

ANACOSTIA COMMUNITY MUSEUM  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

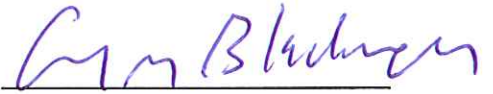
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

Have read and approve:



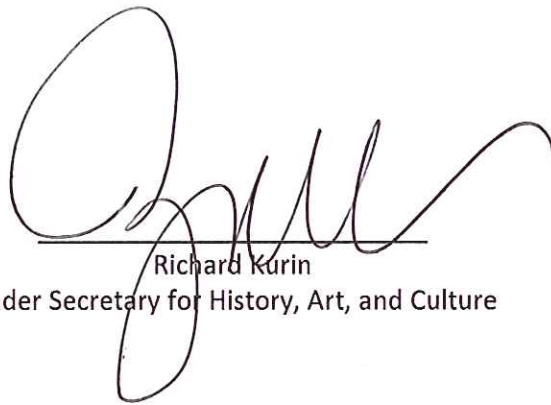
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11/4/10

Date

# Anacostia Community Museum

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## Collections Management Policy

**Revised November 2010**



Smithsonian Institution



Smithsonian  
*Anacostia Community Museum*

**Collections Management Policy**

November 2010

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Since its founding in 1967, the Anacostia Community Museum (ACM) has served first, as a neighborhood museum located in one of the District of Columbia's least affluent areas, later as a museum producing African American exhibits and educational materials for a national audience, and currently as a museum focusing on contemporary urban communities. The Anacostia Community Museum was founded upon the principles of direct engagement with and responsibility to the community in which it was established; the museum mission centers upon developing exhibitions that discuss contemporary community issues and concerns.

The museum was established within a residential, low- and mixed-income, largely African American community. From its inception, museum publications, exhibitions, and public programs focused on neighborhood history, African American history, and on socio-cultural issues that resonate within urban communities.

In 2009, under the direction of the museum's current director, Camille Akeju, new mission and vision statements were set forth for the institution. The museum collections plan and the collections management policy incorporate the new mission by directing collections efforts towards community history and contemporary urban community life.

The ACM Collections Plan grows out of the museum's work in contemporary history and culture, from staff efforts to document the District of Columbia neighborhoods that lie east of the Anacostia River (EOR communities), and also draws upon the strong collection of community-focused materials within the museum's permanent collection.

The ACM Collections Management Policy establishes policy standards, guidance and procedures that govern the acquisition, management, and use of the museum's permanent collection as well as the care and management of objects left in its custody. The collections management activities of ACM directly support the Smithsonian's mission, strategic plan, and programmatic goals.

This document will be shared with other museums, scholars, and members of the public upon request.

## **II. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

### **A. Mission**

The mission of the Anacostia Community Museum is to challenge perceptions, broaden perspectives, generate new knowledge, and deepen understanding about the ever-changing concepts and realities of “community.”

### **B. Vision**

Through research, collections, exhibitions, and programs ACM staff will document and interpret the impact of historical and contemporary events and issues on communities in Anacostia and throughout the world.

Collections are fundamental to the mission of the museum, serving as the intellectual base for research, exhibitions, publications, and educational programming. Established as the nation’s first federally funded neighborhood museum, the museum’s collections of artifacts and archival materials reflect neighborhood and city history, women’s history, literature, family history, and African American studies. The museum has broadened its efforts to acquire and preserve collections that support its expanded mission as well as augment its legacy collection and revolving exhibition program.

## **III. STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY**

The Smithsonian Board of Regents retains ultimate responsibility for Smithsonian collections. The primary operating authority for the care and management of the ACM’s permanent collection has been delegated from the Board of Regents to the Secretary and through the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture to the ACM Director (Director). The Director provides policy guidance, program direction and planning, and budgetary support to carry out the collections management requirements established in Smithsonian Directive (SD) 600, *Collections Management*, and this policy. The ACM Collections Committee serves as the authoritative advisory body to the ACM Director for the development of collections policy and for the care and management of the collection. The Director delegates specific collections authority and responsibility to the Registrar, Archivist, Senior Curator, and the ACM Collections Committee as stipulated in this

policy. This activity is to be guided by the policies and procedures as established in this document.

#### **A. Composition of the ACM Collections Committee**

The Director will appoint a Collections Committee, comprised of a minimum of five (5) staff persons consisting of the Deputy Director, staff curators and historians, the Registrar and Archivist, and the Head of the Education Department.

1. The Collections Committee will be chaired by the Senior Curator, or a staff person within the Curatorial Department appointed by the Senior Curator.
2. The Committee shall meet at least four times per year, and may meet at any time that action is needed.
3. A quorum shall consist of four members. When urgent action is required, if a quorum is not available the Director or Deputy Director can appoint a staff person to sit temporarily on the Committee.
4. All actions of the Collections Committee will be by majority vote, except deaccessions, which must be unanimous. Dissenting opinions will be included in recommendations to the Director.

#### **B. Authority of ACM Collections Committee**

The Committee serves as the authoritative advisory body to the Director and the museum staff on issues of collections policy and the preservation, storage, and conservation of objects. The Collections Committee is responsible for reviewing proposed acquisitions, deaccessions, disposals, and loans, and making final recommendations to the Director.

#### **C. Other Smithsonian Staff**

Central Smithsonian offices, such as that of the National Collections Program, Office of General Counsel, Office of Protection Services, and the Office of the Treasurer's Risk Management Division, provide a collections management service function to the ACM as specified in this policy, Smithsonian Directive 600, *Collections Management*, and the *SD 600 Implementation Manual*.

## IV. DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF COLLECTIONS

### A. Accessioned Collections

The museum maintains an accessioned Permanent Collection which is divided into two administrative units: the Archives Division (paper documents, photographs, film, and video collections) and the Objects Division (three-dimensional artifacts). The Archives Division is managed by the Archivist and the Objects Division is managed by the Registrar. All of the museum's Permanent Collection is accessioned.

The museum's Permanent Collection is organized into three main areas: East of the River Neighborhoods, Community Life, and Legacy Collections.

1. The East of the River (EOR) Collections document the history of the District of Columbia neighborhoods that lie east of the Anacostia River. These collections, amassed over 40 years, are comprised of artifacts, audio and video recordings of oral history interviews and community meetings; collections of family photographs and family papers dating from the 1890s; documentary photographs taken by museum staff dating from the 1960s; and a library of books and other published materials.

The museum's Community Documentation Center is the source of much of the research and acquisitions for local and neighborhood collections. The Center develops documentation and original research on the East of the River communities. EOR collections will continue to expand as a result of museum documentation and research projects, and will also result from collections development efforts.

2. The Community Life Collections document contemporary urban community life in the United States and in other countries. The collections focus on three main areas of inquiry:
  - Local community as global village—the impact of globalization; the impact of emerging technologies on community life; ongoing encounters between diverse cultural communities; migration and community change

- Community, identity, and modernization—the study of the evolving and dynamic meaning of community in contemporary life
  - Community ecosystems—the impact of environmental change; environmental preservation and community development; and environmental justice
3. The small Legacy Collection, derived from the previous mission of the museum, is comprised of objects, documents, and photographs relating to African American history and culture.

#### **B. Non-Accessioned Collections**

Non-accessioned objects are used in an auxiliary fashion including use as exhibit props or in hands-on educational demonstrations. Acquisition, management, care, and disposal of these objects are the responsibility of the departments that use them. These objects are not governed by this policy.

### **V. COLLECTIONS PLAN**

#### **A. Collections Plan**

The ACM acquires collections that directly support the museum’s mission and programmatic goals in accordance with its Collections Plan. The Collections Plan ensures logical, responsible collections growth by establishing well-defined goals and priorities that guide collection activities. The Senior Curator is responsible for the development, implementation, and periodic review of the museum’s Collections Plan which must be approved by the Director. The Director will submit a copy of the museum’s current Collections Plan to the National Collections Coordinator.

#### **B. ACM Collections Mission**

ACM collects artifacts, works of art, photographs, paper documents, audio-visual media, and other material. Collections development efforts will focus on materials that document the history and community life of the East of the River neighborhoods, and that support research activities in this area. Staff will also build discrete collections that support the museum’s broader interest in urban contemporary community life. In



addition, collections staff will maintain the museum's small legacy collection, which focuses on African American material culture.

### **C. Collecting Goals**

Museum collections are developed and preserved for the use and benefit of community residents, neighborhood activists, family historians, and others with a direct interest in the community. The Permanent Collection also supports museum and scholarly research efforts, as well as the museum's investigation of contemporary community life, and of issues and themes that shape and resonate within urban communities.

Long term development goals for the museum's Permanent Collection center on building significant and meaningful collections that fall within the following themes:

- Neighborhood histories
- Family histories and family life
- Community life
- The built environment and community development
- The natural environment and community ecologies
- Cultural encounters and demographic changes
- Craft and creativity in community life
- Leisure and recreation
- Spirituality, worship and religion in community life
- Cultural and ethnic encounters
- Impact of globalization on communities and neighborhoods

## **VI. ACCOUNTING FOR COLLECTIONS**

ACM collections are held for public exhibition, education, and research in furtherance of public service rather than financial gain. Collections are protected, kept unencumbered, cared for, and preserved, and they are subject to the requirement that proceeds from sales

of collections are to be used to acquire other collection items. The ACM adheres to the applicable financial reporting standards governing collections held in public trust as set forth in the *SD 600 Implementation Manual*.

## **VII. ACQUISITION AND ACCESSIONING**

Acquisition is the act of gaining legal title to a collection item or a group of items.

Accessioning is the formal process used to acquire legally and to record a collection item or group of items into the museum's Accessioned Collection.

The ACM acquires collections that directly support the mission, programmatic goals, and collections plan of the museum. Collections are acquired only with proper authorization and only when consistent with established acquisition criteria, applicable laws and regulations, and professional ethics. All applicable federal, state, local, and international laws, treaties, regulations, and conventions will be observed and compliance documented.

### **A. Authority**

Final authority to acquire objects for the Accessioned Collection rests with the Director, who exercises this authority with the advice and recommendation of the ACM Collections Committee. The Director, curatorial staff, and members of the Collections Committee may propose acquisitions to the Collections Committee. The Collections Committee will, upon review, make a written recommendation to the Director for final decision.

### **B. Acquisition Criteria**

In determining whether an object should be added to the ACM's Accessioned Collection, the Collections Committee will consider the following factors:

- Consistency with ACM's mission, collections plan, and collecting goals
- Relationship to existing collections materials
- Potential use for research, scholarship, exhibition, and education purposes
- Aesthetic and/or historical value
- Physical condition

- Storage, preservation, or documentation requirements and costs
- Documentation of provenance and legal title
- Restrictions on use including intellectual property rights
- Potential for the appearance of giving the Smithsonian's commercial, political, or intellectual endorsement.

### **C. Methods of Acquisition**

Objects may be added to the collections by the following methods: gift, bequest, purchase, transfer, exchange, field collecting, or any other method by which title to objects passes to the Smithsonian.

### **D. Terms of Acquisition**

1. As a general rule, an object is accepted into the collection only when there is a good faith intention to retain it for an indefinite period of time. Collections generally are not acquired for resale or disposal. Exceptions are rare and require advance discussion with the donor about potential tax implications and arrangements for the appropriate disposition of unwanted objects. If objects are acquired with a specific intent at the time of acquisition not to add them to the collections, but rather to sell, exchange, or otherwise use them for financial gain, the National Collections Program and the Office of General Counsel must be notified and consulted in advance.
2. As a general rule, the museum acquires unrestricted collections. Certain restrictions, such as retention by the donor of intellectual property rights, may be accepted by the Director in appropriate circumstances. Restrictions which would substantially limit the museum's ability to use or dispose of an acquisition may be accepted by the Director only after consultation with the Office of General Counsel and the National Collections Program. Under no circumstances will the museum agree to conditions requiring the retention or display of the work in perpetuity. Restrictions which would require substantial resources beyond the museum's allocated budget may be accepted by the Director only upon approval

by the National Collections Program and the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture, who may consult the Office of General Counsel as appropriate. Any restrictions accepted by the museum must be set forth in the deed of gift or other transfer document and must be noted in the object's record in the museum's collections information system – The Museum System (TMS) – and placed in the appropriate accession file.

3. The museum shall acquire title to objects by a Deed of Gift, purchase agreement, invoice, or other appropriate document transferring legal title from the donor or seller to the museum. The transfer document must establish which rights, including copyright, are being transferred (or not) to the museum with each object. Whenever possible the museum shall acquire all rights and title to all copyright and related interests associated with each object or obtain a license for the museum's intended use.
4. The museum will exercise due diligence in the acquisition of collections, including making reasonable inquiries into the provenance of the object under consideration for acquisition to determine whether ACM can acquire valid title to the object and whether the acquisition will conform to all legal and professional ethical standards. Before acquiring a collection object, the museum shall ascertain, from the circumstances surrounding the transaction or knowledge of the object's provenance, that the collection object was not stolen or wrongfully converted, and is not illegally present in the United States. The museum shall comply with the Smithsonian Institution's Policy on Museum Acquisitions (May 9, 1973), and any subsequent revisions thereto, and the Smithsonian Institution policy concerning unlawful appropriation of objects during the Nazi Era. All release or receipt documents related to bequests must be reviewed and approved by the Office of General Counsel, which is the sole signatory for bequests, to assure compliance with legal requirements.
5. When collections are acquired through purchase, the museum will ensure that the transaction complies with Smithsonian policy requiring a determination that the

purchase price is fair and reasonable under the circumstances and that such purchases and related decisions are appropriately documented.

#### **E. Documentation**

When an object is acquired, the Registrar will assign an accession number and create an accession file for each transaction. All original documents relating to the acquisition of objects, including Collections Committee approval forms, deeds of gift, gift acknowledgements, invoices, purchase or transfer agreements, transfer of rights documents, photographs, and related correspondence, will be provided to the Registrar to establish a complete accession file. Accession files shall be of the highest order of accuracy, completeness, and timeliness. The accession files must include all original documents pertaining to legal transactions and to the history of the object. No original papers may be destroyed. The accession file will be considered the permanent record of the object. The files will be maintained by the Registrar in safe, secure, accessible condition in accordance with current museum practice. For donated objects, the museum will provide a deed of gift form prepared by the Registrar, which will be signed and returned by the donor to record the acquisition. All gifts shall be acknowledged by a Letter of Appreciation from the Director. The Registrar is responsible for completing and signing the IRS Form 8283.

#### **VIII. DEACCESSIONING AND DISPOSAL**

Deaccessioning is the process used to formally approve and record the removal of an object or group of objects from the museum's Accessioned Collections. Disposal is the act of physically removing an object or group of objects from the museum's Accessioned Collections.

Deaccessioning is an important decision which no museum should undertake lightly. A museum exists to serve the public, and to be truly effective, it must maintain the confidence of these beneficiaries. The museum must be ever aware of its role as steward of the collections for the benefit of the public.

As a general rule, objects are acquired for ACM collections only when there is a good faith intention to retain the material for an indefinite period of time. Collections are

retained as long as they continue to serve the goals and objectives of the ACM and can be properly maintained and used.

Prudent collections management includes judicious consideration of appropriate deaccessioning and disposal. Periodic review, evaluation, deaccessioning, and disposal of existing collections are intended to refine and improve the quality and relevance of the collections with respect to ACM's mission and purpose. Deaccession and disposal procedures are designed to ensure thoughtful, well-documented consideration of each proposed collection item in the context of the long-term interest of ACM, the general public, and the object itself.

#### **A. Authority and Procedure**

All deaccessioning and disposal actions require the approval of the Director, upon recommendation of the Collections Committee. Deaccession procedures are as follows:

1. The Senior Curator will write a proposal to deaccession to the Registrar which a.) articulates the reasons for removal of the object(s) from the collections, and b.) outlines a specific disposal plan for the object(s).
2. The Registrar will review the proposal to confirm that a.) the museum holds title to the object, and b.) there are no restrictions bearing on the deaccession and disposal of the item(s) in question. Guidance should be sought from the Office of General Counsel if it is deemed necessary.
3. The Registrar will submit the proposal to deaccession and the proposed disposal plan to the Collections Committee, which must unanimously approve the recommendation.
4. The Director makes the final decision in writing on all deaccession and disposal proposals.

In accordance with SD 600, if the estimated value of a single object or a group of objects considered for disposal is more than:

- \$10,000, the museum must obtain a written, independent appraisal or informed estimate of fair market value

- \$100,000, the museum must obtain two written, independent appraisals or informed estimates of fair market value and approval of the deaccession and disposal from the National Collections Coordinator, the Office of General Counsel, the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture, and the Secretary
- \$500,000, the museum must obtain two written, independent appraisals or informed estimates of fair market value and approval of the deaccession and disposal from National Collections Coordinator, the Office of General Counsel, the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture, the Secretary, and the Smithsonian Board of Regents.

## **B. Deaccessioning Criteria**

In determining whether to deaccession an object from the Accessioned Collections, the following criteria should be considered:

- whether the object is relevant to the mission and activities of the museum
- whether the object has research, exhibition, or education potential
- whether the museum is able to preserve the object properly
- whether the object has deteriorated beyond usefulness
- whether the object is duplicative or redundant of collection material
- whether disposal would provide the means for improving or strengthening the collections or otherwise furthering the goals of the museum
- whether the object would be appropriate for consumptive research or educational use

## **C. Methods of Disposal**

The museum may dispose of objects by a variety of methods, including donation, transfer, exchange, sale, repatriation, and destruction, as further explained below. The appropriate method of disposal is determined by the circumstances of each case.

- Offer to other Smithsonian collecting units. In accordance with SD 600, Smithsonian collecting units shall have the right of first refusal for collection items proposed for disposal except as otherwise stipulated by authorizing legislation or other restrictions. Such transfers are without financial compensation, except when a collecting unit disposes of a collection item acquired through purchase.
- Exchange with another museum or public educational institution for an object to be accessioned into the ACM collection.
- Donation to another museum or public educational institution.
- Use as non-accessioned objects for tours, demonstrations, conservation practice, or other educational purpose.
- Witnessed destruction certified by the Senior Curator and the Registrar.
- Sale, preferably at public auction.

Under no circumstances will ownership of ACM collections be transferred to any Smithsonian Regent or advisory board member, officer, employee, volunteer, or their relatives.

The disposal plan, written by the Registrar, circulated with the proposal to deaccession an object, should address the following questions:

- Have the relevant Smithsonian collecting units been contacted in connection with any right of first refusal?
- If disposal by exchange is recommended, what are the details of the proposed exchange? What is the need for the object to be received in exchange?
- If disposal by sale is recommended, what are the details of the proposed method of sale?
- If donation is recommended, who is the intended recipient and how will distribution be made?



- If destruction is recommended, what is the justification for the recommendation and what are the proposed procedures to be followed?
- If funds are realized from a deaccession, what available objects will be purchased with the funds?
- Does the action warrant notification of the donor, donor's descendants, or other third parties?

If the Registrar believes a sale to be prudent, the disposal plan provided to the Collections Committee will include rationale, alternatives, and method, with an outline of the use of proceeds and the impact of sale upon the museum and the Smithsonian Institution. Proceeds realized from the sale of collections must be designated for additional collection acquisition.

#### **D. Deaccessioning and Disposal Documentation**

The records of a deaccession and disposal shall be maintained by the Registrar in the museum's Accession file. These records must include:

1. The original proposal for deaccession
2. The disposal plan
3. The Collections Committee recommendation to the Director
4. The Director's approval and all other required approvals
5. Documentation of the disposal, including any correspondence, receipts, or transfer agreements, etc., concerning the donation, transfer, exchange, sale, or destruction of the object.

### **IX. COLLECTIONS INFORMATION**

Collections information documents the intellectual significance, physical characteristics, and legal status of collection objects. Collections information documents the objects themselves as well as the collections management processes and transactions they undergo. Collections information may reside in a combination of manual files, electronic

information systems, and media formats. Collections information shall be of the highest order of accuracy, completeness, and timeliness.

The Registrar is responsible for creating, maintaining, and providing access to the museum's official registration files, including: accession records of each object; deaccession and disposal records; incoming and outgoing loan records; temporary custody records; records of insurance transactions; and any legal documents relating to the collections. The Registrar is also responsible for completing all collections reports required by Smithsonian and ACM officials. The Registrar ensures that all legal documents the museum uses are reviewed by the Office of General Counsel and, where necessary, the Office of the Treasurer's Risk Management Division.

The Registrar will ensure that the museum's official registration files contain the following information for each object:

- Registration number (e.g., accession, loan, or temporary custody number)
- Identifying description
- Source
- Legal status (e.g., accession, loan, or temporary custody)
- Method of acquisition if owned by the museum (e.g., gift, bequest, purchase, transfer)
- Legal documents (e.g., deeds of gift, loan agreements, purchase receipts, correspondence)
- Provenance (information about the object's attribution and history)
- Restrictions, including intellectual property rights
- Location
- Exhibition history
- Condition and conservation treatment reports
- Credit line

- Name of staff member who initiated the acquisition or loan
- Value (if known)
- Other relevant history of the object (e.g., historical significance, incidents and activities involving the object while in the custody of the museum, and Collections Committee recommendations and Director decisions )

The Museum System (TMS) is the museum's system of record for electronically maintained object information. The museum will develop, implement, and maintain its electronic collections information system to facilitate collections management and make collections information accessible to the general public, scholars, and staff for educational and research purposes. The Senior Curator, working with curatorial and collections staff, must establish annual goals for the development and enhancement of the museum's collections information system. Selected curatorial and collections staff must meet on a periodic or on a regular basis to review activity, goals, and progress.

All records will be kept in acid-free folders in locked, fire-resistant cabinets under the control of the Registrar. The Registrar shall ensure that all electronic collections information is periodically backed up by the Office of the Chief Information Officer and safeguarded by a user security system.

## **X. CARE OF THE COLLECTIONS**

The ACM has a responsibility to preserve and safeguard its collections. ACM shall provide the necessary preservation, protection, and security for collections acquired, borrowed, and in the custody of the museum, including their associated information. ACM supports and promotes the goals of collections preservation as stated in the professional codes of ethics for museums, curators, registrars, and archivists. The museum will balance current research and educational use with the preservation requirements of collection items to ensure that collections are maintained for future generations and rightfully serve their intended purpose.

## **A. Authority**

The Senior Curator, the Registrar, and the Archivist are ultimately responsible to the Director for care of the objects in the accessioned collection and objects in the temporary custody of the museum. The Registrar and Archivist have primary responsibility for the day-to-day management of collection objects, establishing and monitoring technical standards of collections care in consultation with the Senior Curator.

## **B. Standard of Care**

1. The museum is committed to maintaining its collection objects and objects left in its custody in a manner that preserves and extends their physical integrity. Although deterioration is inherent in physical materials, the museum strives to control the physical, chemical and biological factors that hasten deterioration. Collections care activities are predicated on a concerted preventative maintenance program which advocates: minimal intervention; environmental conditions that minimize harm; art handling only by trained personnel; use of archival materials for storage, packing, and exhibition of objects; and reversibility of conservation treatments whenever possible.
2. The museum will ensure that its collections are protected and maintained in a secure, climate-controlled environment. Physical aspects of the museum facility affecting the ambient collection environment—light, temperature, relative humidity, infestation and air pollutants—shall be monitored by the museum collections staff and appropriate Smithsonian facilities management personnel.
3. The Registrar shall prepare a written condition report and photographic documentation for each incoming object, whether on loan or in temporary custody, producing a baseline record from which object condition can be monitored. The Registrar shall be responsible for packing and shipping all objects passing in and out of the museum's control. Condition reports for the record will be completed by the Registrar on each incoming and outgoing loan object. A photograph will be taken of each incoming and outgoing loan object and included

as part of the condition report. The Registrar must be present whenever objects on loan are moved from one location to another.

4. Curatorial and Registration staff shall inspect all objects on exhibition routinely. The Registrar and Archivist shall inspect all storage areas routinely. Changes in ambient environment or in conditions affecting collection, loan, or temporary custody objects must be brought to the immediate attention of the Senior Curator who will take the necessary action to rectify the situation.
5. The Registrar and the Archivist must notify the Senior Curator of significant or serious conservation needs. Outside assistance should be sought whenever there is a question about the need for conservation, and a report should be filed with the Collections Committee whenever the Registrar or Archivist recommends conservation. The museum must use resources within the Smithsonian for assistance in the evaluation and, where feasible, actual conservation or restoration of objects before considering contractual services. All conservation activity must be authorized, justified, and documented in writing by the Senior Curator for the purpose of preservation or professional scholarship.
6. Any damage of collection, loan or temporary custody objects must be reported immediately to the Senior Curator and Registrar who must then inform the appropriate staff members, the Office of the Treasurer's Risk Management Division, and the Office of Protection Services. If loan objects are involved, the Registrar will take appropriate action to notify the lender and the Risk Management Division. Any situation involving damage to an object shall be thoroughly reviewed and appropriate measures taken by the Senior Curator in consultation with the Registrar and/or Archivist. In the case of loan objects, no treatment will be undertaken without the lender's approval. In case of theft or vandalism, appropriate authorities will be notified and a thorough investigation conducted.

## **XI. ACCESS**

The ACM accepts as its guiding principle the responsibility and opportunity to provide the public access to the rich variety of its collections. Access to the collections is encouraged through research opportunities, exhibitions, online and web-based materials, and educational programs and publications.

The museum's Community Documentation Center (CDC) helps fulfill the museum's mission and provides the primary access point for the public with the museum's collections and research. The CDC:

- Organizes and makes accessible the museum's archival and object collections that focus on the East of the River Collections
- Develops and deepens the museum's engagement with its local constituency
- Ensures that the museum remains relevant to the community in which it is situated; and
- Develops public and educational programs, publications, educational curricula, and online exhibitions.

The museum's electronic collections information system is one of the most effective and important means for providing public access; annual goals will ensure its continuing development and enhancement. Access to the museum's collections and collections information may be restricted due to resource or staff limitations, security concerns, object availability, intellectual property rights, applicable restrictions, and preservation constraints.

### **A. Access to Museum Collections**

1. Curatorial and collections staff are responsible for permitting access to collections. The museum will provide reasonable access to its collections and collections information consistent with its stewardship responsibilities. Physical and intellectual access to the collections must be balanced against preservation and protection concerns.

2. In keeping with its stewardship responsibilities, all access to collections storage areas shall be controlled, monitored, and documented. Visitors must be accompanied at all times by a member of the Curatorial, Registration, or Archival offices, or by the Director / Deputy Director. The Registrar and Archivist are responsible for supervising and documenting public access to secured museum collections storage spaces.

#### **B. Access to Collections Information**

1. The ACM seeks to provide the widest dissemination of collections information possible, consistent with its stewardship responsibilities.
2. The Registrar shall provide access to Accession files by appointment.
3. The Registrar may withhold or limit access to the Accession Files to protect sensitive information including, but not limited to, personally-identifying information and security information. Sensitive information includes: personal information about the donor, lender, or prior holder (including names, addresses, and other information they request to remain confidential); location of objects not on public view; and valuations of objects. Requests for ACM or SI records or information citing the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) or SD 807, *Requests for Smithsonian Institution Information* shall be referred to the Office of General Counsel.

## **XII. RISK MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY**

The museum follows the Smithsonian policy on risk management and insurance through the Office of the Treasurer's Risk Management Division as governed by SD 108, *Insurance and Risk Management*. The Smithsonian Office of Protection Services is responsible for coordinating security at the museum in consultation with the Director and collections staff.

### **A. Insurance**

In accordance with SD 600, the museum does not insure its own collections while they are in the custody of the museum. Incoming and outgoing loans are insured by the

museum through the Office of the Treasurer's Risk Management Division. The museum shall recommend that objects lent to other organizations be insured under the Smithsonian's policy, with the Institution being reimbursed by the borrower for the cost of coverage. If the museum, in consultation with the Risk Management Division, agrees to accept the borrower's coverage, the borrower must supply a certificate of insurance naming the Smithsonian Institution as an additional insured or a signed instrument waiving the right of subrogation. All incoming loan objects must be insured by the Smithsonian Institution unless other arrangements have been made by the lender with the approval of the museum and the Risk Management Division. Objects left in temporary custody of the museum for other purposes are not routinely insured by the museum. The Registrar shall be responsible for initiating and maintaining all records and files pertaining to insurance.

Insurance proceeds from the settlement of claims for damage to museum collections will be used for the conservation and restoration of the specific collection item. Insurance proceeds received on account of a total loss of a collection item or in excess of the cost of conservation and restoration of a damaged collection item will be designated for collections acquisition.

## **B. Disaster Planning**

The museum will maintain a written, comprehensive emergency / disaster preparedness plan as outlined in SD109, *Disaster Management Program*, which includes planning, response, and recovery from emergencies and major disasters as well as evaluation and assessment following an incident.

## **C. Security**

Museum staff must be familiar with security processes. Staff must note and communicate to the Registrar situations that create the potential for damage or loss to collections, personal injury, or legal liability; staff must notify members of the curatorial or collections staff if the Registrar is not immediately available.

Special attention shall be paid to collections security issues during high-risk activities such as building renovations and exhibition changes, special events held in the museum,



and when collections are in transit. In the event of emergencies that pose a threat to collections, staff members shall follow procedures outlined in the museum's emergency / disaster preparedness plan.

Entry into the museum's secure collection storage area is restricted to selected members of the curatorial staff and the collections staff, the Deputy Director, and the Director. All other staff requiring access to the collections storage area must be accompanied by one of the above persons. The Registrar shall have the right to review records of requests for entry into secured collection areas from the Smithsonian Institution Office of Protection Services to compare with museum entry sign-in sheets.

#### **D. Reporting Loss, Damage, Theft or Vandalism**

Any loss or damage to an accessioned object or an object on loan or in the temporary custody of the museum must be reported to the Registrar, who will report the incident to the Senior Curator, the Deputy Director, and Director immediately. If the object is on loan, the Registrar will also notify the owner. Upon notification by the Registrar, the Director will notify the Risk Management Division. The Director may also choose to notify the Office of Protection Services, the Office of the General Counsel, and the Office of the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture. An incident report will be created by the Registrar in a timely manner, forwarded to the Senior Curator and Director, and copied to the object record.

If an object is missing and is part of the museum's collection, the Registrar should not deaccession the object. All records of the object should be maintained in perpetuity after the disappearance of the object.

All collections security issues should be resolved in collaboration with the Office of Protection Services. All attempts or incidents of theft or vandalism to collection objects must be reported immediately to the Registrar who, in addition to notifying the individuals and offices detailed above, must immediately notify the Office of Protection Services in order to protect the crime scene and preserve evidence. The Registrar should also promptly prepare written documentation. The Director should notify the Office of the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture.

### **XIII. INVENTORY**

In compliance with SD 600, a current, reconciled inventory of the collection shall be maintained to provide accountability and access to the collections. The museum's inventory of its collections is maintained through routine additions to and updating of electronic and manual collections records. The Registrar and Archivist are responsible for maintaining accurate, current location records electronically filed in TMS for all objects in the custody of ACM and records documenting both spot-check and cyclical inventories.

#### **A. Spot-Check Inventory**

An annual random sampling inventory will be conducted of at least 1% of items in the museum collection. The inventory will be conducted by the Senior Curator, Archivist, and Registrar. The locations of highly sensitive objects will be verified during the annual random sampling inventory.

#### **B. Cyclical Inventory**

A comprehensive inventory of the entire Accessioned Collection will be conducted every five years. The Registrar and Archivist shall draft an inventory plan, approved by the Senior Curator. After each inventory, the Registrar and the Archivist will reconcile the inventory records with the existing collection records and provide explanations for any discrepancies to the Collections Committee, which will review the inventory report at its first meeting following the completed inventory. There will be adequate separation of duties to minimize the possible unauthorized removal of collection objects and corresponding records.

### **XIV. TEMPORARY CUSTODY**

In order to meet the goal of complete accountability for objects in the custody of the museum, the Registrar must also control objects left in temporary custody for authentication, identification, examination, consideration for possible acquisition, photography, or other purposes. This category applies to objects not covered by loan agreements.

All objects left in the temporary custody of the museum are approved and recorded by the Registrar immediately upon their arrival. The purpose, source, objects, and expected duration of custody must be recorded on a Temporary Custody Receipt form.

Periodically, the Registrar, in consultation with the Senior Curator, shall review the status of objects in temporary custody and determine whether that status continues to be appropriate. Temporary custody should not exceed 90 days. In general, objects deposited for a period exceeding 90 days should be governed by an incoming loan agreement. Objects received under temporary custody are not insured by the museum.

All unwanted and unsolicited objects may be disposed of in the following manner: return to the sender; transmittal to another Smithsonian collecting unit; transmittal to another educational institution; or witnessed destruction. If the object is not returned to the sender, the sender will be given 90 days notice prior to disposal. The Registrar may choose to seek the advice of the Office of General Counsel before any disposal action is taken. Anonymously received objects are recorded and handled in the same manner as unsolicited objects.

## **XV. LENDING AND BORROWING**

Lending and borrowing collections for exhibition, research, and education furthers the museum's mission. All loans to and from ACM will be conducted only in accordance with established authority and only when consistent with applicable law and professional ethics. All loans will adhere to applicable federal, state, local, and international laws, treaties, regulations, and conventions. ACM adheres to the *Guidelines for Exhibiting Borrowed Objects* issued by the American Association of Museums (AAM).

### **A. Incoming Loans**

Objects are borrowed by the museum from public and private institutions and private individuals for purposes of exhibition and research. While curators may initiate incoming loans, all such loans will be processed by the Registrar. All curatorial staff must notify the Registrar in a timely manner of intentions to borrow objects.

All loans are governed by formal loan agreements for a specific purpose and for a specified time period with option for renewal if appropriate. Renewals of loan

agreements must be approved by the lender in writing. Incoming loans shall comply with the Smithsonian Policy on Museum Acquisitions (May 9, 1973), and any subsequent revisions thereto, concerning illegally or unethically acquired objects.

### 1. Authority

Incoming loans must be approved by the Registrar. Collections Committee approval is also required if the following conditions exist:

- Unusual restrictions
- Questionable provenance
- Extraordinarily fragile physical conditions
- Higher than usual security risk

### 2. Criteria

In determining whether to approve a loan, the Registrar and the Collections Committee should evaluate: the loan costs, including storage, security, transportation, conservation, and insurance; any lender, environmental, security, and/or legal restrictions; any issues of provenance or copyright; and the object's condition and ability to withstand transportation.

### 3. Responsibility

After the loan request is approved, the Registrar will be responsible for authorizing an incoming loan agreement, maintaining records for the loan, making arrangements for packing and shipping the objects, monitoring the condition of the object, and complying with the terms of the loan agreement. This does not absolve the initiating curator from all responsibility for the decision to borrow or for the care and condition of the object while on loan. When necessary, the curator will assist the Registrar in monitoring the loan and corresponding with the lender to insure good relations.

The Registrar will initiate insurance coverage on all loan objects in the custody of the museum. If a lender wishes to use its own insurance, the Registrar will

forward the lender's policy to the Office of the Treasurer's Risk Management Division for review and approval.

The Registrar will complete a condition report (including photographs) for each incoming object immediately after the object arrives at the museum and before departure of the loan. Original copies of loan agreements and all records pertaining to shipping, insurance, and condition of incoming loans will be maintained by the Registrar. All incoming loans receive the same standard of care given to objects in the museum's Permanent Collection.

## **B. Outgoing Loans**

ACM is committed to providing maximum public accessibility to objects in its collection. The museum encourages requests from museums and educational institutions which insure adequate safety and environmental protections for loaned objects. Loans are made for non-profit educational and scholarly purposes only. ACM objects may not be lent to individuals or for commercial purposes, fundraising and promotional activities, or private pecuniary gain. The purpose and nature of the loan will be consistent with the mission and intellectual standards of the museum.

In accordance with the Smithsonian Strategic Plan's priority for cross-unit collaboration, the museum will facilitate to the extent possible expeditious loans to other Smithsonian collecting units, including the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services, as well as to Smithsonian Affiliate museums. It is understood that all loan protocols will be observed, including donor restrictions, object availability and physical condition, and preservation / security requirements. Prior contractual or other agreements or in-house exhibition schedules may preclude such loans from time to time.

### **1. Authority**

All loan requests must be initiated with a written request, stating the purpose and period of the loan. Requests to borrow ACM objects shall be referred to the Collections Committee for consideration and review. The Committee will make a written recommendation to the Director, following consultation with the

Registrar. The Director shall make the final decision on all outgoing loan requests.

## 2. Loan Criteria and Process

In general, ACM lends objects only to similar institutions in order to insure the long-term preservation of the objects and their use for public benefit. Collections are lent for public exhibition, research, and other educational purposes.

All loans will be governed by the museum's outgoing loan agreement for a specific purpose and specified period of time, not to exceed 12 months in duration with the option for renewal for a maximum of 36 months (with the exception of long-term loans). A current standard facility report, such as the General Facility Report approved by the AAM Registrar's Committee, will be required of all institutions seeking to borrow objects from the museum. If the loan is being requested for a touring exhibition, facility reports must be obtained for each institution on the tour. The museum must have the complete itinerary for a touring exhibition before it will consider approving the loan for the entire tour. All loan renewal requests require review by the Collections Committee and approval of the Director.

The following should be considered by the Collections Committee when reviewing outgoing loan proposals:

- The purpose or nature of the loan, which must be consistent with the museum's mission
- The ability of the borrowing institution to provide appropriate care and adequate environmental protection and security for the object so that its long-term preservation will not be compromised by the loan
- The ability of the borrowing institution to complete a standard facility report which meets the requirements of the museum

- The condition and rarity of the object and whether it can withstand the stress of transportation and handling or changes in environmental conditions
- Any legal restrictions which might prevent the object from being lent
- The impact of the object's absence on the visiting public, scholars, staff, and the museum's programs.

All expenses incurred in connection with outgoing loans, including but not limited to packing, shipping, and conservation, will be paid by the borrower. Exceptions in rare cases may be permitted by the Director. Written condition reports including photographs will be prepared by the Registrar before an object leaves the museum and upon its return.

On occasion, the museum may permit a long-term loan for an extended period of time beyond 36 months. Long-term loans should be brought before the Collections Committee and identified as such by the Registrar before their review. Such loans should be infrequently permitted as they present significant obstacles to the museum's ability to monitor and control the conditions under which objects are stored and displayed. A long-term loan may be authorized in circumstances where it appears that the objects under consideration will not be used by the museum in the foreseeable future; the objects will be maintained under suitable conditions by the borrower; and granting the loan will result in greater public benefit than denying the loan.

The renewal of a long-term loan requires annual review by the Collections Committee and approval by the Director. Borrowers will be required to provide a current standard facility report to be considered as part of the review and approval process.

### 3. Responsibility

Once a loan has been approved, the Registrar is responsible for implementing the loan, including completing the museum's outgoing agreement, arranging

insurance coverage, obtaining facility reports, packing and shipping the object(s), making courier arrangements (if necessary), and monitoring the loan and the borrower's compliance with all loan conditions.

The Registrar will complete a condition report (including photographs) for each outgoing object documenting its physical condition before the object leaves the museum and immediately upon its return. The Registrar will also create and maintain all necessary records for outgoing loans, including requisite facility reports, loan agreements, insurance documents, and condition reports. Records of completed loans will be retained in the Accession file as part of the exhibition history of the object.

### **C. Loans to High-Ranking Government Officials**

The ACM may lend collection objects for public display in the offices of high-ranking government officials in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the SD 600 *Implementation Manual*.

## **XVI. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS MANAGEMENT**

ACM is both a holder and a user of intellectual property rights and therefore seeks to protect the intellectual integrity of collections and promote wide access to collections for educational purposes. In providing access to its collections, the museum strives to protect the intellectual property rights of creators and owners, including the museum itself as rights holder, and promote the responsible dissemination of knowledge.

Intellectual property rights are distinct from the right to possess collection objects and arise from the creative content of the objects. A holder of intellectual property rights in an object may limit the uses that may be made of the object. The museum's ability to use its collections or their associated intellectual property may be subject to intellectual property rights held by others. In carrying out its programmatic activities, the museum will adhere to the following principles regarding intellectual property rights management:

- The museum will manage its collections and collections in its custody in a manner designed to avoid any infringement of intellectual property rights. At the same



time, the museum will promote the widest possible dissemination of information about its collections consistent with its commitment to protecting the intellectual property rights of creators and intellectual property right owners, including the museum itself as rights holder.

- The museum may charge fees to outside organizations and individuals to use images of collection objects. Image use and reproduction policies may reflect a fee schedule that distinguishes between different types of uses, including educational, not-for-profit, and commercial uses, in accordance with SD 805, *Handling Outside Permission Requests to Use Smithsonian Images*, and the *SD 600 Implementation Manual*.
- The museum may rely on the doctrine of fair use in appropriate circumstances in making reproductions of collections for standard museum purposes, such as archival, research, educational, exhibition, and similar purposes. Fair use determinations must be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the facts and circumstances of the proposed use and the legal parameters of the fair use doctrine. Questions about fair use shall be referred to the Office of General Counsel.
- The museum will ascertain whether collection objects or proposed acquisitions are encumbered by intellectual property rights or other restrictions and determine what steps are required to obtain any rights necessary for the intended use of the item.
- The museum will document intellectual property restrictions in collection records and ensure that those records are consulted for possible restrictions or prohibitions before using an object in a manner which may implicate intellectual property rights, including reproducing an object for use by the museum and/or others in any media format (print, electronic, audio, video, the Internet, etc.).

The Senior Curator will approve permissible use of collections information and images, and will be responsible for rights management.

## **XVII. INTERNAL CONTROLS**

It is important that a separation of duties is maintained in regard to the collections so that no one individual controls all phases of accessioning, deaccessioning, negotiating of loans, and record keeping of the collections. Through the agency of a Collections Committee, numerous individuals share responsibility for accepting gifts, making purchases, initiating loans, and maintaining internal controls.

No single staff member shall be responsible for creating and maintaining both written and electronic records for new acquisitions and collections. The museum will maintain appropriate checks and balances for collections record keeping as indicated by the *SD 600 Implementation Manual*.

## **XVIII. ETHICS**

### **A. Standards of Conduct**

In conducting collections management activities governed by this policy, ACM employees shall comply with Smithsonian Institution policies prescribing ethical standards of conduct. These policies include The Smithsonian Institution Statement of Values and Code of Ethics; Smithsonian Directive 103, *Smithsonian Institution Standards of Conduct*; Smithsonian Directive 600, *Collections Management*; and the *SD 600 Implementation Manual*. Some common ethics issues are addressed below.

### **B. Personal Collections**

Employees may not bring onto museum premises personally owned material which may be confused with collection material without the written permission of ACM. Any such material must be documented and recorded with the ACM. The museum assumes no responsibility for personally owned materials on museum premises unless the museum agrees otherwise in writing because of some benefit to the museum.

ACM employees who are responsible for acquiring objects for the museum's collections must obtain prior clearance from the Director and an ethics counselor in the Office of General Counsel before acquiring personally any object that may be within the scope of the museum's collections.

ACM employees may not acquire objects in direct competition with the collecting activities of the museum or any of the collecting units of the Smithsonian. Direct competition may exist when an employee knows or has reason to believe that the museum or a Smithsonian collecting unit would acquire the object if aware of the opportunity. In case of uncertainty about the Smithsonian's interest, the employee must consult with the appropriate curator or collecting unit director. In cases of conflict or the appearance thereof, clearance must be obtained from an ethics counselor in the Office of General Counsel.

### **C. Appraisals**

ACM employees may not make estimates of monetary value of objects or materials of the types collected by the museum. Appraisals may be made solely for internal Smithsonian use, such as insurance valuations for loans. If a donor requests an appraisal, staff may refer the donor to a list of qualified professional appraisers without endorsement.

### **D. Authentication**

ACM staff may be asked to exercise their expertise in examining documents or objects or photographs of objects in order to ascertain their identity, age, quality, or condition, or to give general information about the object's origin. All such authentications shall be given only to the owner of the object or the owner's authorized agent and for non-commercial purposes. All assistance or opinions, whether written or oral, shall be provided free of monetary or other compensation to museum staff. A disclaimer statement approved by the Office of General Counsel must accompany all written statements.

## **XIX. POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION**

The contents of this document are to be reviewed every five years by the Registrar and Senior Curator, or at the direction of the Director. The Director submits revisions to the National Collections Program for approval by the National Collections Coordinator, the Office of General Counsel, the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture, and the Secretary of the Smithsonian.

**XX. EXCEPTIONS TO THE ACM COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Exceptions to the ACM Collections Management Policy may be approved by the Director only after consultation with the National Collections Coordinator and the Office of General Counsel, and approval by the Under Secretary for History, Art, and Culture.