

**Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery**

**The Arkell Museum at Canajoharie**

**Museum Collections**

**Collections Management Policy**

**Reviewed by Collections Committee in February 2011**

## **Acquisitions and Accessions**

### Purpose

The building of the collection is one of the purposes for which the museum exists. Therefore, the trustees and staff are charged with the responsibility of building the collections through the development and implementation of approved acquisition plans.

### Authority

The decisions on which individual items to collect or to ignore are basic to the ongoing success of the museum. These decisions will be based on the reasoned application of the approved acquisition plans, along with the criteria outlined below. Initial screening of available potential acquisitions will be performed by the Chief Curator. The Chief Curator will notify the Executive Director of all potential acquisitions, whether by donation or purchase, and will recommend specific items for acquisition to the Executive Director. All acquisitions will require the approval of the Board of Trustees.

### Criteria for Acquisition

In addition to fitting within the approved acquisition plan, which identifies whether an item fits within the scope of the collection, all acquisitions must meet the following criteria:

- come with assurances of legal title from the donor/owner
- come with clear indication of ownership of copyright. If copyright is not conferred, this must be clearly stated on all appropriate records.
- be acquired without condition from the donor/owner
- be acquired without violation of any international treaty or any federal state or local law
- be in stable condition, and not pose a threat to other items in the collection. Items that are not in a useable condition will only be acquired when a plan is in place to perform the necessary conservation on the object.

- If an entire collection is offered the museum, the donor must authorize the museum to pursue the disposition of any items in the offered collection that do not meet any museum criteria for acquisition

### Guidelines

The museum will not acquire individual items for purpose of resale.

The museum will not provide appraisals or give any valuation of works, either for items offered as gifts or as reference information.

The museum will not acquire any object without first physically inspecting the item for condition and suitability.

Upon acceptance of an item for acquisition, all existing information relating to the object, including the records accompanying board approval, appraised value, correspondence, etc, will be compiled for the curatorial files.

Museum staff will formally accession all items, and will create cataloging records for each accessioned object. If the accessioned items are gifts, staff will secure completed Deed of Gift forms and send letters of appreciation to all donors.

## **Deaccessions**

### Purpose

Deaccessioning, the permanent removal of items from the collection is an important component of effective collections management. Deaccessioning can be an effective tool for protecting the collection and the museum's mission. However, poorly conceived and implemented deaccessioning can be just as damaging to the museum as a failure to deaccession inappropriate objects. Deaccessioning should always be approached with caution and with scrupulous attention to policy, mission, institutional resources, and public perceptions

### Authority

The decisions on which individual items to deaccession is basic to the ongoing success of the museum. These decisions will be based on the reasoned application of the approved acquisition plans, along with the criteria outlined below. The Chief Curator for the Museum will make recommendations for any deaccessions to the Executive Director. Any such objects will be reviewed by the Art and History Collections committee. No object will be deaccessioned without the express, prior approval of first the Committee, and then the full Board of Trustees.

### Criteria for Deaccessioning

Items can be recommended for deaccessioning for any of the following reasons:

- The item is no longer relevant to the collections; it no longer contributes to collecting goals
- The item is a duplication in the collection; other items in the collection may be of more interest, or in better condition
- The quality or condition of the item is such that the item is not useable for exhibits, etc.,
- The museum lacks the resources to properly care for, treat, repair or store the item.
- The object has been found to be in the museum's possession illegally. Specific sections of this policy refer to items of Native

American origin and items that, in their provenance, have been looted from the rightful owners.

### Guidelines and Procedures

The Chief Curator will periodically review the collections for objects that may be appropriate for deaccessioning. The Chief Curator will compile information on these items, work with other museum staff to formulate recommendations, and present recommendations for deaccessions to the Executive Director.

Recommendations for deaccessions will be reviewed by the board committee with oversight for the relevant collection. If the committee concurs with the recommendation, the recommendation will be made to the Board of Trustees. The Board will acknowledge receipt of the recommendation, and discuss the proposed deaccessioning, but will not formally act at the meeting at which the proposal is presented. Board action will be deferred to a subsequent meeting.

The museum must own any accessioned item for a minimum of two years before it is eligible for deaccessioning.

Deaccessioned items may be removed from the collection through gift or exchange to another similar institution, sale at public auction, sale through a reputable dealer, or witnessed destruction. Under no circumstances can the deaccessioning benefit any trustee, staff member or volunteer of the organization, nor may any of these individuals take possession of any deaccessioned item. The proposed method of removal must be included in the board resolution authorizing the deaccession.

Funds acquired through deaccessioning of objects in the museum collection must be used for the sole purpose of acquiring objects for the museum collections.

The museum will continue to maintain all curatorial, accession and cataloging records on all deaccessioned items. Notation will be made in the records of the reason and date of deaccessioning, and the current location of the object, if known. All records concerning deaccessions are public records and must be maintained.

### Return of Items found to be in the Collections Illegally

The Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery does not collect items unless the donor or seller has clear title to the object. If, in spite of this policy, the museum uncovers evidence that an object was acquired through illegal means, or entered the country under questionable circumstances, as identified by U.S. Department of State Guidelines, the museum will contact the U.S. State Department with that evidence, and will cooperate in returning the object to its rightful owners.

### Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

The Canajoharie Library and Art Gallery will not collect objects relating to Native American Graves or objects currently in use as Native American Religious objects. If such items are found to be in the collection, the museum will cooperate with the federal government and appropriate tribal government in returning the objects to the affected tribe.

## **Outgoing Loans**

### Purpose

The Canajoharie Library & Art Gallery recognizes its responsibility to the public and to the museum community to make its collections available to further public exposure and education, and to advance scholarship. Loans of objects will be made to other institutions to help further these goals. The museum will balance this responsibility with that of the collection's safety and stewardship and with the museum's internal needs and overall mission.

### Authority

Loan requests are ordinary made through the Chief Curator who will develop recommendations for the acceptance or denial of all loan requests. These recommendations will be relayed to the Executive Director. No item from the collection will be loaned without the prior approval of the Board of Trustees.

### Criteria for Loans

- Institutions requesting loans must supply a written request at least three months prior to the anticipated shipping date.
- These requests must include a standard facilities report as well as transportation and insurance assurances.
- The requested objects must be available (not already in use for whatever reason).
- The requested objects must be in stable condition, so as to be unaffected by the rigors of transport. Pastels and paintings on wood panel will ordinarily not be available for loan
- Loans will not be made for exhibitions that do not have an educational or scholarly component.

### Guidelines and Procedures

The Chief Curator will review all loan requests and work with museum staff to coordinate the loan process. Museum staff will compile loan request forms, condition reports and facility reports, will review transportation

options, and will determine the object's availability, based on the requested dates. This information will form the basis of a recommendation made to the Executive Director, and eventually, to the appropriate Board Committee and the Board of Trustees.

Loans will be for a maximum of one year duration. Borrowers may request an extension of any loan, but any such extension will be considered a separate loan request.

Works borrowed may not comprise more than 20% of the objects in the exhibition without prior approval from the Board of Trustees.

After the board has acted on a loan request, the Executive Director will direct the Chief Curator to contact the requesting institution to notify them of the board's decision.

The loan agreement form will include the following:

- Listing of the works to be loaned
- Title and dates for the exhibition
- Duration of the loan
- Transportation arrangements
- Any conditions concerning installation of the work(s)
- Value of the works to be loaned

A certificate of insurance must be sent to the Arkell Museum before the loaned work transported to the lending museum(s)