

Preamble

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) is dedicated to preserving, enhancing, interpreting, and communicating its *collections* which document art, culture, and natural history from around the world. The purpose of the collections policy is to establish the ROM's guidelines for:

- The methods of acquiring objects for accession including, works of art, artifacts, and biological and geological materials (hereafter collectively referred to as objects) for the collections.
- The care of the collections.
- The establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive, accessible system of record-keeping for all objects placed in the custody of the ROM.
- The *deaccessioning* of objects.
- The lending of objects to or borrowing of objects from other museums, institutions, and private sources.

Although, the ROM may accept *loans* or donations of non-accessioned objects for purposes of research, teaching, and public programming, and every effort will be made to maintain the same level of *safeguards* as for accessioned objects, the following policy applies only to objects that have been accessioned.

Policy

The ROM will actively establish, maintain, and expand the accessioned collections in its Core Areas of Collections and Research. Core areas are subject to change and potential expansion as new opportunities for significant *acquisitions* and curatorial research arise. Collection development and the setting of priorities will be guided by the specialized knowledge and research expertise of qualified professional staff, in consultation with Senior Management.

Core Areas

The ROM's core collections are those of established national and/or international significance supported by nationally and/or internationally recognized programs of curatorial research. These core areas are central to the ROM's mandate and the ROM is committed to them on a long-term basis. The following collections are currently considered core areas:

Art and Culture

- African art, culture, and archaeology, including ancient Egypt/Nubia
- Canadian art, culture and design (Post-contact)
- Indigenous art, culture, and archaeology
- Contemporary global art, culture, and design
- East Asian art and archaeology, specifically China, Japan and Korea
- European art, culture, and design, including ancient Greece and Rome
- Fashion and Textiles
- Middle and South American art, culture, and archaeology
- Near East, Middle East and West Asian art and archaeology and their diasporas, including Judaic and Islamic art
- South Asian art and culture

Natural History

- Biodiversity, including botany, entomology, herpetology, ichthyology, invertebrate zoology, mammalogy, mycology, and ornithology.
- Earth Sciences, including mineralogy and gemstones, meteoritics, and petrology.
- Palaeobiology, including dinosaurs and other fossil vertebrates, Burgess Shale biota and other fossil invertebrates, and Canadian fossils in general.

Library and Archives

- Library and Archives, focusing on areas of ROM Collections and Research.

As the ROM's priorities for collecting and research change over time, the above listing will be subject to periodic review and change.

Conditions of Acquisition

Objects will be accessioned into the ROM's collections only under the following conditions:

- The objects must be consistent with and relevant to the ROM's mission.
- The ROM must be able to provide proper care and storage for the objects. No object should be considered for acquisition if its physical condition exceeds the ROM's ability to provide for its proper care and preservation.
- The objects must be accompanied by warranties of good legal title.
- The objects must be accompanied by a good record of provenance and must be authenticated. Curators must demonstrate due diligence in proposing acquisitions whose provenance records are incomplete.
- The objects should be accompanied by valuations, where appropriate.
- Donations must be free and clear of conditions and restrictions imposed by the donors regarding the ROM's use of the objects.
- All donations to the ROM's collections are irrevocable upon the formal transfer of title to the ROM.
- The ROM will endeavor to acquire all economic rights necessary to permit anticipated exhibition and reproduction uses. The ROM will respect the creator's right to the integrity of the work. Where reasonable, the ROM will respect the creator's right to be associated with the work as its named creator.
- The ROM is satisfied that any object to be acquired, whether by donation, exchange, or purchase, is not stolen or otherwise illegally acquired or collected. The acquisition of cultural property which has been in foreign countries will comply with the *Cultural Property Export and Import Act*, which incorporates the principles and provisions of the *UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of*

Ownership of Cultural Property (1970) into Canadian law. The ROM will use the date of adoption by UNESCO of the 1970 convention, November 14, 1970, as the landmark date after which all cultural property acquisitions require comprehensive provenance records.

Exceptions to individual conditions can be considered on a case by case basis, and must be approved by the Director & CEO, and reported to the Board of Trustees, following ethical and legal guidelines and accepted Museum standards

In addition to legal requirements for acquisitions, the ROM follows: the Ethics Guidelines of the Canadian Museum Association; the Ethics and Best Practices in Museums, and the Standards Regarding Archaeological Material and Ancient Art of the American Alliance of Museums; and the Code of Ethics, and Standards and Practices of the Association of Art Museum Directors.

Care of the Collections

The ROM will allocate an annual budget for funding the continuing care and preservation of objects in its collections. Proper storage and exhibition facilities along with adequate environmental-control systems must be top priorities for the ROM at all times.

The ROM will ensure that the collections are adequately protected against fire, flood, pests, theft, vandalism, and natural disaster. These issues are addressed further in the Risk Management and Emergency & Disaster Planning policies.

The ROM will establish and maintain a comprehensive system of records that will include the following information:

- Documentation pertaining to the provenance and legal title of an object.
- All correspondence, documents, and other materials pertaining to an accessioned object.
- Accessioning and cataloguing data.
- Photographic documentation.
- Condition and conservation history.
- Insurance records.
- Current location and loan records.
- Deaccessioning information.

Deaccessioning

The ROM reserves the right to deaccession any object under any of the following criteria:

- An object is no longer relevant within the collection, exhibition, or research programs of the ROM.
- An object was acquired illegally or unethically.
- An object has failed to retain its physical integrity or authenticity and/or cannot be properly preserved, stored, and used.
- For the purpose of upgrading the ROM's collections and their care.

The public relations impact must be carefully assessed prior to the approval of any deaccession.

Registration will continue to maintain all records pertaining to deaccessioned objects.

Disposals

Disposal of deaccessioned objects will be made by one of the following means:

- Sale to another museum or charitable institution.
- Sale at public auction.
- Exchange with another museum or charitable institution.
- Donation to another museum or charitable institution.
- In the case of repatriation, return to the Indigenous community of record

When possible, deaccessioned objects should be disposed of in a manner that keeps them in the public domain. A deaccessioned object may be destroyed if it is not salvageable or no longer of interest to any party.

No member of the Board of Trustees, employee or volunteer, or their representative or immediate families may be given, sold, or otherwise knowingly obtain deaccessioned objects. Deaccessioned objects may not be directly sold to private individuals and corporations.

All monies realized from the sale of any object or collection will be used by the ROM to upgrade the ROM's collections and their care, preferably in the curatorial department from which the sold objects were deaccessioned.

Loans

The ROM may borrow objects from other museums, galleries, and private sources for the purposes of exhibition, research, or public programming and education. The ROM may also lend objects from its collections to responsible institutions for the purposes of exhibition, research, or public programming and education. Outgoing loans are an important aspect of the ROM's mandate and allow the ROM's collections to be used and enjoyed more widely in Ontario, Canada and elsewhere.

- All loans are subject to a formal written agreement between the lender and the borrower, which ensures appropriate coverage of all insurance obligations. The borrower will comply with all restrictions and conditions imposed on borrowed objects.
- The Museum will apply the principles of reasonable due diligence to ensure that any work of art or other cultural or natural object to be borrowed has not been either imported or exported in an illicit manner and that there are no potential competing ownership claims.
- Loan agreements will specify the purpose and time period of the loan.
- Loan agreements will address copyright and reproduction rights.

Approval and Reporting Levels

Decisions regarding ROM acquisitions, deaccessions, disposals, and incoming and outgoing loans will follow the approval and reporting levels set by the Board of Trustees. Refer to the attached appendix for the current approval and reporting levels.

Explanation of Terms

accession: the formal process or procedure of recording an addition to the collections; the status assigned to the object. Not all objects acquired by the ROM are accessioned.

acquisition: the act of gaining legal title of an object or a collection of objects.

collections: refers to objects including works of art, artifacts, and biological and geological materials, sound and video recordings, library and archives, and any other movable cultural or natural property that has been formally accepted and accessioned by the ROM.

deaccession: the formal process or procedure that records the permanent removal of an accessioned object or group of objects from the collections.

disposal: permanent physical removal from the collections of any catalogued object or specimen, usually by exchange, donation, sale, or destruction.

loan: an object that is lent or borrowed; the act of furnishing an object or a collection to another party for temporary use, for an agreed specific purpose, with specific conditions regarding the handling and care of the object, and on the condition that the object is returned by a specified date.

safeguarding: includes the conservation, preparation, and preservation of objects; collections management; and security.

Date Amended

June 21, 2001
 January 17, 2002
 March 6, 2008
 March 5, 2009
 November 15, 2012
 October 1, 2015 (*no amendments*)
 October 17, 2017 (*with amendments*)
 January 21, 2022 (*with amendments*)

MONITORING

Adherence to Policy

Board: The Collections, Engagement & Research Committee will periodically review management's adherence to the policy.

Management: The Director & CEO and the Deputy Director, Collections & Research will ensure that the Collections, Engagement & Research Committee has all the relevant information for determining adherence.

Policy Review

Method Internal Report

Responsibility Collections, Exhibitions & Research Committee

Minimum Frequency Every three years

	Collections Approval and Reporting Levels	Department Head APPROVAL	Deputy Director, Collections & Research, APPROVAL	Director & CEO APPROVAL	CER Committee and Board INFORMED	CER Committee APPROVAL	Board APPROVAL
	Purchases and Gifts-in Kind						
	up to \$10,000	X					
	>\$10,000 - \$50,000	X	X				
	>\$50,000 - \$250,000	X	X	X	X		
*	>\$250,000 - \$1,000,000	X	X	X	X	X	
*	>\$1,000,000	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Unconditional Gifts	X	X	X			
	CCPERB Applications						
	up to \$100,000	X	X				
	>\$100,000	X	X	X	X		
	Deaccessions & Disposals						
	up to \$50,000	X	X	X			
	>\$50,000 - \$100,000	X	X	X	X	X	
	>\$100,000	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Repatriation						
	All Levels	X	X	X	X	X	X
^	Incoming Loans						
	up to \$100,000	X	X				
	>\$100,000 - \$250,000	X	X	X			
	>\$250,000 - \$15,000,000	X	X	X	X		
*	>\$15,000,000 - \$25,000,000	X	X	X	X	X	
*	>\$25,000,000	X	X	X	X	X	X
^	Outgoing Loans						
	up to \$100,000	X	X				
	>\$100,000 - \$250,000	X	X	X			
	>\$250,000 - \$10,000,000	X	X	X	X		
*	>\$10,000,000 - \$15,000,000	X	X	X	X	X	
*	>\$15,000,000	X	X	X	X	X	X
*	In unusual circumstances where time is of the essence, the Director & CEO may approve acquisitions and/or loans at this level after having received approval from the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the CER Committee. Any such loan approval shall be reported and ratified at the next CER Committee meeting and/or Board meeting.						
^	All incoming loans that are included in a special exhibition borrowed from another institution, as well as all outgoing loans that are included in a ROM-organized travelling exhibition, shall be approved in accordance with the Exhibition Policy, rather than the Collections Policy, to avoid duplication of the approval process.						