

ROWAN UNIVERSITY  
**MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**  
Collections Management Policy

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## Statement of Purpose

This Collections Management Policy articulates the professional standards and practices by which the proper development, management, preservation, and use of the collections held by the Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art (hereafter the “Museum”) is ensured.

The Collections Management Policy is a comprehensive written statement that:

- Sets forth the mission of the Museum;
- Explains how this mission is pursued through the permanent collection;
- Articulates the Museum’s professional standards regarding objects in its care;
- Serves as a guide to personnel in carrying out their collection related responsibilities, and;
- Provides the public with information about what objects and information the Museum collects and preserves and how the Museum performs these functions.

The policy has been endorsed by the Museum’s director and personnel and, pursuant to University governance, approved by the Dean of the College of the Arts.

## Mission and Vision

Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art's mission is to present diverse forms of contemporary art by professional artists with content that is thought provoking, relevant, and timely.

With our exhibitions, collections, and programming we seek to engender curiosity and a passion for contemporary art, enrich the quality of life for area residents, and serve as a vibrant cultural destination for South Jersey, the Rowan community, and surrounding region. We are committed to cultivating an inclusive, accessible, and just environment that encourages dialogue and collaboration between artists, students, faculty, and the general public through the presentation of interdisciplinary, contemporary art exhibitions, artist talks and other public programming, and by making our unique collection of art by women artists accessible for study and inspiration.

## Authority and Governance

Overall responsibility for the management of the Museum and the collection rests with the Director of the Museum, reporting to the Dean of the College of the Arts who in turn reports to the Provost. The Director will present and discuss issues related to the development of the collection with the Collections Committee in determining the best course of action in accordance with this policy.

Director and Chief Curator	Responsible for overall operations, programmatic scope and direction, and the development and planning of exhibitions and related programming.
Gallery Coordinator	Provides support in the management and coordination of museum programming and exhibitions including contemporary art exhibition planning and design, art handling and installation, and design of educational and promotional materials.
Collections Curator	Manages all aspects of the permanent collection for purposes of exhibition, loans, donations, and reproductions.
Collections Committee	Responsible for overseeing and reviewing acquisitions, deaccessioning, outgoing loans, conservation, and all matters pertaining to collections stewardship and planning.
Advisory Committee	Reviews terms of the policy and makes appropriate recommendations where applicable.

## Code of Ethics

In all actions related to the Museum and its management, the Museum personnel will adhere to the current American Alliance of Museums (AAM) Code of Ethics and the current Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) Professional Practices in Art Museums manual as well as the Rowan University Code of Ethics.

## Scope of Collections

The Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art collection consists of more than 450 fine art objects with particular emphasis on the works of American women artists who were active in the pivotal period of the 1970s and 1980s.

The museum's permanent collection was established in 2008 by Andrew D. Hottle, Professor of Art History at Rowan University. Through his efforts, the Sylvia Sleigh Collection was donated and formed the foundation of the permanent collection. Acquired in 2011, it is comprised of 100 paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and photographs by women artists. It was amassed by Sylvia Sleigh (1916–2010), a pioneering feminist and tireless supporter of women artists. Sleigh was among the founding members of SOHO 20 Gallery (est. 1973), an important women's cooperative. She subsequently joined A.I.R. Gallery (est. 1972), the first artist-run exhibition space for women in the United States. It was Sylvia Sleigh's intention to donate her collection to an institution that would preserve the work and make it accessible through periodic exhibitions. She acquired the works of other women as a way of supporting them and honoring their achievements, regardless of whether they were critically acclaimed or financially successful. Additions to the permanent collection follow the same rationale of placing quality and relevance over critical or commercial recognition.

A central component of the Museum's permanent collection is *The Sister Chapel* (1974–78), a historic collaborative installation created by thirteen contributors at the height of the women's art movement. At the Museum, *The Sister Chapel* was first mounted as a short-term exhibition in 2016, the first time it had been shown since 1980. It was subsequently made into a permanent installation at Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art at Westby Hall in 2019. As a condition of donation, the component paintings of *The Sister Chapel* must remain together as a cohesive group and cannot be individually deaccessioned.

## Purpose and Use of Collections

The Museum acquires, preserves, and shares collections in accordance with its mission. Collections may include items that, because of their age, condition, or value, require special housing, handling, and climate-controlled conditions to ensure their preservation.

Collections may be used in the following manner:

- Exhibitions;
- Loans to other museums, or cultural institutions;
- Study, research or other scholarly purposes;

- Expose the community to art on campus.

Inappropriate usage may include, but is not limited to:

- Use of objects as decorations or props at University or public events;
- Display in private areas not accessible by Museum personnel;
- Reproductions of objects in publications or productions by outside agencies when the goals of the publication conflict with the Museum's mission and goals;
- Displays that are not secure or prone to damage.

When in question, appropriate or inappropriate use of the collections will be determined by the Museum Director.

Collection objects are held in public trust in perpetuity by the Museum. To protect the relationship between the Museum and the public, and to preserve the historical integrity of each object, the monetary value of the collections will not be listed on balance sheets or other financial reports designed to show those objects as financial assets or collateral resources of the organization.

## **Acquisitions and Accessioning**

### **Criteria for Collection Acquisition**

The Museum seeks to enhance its Collections by adding, in a judicious manner, those objects which are appropriate to its mission statement. Objects may be added to the Collections by means of gift, bequest, purchase, exchange, or any other transaction by which title to the objects passes to the Museum. All objects accepted into the Collections become the exclusive property of the Museum and if unrestricted, may be displayed, loaned, retained or disposed of in the best interests of the Museum and the public it serves.

The basic consideration in acquiring works of art for the collections is aesthetic quality and historical importance. Each new acquisition aims to strengthen the collections rather than dilute their quality. An object that fills a gap in the collections should maintain the highest level of other works of art in the collections, while an object that contributes to an existing strength in the collections should not lower the level of quality or interest of the group as a whole.

The Museum will only accept acquisitions that fall into its collecting scope, as described previously in this policy. Additional factors to consider include:

- The work of art shall possess potential for research and scholarship and will be useful for exhibition purposes.
- The work of art is in exhibitable condition, or if for study, sufficiently stable to permit that activity and is not hazardous (i.e. toxic, radioactive, or explosive) to people or property.

- The work of art is accompanied by clear title that has been presented by the donor, seller, or his/her authorized agent with sufficient documentation to establish provenance.
- The Museum has the capacity to provide for the storage, protection, and preservation of the work of art, in keeping with professionally accepted national standards.
- The work of art is free of restrictions imposed by the donor. Conditions regarding exhibiting works should be avoided, but if necessary, apply only to a limited, specified period of time. The Museum will not accept collections donated with the condition that the entire collection be accessioned. The Museum has the right to choose, within a proposed donation, which items they wish to keep.

No person who is involved in the policy or management of the Museum may compete with the Museum for objects or may take advantage of privileged information which has been received. Should a conflict of interest develop between the needs of the individual and the Museum, the needs of the Museum will prevail.

### **Methods of Acquisition**

The Museum is empowered by the Dean of the College of the Arts to acquire by donation, bequest, transfer, or purchase objects for the collection.

- *Donation*

The Museum's collections exist largely because of the generosity of donors. However, given the responsibility and cost of caring for collections over the long term, rigorous standards of quality for accepting donations of works of art are applied. A Deed of Gift acknowledging transfer of title will be issued to the donor. Legal and ultimate responsibility for furnishing appraisals of value to governmental tax agencies rests with the donor. The IRS prohibits the receiving institution from providing appraisals to individuals but the Museum will make the work(s) available for an appraiser's inspection. The Office of University Advancement provides tax forms when an appraisal exceeds \$5000. Works which do not meet the collection objectives may be offered by donors to other departments of the University. Although the University may choose to accept such donations, the Museum is not responsible for their storage or care. These works are not accessioned or intermingled with the Museum's own collection.
- *Bequest*

Objects bequeathed to the Museum should be approved for acquisition prior to the Museum being designated as the beneficiary. If this is not done, the Museum is under no obligation to accept the bequest if the objects willed are deemed to be inconsistent with the policies outlined above.
- *Transfer*

Items may be acquired by transfer to the Museum from the collection of another institution.
- *Purchase*

For all works of art that have previously changed hands, the Museum requires an appropriate dealer warranty certifying that the dealer possesses good title and has the right to sell the object.

### **Authority**

Possible acquisitions can be brought to the Director by Museum personnel or affiliated faculty. If the object considered for acquisition meets the proper criteria and is deemed suitable, it will be presented with appropriate documentation to the Collections Committee for approval. A majority vote by the committee is required for a possible acquisition to be acquired and accessioned into the collection. The Collections Committee decision is final.

### **Deaccessions and Disposals**

Deaccessioning is the process of permanently removing accessioned collection objects and materials from the Museum's ownership. Because deaccessioning can adversely affect an institution's collection, reputation, and even ability to fundraise in a lasting way, all objects proposed for deaccessioning from the Museum must be subjected to a thorough review. Deaccessioning shall never be undertaken for the sole purpose of generating income. In accordance with guidelines of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), any proceeds generated by a deaccessioning process will be used solely for the acquisition of new works for the collections. Because the Museum is aware of its role as a steward of the collection for the benefit of the public, it only acquires objects that it intends to retain for perpetuity and not with the intention of disposing of them.

To be considered for deaccessioning, an object must:

- Be free from donor mandated restrictions;
- Be fully and legally owned by the Museum;
- Meet at least one of the following criteria:
  - the work of art does not fall within the Museum's mission or scope of collection;
  - the Museum is incapable of providing the conditions necessary for minimum curatorial care;
  - the work has deteriorated or is damaged to a point where it can no longer be exhibited or used and poses too great or costly a conservation problem;
  - the work of art is a duplicate;
  - the work of art is of a particular type of work that is over-represented in the collection;
  - the work of art is determined to be below the level of quality necessary to be included in exhibitions and possesses little potential for research, scholarship, or educational purposes;
  - the work of art has been found to be a forgery, fake, or copy with no definable purpose;
  - the work of art has a fraudulent, unethical, or illegal provenance;
  - the work of art constitutes a physical hazard or health risk to the staff or public.

**Methods of Disposal**

The Museum may dispose of a deaccessioned object by donation to or exchange with a non-profit institution, by public sale, or by destruction when it is warranted. Proceeds from public sale will be placed in a restricted account to be used to acquire collection objects. The proceeds of each such sale shall be separately attributed to the original donor as an individual component of such a fund.

Under no circumstances may a deaccessioned object be given to or otherwise placed in the possession of Museum personnel; a member of the Collections Committee; a member of the Advisory Committee; any employee of Rowan University; or any representative or immediate family member of the aforementioned. They are, however, eligible to purchase deaccessioned objects that are offered at public sales.

Private sales are not permitted.

**Authority**

The recommendation to deaccession shall be made by Museum personnel or affiliated faculty to the Director by means of a proposal that addresses the justification for deaccessioning, the object's ownership status, and suggested method of disposal. If the Director concurs, the potential deaccession will be presented to the Collections Committee. If the committee unanimously agrees with the deaccession proposal, the Director will seek the Dean's approval before moving forward with disposal.

**Loans****Incoming Loans**

The Museum may borrow items on short term loan for the purposes of temporary exhibition from private as well as public collections. Because of the liability and expense, the Museum cannot store and maintain items belonging to others that are not required for exhibition needs. The Director approves and instigates all incoming loans, working with the Coordinator to generate appropriate documentation and coordinate all internal and external arrangements for collecting and receiving the objects.

**Outgoing Loans**

The Museum actively lends work from its collection to institutions or organizations whose expressed purpose for the loan is of educational value, in order to make the collections publicly accessible in the broadest manner, while recognizing considerations of good conservation practices, security and the Museum's own exhibition and research plans. No loans will be made to private individuals.

Objects requested for loan must be in good physical condition, and judged able to withstand the ordinary strains of packing, transportation, handling, and exhibition. Borrowing institutions must follow professional practices and have a facility that meets the standards established by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). Furthermore, the borrowing institution is required

to assume the responsibility for all shipping costs, including any special packing that might be required; insurance costs in transit and on location; all costs of any special conservation work on requested objects; and costs of appraisals establishing current market value. Loan fees to cover the administrative costs are established by the Museum Advisory Board in consultation with the Museum Director. Rate sheets are available at the time of the request.

The Museum will not lend objects on a permanent or indefinite basis. Loan periods will not exceed one year but can be renewable. The Museum reserves the right to recall items at any time. Unless the recall is made because of the Borrower's failure to abide by the conditions of the loan agreement, the Museum will make every effort to make an appropriate substitution. Receipt of a loan does not carry with it any rights to reproduce, distribute, or publish images of the item(s). The Collections Committee has the final authority to approve or decline a requested loan.

### **Loans to Campus**

In support of its mission, the Museum holds its collections in trust for the benefit of the public. As such, the Museum does not lend works from its collection to any location on campus that does not provide public access, sufficient security, or adequate climate control.

The Museum may approve loan requests for displays in areas open to the public and are accessible by Museum personnel at all times. The goal of such a loan is to make the collection more widely available and engage the campus community. Loan periods will not exceed one year but can be renewable. Museum personnel may conduct an inspection of all University loans to ascertain that their condition is sound, they have not been moved, and the borrower still occupies the space where they are installed. It is the responsibility of the borrower to pay any costs associated with the loan (framing, installation, special packing materials, etc.), and to notify the Museum when the loan is no longer needed.

The Museum reserves the right to recall items at any time.

### **Objects In Custody**

The Museum does not accept unsolicited objects for temporary custody. If an object is sent to the Museum without prior notice or is left on the premises with no owner identification, the Museum will assume no responsibility for care and custody of such object, and reserves the right to dispose of it in any way it sees fit. "Found in Collection" refers to objects which have been found and deposited in Museum storage without any identification. An object found in the collection will be accessioned and processed if:

- It is clear that the object belongs with other objects in the collection; or
- It is surmised that the object once was part of the collections or intended for collections; and
- The object fits within the current parameters of accessioning.
- If the object will not be accessioned, it will go through the process of disposal.

## Care of Collections

The Museum is committed to the care and preservation of its collections. As such, it displays and houses them in a clean, climate-controlled environment that is protected by institutionally appropriate security and fire detection/suppression systems. Pest management is controlled by the University Facilities Department with routine checks and trap placement. Display spaces are cleaned on a weekly basis. The dusting of works of art is carried out by Museum personnel as needed. Only personnel professionally trained in the care and preservation of the collections may examine, handle, and transport works of art. Lights are turned off when display spaces are closed to the public or the storage area is unoccupied.

## Risk Management

### Insurance Policy

The Museum's insurance is managed by Rowan University Risk Management. The policy is a HTB Small Museum Collection & Temporary Loans – AAM. The insurance company is United States Fire Insurance Company and the policy is placed through Huntington T. Block Insurance Agency in Washington, DC.

### Security

The Museum works with the Rowan University Department of Public Safety to ensure the security of the collection through motion alarm systems and limiting after-hours access to spaces via keys and ID cards. Public Safety is staffed by police, security, and dispatch personnel 24/7.

On a building wide scale, control is achieved through limiting the times and areas the public can access. During those times, Museum personnel will be present to visually monitor artwork. Entry into the collection storage area is restricted to Museum personnel. Through use of a Collections Management System, Museum personnel track the location of objects in the collection.

Special attention shall be paid to collections security issues during high-risk activities such as building renovations and exhibition changes, when collections are in transit, and during special events held in the Museum.

Loss of or damage to an object must be reported immediately to the Museum Director.

## Documentation and Records

- The Museum maintains its collections documentation in a centralized collections management system (CatalogIt cloud-based database), where each accessioned object is recorded with a unique number and record. The database allows information about objects, donors, artists, loan transactions as well as exhibitions to be accumulated, organized, and disseminated through recording and reporting mechanisms. The database also serves as the basis for the data that populates the collections portion of the Museum's website.

- CatalogIt serves as the Museum's method for recording inventory, as physical locations within the building are entered into the database (by room, furniture type and then by specific location, such as a drawer, shelf, or screen) and an object's location can therefore be tracked with regularity and specificity. It also serves as the repository for descriptive information about an object, such as dimensions and whether the object has components such as multiple parts or frames. The record contains the object's loan and exhibition history, as well as the accurate credit line and any relevant bibliographic information.
- All documents relating to the object, including the signed Deed of Gift, will be deposited in the relevant collections files.
- All documents related to the deaccessioning process will be deposited in the relevant collections files and retained there permanently. Deaccessioning purpose and date should also be recorded on the object record.
- The Museum makes every effort to grant access to objects not on exhibition, and to collections records, in accord with personnel availability and professional security and safety standards. Access is granted to researchers, scholars, students, and interested members of the public who can demonstrate a serious and legitimate purpose in their request for access. Access to collections records does not include such information as insurance value, name of anonymous donor, or other information that may be deemed privileged.

## **Legal and Ethical Considerations**

No materials will be knowingly or willfully accepted by the Museum if the material was illegally imported, or illegally obtained in the United States, as determined by local, city, state, federal, or other laws, regulations, treaties, or conventions. No material will knowingly or willingly be accepted by the Museum where there is evidence that its acquisition involved the illegal destruction of historic sites, buildings, structures, or artifacts.

## **Rights and Reproduction**

### **Photography and Reproduction**

It is understood in this section that photography includes filming. During photography procedures, conservation guidelines must be observed.

- Objects on loan may not be photographed or filmed without permission from the owner.
- Requests for commercial and/or publicity filming and photography are referred to the Museum Director for evaluation for publicity purposes. The Museum is responsible for issuing any reproduction restrictions.
- The Museum reserves the right to review, approve, restrict or deny the reproduction or other replication of any of its collections objects. Decisions as to the commercial use of the collections require careful consideration of both the integrity of the object and of the Museum's reputation as an educational research institution, and any such use will be subject to conditions specified by the Museum. Any replication will be clearly noted as a reproduction along with the appropriate credit line identifying as owner the Museum, and source acquisition.

- The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, USC) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. One of the specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement. Reproductions are permitted for personal and research use only, and the Museum staff reserve the right to refuse permission.

### **Publishing**

All requests for publication must be made in writing to the Director.

Any person wishing to publish, exhibit, or broadcast photographic reproduction material must make a written request for permission. The following information must be included in the request letter:

- The title of the book, catalog, magazine, brochure, film, exhibit, etc.;
- The name of the author;
- The name of the publisher, producer or organizer;
- The anticipated print run and distribution (local, national, worldwide), and
- The expected release date.

In providing permission to publish material obtained from the Museum, the Museum does not assume any responsibility for infringement of copyright or of publication rights in the material which may be held by others, and the publisher assumes all responsibility for any claims under the Copyright Law of the United States or the laws of libel which may be made as a result of the publication.

- The publisher agrees to cite “Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art, Glassboro, NJ” as the source of the artistic material in all published works. A dissertation is considered a published work.
- The responsibility for obtaining any additional permission required for the publication of archival or artistic materials remains with the publisher of the material.
- Permission granted is for one time publication use. In granting permission to publish, the Museum does not surrender its own right after that to publish any of the materials for its collection or grant permission to others to publish them. In return for permission to publish, a final copy of the publication should be provided to the Museum
- Fees may be charged by the Museum for providing permissions and photographic reproductions for publication. The fees are established by the Museum Advisory Board in consultation with the Museum Director.
- Visitors may photograph works of art in the collections on display in the galleries, although cameras must be handheld and no flash or photofloods may be used. The Museum assumes no responsibility for claims of copyright infringement if visitors circulate copyrighted material without obtaining permission from the copyright holder.

**Review and Revision**

This policy will be reviewed every five years. It is, however, a living document and can be revised at any time given the appropriate approvals by the Director. Only the Director has the authority to make an exception to this policy.