



STRENGTHENED GUIDELINES ON THE ACQUISITION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIALS AND ANCIENT ART ISSUED BY ASSOCIATION OF ART MUSEUM DIRECTORS

MEMBERS CONCLUDE MID-WINTER MEETING IN KANSAS CITY

New York, New York—January 30, 2013—At its Mid-Winter meeting at Kansas City, Missouri, the Association of Art Museums Directors approved revisions to its guidelines for the acquisition of archaeological materials and ancient art. These revisions further strengthen and clarify AAMD’s guidelines, as part of the organization’s ongoing commitment to establishing the highest professional standards for the art museum field. The changes to the guidelines focus on how member institutions use AAMD’s Object Registry and make the requirement to post to the Registry a part of AAMD’s Code of Ethics. The revised guidelines also cover a limited group of objects not addressed by the previous guidelines: promised gifts and bequests of archaeological material and ancient art made prior to the adoption of AAMD’s 2008 guidelines.

The changes in the new “Guidelines on the Acquisition of Archaeological Material and Ancient Art (revised 2013)” focus on specific aspects of the guidelines, as follows:

- The existing requirement to post information about new acquisitions of archaeological materials and ancient art to AAMD’s Object Registry has been clarified: members must now post all provenance information of which the museum is aware, as well as specific details about how the acquisition meets the standards of the guidelines.
- At the same time, the AAMD Object Registry has been strengthened by making posts to the Registry a requirement of AAMD’s Code of Ethics.
- The revised guidelines provide more detail about the considerations to be taken into account when deciding whether to acquire a work that is either archeological material or ancient art.
- The guidelines also address an area that was not covered in the 2008 report: guidance on the handling of promised gifts and estate plans made before the 2008 report was issued. The revised guidelines state that gifts promised and bequests made prior to 2008 can be accepted provided they are posted to the Object Registry when accessioned into a museum’s collection.

Most areas of the guidelines remain consistent between 2008 and 2013, including the principle that museums should not normally acquire archeological materials and ancient art without provenance demonstrating that the object was out of its country of modern discovery prior to or legally exported therefrom after November 17, 1970 (the date of the UNESCO Convention.) Museums may consider acquisitions that do not have a complete provenance if they meet the criteria described in the guidelines. If acquired, those works must be posted publicly on AAMD’s Object Registry. These postings make information on

the works accessible to the public nationally and internationally and enable new research and possible claims to occur.

"I want to thank my colleagues—those who participated in the Task Force and the members at the meeting—who worked together to develop the revisions, and provided thoughtful commentary on them," said Maxwell L. Anderson, Chair of AAMD's Task Force on Archaeological Materials & Ancient Art, and Eugene McDermott Director of the Dallas Museum of Art. "It is because of their continued commitment that AAMD has been successful at balancing the complex considerations involved in collecting ancient art with the imperative to do so ethically."

AAMD's previous—and current—guidelines grow out of the principle that museums have a responsibility to collect, and are committed to collecting responsibly. AAMD recognizes that acquiring archaeological materials and ancient art is increasingly complex, and through the guidelines AAMD outlines the range of considerations that must be taken into account when making decisions to collect such objects. AAMD believes that bringing works into the public domain benefits the public by making the objects available for everyone to experience, and by making education programs, research, and exhibition of the works possible.

The revised guidelines are posted [on AAMD's website](#). The revised Object Registry will be operational in the coming weeks.

The new guidelines were developed by a Task Force of 15 art museum directors representing a wide variety of art museums nationwide. The guidelines were approved by the Board of AAMD and by its membership at the Mid-Winter meeting.

"Our growing membership continues to demonstrate their commitment to the field through the leadership and thoughtfulness they bring to these meetings," said Kimerly Rorschach, AAMD's current president and director of the Seattle Art Museum. "In three days, we have accomplished much, most notably with the discussion and adoption of revised guidelines for collecting archaeological materials ancient art. This is an area of concern for many members, and I want to thank Maxwell Anderson and all the members of the Task Force for leading us to a successful conclusion."

The Association of Art Museum Directors, representing 217 art museum directors in the US, Canada, and Mexico, promotes the vital role of art museums throughout North America and advances the profession by cultivating leadership and communicating standards of excellence in museum practice. Further information about AAMD's professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at www.aamd.org.

###

Contacts:

Christine Anagnos / Alison Wade Association of Art Museum Directors 212-754-8084 canagnos@aamd.org awade@aamd.org	Sascha Freudenheim / Elizabeth Chapman Resnicow Schroeder Associates 212-671-5172 / 212-671-5159 sfreudenheim@resnicowschroeder.com echapman@resnicowschroeder.com
---	--