

# GENERAL COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY OF THE MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to define the general principles, best practices and procedures that must guide the decisions and actions taken by employees of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (hereinafter the “MMFA”) with respect to the development, documentation, movement, traceability, control, access to and conservation of the MMFA’s collections. It also aims to ensure that decisions concerning the acquisition, deaccessioning and loan of works are made in accordance with the MMFA mission, the applicable law (*An Act respecting the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts*, chapter M-42) and the highest professional standards in collections management.

## 2. FRAME OF REFERENCE

This Policy is founded in section 14 of the *Act respecting the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts*, which stipulates that the MMFA must adopt a general collections management policy that describes: the chosen areas of development for its collections in light of its mission and exhibition space; its acquisition policy; and its reserve facilities management policy. It also follows the principles set out in the MMFA’s 2022-2025 Strategic Plan.

Finally, the Policy takes inspiration from the practical guide *Élaborer une politique de gestion des collections*, produced by the Direction du patrimoine et de la muséologie of the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec (MCC), as well as from the ethical principles, standards and rules of professional practice of the Société des musées du Québec (SMQ), the Canadian Museums Association (CMA), the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

## 3. MISSION OF THE MMFA

Upon its founding in 1860, the Art Association of Montreal’s objective was “to encourage the appreciation of fine arts among the people of the city” by creating and maintaining, to the extent possible, a museum or exhibition galleries. This interest in the “fine arts” soon expanded to include ancient, decorative and industrial arts. In 1916, the Art Association’s mission was officially redefined to include the latter, and a new “Museum Section” was established to house “all objects tending to the education of the designer and worker.”

The mission of the institution, which was renamed the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 1949, is formulated as follows: The mission of the MMFA is to acquire, conserve, study, interpret and present relevant works of art from all around the world and from every era, so that the members of its community and publics may benefit from the transformative powers of art.<sup>1</sup>

## 4. CONTENT

### 4.1 The collections

#### 4.1.1 Permanent Collection

Started in the 19th century, the MMFA’s Permanent Collection is one of the oldest and most diverse in Canada. It currently includes over 45,000 works from all five continents, dating from the Neolithic era to the present. Since more than 80% of these works were acquired by gift, bequest or exchange, they form a sort of “collection of collections” that bears witness to the history of art appreciation in Montreal. The MMFA continues to develop its collection in accordance with the priorities outlined in section 4.2 of this Policy, with a view to holding space for voices and stories that continue to be under-represented in our society.

#### 4.1.2 Educational Collection

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<sup>1</sup> The MMFA’s mission statement as updated in the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan. The previous mission statement reads as follows: “The mission of the Museum is to encourage the arts, disseminate knowledge of the arts, and acquire, preserve, collect, improve the condition of and exhibit works of art.”

The MMFA's Educational Collection currently encompasses works and objects that lend themselves particularly well to study, interpretation, documentation or education. The main function of this collection is to complement the works in the Permanent Collection or the artists, tendencies and movements represented within it. The MMFA fulfills its scientific and educational aims for this collection by making it accessible to researchers and students, and by carrying out interpretive and other activities.

The decision to include a gifted work in the Educational Collection or the Permanent Collection rests with the MMFA, based on a recommendation from the Internal Acquisition Committee. The MMFA must notify the donor of its intention to integrate the work in the Educational Collection as early as possible in the acquisition process.

Certain works in the Permanent Collection that are not suitable for exhibition due to their state of conservation, issues regarding authenticity, or the fact that they are considered minor works may be transferred to the Educational Collection. Such a change in status is subject to an evaluation by the Internal Acquisition Committee, and the resulting recommendation must be approved by Management.

Works and objects in the Educational Collection are not subject to the same conservation rules as works in the Permanent Collection in terms of storage, display and use. The MMFA must nevertheless ensure that the integrity of this collection is preserved.

Works donated specifically for inclusion in the Educational Collection are not eligible for an application to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board (CCPERB).

#### 4.1.2.2 Towards a new definition

The MMFA has set itself the task of reviewing the definition, function, uses and pertinence of its Educational Collection. To this end, it will undertake an analysis of its constitution process and the nature of the objects that have been added to the collection over the years.

### 4.1.3 Archives

#### 4.1.3.1 Archives Department

An integral part of the Collections Management and Registration Department, the Archives Department has existed in its current form since it was established in 1991. It was born out of a desire to centralize all documentation related to the MMFA, whose archives date back to 1860, under a single department.

In addition to being responsible for the institutional archives, private archives and documentation on artworks in the Permanent Collection, the Archives Department is also charged with the task of processing, storing and disseminating all physical and digital records that trace the MMFA's rich history and that ensure the smooth running of the institution.

#### 4.1.3.2. Private archives

The vast majority of the fifty or so archival fonds donated over the years are related to the MMFA's Permanent Collection. Some of these fonds originated from an artist or designer, such as Henri Beaulac, or from a gallery or institution that has helped shape the collection, such as the Lippel Gallery or the Musée des arts décoratifs de Montréal. The archives also include the fonds of collectors who have contributed to the enrichment of the collection, such as Frederick Cleveland Morgan and George Alexander Drummond.

### 4.1.4 Library

Founded in 1882 and known as the "Reading Room" in the days of the Art Association of Montreal, the art library at the MMFA is the oldest of its kind in Canada and one of the largest in the country. Over the years, its collection has been enriched thanks to the generosity of numerous donors; annual purchases based on new acquisitions, research projects and programming; and the establishment of an exchange program with museums around the world. The collection of books housed in the Library is aligned with the main priorities and directions of the Permanent Collection and includes a collection of documentary records on Canadian artists, international designers and Canadian communities. It also offers access to specialized databases.

The management of the Archives and Library Department is overseen by the Head of Collections Management and Registration.

## 4.2 Priorities and directions for the development of the collections

## **4.2.1 Permanent Collection**

### **QUEBEC AND CANADIAN ART**

This collection is composed of significant works by outstanding painters, sculptors, draftspersons and printmakers who were active in Montreal, Quebec and Canada from the 17th century onwards. It reflects, in that order, various priorities in terms of the representation of the main movements in local and national art history. Acquisitions of Canadian art are at the origin of the MMFA's establishment. From its first acquisitions in the third quarter of the 19th century, the collection grew steadily in the first half of the 20th century through donations. Following the hiring of the first permanent curators in the 1970s, it began to expand systematically, a momentum that has continued to this day.

The works of certain artists are collected in greater numbers, owing to the importance and outstanding or unique quality of their practice. The MMFA strives to support artists from Quebec and Canada and to make room for artistic disciplines that are historically under-represented in its collection. It thus favours a more holistic and global vision of art. The approach adopted is selective, proactive and qualitative rather than quantitative.

### **INDIGENOUS ART**

The collection of North American Indigenous art was originally assembled by Frederick Cleveland Morgan, the MMFA's first volunteer curator. Beginning in 1919, his particular focus was on the art of the First Nations of the Northwest Coast – a body of work that still forms the core of this collection. In 1953, he acquired the first works of Inuit art, beginning a collection that has grown steadily to the present day. The contemporary Indigenous art collection contains key works of art acquired from 2000 until the present day.

In order to provide a more representative overview of Quebec and Canadian art, the MMFA acquires both historical and contemporary works by Inuit, Métis and First Nations artists. Acquisitions also include works by Indigenous artists from the United States and ties are also developed with works by Indigenous artists from other continents. Finally, to ensure that representation is as inclusive as possible, the MMFA acquires works by major modern and contemporary artists who have had a significant impact on the world of art.

### **ART OF THE AMERICAS**

This collection is made up of works produced throughout the Americas (excluding Canada) over the last five millennia. It includes primarily works from Latin America predating European colonization, which began to be collected in the 1920s. Other important works in this collection, notably from the United States, fall under the collecting areas of graphic arts, decorative art, modern art and contemporary art.

Future acquisitions will be evaluated on the basis of their potential to build on the strengths of the collection (Mesoamerican and Central Andean art) or to address weaknesses (Circum-Caribbean art, colonial-era art). In order to safeguard the heritage and respect the communities of origin, the provenance of each acquisition must comply with the ethical and legal rules in force.

### **OCEANIC ART**

This collection brings together Indigenous art from Near and Remote Oceania, notably Papua New Guinea and Aotearoa (New Zealand). It consists mainly of traditional functional works made between the 18th century and the first half of the 20th century, most of which were acquired on the art market between 1940 and 1960.

This direction will be maintained in tandem and in conjunction with acquisitions of contemporary Indigenous artists from this region. All new acquisitions with the potential to enrich the collection will be made in accordance with rules of provenance and will be subject to consultation to ensure that the wishes of the communities of origin are respected.

### **ASIAN ART**

The scope, quality and historical nature of this collection make it one of the most prestigious in Canada and the only one of its kind in Quebec. The collection brings together objects that were originally acquired by independent collectors and that came to the MMFA via Frederick Cleveland Morgan in the first half of the 20th century. It is a veritable time capsule that reflects the aesthetic tastes of local collectors of the time, who were often driven by a more romantic than historical vision of Asia. Despite its unique origins, the

collection captures the main artistic trends that have marked the Asian continent from the third millennium before the Common Era to the present day. It contains decorative objects, ceramics, manuscripts, and textile fragments from the Iberian Peninsula, Western Asia, and Central Asia while they were under Islamic rule, from the 10th to the 18th century; Chinese works from the Neolithic period to the present; and Japanese lacquerware, *ukiyo-e* prints, and ceramics from the Edo and Meiji periods. The South Asian and Southeast Asian part includes Thai ceramics from the 13th to the 16th century, sculptures from Indian temples, and a collection of early and contemporary Sikh works.

Objects will be added to this collection only if they fill a gap, and if their provenance is clearly established and conforms to current museological, legal and ethical guidelines. In the spirit of the transhistorical, cross-cultural, and thematic reorganization of the collection, the MMFA will continue to acquire contemporary Asian works that are polysemic in nature and that link past and present.

## **AFRICAN ART**

This collection brings together works produced on the African continent over the last six millennia. It is divided into two main collections. The first is composed of works from North Africa. Collected since the beginning of the 20th century, this group of artworks consists mainly from ancient Egypt (Pharaonic and Coptic). The second group, the fruit of a collection begun in the 1940s, includes traditional functional works from sub-Saharan Africa, mainly from West and Central Africa, dating from the 17th century to the first half of the 20th century.

These directions will be maintained for the most part, but special attention should be paid to acquisitions that encourage a rethinking of the relatively static image of African art conveyed by the historical collections. Future acquisitions should foster a dialogue with the MMFA's contemporary African art collection. Before making any acquisition, thorough research shall be carried out to verify the provenance of the works and to ensure that the wishes of the communities of origin are respected.

## **GREEK, ETRUSCAN AND ROMAN ARTS**

This collection is composed of archaeological works from the Aegean Bronze Age to the late Roman period. The most important groups of works are linked to artistic production in ancient Greece and under the Roman Empire and have been part of the collection since its inception. Recent acquisitions have also enriched the body of work produced by the peoples of the Italian peninsula during the first millennium BCE.

Future acquisitions should ideally allow the MMFA to enrich these collections, but also develop certain smaller parts of the collection, particularly those devoted to ancient periods such as the Bronze Age or the Geometric period. Only works whose provenance complies with the ethical and legal rules in force shall be acquired.

## **EUROPEAN ART**

During the second half of the 20th century, the MMFA built an exceptional collection of European works, including religious objects from the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, medieval altarpieces painted for private chapels or portable altars, Renaissance and Mannerist portraits and 18th-century English portraits. Over several decades, the collection has been enriched by the addition of works from the Golden Age of Dutch and Flemish painting, among other important works, thanks to the integration of the Michal and Renata Hornstein Collection into the MMFA's holdings.

Future acquisitions should build on the strengths of the collection, ensure representation of artists and movements not yet present, and open up new perspectives on the history of art.

## **INTERNATIONAL MODERN ART**

The MMFA's collection of late 19th-century modern paintings and sculptures largely reflects the artistic tastes of a small group of Montreal patrons in the institution's early history, as the majority of these works were donated. The most significant works in the collection of 19th- and early 20th-century European Modern art include striking examples of Impressionism, Academicism, Symbolism and *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The collection of post-war modern art, amassed through purchases and donations, boasts British sculptures, French non-figurative paintings, and a strong emphasis on German and American art.

Historically, the collection of international modern art has been built on works by male artists from Europe and the United States. Through future acquisitions, the MMFA will strive to compensate for this gender imbalance and to fill important gaps in the representation of historical movements and individual artists.

The MMFA would like to diversify its Modern art collection in order to present a broader and more inclusive panorama of art history. In pursuing this aim, it will look for opportunities to acquire works with the potential to enhance its corpus of 20th-century art.

## **CONTEMPORARY ART**

The MMFA's contemporary art collection includes works by major artists from here and abroad who are recognized by their peers on both the national and international stage. The works in this collection span all disciplines and represent a significant contribution to the history of art thanks to their quality and relevance. Contemporary works are not collected in an exhaustive manner, but in consideration of the commitment and influence of the artists who created them.

The MMFA is always refining its collecting strategy in order to reflect and highlight the heterogeneity of its collection. It takes into account the rapid evolution of contemporary art in an era when artists are constantly exploring new forms of artistic creation.

Inclusivity and parity remain priorities for the development of the collection. As such, every effort shall be made to ensure that future acquisitions of contemporary art include exceptional works from major artistic centres around the world. In doing so, the MMFA seeks to promote gender equity.

## **DECORATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN**

The MMFA has a long history of collecting ancient and contemporary objects encompassing all forms of decorative arts and design, including furniture, lighting, glass, ceramics, silverware, jewellery, metalwork, decorative sculpture, textiles and industrial design, among others. The pre-1900 decorative arts collection focuses on remarkably refined objects produced by leading designers and craftspeople, reflecting aesthetic trends, manufacturing processes, and the exceptional craftsmanship of artists at the forefront of design history. The ever-changing nature of design and consumer trends in the 20th and 21st centuries are reflected in the modern and contemporary portions of this collection, which span broader segments of society, including mass-produced objects, prototypes, limited editions, and one-of-a-kind handmade pieces, and highlight aesthetic and technical innovations and changing needs.

Future acquisitions should serve to expand the geographic scope of the collection to include more works by designers and artisans from around the world. To address certain gaps in the collection, the MMFA also aims to enrich its collection of works by women artists and artists from visible, cultural and sexual minorities, thereby ensuring a better reflection of today's world of changing lifestyles, new artistic configurations and the importance of digital design. Increased emphasis will be placed on projects that explore unique forms and new materials, as well as discursive and speculative design. Moreover, given that environmental issues are of increasing concern to design firms, the MMFA shall also make room for innovations that take into account the constraints imposed by the non-renewable nature of natural resources.

## **GRAPHIC AND PHOTOGRAPHIC ART**

The MMFA houses one of the most important collections of graphic arts in Canada. Consisting of drawings, pastels, miniatures, prints and photographs, this collection spans a vast period from the 13th century to the present and features major works by some of the leading masters of the French, German, Swiss, British and American schools. It also includes French and Persian illuminated manuscripts.

The history of Quebec and Canadian art (including Indigenous art) is strongly represented in pieces dating from the 18th century to the contemporary period, including a prestigious series of graphic works by Riopelle. Future acquisitions of drawings, prints and manuscripts should aim to fill certain gaps in the collection.

The bulk of our photographic collection is composed of contemporary works from Canada, the United States, Europe, Africa and Asia. In recent years, the MMFA has made significant additions to this collection, particularly through the acquisition of documentary works by Quebec photographers. It is actively working to enhance the collection by acquiring historic works as well as important works by contemporary photographers from here and abroad. The MMFA favours diversity and seeks to establish gender parity in its future acquisitions.

### **4.2.2 Educational Collection**



Until such time as the MMFA establishes a better understanding of the nature of the Educational Collection in its current state as well as a clear definition of its purpose and use, it will refrain from developing it further, and no new objects will be added to it.

### **4.2.3 Archives and Library**

The mission of the Archives and Library Department is to advance research and knowledge in art history and the history of the MMFA (collections, exhibitions and activities) for the benefit of the entire research community and the MMFA's staff.

#### **4.2.3.1 Archives**

The enrichment of the documentary collections and private archives through acquisitions shall be conducted in consideration of the following criteria:

- Relevance to the MMFA
- Complementarity with the collections
- Importance for research in art history or related fields
- Authenticity, originality and uniqueness of the documents
- Physical integrity of the donated material and the capacity of the MMFA to preserve it
- Absence of specific conditions or restrictions that could limit treatment and consultation possibilities

As a general rule, the preferred method of acquisition for the development of this collection is donations. All archival materials submitted for acquisition are subject to the same approval process as works added to the Permanent Collection. Acquisition recommendations may be made by management, curators or the Head of Collections Management and Registration.

The archival value of documents presented as archival material shall be assessed prior to submission to the internal acquisition committee, in consultation with the professional recommending the acquisition, the documentation technicians, the Acquisitions Manager and, if necessary, the Head of Collections Management and Registration. Materials that could simply be added to the archival collection as complementary documentation are thus removed from the process.

The Collections Management and Registration Department reserves the right to decide whether or not to catalogue this type of complementary material in its various search directories.

#### **4.2.3.2 Library**

The development of the Library's physical and digital collections is currently guided by needs related to research, the MMFA's exhibition and educational programs, and new acquisitions.

##### **4.2.3.2.1 Donations to the Library and the Permanent Collection**

Donations of books to the MMFA are submitted to various stakeholders and go through different channels. They may come from the MMFA Foundation, curators, the Chief Curator or the Director; alternatively, they may be proposed directly to the Head of Collections Management and Registration. Several criteria determine whether a book should be submitted to an acquisition committee or whether it should be included in the collection of artworks or in the Library collection. The following criteria should be used to determine whether a title should be submitted to an acquisition committee:

- The book has undeniable artistic value. It could be exhibited in a gallery and is considered a work of art. This artistic value is determined by the appropriate curator.
- The book has artistic value, but requires some restoration work before it can be displayed. We therefore would want to store it in optimal conditions of conservation in order to slow down its deterioration.

On the other hand, a book that does not meet the above criteria does not need to be submitted to an acquisition committee and can be processed by the Library staff upon receiving it. The following criteria are used to determine whether a title can be added to the library's collection:

- The book has definite potential for art historical research and scholars, and the general public would benefit from the ability to consult it. In such case, it does not need to be submitted to the

acquisition committee for approval. It can be submitted directly to the Library staff and may be mentioned for information purposes at an acquisition committee meeting.

- The book is used to document works in the MMFA's Permanent Collection.
- The work has aesthetic and artistic value, but its condition makes it unsuitable for display or restoration (in this case, it is made available to researchers for consultation). Following a recommendation by the acquisition committee to transfer a work to the library, the librarian and the department head reserve the right to refuse the donation if it does not meet the criteria for collection development outlined in this document.

### **4.3 Acquisition policy**

#### **4.3.1 Methods of acquisition**

The two main methods of acquisition are gifts and purchases. In both cases, the legal transfer of title to the works must be recorded. Regardless of the method, acquisitions should not be limited by any conditions or restrictions.

##### **4.3.1.1 Gift**

Any object presented to the MMFA as a donation, pledge or bequest constitutes a gift. The legal transfer of ownership of accepted works is registered in a deed of gift. The MMFA may accept all gifts, including works presented to it by members of its staff or Board of Trustees.

##### **4.3.1.2 Purchase**

Any object presented to the MMFA in exchange for money constitutes a purchase. The legal transfer of title is established by a deed of sale or an agreement of sale. The MMFA may not purchase works from its staff, Board of Trustee members or their families.

In some cases, the MMFA may enter into an agreement with a donor to acquire a work of art as both a purchase and a gift. In this case, the MMFA pays a portion of the asking price, and the balance of the appraised value is returned to the seller in the form of a tax receipt.

#### **4.3.2 Legal and ethical terms**

##### **4.3.2.1 Legal terms**

The MMFA adheres to national and international laws governing acquisition practices, as well as to guidelines developed by recognized museum authorities. Accordingly:

- It shall not add any work to its collections for which it cannot establish clear legal title.
- It shall not knowingly acquire, either directly or indirectly, works collected in violation of the *Cultural Property Export and Import Act* (1988; 1995, c. 93) or the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (Paris, UNESCO, 1970).
- It shall comply with the provisions of the *UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects* (Rome, 1995) and the *Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* (The Hague, 1954).
- It shall comply with the guidelines developed by the AAMD regarding the acquisition of archaeological objects and ancient art (*Revisions to the 2008 Guidelines on the Acquisition of Archaeological Material and Ancient Art*, 2013).

##### **4.3.2.2 Ethical terms**

All acquisition proposals shall be accompanied by a detailed research report (also called a "statement of justification") prepared by the curator responsible for the collection in question. In addition to the relevance of the work to the MMFA's collecting areas and mission, this report should include information on the history and provenance of the work.

Works whose intrinsic nature, history, or political, social or cultural affiliations could be deemed problematic must first be identified as such in order to be submitted for consideration. In such cases, the statement of justification shall propose an angle of analysis that takes into account the presentation and mediation possibilities related to the acquisition. This allows the MMFA to engage in a nuanced reflection, guided by

an effort to contextualize and provide perspective on the work, as well as by an educational aim and a desire to further research on a particular artist, period or movement.

All activities related to acquisitions must comply with the ethical principles and codes of conduct that govern the museum profession. Accordingly:

- Every effort shall be made to ensure that there are no gaps in the ownership history of works acquired by the MMFA that could be deemed unethical.
- No work shall be intentionally misidentified or falsely appraised to enable the MMFA to profit in any way.
- The MMFA must be satisfied that it has adequate resources to display, store or restore works added to its collections and to gather the necessary documentation concerning those works.

#### 4.3.2.3 Additional legal and ethical terms

##### 4.3.2.3.1 Archaeological, ancient and ethnographic works

Before acquiring or borrowing an archaeological, ancient, or ethnographic work, the MMFA shall conduct thorough research on its ownership history to ensure that the work has not been acquired in a manner that is unethical or contrary to the applicable legal frameworks. This research shall be particularly exhaustive in the case of works that may have been acquired in the context of colonial or armed conflict, and in the case of archaeological works resulting from stray finds or unscientific excavations. The MMFA shall therefore require sellers, donors, lenders and their representatives to provide all available information and documentation, as well as appropriate guarantees.

Among other things, the MMFA shall ensure that the work was outside its probable country of modern discovery before November 17, 1970, or that it was legally exported from its country of modern discovery after November 17, 1970, the date on which the *Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* was signed. The MMFA recognizes that, even after extensive research, the ownership history of some works may remain incomplete. In certain cases, the MMFA may rely on other information including, but not limited to, the exhibition and publication history of the work in order to make an informed decision on whether to acquire or borrow the work.

If, as a result of its extensive research, the MMFA obtains information establishing another party's ownership of a work, the MMFA shall bring this information to the attention of the party and, if warranted, undertake to return the work. In the event that a third party brings information supporting the party's claim to a work to the MMFA's attention, the MMFA shall respond promptly and responsibly. It shall take all necessary steps to respond to such claims, including, if warranted, the return of the work.

##### 4.3.2.3.2 Copyright

All activities related to the use of a work acquired by the MMFA must be in compliance with the *Copyright Act* (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-42). All rights transferred upon transfer of ownership must be clearly established and documented in the acquisition register and related records.

##### 4.3.2.3.3 Acquisition of works for the private collections of MMFA staff

The MMFA encourages its staff members to own and develop their own collections for their personal culture and enjoyment. In order to avoid any conflict of interest or appearance of conflict of interest, however, the MMFA requires that they be completely transparent about their private collections. This requirement applies first and foremost to the staff responsible for the collections, including members of the following departments: Curatorial, Conservation, Collections Management and Registration, Exhibition Production, and Exhibition Administration (hereinafter referred to as "staff members"). Notwithstanding the foregoing, all staff members, including those not specifically mentioned herein, are expected to exercise good judgment with respect to the matters mentioned below as well as to any situations not specifically described in this policy. Adherence to best practices is dictated by the following principles:

- The development of the MMFA's collection must take precedence over that of staff members.
- The development of a staff member's collection must not in any way compromise or compete with the development of the MMFA's collection.

To ensure compliance with these principles, all staff members are required to comply with the following provisions:

- No staff member may knowingly seek to acquire a work of art that the MMFA is actively seeking to acquire.
- If a staff member is aware of a sale or donation that may be of interest to the MMFA and that is also of interest to their private collection, they must inform the curator of the collection concerned or the Chief Curator. In such a case, the right of first offer falls to the MMFA.
- If the timing is not right for the MMFA, it may ask the staff member to sell the work to it at cost within six (6) months of the purchase. The MMFA has four (4) months following the initial purchase to make this request to the staff member.
- If a curator is selling a work from their collection that is consistent with the MMFA's mission, the MMFA has the right of first offer in respect of the transaction.
- Staff members are prohibited from bidding on a work at auction if the MMFA intends to bid on the same work.
- Staff members who own a private collection are required to disclose the existence of their collection at the time of hire and are encouraged to discuss it openly throughout their tenure.
- Staff members are prohibited from using their association with the MMFA to facilitate an acquisition.
- Staff members are prohibited from using privileged information acquired from the MMFA to enrich their collection.
- Staff members are prohibited from acting as active art dealers or as intermediaries in a commercial transaction.
- Staff members are prohibited from taking part in the MMFA's decision to acquire or exhibit a work from their collection.
- Staff members must wait two (2) years after the removal of a work from the MMFA's collection before they can acquire it or accept an offer of it for their own collection.
- If a staff member receives a work as a gift from a donor or an artist in return for work they have done in association with the MMFA, they must donate the work to the MMFA.

### **4.3.3 Acquisition committees**

#### 4.3.3.1 Internal Acquisition Committee

The Internal Acquisition Committee is made up of the MMFA's Director, the Chief Curator, all curators, the Artwork Acquisitions Manager, the Head of Conservation and the Head of Collections Management and Registration. Other MMFA professionals or external stakeholders whose expertise may be useful are sometimes invited to participate in the decision-making process. All decisions are recorded in minutes, which are prepared and signed by the Acquisitions Manager.

#### 4.3.3.2 External advisory committees

There are four external advisory committees:

- Acquisition Committee – International Art before 1945
- Acquisition Committee – International Art after 1945
- Acquisition Committee – Quebec and Canadian Art
- Acquisition Committee – Decorative Arts and Design

All new acquisitions proposed by the Internal Acquisition Committee are then evaluated by the appropriate external advisory committee with a view to their presentation to the Board of Trustees for approval. Once the proposal is approved by the Board of Trustees, the acquisition can proceed.

All recommendations of the external advisory committee are documented in minutes signed by the committee chair and the Artwork Acquisitions Manager.

Committee members may be drawn from the MMFA's Board of Trustees, art experts and the public. However, at least one member of the committee must also be a member of the MMFA's Board of Trustees. The chair of the Board of Trustees shall, following consultation with the members of the Board, submit a list of nominations.

All acquisition committee members must:

- be actively involved in the duties of their committee;
- identify potential donors of works of art;
- when possible, donate or sponsor the purchase of a work of art.

The term of office is one year. Committee membership is reviewed annually.

#### 4.3.3.3 Ad hoc committees

The MMFA reserves the right to establish ad hoc committees or to seek input from outside experts. It may rely on their support for the analysis and resolution of issues related to the management of the documentary, archival and library collections.

#### 4.3.4 Acquisition criteria

In accordance with its mission, the MMFA acquires works with the aim of developing and enriching its collections. Acquisition decisions are based on the research report prepared by the curator of the appropriate collection, a recommendation from the internal acquisition committee, and the following considerations:

##### **Relevance**

Each acquisition is evaluated in relation to the MMFA's mission, collecting areas, and priority lines of development. Aesthetic and historical connections to other works in the collection are considered, as is the potential for displaying the work in an exhibition context.

##### **Legitimacy and authenticity**

Provenance, authenticity and ownership of the work are known and documented.

##### **Aesthetic quality and historical value**

These elements are evaluated on the basis of the exceptional nature or representativeness of the work within the artist's body of work, the historical period, the artistic movement or the cultural tradition. The provenance of the work may also add to its historical value.

##### **Physical condition**

The work should be in the best possible condition in accordance with the type of acquisition. If it requires conservation treatment, it must be able to be displayed without compromising its integrity. The MMFA must also consider the risk of degradation of the work over time and ensure that it does not contain any elements or materials that could harm other works in the collection or staff members.

##### **Capacity and resources**

For each acquisition, the availability of physical, financial and human resources allowing for the administrative processing, cataloguing, documentation, storage, maintenance, and presentation of the work according to best museum practices must be assessed. In the case of a purchase, the cost of the work in relation to the market must also be considered.

##### **No restrictions on use and display of the work**

Barring exceptions, the acquisition proposal must not contain any special conditions or restrictions imposed by the seller or donor.

##### **Complementarity with other Quebec collections**

The presence of similar works or other copies of the work in certain Quebec collections must be taken into account to ensure a measure of inter-institutional complementarity.

#### 4.3.5 Acquisition process

##### 4.3.5.1 General principles

The committees currently in place at the MMFA evaluate all acquisition proposals, regardless of the collection involved (Permanent Collection, Educational Collection, Archives or Library). Thus, whenever possible, the appropriate collection is identified early in the process, before the proposal is submitted to the Internal Acquisition Committee. However, the decision to include a work in one of these collections may be reviewed by the internal committee, in which case the acquisition could be reassessed on the basis of this change in status at the subsequent committee meeting.

All acquisitions must be accompanied by a formal donation offer signed by the owner of the work. The owner confirms that they are the legal owner and indicates their intention to transfer ownership of the work to the MMFA. The MMFA may require additional proof of ownership of a work offered as a gift (certificate of authenticity, invoice, page of the will in the case of a bequest).

Regardless of the stage at which a proposed acquisition is refused, the MMFA must inform the owner in writing as soon as possible. If the work is already on site, the MMFA must undertake to return it as soon as possible.

Upon inclusion of the work in the collection, a blanket copyright license is sent to the artist, or their successor who is not represented by a collective management organization. This license is attached to the artwork's file and makes it possible to record uses of the work for future distribution purposes.

#### 4.3.5.2 Processing times and steps

The processing time for acquisition proposals varies according to several factors (e.g., acquisition method, complexity of the file, submission to CCPERB) and can take up to 18 months from the initial offer to the legal transfer of ownership.

The steps are as follows:

- Preliminary review of the proposal
- Review of the proposal by the Internal Acquisition Committee
- Evaluation of the condition of the work
- Review of the proposal by the appropriate external advisory committee
- Appraisal of the work's value
- Recommendation submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval
- Signing of the deed of gift or the deed of purchase
- Issuance of a tax receipt, where applicable, or payment for the work

#### 4.3.5.3 Receipts and appraisals for tax purposes

At the donor's request, the MMFA will issue a tax receipt for the fair market value of the work or fonds. This value will be established by a certified appraiser during the acquisition process. The Canada Revenue Agency accepts appraisals prepared by qualified MMFA employees when the fair market value of the gift or bequest is less than C\$1,000. However, employees are not permitted to appraise works that are unrelated to the MMFA's acquisitions.

Appraisals of works with an estimated value exceeding C\$1,000 must be done by an appraiser who is independent of the MMFA and the donor. The donor may suggest an appraiser, but the MMFA reserves the right to make the final selection. The cost of external appraisals is borne by the MMFA, up to a maximum of two appraisals. The MMFA retains ownership of the appraisals it commissions and is not authorized, unless by prior agreement with the appraiser, to pass these documents on to a third party (donor or otherwise). If the donor withdraws their offer during the acquisition process, the MMFA is entitled to reimbursement of any external costs incurred, including the appraisal fee.

Certain works may be subject to an application for certification by the CCPERB. This decision is up to the MMFA and must be based on the exceptional nature of the work. Barring exceptions, only works with an estimated fair market value exceeding C\$20,000 are eligible for an application to the CCPERB. Eligible applications are submitted by the Artwork Acquisitions Manager. If the total market value of the donation is estimated to exceed C\$50,000 (or the threshold established by CCPERB at the time of submission), a second appraisal will be required to determine the fair market value.

#### 4.3.5.4 Acquisition budgets

In order to fulfill its commitment to develop its collections, the MMFA must ensure that it has the financial resources necessary to acquire works of art. It can use either cash donations made specifically for this purpose or the interest on capitalization funds offered to it for the purchase of works of art. A decision as to the percentage of interest allocated to the various committees is made annually by management and approved by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees must also approve any changes in the allocation of acquisition funds. Acquisition committees may not commit to spending more than the amounts made available to them.

The Director of the MMFA has an annual discretionary fund, the amount of which is determined by the Board of Trustees. This fund may be used by the Director to purchase works of art without going through the usual acquisition process. This fund offers a great deal of flexibility for acquisitions made in the context of art auctions or fairs.

The MMFA must be aware of the laws and new procedures regulating or amending the tax benefits related to artwork donations. Where necessary, it must ensure their implementation or demand the necessary changes.

#### **4.4 Deaccession policy**

##### **4.4.1 Purpose**

The purpose of the deaccession policy is to establish guidelines for the process leading to the voluntary deaccessioning of a work from the collection, that is, its permanent removal from the collection. The policy also provides a framework for the implementation of deaccessioning activities, including documentation and archiving.

##### **4.4.2 Definition**

In contrast to involuntary removal, which refers to works that are stolen, considered lost, destroyed or damaged beyond restoration, voluntary deaccessioning is the transfer of legal title to a work by the MMFA by means of donation, sale or exchange for the purpose of enhancing the quality of the collection or ensuring the effective management of its spaces. Under this policy, works that are the subject of a request for restitution or for which repatriation procedures have been undertaken by the MMFA, as well as works that have been voluntarily destroyed, will also be considered voluntary deaccessions and will be subject to the same approval process.

##### **4.4.3 Methods of deaccessioning**

**Donation (or disposition)** – A donation is a transfer of title to an object from the MMFA to another institution, without financial consideration or compensation of any kind. In this method of removal, the MMFA must ensure that the institution that is to receive the work is capable of properly conserving it and using it for research, educational or exhibition purposes.

**Exchange** – An exchange takes place by transferring the title to an object belonging to the MMFA in exchange for title to an object owned by another establishment.

**Sale** – A sale involves the transfer of title to an object owned by the MMFA in return for financial consideration. There are three types of sale: sale by private agreement, public auction, and sale by tender.

**Restitution** – The restitution of objects follows a request from the rightful owners (countries, nations, communities, persons who were dispossessed).

**Destruction** – Destruction of a work is only considered when its deterioration precludes restoration in accordance with the standards set out in the *Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice*,<sup>2</sup> when it is no longer suitable for exhibition or educational purposes, or when its condition poses a hazard to staff or other works in the collection.

##### **4.4.4 Guidelines**

The decision to deaccession a work must take into account the following general principles:

- Alignment with the MMFA's mission, collecting objectives and acquisition criteria.
- Sound collections management, including the management of the storage facilities.
- The deaccessioning process must be as rigorous as the acquisition process and must not be influenced by changing trends or personal judgement.

##### **4.4.5 Main considerations**

- The MMFA shall not deaccession works by living artists unless the artist offers to exchange them for another work.
- All deaccessions must be accompanied by a valid legal document.
- The deaccessioning process must comply with the tax provisions of the laws in force.
- Deaccessioning of a work certified by the CCPERB requires exceptional circumstances.

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<sup>2</sup> *Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice*, published jointly by the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property and the Canadian Association of Professional Conservators, third edition, 2000.

- Deaccessioning must be in accordance with the applicable international agreements and treaties (e.g., in the case of restitution claims or illegally acquired works).
- The MMFA must ensure that it has title to the works before they are disposed of. There must be no doubt as to the provenance of the work and its acquisition history prior to deaccessioning.
- The MMFA must ensure, with the assistance of legal counsel if necessary, that there are no clauses restricting deaccessioning.
- The MMFA shall not deaccession donated works within ten (10) years of acquisition.
- The MMFA shall take reasonable steps to inform authors, donors or their estate of the deaccessioning process. In the event that the disposition of a donated work results in the acquisition of a new work, the credit accompanying the work may include the name of the donor or their estate by way of recognition.
- In the case of works offered for sale, priority shall be given to other museum institutions. As a second step, they may be offered at public auction, and as a third step, to a dealer.
- Proceeds from the sale shall go to the main acquisition fund or to any other acquisition fund deemed useful or relevant by the Board of Trustees.

#### **4.4.6 Criteria**

The following is a list of the main criteria to be taken into account when evaluating the deaccessioning of works from the collection:

- The work cannot be used for exhibition and study purposes and has no educational value.
- The work is not relevant to the MMFA's mission and collecting areas.
- The authenticity or attribution of the work is found to be false or fraudulent.
- Similar objects are over-represented in the collection and their accumulation does not enhance the exhibition, education or research potential.
- The MMFA is unable to restore the work because of its condition.
- The MMFA is unable to adequately conserve the work.
- The work poses a safety hazard to people during handling, display or storage.
- The work poses a safety hazard to other works in the collection (e.g., contamination).
- The MMFA's possession of the work is contrary to applicable laws (e.g., stolen or illegally imported work, unauthorized specimen).

#### **4.4.7 Deaccessioning process**

Deaccessioning requires a written recommendation by the curator responsible for the work, followed by a recommendation by the Internal Acquisition Committee and the relevant external acquisition committee, and, finally, the approval of the Board of Trustees.

1) The curator recommends the deaccessioning of a work within their area of expertise. To this end, said curator prepares a detailed research report that includes the following elements:

- Complete technical data with supporting visual documentation
- Provenance and ownership
- Historical background
- Bibliography listing related exhibitions and publications
- Condition report signed by the Head of Conservation
- Statement of justification on deaccession
- Fair market value (estimated by MMFA specialists or external appraisers)

2) The deaccession proposal is then presented and reviewed at a meeting of the Internal Acquisition Committee, and then, subsequently, at a second meeting of the external acquisition committee.

3) Following the analysis of the deaccession proposal, the external committee issues its recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

4) The Board of Trustees approves or rejects the deaccession proposal by means of a resolution.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, an object that has been approved for deaccession may be returned to the collection prior to its disposal if there is a change in the opinion of the specialists or on the recommendation of the Director or the Board of Trustees.

#### **4.4.8 Documentation and archiving**



The process of deaccessioning a work must be carefully documented and archived. The record of the deaccessioned work, whose status is updated in the central collections database, shall become a permanent part of the archives and shall not be destroyed in whole or in part under any circumstances.

Details on deaccessioned works and the method of deaccessioning shall be included in the annual report.

#### **4.4.9 Ethical considerations and conflicts of interest**

All parties involved in the deaccessioning process, including directors, conservators, curators, trustees, appraisers, and advisors, must be guided by a concern for transparency and rigour.

MMFA staff, trustees, advisors, or their family members or close associates are not authorized to purchase, directly or indirectly, a work that has been deaccessioned by the MMFA within the previous two years, or to otherwise profit from its sale or trade.

### **4.5 Lending and borrowing policy**

#### **4.5.1 Loans**

The MMFA agrees to short- or long-term loans for the purpose of fostering exchange, making its collections accessible to a wider audience and promoting its collections. Only requests from cultural institutions recognized for their conservation and cultural heritage development activities should be considered. These institutions must demonstrate that they have the necessary human resources (specialized professional teams) and physical capacity (space, security and conditions meeting museum standards) to receive one or more works from the MMFA's collection on loan for a specific period of time. Accepted loan requests and associated terms and conditions (regarding exhibition, transportation and courier services) are recorded in a loan agreement signed by all parties involved (the MMFA, the borrower and other collaborators, if applicable). The agreement used may be that of the MMFA or the borrowing institution.

##### **4.5.1.1 Loan request**

All loan requests must be submitted in writing to MMFA management and shall include, without limitation, the following information: identification of the borrower, details of the exhibition project, dates, locations, detailed list of works requested for loan, and contact persons. The minimum time limit for receiving the request varies according to the geographic location of the borrower, the number of works requested, and the complexity of the project (e.g., restoration required, complex crating or packaging, complex artwork). As a general rule, signed requests must be received at least one (1) year prior to the date the work is needed.

All requests are evaluated by the internal loan committee, which meets three to four times a year, depending on the number of requests received. This committee recommends whether or not to accept the loan based on the availability and condition of the work requested, as well as the relevance of the proposed exhibition project. The final decision rests with the Director, who authorizes all loans. The Director must inform the Board of Trustees of all loans of works valued at C\$5,000,000 or more.

##### **4.5.1.2 Costs**

In addition to administrative fees, the borrower is responsible for defraying all costs relating to the work's appraisal, processing, preparation, transportation, storage and, if applicable, courier services. These fees are subject to change without notice.

Fees may also apply in the event a request is cancelled or modified. These fees are calculated on the basis of the work carried out from the time the loan was granted to the time of cancellation or modification.

##### **4.5.1.3 Insurance**

The borrower must cover the cost of "nail-to-nail" insurance for the value indicated in the loan agreement. Proof of insurance will be required by the MMFA before the work is released. In the case of long-term loans, the MMFA reserves the right to re-appraise the fair market value of the work periodically and to require a new proof of insurance corresponding to this adjusted value.

##### **4.5.1.4. Exhibition and reproduction rights**

The borrowing institution is responsible for the management of copyright and the payment of exhibition or reproduction royalties. The borrower undertakes to contact the artist, their assigns or an authorized

licensing body to ensure that copyright is respected in the presentation and dissemination of the work and to ensure payment of the related fees, where applicable.

#### **4.5.2 Borrowing**

The MMFA borrows works from individuals, galleries, foundations and other museum institutions for the purpose of temporary exhibitions or to complement permanent exhibition projects.

##### **4.5.2.1 General principles**

As a borrowing institution, the MMFA undertakes to comply with all terms and requirements negotiated with the lender as specified in the loan agreement. It also agrees to apply the same conservation and security standards as those in place for the recording, movement, storage and exhibition of its collections.

##### **4.5.2.2 Abandoned works**

If a work on loan is abandoned at the MMFA and the lender cannot be found for at least five (5) years after the end of the loan term, the case shall be referred to the Board of Trustees, which will decide on the action to be taken (e.g., deaccessioning or integration into the collection).

This guideline also applies to works abandoned on the MMFA's premises without record of their transfer to the MMFA, as well as to rejected acquisitions where contact with the donor has been lost or the donor has been unreachable for a minimum of two (2) years.

### **4.6 Reserve Facilities Management Policy**

#### **4.6.1 Purpose**

The MMFA's collections are kept in designated storage areas on the MMFA premises, in the Conservation Department's laboratories, and in an off-site location designated as the "Collections Centre," situated on Peel Street in Montreal. In order to ensure the protection of the collections housed in these reserves, it is crucial that access to these areas be controlled and monitored.

#### **4.6.2 Guidelines**

The Office of the Director, the Curatorial Division, the Head of Collections Management and Registration, the Head of Conservation and the Head of Exhibition Production have access to the on-site and off-site reserve facilities at all times. The Head of Collections Management and Registration and the Head of Conservation are responsible for authorizing access to the reserves and informing the Head of Prevention, Security and Maintenance granted.

MMFA employees, collaborators and guests may access the reserves for special projects. However, they must be accompanied by an authorized employee or a security guard.

#### **4.6.3 Access rights and operating schedule**

There are several different types of access to the reserves. These are recorded in the access log, which is regularly updated by the authorized departments (Prevention, Security and Maintenance, Conservation, Collections Management and Registration).

Authorized employees have access to the reserves Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Outside of these hours, the area is under surveillance and protected by an electromechanical locking system.

##### **4.6.3.1 Access with the right to remove works**

Authorized employees may move works inside and outside of the reserves and the Collections Centre.

##### **4.6.3.2 Access with guests**

Authorized employees may be accompanied by one or more guests. They must first register in the entry/exit log kept at the service entrance at 2189 Bishop Street. Details on the terms for visiting the reserves with guests are outlined in the administrative document *Protocole pour les demandes de visites des réserves et des galeries du MBAM.*

#### 4.6.3.3 Access for housekeeping

Housekeeping must be done under the supervision of a Prevention, Safety and Maintenance Department supervisor or other authorized person.

##### Housekeeping plan

One (1) cleaning round per month in all the reserves, using a damp microfibre cloth (with storage racks closed).

Two (2) rounds per year in all the reserves to clean the tracks (with open storage racks) in the presence of a Conservation or Collections Management and Registration technician.

#### 4.6.3.4 Access for maintenance work

Maintenance must be performed in the company of a person authorized to supervise the work. The Collections Management and Registration Department and the Conservation Department may instead designate a security guard to supervise the work.

#### 4.6.3.5 Access for the Prevention, Security and Maintenance Department

Security guards and staff of the Prevention, Security and Maintenance Department (department head, assistant head, supervisors) have access to the reserves and the Collections Centre at all times.

#### 4.6.3.6 Access requests

For all other requests for access (media, donors, etc.), an email must be sent to the Head of Collections Management and Registration and the Head of Conservation.

#### 4.6.3.7 Rounds schedule and instructions for security guards

- Two (2) rounds between midnight and 8:00 a.m. (Monday to Sunday)
- One (1) round between 4:00 p.m. and midnight (Monday to Sunday)
- One (1) round between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. (Monday and Thursday, Saturday and Sunday)

The security guards enter the reserves, turn on the lights, walk through the reserves and then retrace their steps while observing and listening for ambient noises.

### **4.6.4 Rules and instructions**

- Any form of food or liquid (including water bottles and chewing gum) is strictly prohibited in the reserves. To the extent possible, keep these areas clean and free of any residue that may result from the performance of certain tasks.
- Access is strictly limited to staff members who have been authorized to use these areas.
- Any visitor, whether a guest or an unauthorized MMFA employee, must receive permission to enter the reserves from the Head of Collections Management and Registration or the Head of Conservation, both of whom are responsible for these areas.
- The guest or unauthorized MMFA employee must be accompanied by a staff member authorized to escort visitors in the reserves.
- Visitors' coats, protective accessories, or bulky items must be left in the cloakroom. Only accessories and equipment useful for the visit and of reasonable size are accepted (e.g., camera, documentation, notebooks, tools), with some exceptions.
- Only authorized staff\* may handle both the works and the storage equipment (display racks, mobile shelving, storage boxes) for the purpose of allowing visitors to visually inspect the works.
- Photography and videotaping are not permitted unless permission is obtained from the Head of Collections Management and Registration or the Head of Conservation.

\* Staff authorized to handle works include technicians from the Exhibition Production Department, members of the Conservation Department, and designated technicians from the Collections Management and Registration Department. In exceptional circumstances, curators may handle works provided they are escorted by an authorized staff member.

## **5. COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

### **5.1 Movement of the collections**

In order to ensure the traceability of all the works under its responsibility, the MMFA records all incoming, outgoing and internal movements in its central collections database. The persons authorized to update tracking activities in the database are the specially designated technicians in the Collections Management and Registration Department.

All documentation pertaining to the movement of collections, including transportation requests, bills of lading, condition reports, customs documents, and visual documentation recorded during unpacking or packing, are recorded in the physical and digital records of the works or projects involved.

#### **5.1.1 Incoming works**

The Collections Management and Registration Department must approve all requests for incoming works in order to ensure proper follow-up, as detailed below:

- Registration in the database
- Coordination of transportation
- Receipt and filing of related documentation (receiving slips and lists)
- Unpacking and documentation
- Condition report
- Identification
- Photographing (photo for publication), if necessary
- Temporary or permanent storage, if applicable
- Updating of the location in the database

For insurance reasons, the MMFA requires that it receive a condition report before a work is transported to the MMFA. If the owner is unable to provide a proper condition report, they must sign a document attesting to the good condition of the work.

The MMFA shall not accept any work that has not first been reported to the Collections Management and Registration Department. Consequently, no individual, staff member or Board member may leave a work, object or archival document at the MMFA unless it has been registered in the database. Security staff must be properly advised of this rule and are responsible for enforcing it.

#### **5.1.2 Outgoing works**

The Collections Management and Registration Department must approve all requests for outgoing works in order to ensure proper follow-up, as detailed below:

- Condition report
- Documentation
- Packaging, packing
- Coordination of transportation
- Supervision of truck loading
- Transportation follow-up and archiving of related documentation (exit slips and lists)
- Updating of the location in the database

#### **5.1.3 Movement within the MMFA**

The only persons authorized to move works within the MMFA are:

- Conservators and conservation technicians
- Designated technicians in the Exhibition Production Department
- Designated technicians in the Collections Management and Registration Department

All movements must meet the highest standards of safety and security for both staff and works.

It is the responsibility of each person authorized to move a work to notify the Collections Management and Registration Department of any movement, so that the department staff can update the new location in the central collections database.

#### **5.1.4 Transportation**

Regardless of whether a work is being moved locally, nationally or internationally, the MMFA shall entrust the transportation of works of art under its responsibility to recognized specialized companies. The selection of the carrier should be based on the nature or value of the work, its location or the length of the trip. However, the main criterion is the security of the works at all times during transit.

### **5.2 Documentation of the collections**

Documentation related to the works in the collections comes from various internal and external sources. However, responsibility for the physical and digital archiving of this documentation rests with the Collections Management and Registration Department, which must ensure that cataloguing standards are respected and that the information is standardized.

The collections management software used by the MMFA is Mimsy XG (Axiell).

#### **5.2.1 Registration**

In order to make it possible to identify and locate works in the digitized collections system, a record is created for each work that enters the MMFA.

##### Work proposed for acquisition

- Assignment of a temporary number
- Recording of status
- Preliminary information received from the Curatorial Department (e.g., location of the work) is recorded in the appropriate fields

##### Work confirmed for acquisition

Once the deed of gift is signed or final payment is made, a permanent record can be established for the work.

- Assignment of a permanent number (accession number). The temporary number will be registered in the "Previous Number" field to allow for future referencing.
- Updating of the status of the work

##### Work on loan

The documentation of works on loan is based on a list established by the Exhibition Administration Department. It includes the identification numbers for each work.

#### **5.2.2. Physical identification**

The physical identification of works is undertaken based on their nature and status. For example, a removable label will be preferred for all works that are candidates for acquisition or works on loan, while a reversible marking placed on the work itself will be preferred when possible for works that are part of the Permanent Collection.

#### **5.2.3 Cataloguing**

All relevant information concerning a work is recorded in the various cataloguing fields of the digitized collections database, in consideration of recognized documentation systems and current national and international museum standards. It is the responsibility of the Collections Management and Registration Department to ensure the validity and standardization of the catalogued information.

#### **5.2.4 Photography**

The works in the Permanent Collection are photographed by the MMFA's Photography Department in accordance with the documentation rules in force at the institution. This visual documentation and the accompanying photographic credits are entered into the collections database for purposes of consultation and dissemination.

It is the responsibility of the Photography Department, under the supervision of the Collections Management and Registration Department, to ensure the quality of the visual documentation entered into the database. This quality is determined, among other things, by the conformity of the colours and precise and close framing.

Reference photos, produced for documentation and research purposes only, are kept on the MMFA's internal servers. The MMFA may also add them to the database, taking care to indicate that they are reference photos and that distribution is prohibited.

### **5.2.6 Digitization of data**

The central collections database provides access to all the works under the responsibility of the MMFA. The works in its Permanent Collection are rigorously and exhaustively documented and catalogued. The digitization of this data makes it possible to produce lists and reports that facilitate research and the production of statistics on the collections. Activities related to loans and exhibitions are also recorded, but a review of their standardization is needed.

## **5.3 Control and access to collections**

### **5.3.1 Physical access to works**

#### **5.3.1.1 Reserves**

Access to the reserves is governed by the Reserve Facilities Management Policy set out in section 4.6 hereunder.

##### **5.3.1.1.1 Digital storage space**

Digitally created works, digital copies of video works, and visual source documentation (reproduction photography) are stored on a dedicated server, which is accessible only by designated members of the Collections Management and Registration Department. The Information Technology and Digital Development Department is responsible for conducting periodic server backups.

#### **5.3.1.2 Exhibition galleries**

The works in the exhibition galleries and the public circulation areas are continuously monitored by the Prevention, Security and Maintenance Department. Security needs are reassessed based on the specific requirements of each exhibition project (number of guards on site, spaces to be monitored, security system, etc.).

### **5.3.2 Intellectual access to works and their documentation**

The Collections Management and Registration Department bears physical and moral responsibility for the records of the works in the collection, which constitute the collections' archives. For each work, there is a public record – accessible to researchers as is, since all sensitive data has been expunged – and a full record that includes all the documentation regarding the acquisition of the work, including sensitive data and confidential information.

#### **5.3.2.1 Copyright**

As the MMFA does not own the rights to the works in its collection, it is responsible for ensuring that current copyright law is applied, as well as all other rights applicable to use of the works.

It provides access to the visual documentation it owns and requires requestors, in addition to giving proper copyright credit, to obtain the necessary distribution rights for reproduction of the work and to pay any associated fees, if applicable.

### **5.3.3 Inventorying of the collections**

Inventorying is a process aimed at verifying the integrity of the collections by means of a physical inventory (number and location of the works). In addition to ensuring traceability, this activity allows the updating of information about the works (identification, materials), as well as their state of conservation. A contextual verification can also be made of the preventive conservation measures put in place for the storage or display of collections.

The physical inventory and the digitized inventory must correspond at all times. Inventory control is the responsibility of Collections Management and Registration Department.

Due to the size of the collections at the MMFA, the inventorying process is conducted over a 10-year period, at the end of which the entire collection will have been reviewed.

Works in the exhibition and transitional spaces, such as the conservation labs or photo studio, as well as works valued at more than C\$500,000 are inventoried annually.

A random audit test, conducted by an external firm, is carried out each year to validate the processes in place for inventory control, including registration methods.

## **5.4 Conservation of the collections**

The Head of Conservation and the Head of Collections Management and Registration are responsible for enforcing the guidelines contained in the Reserve Facilities Management Policy (see section 4.6).

### 5.4.1 Preventive conservation and environmental control

The MMFA shall ensure that environmental, storage, handling, transportation, display and lighting conditions meet the highest standards of preventive conservation, in accordance with the nature of the materials, in order to avoid any accidental or natural deterioration of the works under its responsibility.

### 5.4.2 Conservation

The Conservation Department is staffed by specialists in painting, decorative arts, sculpture, works on paper (including photography) and framing. Although there is currently no specialist in contemporary art on staff, the combined expertise of the existing conservators allows them to take on this role in accordance with the nature of the works. The Conservation Department also has technicians specialized in preventive conservation. Most conservation treatments are carried out by this department at the MMFA. However, the MMFA can also call upon external experts, such as the Centre de conservation du Québec (CCQ), or private conservators if needed. For interventions, priority is determined according to needs (works on display, loans, etc.) and the urgency of treatment in the event of material instability. Exceptionally, the restoration of a work from a private collection may be undertaken, subject to prior agreement regarding a loan to the Permanent Collection or a loan associated with a temporary exhibition project.

#### 5.4.2.1 Condition report

As soon as a work of art arrives at the MMFA, a conservator must conduct a preliminary examination of the object and draw up a condition report. All the information recorded in this document, as well as any visual documentation that may accompany it, attests to the condition of the object upon its arrival. In addition to the examination conducted upon receiving a work, the MMFA shall review or update the condition report in the following situations:

- After a conservation treatment
- Prior to packing and leaving
- On return from a loan
- Before an exhibition
- Upon the annual planning of interventions to maintain and improve the integrity of the works in the collection
- At the request of a lender

### 5.4.3 Storage

To ensure the sustainability of the collections, storage areas are adapted to meet the needs of the works they house. Access to these spaces is limited and strict standards are observed for the control of ambient conditions. Where necessary, specially adapted racks are designed to stabilize the works during storage, and packaging measures that minimize the effects of dust and prolonged exposure to light are adopted. The MMFA uses only neutral materials for the storage and packaging of its collections.

### 5.4.4 Displaying

In addition to environmental control measures, which take into account the number of visitors to the rooms, the MMFA implements various security measures to prevent accidents and theft. For example, all smaller paintings, which could be stolen more easily, are equipped with high-performance security plates or steel wires mechanically anchored to the wall. Smaller objects are placed behind glass cases, which often have hidden locking systems. Access-control platforms are custom built for medium-sized objects, which are also anchored to these platforms, where possible. Access to wall-mounted artworks can be restricted by means of non-slip tape on the floor or elastic or braided steel ropes suspended between posts.

#### 5.4.5 Handling and protection of works

The handling of works at the MMFA is carried out exclusively by qualified personnel. Workshops on the most up-to-date handling and protection methods are held regularly for existing teams and new employees. The MMFA ensures the safe circulation of artworks and staff in its rooms and spaces.

Works that travel must be packed or crated according to the specific nature of the work, the type of transportation and the duration of the trip. The production of crates is the responsibility of the Exhibition Production Department, which has the necessary expertise, but may also be entrusted to an external supplier depending on the mandate and the availability of internal teams. The Conservation Department reviews and approves the protective measures and materials used. The Collections Management and Registration Department gathers the necessary documentation on packing and crating, and archives this documentation in the appropriate files.

#### 5.4.6 Insurance

The works under the responsibility of the MMFA (collections and loans) are insured under an annually renewable contract with a commercial insurance company. The MMFA is also eligible for the Canada Travelling Exhibitions Indemnification Program.

#### 5.4.7 Security

In order to ensure the security of the works, the MMFA has equipped the MMFA with IP cameras, which offer a better resolution than analog cameras. In addition to the video surveillance system, the MMFA has motion detection systems, access-controlled doors using personalized magnetic cards, panic bars on exit doors and security contacts on windows. The MMFA has also limited its entry points to better control of access.

Furthermore, the MMFA has an internal and external security team under the management and jurisdiction of the Prevention, Security and Maintenance Department.

#### 5.4.8 Access control

The Head of Conservation and the Head of Collections Management and Registration are responsible for authorizing access to the reserves and for informing the Head of Prevention, Security and Maintenance accordingly. The procedures governing access to the reserves are detailed in section 4.6.3 of this policy.

Access to exhibition galleries during installation periods is limited to individuals whose presence is essential. The Exhibitions Production Department will provide a list of authorized individuals to the Security Department. This list is kept at the entrance to the galleries, which is monitored by a security guard who controls access.

#### 5.4.9 Emergency preparedness measures

The MMFA has a fire safety plan in place, as well as a protocol for incidents.

In the winter of 2022, the MMFA began drafting a disaster response plan that applies specifically to the collections. The aim of this plan is to put in place a protocol to guide the team through all the steps required to safeguard the collections. The model used for this plan is that developed by the Centre de conservation du Québec for the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec.

## 6. FINAL PROVISIONS

This document constitutes the first version of the General Collections Management Policy of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.



This policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Museum on May 9, 2022.

The policy shall be reviewed every five years.