

HOUSATONIC MUSEUM OF ART

Collections Management Policy

I. Museum Philosophy

The Housatonic Museum of Art was founded on the philosophy that works of art should be an everyday part of the educational environment. Just as the college understands the necessity of providing books through a library, Connecticut State Community College Housatonic believes that an equally important component of its educational mission is to provide an opportunity to experience original works of art – in essence, a visual library. Art becomes an integral, personal part of the learning environment.

II. Museum Mission

The Housatonic Museum of Art is an expression of the serious commitment CT State Community College Housatonic has made to the cultural enrichment of students, faculty, and staff through an introduction to original paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, and sculpture. In addition, the Museum strives to introduce the greater Bridgeport area to the pleasures and challenges that result from experiencing original art. The Museum provides educational opportunities through the display of art throughout the building and in the galleries. The Museum also offers cultural enrichment programs to augment exhibitions in an effort to provide deeper understanding of the work to both the campus community and the entire region.

III. Museum Purpose

As an educational resource for both the College and the Community, the Housatonic Museum of Art is dedicated to the presentation, preservation, and interpretation of objects of artistic or historic value. To further the College's academic goals, the Museum will actively pursue the expansion and maintenance of its collections including paintings, sculptures, photographs, and artifacts. The Museum collections are to provide a basis for its educational programs for faculty, students, staff, and the public, for research and study by scholars, historians, and curators, for special lectures and symposia, for exhibitions, and for cultural and educational enrichment of the internal community and public-at-large.

IV. Museum Ethics

The Museum and its governing body abide by a code of ethics that reflects a commitment to excellence and accountability between the State of Connecticut, CT State Community College Housatonic, the Museum, and the society they serve.

V. Museum Organizational Structure

Campus CEO

HMA Director reports directly to the CEO of CT State Housatonic. CEO is responsible for all campus operations, academic and otherwise. He or she has final approval over museum

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activities and the HMA requires signoff from the CEO on important matters such as deaccessioning.

HMA Director

Oversees all aspects of the HMA including exhibitions, collections, public programming, fundraising and development. Collections manager reports to the HMA Director. He or she determines the direction of the museum's work with approval from the Campus CEO.

Collections Manager

The daily management and care of the collection are the responsibility of the Collections Manager. He or she reports to the HMA Director. Can determine the necessary conservation, storage, or database needs with approval from the Director.

Housatonic Community College Foundation Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is the fiscal sponsor of the HMA and provides its 501-c3 non-profit status. All grant funds are distributed to the museum through the HCCF.

VI. Museum History

The Housatonic Museum of Art was founded in 1967 when the College opened its doors. Burt Chernow, the first instructor in art, believed that original works of art should be as much a part of everyday College life as textbooks and libraries. The collection was developed with an eye toward providing the College with not only a "teaching Museum," but also an exciting total environment for the visual arts. It is used as a resource towards a fine art associate degree, a support for the graphic arts program and the general education program at the College, and as a resource for the students, faculty, and staff of the College as well as for the greater Bridgeport community.

The Museum has grown with the very generous donations by numerous artists and collectors and consists currently of approximately 7,000 works of art in a variety of media. Among the well-known artists included in the collection are works by Jenny Holzer, Cindy Sherman, Benny Andrews, Jacob Lawrence, Louise Nevelson, Auguste Rodin, Pablo Picasso, and Andy Warhol.

VII. Museum Public Trust

CT State Community College Housatonic shall care properly for the art. Both the College and the Museum utilize the collection to exhibit works of art and enhance education. Our goal is to preserve and protect this collection for future generations of students.

The College believes that there is no higher priority or more basic requirement for administering this public trust than the preservation and maintenance for those objects in the museum's care, the Museum operates under the laws of the State of Connecticut, the guidelines of CT State Community College Housatonic, and ethical standards and practices established by the American Association of Museums.

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VIII. Criteria for Collections

The Museum shall maintain two specific types of collections for the purpose of establishing a valuable educational and cultural resource for the students, faculty, and staff of the College as well as providing and expanding the foundation for the Museum's exhibition program:

- A.) The Permanent Collection
- B.) The Study Collection

IX. Definition of Types of Collections

- A. *Permanent Collection*: designates all objects for which the Museum has exclusive ownership, which are assigned a museum accession number, and maintained in the current files of the museum office. The Museum shall pursue through purchase, exchange, gift or bequest, objects that significantly contribute to the Museum's collection and that possess the visual integrity and physical condition necessary to be incorporated into the Museum's educational offerings as well as its exhibition program.
- B. *Study Collection*: The Museum shall maintain objects in this collection, received through gifts or bequest, to be used for educational purposes. Objects in this collection will be assigned a study collection number, which will begin with the letter "S", they are not maintained in the files of the museum office. The Director will determine whether to accept, reject, utilize, or dispose of objects in this category.

X. Acquisition of Objects and Museum Guidelines

Works of art and objects considered for acquisition into the Museum's Permanent Collection will be considered using the following criteria:

1. The object(s) must be consistent with and relevant to the stated purpose, scope and activities of CT State Community College Housatonic and/or the Museum.
2. The object(s) must have intrinsic value.
3. Consideration will be given to the College's as well as the Museum's ability to provide proper care and adequate storage for any work of art or artifact.
4. The object(s) must have a verifiable record of authenticity and provenance. The provenance of acquired objects shall be a matter of public record.
5. The object(s) must have a free and clear title. The College and the Museum abide by all local, state, federal, and international treaties or agreements concerning the acquisition of, use of, and disposal of objects. Neither the College, nor the Museum, will knowingly accept stolen, wrongfully converted, or illegally acquired object(s) of questionable provenance through purchase, exchange, gift or bequest. Further, the acquisition of cultural property

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of foreign countries is to be guided by the policies of the *UNESCO Convention of November 14, 1970*.

6. If CT State Community College Housatonic or the Museum discovers that it has inadvertently acquired an object that is proven to have been obtained illegally, they will seek to return the object to its legal owner in accordance with the any and all of the following: *UNESCO Convention, NAGPRA Act of November 16, 1990, Antiquities Act of 1906* and the *Archaeological Resource Protection Act of 1979*. If an owner cannot be determined, the Museum will seek, through outside competent authorities, the proper means of disposition.
7. The College and the Museum shall remain aware of and sensitive to the concerns of indigenous persons when considering the acquisition of artifacts especially regarding associated funerary objects or objects of cultural patrimony.
8. The Donor is responsible for appraisals of value. Under no circumstances shall the College or the Museum provide an appraisal of a donation. It may offer only suggestions concerning outside appraisal services.
9. All acquisitions are to be outright and unconditional.
10. No object(s) shall be accepted into the Permanent Collection if the immediate intent is to sell or exchange it for another object(s).
11. All donations to the College and the Museum are irrevocable upon the formal and physical transfer to the Museum.
12. All legal instruments of conveyance of title, signed by the donor/seller/agent setting forth an adequate description of the object(s) involved, and the precise conditions of transfer shall accompany all acquisitions.
13. Acquisitions by gift or bequest to the Permanent Collection will remain in possession of the College and the Museum a minimum of 5 (five) years, unless otherwise stipulated in the *Declaration of Gift*, or as long as they retain their physical integrity and authenticity, and as long as they remain useful for the purposes of the Museum.
14. 14. All gifts and purchases must be accompanied by the appropriate paperwork. Gifts totaling \$5,000 or more must be accompanied by a written third-party appraisal. Upon receipt of the appraisal a formal *Declaration of Gift* will be forwarded to the Donor accepting the work into the Permanent Collection.
15. Proceeds acquired through the deaccessioning of objects from the Permanent Collection, and cash contributed for a specific category of collection less expenses, namely

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commissions and fees associated with the sale of the work, will be restricted to the purchase of a new work and/or the preservation and conservation of works in the collection.

16. Insurance funds received from a lost work of art will be used to replace the piece by artist, kind, or style.

X. Documentation and Records

The Museum maintains and preserves records of its collection with accession file folders, computer files and out-going loan files. The Collections Manager is responsible for maintaining up-to-date records which document the history and all activities affecting objects in the Museum's custody along with their status: accessioned, loaned, deaccessioned, object left in custody, etc. All computer records will be safeguarded against hazards such as loss, fire, water, and theft. All computer files shall be backed up on a regular basis and duplicate computer files shall be stored in an off-site server.

Accession Records

The museum's accession records document the legal status of an object, its source, date of receipt, accession number, restrictions placed by donor, provenance, and description. Deed of Gift or Bill of Sale (sometimes both in case of a partial gift) transferring legal ownership to the Museum includes: an accession folder and an artist's file; computer entry of all information as stated above.

Letter of Acceptance

A letter of acceptance will be sent by the Director to the donor. A copy will be kept with the donor file and an object file as proof of ownership. This acknowledgement letter will be sent promptly. In addition, if pertinent information about the object is missing it will be requested here: object's title, maker, history, value, provenance, and exhibition record.

Annual Report

An annual report of objects in the Permanent Collection will be filed by the Director with the Dean, the Business Office, and the Campus CEO to maintain yearly inventory and insurance records.

Appraisals

1. All prospective donors are asked to provide their own validated appraisals for objects to be given to the College and the Museum. If the appraisal appears to be inflated, a second appraisal shall be requested, at no expense to the Museum.

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2. Museum staff cannot provide appraisals for work under consideration by the Museum. This is a conflict of interest and is not in keeping with the College's and the Museum's Code of Ethics.
3. Insurance valuations, rather than a formal appraisal, may be given by the Museum Director or Collections Manager for objects from the collection leaving the premises on loan.

Objects Without Documentation

Objects currently in the Permanent Collection that have not been accessioned or otherwise properly documented but nevertheless have been in the collection for some time:

1. will receive the same level of care as objects with a known provenance. The objects will be identified as much as possible and labeled.
2. may be accessioned into the collection but will include FIC, (found in collection), all methods of accessioning will be followed as closely as possible. The Museum will return the object should the original owner return and provide proper proof of ownership. Legal counsel may be sought in these cases.

XI. Deaccessioning

For a step-by-step checklist of the deaccessioning process see "HMA Deaccessioning Checklist" in appendix A.

1. The Museum and governing body must comply with all state and federal laws and regulations with regards to the sale of property, in this case, a work of art or artifact.
2. The Museum must have a clear and unrestricted title to the object.
3. The Museum must make every effort to preserve its integrity and good standing within the community and the profession, safeguarding objects in the public trust.
4. The Museum must make reasonable effort to notify donors (or surviving kin) of the intent to dispose of donated objects. Proper acknowledgement will be given to donors of deaccessioned objects when a new acquisition is made with funds gained through the sale of their object or through the exchange of their object.
5. The Museum must make a reasonable attempt to notify a living artist of intent to dispose of his/her work. Should the artist request the return of work, the Director and governing body shall decide with the advice of legal counsel whether the work may be given back or sold back to the artist or exchanged for another work by that artist.

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Criteria for Deaccessioning:

1. The object is no longer of relevance to the collection, or it no longer meets the collecting goals of the Museum as determined by the Director, in consultation with the Campus CEO of the College and/or with the Collections Committee.
2. The object is redundant within the collection (for example, two or more copies of the same print all in equal condition).
3. The quality of an object is so poor that it is unlikely that the object will ever be exhibited. The condition of the object makes it impossible to display, and restoration is not feasible due to expense or extent of damage.
4. The object has been found to be in the College's and the Museum's possession illegally. In this case, the Museum shall make every reasonable effort to return the work to its rightful owner/authority.
5. The authenticity, attribution or genuineness of the object has been proven false. (The work shall be destroyed to keep it from being placed back on the market as an original).
6. The College and the Museum are no longer able to provide proper care for the object.
7. If the College's and the Museum's governing bodies determine that it will no longer maintain the Permanent Collection, and in accordance with all State regulations governing such action, the works will:
 - a. be returned to the original donor/artist or next of kin, or
 - b. offered to another Museum for inclusion in their collection, or
 - c. offered to another nonprofit entity (i.e. college, university) or
 - d. witnessed destruction of objects not deemed disposable by any of the means listed above.

Method of Disposal

The decision to deaccession an object must be presented in writing and approved by the Museum Director, the Campus CEO, in accordance with all State regulations. The Director will select the method of disposal:

1. Transfer to the Study Collection.
2. Exchange or gift to another Museum or nonprofit entity; or

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3. Sale at public auction or sale through a reputable dealer (under special circumstances).
4. Witnessed destruction of objects not deemed disposable by any of the means listed above.

Deaccessioning - Documentation and Records

All documents pertaining to the deaccessioning of an object(s) must be filed with the Director and the Business Manager and are a matter of public record that may be released upon request. Records of all acts relating to deaccessioning of objects (sales records, dates, method of disposal, etc.) are to be kept by the Collections Manager and noted in the existing accessions files.

1. The date and reason for deaccessioning shall be recorded in the Accessions file.
2. The *Declaration of Gift* or the *Bill of Sale* shall be stamped “deaccessioned” and the reason for deaccessioning will be noted and transferred to the deaccessioned file.
3. The accession card and donor card are stamped “deaccessioned”, and the date and reason for deaccessioning is noted on them. These cards are maintained in the files.
4. All pertinent information will be entered in the computerized files as well.
5. For objects transferred from Permanent Collection or to the Study Collection, all records will be coded with the letter “S” preceding the accession number. All records remain in numerical order.
6. If a work is destroyed, the Director of the Museum and the witness(es) will sign a document and a photographic record of the destruction of the work will be made.

XII. Insurance

The Permanent Collection and all borrowed works are placed on the insurance policy maintained by the State of Connecticut. Separate deductibles exist for objects in the Permanent Collection and objects on temporary loan to the Museum. All works are registered on the master insurance policy and updated as new works arrive. This policy protects against fire, theft, vandalism, accident, and natural disasters.

XIII. Long-Term Loan

The Museum may hold a few long-term loans from private individuals only if they are promised gifts or works of such outstanding quality and importance that they enhance the Museum’s exhibitions in a significant way. All loaned objects will be numbered and registered with the Directors Office but will be preceded by an “L”. These works are also placed on the State

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insurance policy. If the Lender prefers to maintain their own insurance, they must provide the Museum with a waiver and a Certificate of Insurance for the loan dates.

XIV. Care of Collections

The College, the Museum, and its governing body shall endeavor to provide the facilities and funding for the proper environmental and physical protection of all objects in the Museum's collections and exhibition program as well as maintenance of the records and inventories of its holdings.

XV. Object Handling

To prevent structural damage, the handling, storage, packing, unpacking, installation, and deinstallation will be monitored by Museum personnel.

No objects will be moved without the supervision and authorization of the Director or Collections Manager. College personnel must notify the museum staff regarding the relocation of objects. Objects will be moved under the supervision of museum personnel in order that collection records can be properly maintained.

The museum staff will be notified as far in advance as reasonably possible of planned facilities maintenance activities, such as fumigation, repairs involving sanding, painting, or washing, so that works of art may be covered or removed completely from the site to prevent damage by chemicals, paint, dirt, or water.

The Collections Manager will be responsible for the organization of collections storage, the efficient use of storage facilities and the purchase of additional storage equipment.

XVI. Collections On Display

Within the Burt Chernow Galleries food, beverages and social activities will be restricted, unless specially approved by the museum Director and Collections Manager.

Lighting, exhibition, and cleaning procedures shall comply with the Museum's professional and environmental standards.

Surveillance cameras and physical security checks by both gallery staff and security staff shall be made periodically to guard against loss by theft or vandalism.

Reports of damage or loss of an object shall be reported immediately to the Director verbally, either in person or by phone, followed up by written documentation. The Director will notify the Dean, the Campus CEO, and the Business Office about inventory and insurance and to the Director of Security and appropriate authorities including the State Police.

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XVII. Conservation

The Director, in conjunction with the Collections Manager, administers the priority rating for repair, restoration or conservation of objects owned by the museum after consultation with a professional conservator. The Collections Manager will keep records of work to be done, as well as of work already completed, to an object.

Monies for such treatment shall be utilized through budget allocations or acquired through outside funding sources.

Treatment will be carried out by a professional conservator.

Damage to objects on loan to the Museum or in temporary custody of the Museum shall be promptly reported to the owner so that insurance reports can be completed and decisions regarding repairs can be made in accordance with the insurance policy. Repairs are made only with consent of the Lender, substantiated by a written confirmation.

XVIII. Inventory

1. The Collections Manager and appropriate museum personnel shall conduct a comprehensive inventory of specific groups or particularly sensitive or vulnerable objects (paper, wood) in the collection every two years, and the entire collection every five years, or as deemed necessary. Spot-check inventories of not less than twenty randomly chosen objects shall be conducted each year by the Collections Manager and as necessary by the auditors.
2. The inventory consists of an examination of the object noting its condition and verifying its location.
3. If an object appears to be missing, the Director must be notified, and museum personnel will attempt to locate it. If the object cannot be located, then the Dean, the Campus CEO, the Business Office, and Security will be notified and another search to locate the object will be made. If it is determined to be necessary by the museum and college staff, the State Police will be notified should the missing object not be found.
4. Records for the objects missing from the collection shall be marked as such, signed, and dated by the Director. They shall not officially be deaccessioned from the collection.

XIX. Access to the Collection

1. Access to the collection storage areas shall be restricted to the Director, Collections Manager, the Head of Campus Safety, and/or his/her designee. The Director may grant access to temporary curators in pursuance of their duties.

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2. Other personnel (staff or volunteers) may be granted access upon the prior written approval of the Director.
3. Visitors may be granted access while in the company of the Director or Collections Manager. Advance appointments are strongly recommended. Individuals granted access must comply with the Museum's conditions regarding the handling, examination or photographing of an object.
4. Keys to the collection storage areas shall be restricted to the Museum staff and Security.

XX. Informational Access

1. Access to collection records is restricted to the Director and the Museum staff.
2. In-house staff or volunteers may be granted access to the paper or computer records under the direction of the Director or Collections Manager and in the pursuance of his/her duties or research.
3. Scholars and visitors may be provided with artist's files and general information about an object. Certain kinds of information about the collection shall remain confidential: provenance, appraised value, and donor identification.
4. Appropriate fees will be charged to cover the costs of non-Museum-related research.

XXI. Photography of the Collection

1. Generally, visitors may photograph objects from the Permanent Collection for their own personal use. Electronic flashes are not permissible.
2. Items loaned to the Museum may not be photographed by the public or Museum staff without the prior consent of the Lender, except in the case of general installation photographs.
3. Photography for publication/reproduction will be completed by professional photographer under contract with the Museum.
4. Requests for permission to reproduce/publish images of works in the collection will be administered by the Museum Director. Fees will be collected both as reimbursement for photography expenses and use fees.

XXII. Use of Gallery Space

1. Food and drink are prohibited in the galleries except during special supervised functions.

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2. Educational or social functions will be supervised by at least one staff member as well as Security.
3. Smoking is prohibited in galleries by State Law.