

Procedures and Guidelines for Art Acquisition and Deaccession

Northeastern University acquires and deaccessions works of art for the university's collection in accordance with the university's Policy on Art Acquisition and Deaccession (the "Policy") and applicable law. These Procedures and Guidelines supplement the Policy for the purposes of describing the process by which the university acquires works of art and providing guidance on considerations relevant to the deaccession process. Capitalized terms defined in the Policy have the same meaning in these Procedures and Guidelines.

I. Procedures for Acquisition of Works of Art

A. Intake

Intended gifts of art will be entered into an established intake process by the Art Collection Manager. The intake must include the following information:

- Name and details of donor
- Type of artwork, current location
- Proof of ownership and rights to transfer
- Appraisal documentation (see next section)
- Copyright assignment
- Gift Agreement Draft (provided by Advancement Fund Management)
- Requirements for transport & storage
- Office receiving intent to donate
- Signed authorization by the prospective donor showing their agreement to have the art considered for donation according to these Northeastern processes, including the process of deaccession, authority for deaccession decisions and how any realized funds will be utilized, all in accordance with the Policy
- Other classification details deemed appropriate by the Art Collection Committee.

The university generally will not agree to take possession of art on a temporary loan basis. If such agreements are to be considered, the loan agreement must be entered into with the owner to include limitations on liability in the case of loss, theft or damage to the work of art, and other requirements as recommended by the Northeastern Office of the General Counsel.

B. Evaluation and Recommendation

When all intake requirements have been met, at their next scheduled meeting, the Art Collection Committee (the "Committee") will evaluate the proposed acquisition based on an evaluation rubric developed by the committee to be used for scoring or grading the proposed acquisition. Any such rubric must be consistent with the collection goals outlined in the Policy and other goals specific to the art collection at the intended campus location for

the proposed acquisition. Following deliberations regarding the degree to which the artwork meets these criteria, the Committee will make a recommendation regarding acquisition to the Provost or their designee, who will make the final decision.

C. Appraisals

It is the responsibility of the donor to obtain an appraisal for prospective art donations in accordance with a protocol to be established by the Committee. The Committee will assist the donor by providing impartial references or a listing of known appraisers. Appraisal costs must be borne entirely by the donor. To avoid conflict of interest or the appearance thereof, staff, trustees, or others closely related to Northeastern University are prohibited from making appraisals or works considered for or included in the university's collection.

D. Transfer of Art

Once the Provost approves acquisition of the art, the following documentation is required to effect the transfer:

1. Bill of sale.
2. Transfer, retention, or sub-division of copyright protection of works of art as defined in the Policy (whenever possible). Northeastern complies with applicable copyright law and with donor and copyright restrictions as specified by written agreement.
3. Signed Gift Agreement transferring ownership to the university. This process will be managed through university advancement and the Office of the General Counsel, with information provided by the Art Collection Manager. Gift agreements should include:
 - a. A statement that, in the event of eventual deaccession and sale of the work of art, it is the sole discretion of Northeastern University regarding the use of the proceeds from that sale. However, to meet the American Alliance of Museums standards, and in accordance with Northeastern's Policy on Capital Assets, the proceeds from any sale of a deaccessioned work will be placed into a budget index that directly supports the collection (through future acquisition).
 - b. Language describing the university's sole prerogative regarding storage, display, an agreed-upon period of ownership by the university before deaccession is allowed.

The Art Collection Manager will provide to the Treasurer's Office a quarterly list of works (with corresponding estimated values) that have come into or been removed from the university's collections. The items will be recorded in accordance with the university's [Policy on Capital Assets](#).

II. Guidelines for Deaccessioning Works of Art

A. Methods of Disposal

In general, the disposal of an object, whether by sale, exchange, destruction, or transfer, must be conducted with a view toward maximizing the advantage and yield to the university while maintaining applicable standards of professional ethics, the university's standing in its community, and the university's responsibilities to the donor and the artist.

The following may be considered by the university's Art Collection Manager in selecting a method of disposal for works approved for deaccessioning:

1. Except for instances of repatriation (see Section II.A.4, below), preferred methods of disposal are sale through publicly advertised auction, or sale to or exchange with another public institution. Special circumstances (e.g., conditions specified by the donor at the time of acquisition) may require alternative means of disposal, subject to approval by the Provost's Office.
2. In the case of a work of art by a living artist, special consideration may be given to exchange with or transfer ownership to the artist.
3. In the case of a work of art that cannot be sufficiently conserved or repaired for display, and/or the cost of restoration exceeds the value of the object, and/or the restoration will render it essentially false, the work in question may be destroyed according to procedures established by the American Alliance of Museums. If the work of art is by a living artist, reasonable effort will be made to contact the artist and inform them of the need for disposal, and determine if they desire the art to be transferred to them. If such transfer is desired by the artist, deaccession processes will be followed as described in II.B
4. In the case of repatriation, the university will arrange for the return of objects in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, and university policy. The university will make its best effort to minimize any financial burden on the claimants for such repatriation.

B. Transfer of Disposed Art

Upon the recommendation of the Committee, and once the provost approves the disposal of the art, a Deaccession Notification form is required to effect the sale, exchange, destruction, or transfer. The form will include full object information and an image, criteria for deaccession, recommendation for type of disposal, donor information (if applicable), and copy of deed of gift (if available).

Art that is determined to be a forgery will be clearly marked as such and not returned to the market without full disclosure.

C. Interests of Donors

1. The Art Collection Manager, in collaboration with university advancement, will make an effort to notify the donor of a work under consideration for deaccession and disposal. Circumstances may warrant extending similar courtesy to the heirs of a donor.
2. The Office of Institutional Advancement will be notified of any deaccessioning so that donor files can be updated.
3. Any object newly acquired with proceeds from deaccessioning and disposal should, if such information is available, acknowledge the original donor in the credit line for that object.

D. Record of Deaccessioning

Records and files relating to deaccessioned objects will be retained by the Art Collection Manager. Deaccession must be noted in the collection database and physical collection object files.

III. Contact Information

Questions regarding the university's Policy on Art Acquisition and Deaccession or about these Procedures and Guidelines should be directed to the Office of the Provost:

110 Churchill Hall, Boston campus

(617)373-2000

office_of_the_provost@northeastern.edu

Last Updated: 2.17.25

APPENDIX

Specifications for Campus Locations

To be amended as the need arises for specific locations

The Mills College Art Museum, Oakland (MCAM)

Mission: MCAM aims to acquire works of art that complement or reinforce the existing strengths of its collection and that serve the teaching program of the university. The museum seeks to purchase and acquire through gift works of high aesthetic and/or historical value that will contribute significantly to the experience of the general museum audience, and/or scholarly research. Special consideration is given to objects that help to place in context, aesthetically and historically, art already in the collection.

Collection Development Goals

- 1) To seek works of art in close alignment with the exhibition needs and programs of the particular campus location.
- 2) To acquire works of art that support MCAM's current collection strengths
- 3) To diversify the collection by acquiring works of art by traditionally under-represented artistic voices
- 4) To acquire works that have a relationship to teaching
- 5) To strengthen representation of faculty and alumni artists
- 6) To fill in selected gaps in the collection
- 7) To respond to new opportunities and developments in contemporary artistic and scholarly practices
- 8) To refine the collection through deaccession according to institutional needs and capabilities regarding storage, exhibition space and alignment with teaching and research interests.

MCAM may, upon the recommendation of the Director, accept the donation of a work or works of art without accessioning them as part of the permanent collection. If permitted by a written agreement between the donor, or the donor's legal representative, and MCAM, such works may be disposed of by the MCAM in any way it deems appropriate. If a work of art, whether accessioned or non-accessioned, is sold, proceeds from the sale must be directed toward a purchase or endowment fund dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the collection (see section II. Deaccessioning).