum has such groups, the director should work closely with them to ensure that their goals and priorities are in keeping with

those of the museum. The director should select, or be principally involved with the selection of, members of such groups and their officers. If groups assist with fundraising for the museum, all fundraising must be done with the approval of the director and for priorities established with the director. All of the above is true for any college or university advisory group to the museum.

#### APPENDIX D

### Reproductions of Works of Art

Adopted by the membership of the AAMD, January 1979; amended 2001.

Art museums legitimately generate income through the sale of such educational materials as catalogues, books, postcards, and reproductions. The manufacture and knowledgeable use of reproductions for teaching purposes or in a decorative context is appropriate. However, a proliferation of “art-derived” materials, coupled with misleading marketing of reproductions, has created such widespread confusion as to require clarification in order to maintain professional standards.

When producing and/or selling reproductions, museums must clearly indicate, through the use of integral markings on the objects, as well as signs, labels, and advertising, that these items are reproductions. Signatures, print edition numbers, and printers’ symbols or titles must not appear in the reproduction if in the original they occur outside the borders of the image. Similarly, signatures, edition numbers, and/or foundry marks on sculpture must not appear on the reproduction.

Reproductions must be in materials and/or sizes other than those used by the artist in the original works of art. Although reproductions of decorative arts serving functional purposes may pose special problems in this regard, the fact that they are reproductions should be clearly indicated on the object.

The touting of exaggerated investment value of reproductions must be avoided because the object or work being offered for purchase is not original and the resale value is highly in doubt.

When advertising reproductions, museums should not use language implying that there is any identity of quality between the copy and the original or lead the potential buyer to believe that by purchasing any such reproduction, he or she is acquiring an original work of art.

## APPENDIX E

### Recommended Policies

Appropriate policies guide a museum and help avoid misunderstandings. The AAMD recommends that the following issues, identified in *Professional Practices in Art Museums*, be addressed in the policies of every museum. To serve the needs of a particular museum, other issues not mentioned here may be subjects of appropriate policies.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT (including, but not limited to, statements of the nature of collections, accession procedures, exhibition matters, incoming and outgoing loans, conservation, access, and deaccessioning and disposal procedures)

PERSONNEL (including, but not limited to, statements regarding compensation, working hours, benefits, and promotion)

FINANCE AND INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

ETHICS (for staff, trustees and volunteers)