

# COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY

Buffalo History Museum

Approved by:

Board of Managers on October 25, 2022

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# I. Foundational Statements

## A. Mission, Vision, Values

### Mission

Experiencing history with you, by safekeeping, remembering, discovering, and sharing our stories; learning and exploring together; sparking emotional and social connections within our unique community. (Adopted by Board of Managers, September 2019)

### Vision

- Be the leading cultural and educational institution for the study, interpretation and publication of Western New York history.
- Ensure and advocate for the preservation, exploration, and enjoyment of our historic treasures.
- By inspiring personal connections to our regional stories, strengthen the fabric of the community and encourage respect.
- Be a hub for gathering, socializing, connecting, and engaging – specifically a welcoming place that establishes and expands networks and creates shared experiences.
- Build sustainable financial capital and hire, develop and retain talent.
- Through our past, present and future, foster connections with our shared history and contribute to the region's overall quality of life.
- Engage our supporters as goodwill ambassadors for the Museum and for Western New York.

### Values

Collaboration: Work together, valuing others perspectives and contributions, and allow new and creative ideas and possibilities to arise.

Conversation: Listen actively; be open, honest and mindful in our communication.

Diversity: In our operations and outreach, we prioritize inclusivity and access.

Engagement: Exude enthusiasm and energy in our work, ensuring that all people feel welcome and have opportunities for participation.

Excellence: Continuously grow and improve through our implementation of personal and professional best practices and our investment in our people, programs and resources.

Integrity: Demonstrate the highest level of ethics, authenticity, credibility and transparency in our interactions with all people.

Storytelling: Passionately keep and share our community's stories.

Stewardship: Meet or exceed our responsibilities as a regional museum and non-profit organization.

## **B. History**

An inspired group of history-makers founded the Buffalo Historical Society in 1862 and assembled a unique collection of regional paintings, photographs, artifacts, and manuscripts to share with researchers and the public. To accommodate the organization's rapid growth, operations moved into the George Cary designed New York State Building, host of the 1901 Pan American Exposition, which was intended to remain the permanent home for local history after the Expo. The organization's mission expanded and exhibitions to share the collection emerged as a priority.

In 2012, on the organization's 150th Anniversary, it changed its name from the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society to The Buffalo History Museum. The Museum stewards and shares nearly a half-million Objects, Items, and Record Groups and their stories that characterize Western New York and draw national attention to the community.

## **C. Purpose**

This Collection Management Policy is intended to further the stated mission of The Buffalo History Museum (hereafter the Museum) by guiding and facilitating operations regarding the collections (utilitarian objects, artworks, manuscript collections, oral histories, photography, and other published and unpublished materials) stewarded by the organization in both the long- and short-term. It serves as a comprehensive guide to the Museum's standards regarding the development, documentation, access, and care of its collections. It also authorizes the specific committees and parties who will be given the responsibility for these actions and entrusts them with using their own judgment and discretion. The Museum's Board of Managers (hereafter Board) adopts this policy; each time this policy is reviewed, and changes are approved by the Board, it supersedes and replaces all previous such policies and is binding on all members of the Museum's staff, Board, volunteers, and other representatives.

## **D. Statement of Authority**

- 1) The Board holds fiduciary responsibility for protection of the Museum's collection assets held in trust for the public. The Board ensures the collections are preserved and properly and effectively used for the benefit of the public.
- 2) The Board reviews Accessions, Deaccessions, and Loans. It reviews and adopts this Policy.
- 3) The Board is the governing authority for implementation of this policy.
- 4) The Executive Director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Museum and reports to the President of the Board. The Board delegates creation and maintenance of the Procedure Manuals for the management of the collections in accordance with this policy to the Executive Director, who may charge the Museum's professional staff with this duty.
- 5) The Collection Development Committee is authorized to make collection development decisions for the Primary Collections when individual Objects, Items or Record Groups are valued below \$2,500. Actions concerning Objects, Items, or Record Groups valued at \$2,500 or above are subject to the appropriate recommendation and approval processes as designated elsewhere in this Policy. All collection development actions are reported to the Collections Committee of the Board, and to the full Board no less than quarterly. The Collection Development Committee is comprised of the Executive Director, Senior Director of Museum Collections, Director of Library & Archives, Director of Exhibits and Interpretive Planning, and the Registrar.

## **E. Legal and Ethical Considerations**

### 1) Ethics

- a) The Museum abides by its own Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, and Related Party Transaction Policies and the professional ethics statements of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). Other codes of ethics created by professional associations can and will be consulted as necessary.

### 2) Legal

- a) The Museum complies with all commonly recognized pertinent global agreements, and all federal and state laws and regulations that apply to the management of its collections, including but not limited to: UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), the Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and New York State Laws 8 NYCRR §3.27 and EDN §233-AA.
- b) The Museum will not knowingly acquire or exhibit artworks or artifacts that have been stolen, illegally exported from their country of origin, unethically taken from their society of origin, illegally or unethically salvaged, or removed from commercially exploited archaeological or historic sites.
- c) The Museum strives to collect only those archaeological artifacts that have been acquired through properly documented excavations.

## **F. Scope of the Collection**

The Museum seeks to maintain and continually refine a group of materials that are multivalent, resonant, possess enduring historical and cultural value consistent with our mission, and illustrate the history of the land and people in the broad area now known as the Buffalo Niagara Region.

## **G. Collections Categories**

### **1) Primary Collections**

Primary Collections are formally Accessioned into the collection and as such are subject to the Deaccession section of this Policy. This is the primary collection of the museum and is afforded the highest degree of security, care, and conservation that the museum can provide. All materials in the Primary Collection are acquired with the intention to preserve and maintain them for as long as they remain relevant to the museum's mission and fall within the collection's scope. Primary collections are further subdivided into two groups:

- a) **Object Collection:** This group generally includes three-dimensional objects including, but not limited to: paintings, furniture, textiles, and other functional and decorative items.
- b) **Archival and Rare Materials:** This collection generally includes paper-based and born-digital materials including manuscripts, monographs, and photographic materials and other similar textual and visual works that are unique or where only a few known copies exist.

### **2) Supplementary Collections**

Supplementary collection Objects, Items, or Record Groups are Acquired but are not Accessioned into the collection. They may be otherwise registered and tracked; they are not subject to the Deaccession section of this Policy. Generally, materials in this collection are not unique, are replaceable and available for appropriate use by the public with minimal staff oversight or mediation.

- a) **Reference Collection:** This collection includes books, published postcards, newspapers, periodicals, magazines, and other printed materials or born digital materials that are readily available.
- b) **Education Collection:** This collection includes durable, replaceable objects used by the Education Department for hands-on programs. These materials are managed by Education Department Staff with advice from the Collections Department but are generally not covered by this policy.

## II. Collection Development

Collecting represents a long-term allocation of the Museum's resources. Every time the Museum adds an Object, Item or Record Group to its collection, it makes a commitment of tangible and intangible resources to steward those materials and make them available to the community. All acquisition decisions are made with the best available information at the time the decision is made.

### A. Accessions

The Collection Development Committee is authorized to acquire material on behalf of the Museum. Accession decisions are documented in the minutes of the regular meetings of the Collection Development Committee. Minutes are retained in perpetuity.

#### 1) Authority and Process

- a) The Collection Development Committee approves Accessions to the collection at its regular meetings. Decisions about Accessions are documented in the minutes of the regular meetings of the Collection Development Committee. Minutes are retained in perpetuity.
- b) A category (Objects or Unpublished Materials) must be determined prior to acceptance. Each Object, Item, or Record Group may only belong to one collection. The source (donor, seller, etc.) is notified of the collection to which their contribution is added.
- c) Accessions may only be removed from the collection through the processes of Deaccession and Disposal as outlined in Section 6.3 of this policy.

#### 2) Criteria

Because the Museum only acquires materials for the Object and Unpublished Materials collections with the intention to retain and preserve for them for the long term, the following criteria must be met before any Object, Item, or Record Group is acquired by the Museum by any means:

- a) The Object, Item, or Record Group falls within the scope of collections and serves the mission of the Museum.
- b) The present owner has clear title and is willing to declare such in writing.
- c) The Object, Item, or Record Group is free of all imposed restrictions.
- d) The significance and Provenance of the Object, Item, or Record Group can be established and does not contravene or appear to contravene any local, federal, national laws or international conventions
- e) The Museum can properly care for the Object, Item, or Record Group for the long term.
- f) The Object, Item, or Record Group does not pose a hazard to people or property.
- g) All moral, legal, and ethical implications of the Accession have been considered and addressed.
- h) There are no equally well-documented duplicates or similar Objects, Items, or Record Groups already in the collection; acceptance will not create unnecessary redundancy in the collections.
- i) The Object, Item, or Record Group is in condition for exhibition or other appropriate use.
- j) The Buffalo History Museum is the most appropriate repository for the proposed acquisition.

### 3) Methods

#### a) Gifts and Bequests

- (1) Bequests are considered for Accession at the time the materials are legally and physically available.

#### b) Purchases

- (1) The Executive Director is authorized to approve purchases as recommended by the Collection Development Committee when the total cost of acquisition is \$2,500 or below.
- (2) The Collections Committee of the Board must approve all proposed purchases where the cost of acquisition is between \$2,501 and \$10,000.
- (3) The Executive Committee of the Board, or if time allows, the full Board, must approve all proposed purchases where the cost of acquisition is over \$10,000.
- (4) Funds are available at the time of the transaction, to cover purchase price, transportation, documentation, conservation, and other associated costs.

#### c) Adverse Possession

- (1) Title to abandoned and undocumented personal property on the Museum's premises may be claimed by the Museum in accordance with the provisions New York State Law EDN §233-AA. Objects, Items, or Record groups to which title is claimed via adverse possession are considered for Accession in accordance with all other provisions of Section II, Part A of this Policy.

## **B. Temporary Custody**

- 1) The Senior Director of Collections, Director of Library & Archives, and Executive Director are authorized to receive Objects, Items, or Record Groups into Temporary Custody.
- 2) Materials may be placed in Temporary Custody for a period that does not exceed 90 days for the purpose of research, identification, consideration for Accession, or evaluation for Loan. Placement of an Object, Item, or Record Group in the Temporary Custody of the Museum does not constitute a transfer of legal title.
- 3) All Objects, Items, or Record Groups in Temporary Custody are subject to the conditions set forth on a Temporary Custody Receipt, which must be signed by both the owner or the owner's representative and the Senior Director of Museum Collections before, or on the occasion of, the Object, Item, or Record Group's delivery to the Museum.
- 4) Objects held in Temporary Custody will be properly stored and monitored. The Museum will not encumber or otherwise use its resources to provide extraordinary care for Object, Item, or Record Group in its Temporary Custody. The Museum will not insure Objects, Items, or Record Groups in its Temporary Custody, nor will it Catalog the Objects, Items, or Record Groups, or make them available to researchers.
- 5) The Senior Director of Museum Collections will ensure that a log of Objects, Items, or Record Groups in Temporary Custody is maintained, including the owner's information, the Object, Item, or Record Group's location, and whether the Object, Item, or Record Group is returned to its owner or added to the collections. These records will be retained permanently.



- 6) Objects, Items, or Record Groups held in Temporary Custody that are not accepted for inclusion in the collections may be converted into the Museum's ownership and disposed of in accordance with New York State Law EDN §233-AA.

### **C. Deaccessions and Disposal**

#### 1) Deaccessions

In consideration of both the need to shape the collection to reflect the mission and current standards of responsible stewardship, the Museum recognizes that certain Objects, Items, or Record Groups may no longer be desirable for the collection or may no longer support the continually evolving mission of the Museum. The processes of Deaccession and Disposal can and should contribute to strengthening the overall collection, refining collection quality, and providing opportunities to collect in new areas that support the Museum's changing community. Nevertheless, these collection development processes should be considered carefully with regard to the Museum's history, educational responsibility to current and future Buffalonians and the general public.

#### a) Authority and Process

- (1) The Senior Director of Museum Collections or the Director of the Library & Archives may propose Deaccessions to the Collection Development Committee. The Proposal for Deaccession will include:
  - Documentation that the Museum has clear title to the work
  - Information indicating that the Deaccession proposal does not violate any condition of the original acquisition.
  - Identification of one or more criteria for Deaccession.
  - A written narrative justification for Deaccession.
- (2) Individual Objects, Items, or Record Groups valued at less than \$2,500: By simple majority, the Collection Development Committee may approve Deaccession. These Deaccessions are reported to the Collections Committee of the Board at its next meeting. Individual objects, Items, or Record Groups valued at less than \$2,500 do not require approval, but the Collections Committee of the Board must accept or reject the report. The Deaccession action is not complete until the Collections Committee of the Board has accepted the report.
- (3) Individual Objects, Items or Record Groups valued between \$2,501 and \$10,000: By simple majority, the Collection Development Committee may move that the Executive Director recommend Deaccessions to the Collections Committee of the Board. By simple majority, the Collections Committee of the Board may approve the Deaccession.
- (4) Individual Objects, Items, or Record Groups valued over \$10,000: By simple majority, the Collection Development Committee may move that the Executive Director recommend Deaccessions to the Collections Committee of the Board. By simple majority, the Collections Committee of the Board may move that the Deaccession be presented to the full Board for approval.

- (5) Regardless of value or approval method, a schedule of all Deaccessions will be reported to the full Board not less than once per year. The schedule will include all Objects, Items or Record Groups Deaccessioned since the last report.
  - (6) Records of all Deaccession proposals and votes will be maintained in the minutes of the Collection Development Committee and in Collections Committee of the Board and/or the full Board, in perpetuity
- b) Criteria for Deaccession
- Criteria for Deaccession are established by New York State Law (8 NYCRR §3.27). At least one of the following criteria must be met for an Object, Item, or Record Group to be considered for Deaccession:
- (1) the Object, Item, or Record Group is inconsistent with the mission of the institution as set forth in its mission statement;
  - (2) the Object, Item, or Record Group has failed to retain its identity;
  - (3) the Object, Item, or Record Group is redundant;
  - (4) the Object, Item, or Record Group's preservation and conservation needs are beyond the capacity of the institution to provide;
  - (5) the Object, Item, or Record Group is Deaccessioned to accomplish refinement of collections;
  - (6) it has been established that the Object, Item, or Record Group is inauthentic;
  - (7) the institution is repatriating the Object, Item, or Record Group or returning it to its rightful owner;
  - (8) the institution is returning the Object, Item, or Record Group to the donor, or the donor's heirs or assigns, to fulfill donor restrictions relating to the Object, Item, or Record Group which the institution is no longer able to meet;
  - (9) the Object, Item, or Record Group presents a hazard to people or other collection Objects, Items, or Record Groups;
  - (10) the Object, Item, or Record Group has been lost or stolen and has not been recovered.
- 2) Limitations on applicability of this section:
- a) The Deaccession policy does not apply to material that is weeded during the processing of Items or Record Groups in the Unpublished Materials Collection in accordance with professionally accepted archival best practice. Typical weeded materials include duplicate items, newspaper clippings that have been photocopied onto archival paper for preservation, routine circulars, receipts, canceled checks, and routine, non-substantive correspondence.
  - b) The Deaccession policy does not apply to the Supplementary Collection.

### 3) Disposal

Once an Object, Item, or Record Group has been approved for Deaccession by the authorized parties, it will be removed from the Museum's physical control. Such action should be accomplished in the best interest of the Museum and the communities it serves. One or more disposal methods in priority or desirability order may be considered as part of the rationale for Deaccession. The disposal process will occur promptly after the conclusion of the Deaccession process and should be concluded within six months of Deaccession.

Deaccessioned museum Objects, Items, or Record Groups may not be given, sold, or transferred publicly or privately to any member of the Museum's Board, staff, or volunteers, or any other person whose association with the Museum or participation in the Deaccession process may give them advantage in acquiring the Deaccessioned Object, Item or Record Group.

#### a) Methods

- (1) Transfer to the Supplementary Collection: Materials Deaccessioned from the Primary Collection may be transferred to the Supplementary Collection if the materials meet the Accession criteria and scope for that collection. This method of disposal should not be employed to avoid any of the other methods of disposal listed in this section where those are appropriate and legitimate.
- (2) Transfer to another organization: Items may be transferred to another appropriate nonprofit repository, when the Object, Item, or Record Group has cultural or historical value. Written transfer documentation governing the action will be signed by a representative of the Museum and authorized representative of the receiving institution.
- (3) Sale: Objects may be sold at public auction, or otherwise clearly offered for public sale, through a third-party seller.
  - (a) Proceeds derived from the sale of Deaccessioned Objects, Items, or Record Groups must be placed in a restricted fund exclusively for new Accessions, or the preservation, conservation, or Direct Care of the existing collection. Proceeds derived from the sale of Deaccessioned Object, Items, or Record Groups may not be used for operating expenses, capital expenses or any other purposes other than the before stated.
- (4) Exchange: Deaccessioned materials may be exchanged for other comparable materials held by other institutions. Independent appraisals of all materials that are subject of the Exchange will be ordered prior to Exchange.
- (5) Destruction: When an alternative method is unavailable, or the Object, Item or Record Group is deteriorated beyond repair, infested beyond treatment, or composed of hazardous materials, the Object, Item, or Record Group will be destroyed in an appropriate manner and documented by Museum staff.

### 4) Deaccession Records

- a) Complete records of all Deaccession proposals, approved or declined, will be retained in perpetuity.

- b) Complete disposal records for all Deaccessioned Object, Item, or Record Groups will be retained in perpetuity.
- c) Basic Catalog information about Deaccessioned Object, Item, or Record Groups will be retained in perpetuity, including a photographic record. To maintain accurate and thorough historical information and context about works of art, original documentation material relating to conservation, exhibition history, provenance, or other factual or historical information about the creation or use of the work may accompany the work to its new owner. In cases where transfer to the study collection or destruction are the disposal methods, the museum will retain all such information in perpetuity.

#### **D. Collections Review**

The Museum will undertake a full collections review not less than once every twenty years, to ensure the corpus of its collection continues to serve its evolving mission. A Collections Review is broad and general in scope and is not an inventory nor an item-level assessment although it may be conducted on a rolling basis by collecting area or storage or exhibit location. These reviews will be conducted by staff or external experts retained for that purpose and overseen by the Senior Director of Museum Collections. At the conclusion of the full review, or at the conclusion of each significant segment in a rolling review, a written report will be provided to the Board identifying strengths and weaknesses discovered in the collection and recommendations for collection development including collecting priorities, candidates for Deaccession, and any areas for concern. These reports will be retained permanently.

### **III. Collections Information**

#### **A. Documentation and Cataloging**

- 1) Museum staff will create and maintain appropriate documentation for all materials in its care as well as its Collection Development activities. These records establish legal title to Collections, identify Objects, Items, and Record Groups and their Provenance as fully as possible, and track the location of Collections Objects. These records are retained permanently.
- 2) Museum staff are responsible for creating and maintaining consistent, clear, and accessible records of Accessions, Deaccessions, Loans, and Catalog records by the most appropriate method.
- 3) Staff will create and maintain a Procedures Manual that provides detailed record-keeping standards for all materials in the collections. Each record should provide the following information in order to retain physical and intellectual control of the Collections:
  - a) All collections groups:
    - Object, Item, or Record Group name and/or title
    - Source identification and contact information
    - Minimal identifying description
    - Designated collection (Object Collection, Unpublished Materials Collection, or Supplementary Collection)
    - Location of accession in storage or on exhibition
    - Which staff member recorded the information and when
  - b) All Objects, Items, or Record Groups in the Primary Collection
    - ID or catalog number
    - Statement of relationship to the mission
  - c) Object Collection
    - Reference photograph
- 4) Access to records describing Collections is subject to applicable public law. Staff is responsible for controlling and documenting access to collections records. The following information is typically considered privileged and not accessible to the public:
  - Addresses/contact information for donors and lenders
  - Storage location of materials
  - Valuation of materials
  - Identity of donors and lender if anonymity is requested by them
  - Information that is restricted intellectual property

#### **B. Documentation planning**

- 1) Not less than every fifteen years, the Museum will assess its collections documentation procedures and its collections records to determine strengths and weaknesses. The Senior Director of Museum collections will ensure that staff evaluate if record keeping methods and recorded information require improvement, if all ethical and legal obligations, and professional standards are being met, if the recorded information is meeting the needs of all users (staff,

faculty, students, and the general public) and if the Collection Management System is up to date, secure, and backed up or otherwise sufficiently redundant to ensure the safety of the documentation. An external evaluator may be used to conduct this review. A report of the evaluation's findings will be submitted to the Executive Director.

- 2) The Executive Director will submit the report and any recommended changes to the Collections Information section of this document to the Board for approval.

### **C. Inventories**

- 1) The Senior Director of Museum Collections will ensure that periodic inventories of the Primary Collections are conducted. The entire Primary Collection must be inventoried, on a rolling basis, in one or more Inventory Campaigns, not less than every fifteen years with annual random spot checks. These inventories will ensure that:
  - a) minimum documentation exists for all Objects, Items, and Record Groups in the collections
  - b) the Museum can locate and access every Object, Item, and Record Group in the collection
  - c) all Objects, Items, or Record Groups are stored and exhibited with appropriate care
- 2) Before undertaking an Inventory, an Inventory Campaign Plan will be created by the Senior Director of Museum Collections or their designee. The Inventory Campaign Plan will include context and objectives for the Inventory, a detailed process and schedule, required information to check for each Object, Item, or Record Group and how problems will be resolved. The Inventory Campaign may be carried out by the Senior Director of Museum Collections and/or by other staff, interns, or volunteers at their direction and under their supervision.
- 3) Any discrepancies such as missing Objects, Items, or Record Groups, serious condition deterioration, or other damage, will be reported to the Executive Director in writing immediately at the conclusion of the Inventory Campaign in which the Object, Item, or Record Group appeared for Inventory. The Executive Director and Senior Director of Museum Collections will further report discrepancies to the Board if the estimated market value of the Object, Item, or Record Group concerned exceeds \$10,000.

### **D. Valuation and Appraisals**

- 1) A Fair Market Value for each Object, Item, or Record Group in the collection is recorded when it is Accessioned.
- 2) Valuation may only be established by appropriate Collections staff, by an Accredited or Certified Appraiser.
- 3) The method by which value is determined should be outlined in the Procedures Manual.
- 4) Valuation information is restricted to appropriate Museum staff.
- 5) No member of the Museum's Board, staff, or volunteers will offer appraisals or estimate the monetary value of any Object, Item, or Record Group not owned by the Museum on behalf of any other parties. This prohibition on appraisals and estimated monetary value includes materials offered to the Museum by potential donors. Nor may any of these parties reveal the insured value of comparable materials in the Museum's collections. Donors who wish to claim an income tax deduction for a gift to the Museum must obtain an independent appraisal.

## **E. Rights management**

- 1) The Museum will comply with federal copyright and trademark laws in its Accessions, publication, and exhibition activity. Efforts to obtain clear copyright for contributions to the collections will be made at the time of transfer of ownership for new Accessions, although lack of copyright will not preclude Accession.
- 2) Requests for reproduction of Museum-owned and copyrighted materials are submitted to the Senior Director of Museum Collections and handled accordingly. The Director of Library and Archives approves all Digital Surrogates made available for self-service download.
- 3) The Executive Director is authorized to license the manufacture and sale of reproductions based on the collection when the Museum owns all necessary rights to the original Object, Item, or Record Group. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring the accuracy and appropriateness of such reproductions, the way they are advertised, and the conditions under which they are sold.
- 4) The Museum reserves the right to limit the use, reproduction, and/or publication of all materials in its collections for which it holds copyright.

## **F. Digitization policy**

- 1) Staff will create and maintain, in accordance with all other provisions of this policy, a separate Digitization Policy to accompany the Procedures Manual.
- 2) Creation of Digital Surrogates is a method by which access to the collection is increased. Any methods of digitization should endeavor to make it usable to a wider audience than currently has access to the collection via increased online presence, online databases, or other methods.
- 3) Creation of Digital Surrogates can also be a method of preservation. All digitization should be undertaken with long-term preservation in mind, and in accordance with one or more digital preservation standards. The resulting surrogates should receive care and management in the same spirit as the physical collections. Surrogates should be safeguarded through appropriate back- up systems.

## IV. Collections Access

The Museum holds collections for the benefit of the public and will endeavor to make the collections available to all who wish to use them while ensuring preservation for those that come after us.

### A. Loans

- 1) Incoming (borrowing)
  - a) The Senior Director of Museum Collections is authorized to enter into incoming Loan agreements. The Museum may borrow materials for exhibitions that support its mission. When considering an incoming Loan, the Museum will:
    - (1) Examine the relationship with potential lenders to identify conflicts of interest, or the appearance of such conflicts, and will take measures to avoid such conflicts when arranging a Loan or will require that the Board approve the Loan following full disclosure of the conflict or the appearance of a conflict in accordance with the Museum's Conflicts of Interest Policy.
    - (2) Not accept any commission or fee from the sale of materials borrowed for exhibition unless the exhibition is explicitly organized for the sale of those materials.
    - (3) Retain full or shared decision-making authority over the interpretive content and presentation of the materials.
    - (4) Provide the same care and security given to its own collection to all borrowed materials.
  - b) Once an interest in a Loan has been identified, the following procedures apply:
    - (1) A Loan proposal will be prepared and reviewed by the Collection Development Committee. The decision to enter into an incoming Loan agreement will be recorded in the meeting minutes. Minutes are retained permanently.
    - (2) If approved, a contract will be drawn and executed with the lender that will outline the Loan duration, appropriate insurance, registration of the materials into the Museum's temporary care, and other conditions governing the Loan transaction.
    - (3) Museum representatives or their designees will supervise the packing and transport, both arriving and departing, of all Loaned materials.
    - (4) The Senior Director of Museum Collections or their designee will maintain detailed records throughout the duration of the Loan as required by the Loan agreement.
  - c) All Loans will be for a specified period, not to exceed one year without review and renewal.
  - d) A schedule of all incoming Loans will be reported to the Board not less than once per year.



## 2) Outgoing (lending)

The Museum may make its collections available for Loan to appropriate public organizations, institutions, and agencies, to, conservators for contracted evaluation and treatment. Loan to private corporations for educational use in public access areas are approved on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the provisions of this section. Outgoing Loan agreements must detail arrangements for the safe transportation, custody, exhibition, and handling of the lent object or item. Loans will not be made to individuals or corporations for private use.

- a) Objects, Items and Record Groups will be considered for an outgoing Loan only if all the following conditions are met.
  - (1) The Object, Item or Record Group is not currently on exhibition and will not be needed for exhibition or educational purposes during the proposed Loan period.
  - (2) The Object, Item, or Record Group is either in stable condition and will not be damaged by shipment, exhibition, or educational use proposed by the borrower or, the borrower is willing to fund conservation treatment necessary to make it safe for shipment and proposed use. All treatment proposals must be approved by the Museum as part of the Loan agreement.
  - (3) The Object, Item, or Record Group is not used for purposes other than exhibition or study.
  - (4) The borrowing organization provides proof of insurance coverage and its ability to safeguard the Object, Item, or Record Group while in transit, on exhibition or other approved use.
  - (5) The Object, Item, or Record Group has been properly recorded and documented by the Museum and bears a Catalog or other Museum ID number and full condition report.
  - (6) The borrowing organization agrees to promptly report any changes in condition to the Museum.
- b) All Loans will be for a specified period, not to exceed one year without review and renewal.
- c) The museum may charge a fee for each Object or Item Loaned, on a schedule approved by the Executive Director.

## 3) Loan Documentation

- a) All documentation about Loans, incoming or outgoing, should be retained permanently by the museum, including Loan proposals, contracts, condition reports, and other transactional documents.

## **B. Access/Use of Collections**

- 1) The Museum, by its mission, is committed to providing access to its collection. It accomplishes this by exhibiting materials in its galleries spaces, making the collections available for research and learning, hosting public programs, and engaging in Outgoing Loans.
- 2) In accordance with professional standards and practices, the Museum will ensure that collections storage areas are closed to the public. However, the Museum will have established procedures granting access to the collections, either in a designated research space or in storage areas, for research and study. The Museum will make the procedures for accessing the collection readily available to the public.
- 3) The Museum may make data describing the collections including Digital Surrogates available for research and publication in print or electronic media, in accordance with procedures established by the Collection Development Committee.
- 4) Museum staff are authorized to grant access to collection materials at their discretion but will endeavor to provide the most equitable and generous access possible while considering condition, staff resources, and the rights of stakeholders in the requested work (artists, cultures, communities, and people represented in artwork).

## **V. Collections Care**

The Museum invests ample resources to ensure the care and preservation of the collection as it is developed.

### **A. Collections care and conservation**

- 1) The Museum's collections are subject to current professional standards of care. To ensure that these standards are met, Collections Staff establish and issue guidelines for general collections care as part of the Procedures Manual, and it is their responsibility to ensure these guidelines are met by all researchers, volunteers, interns, consultants, vendors, and visitors to the museum.
- 2) Conservation actions on the Objects, Items, or Record Groups in the Primary Collection may only be taken by trained, professional conservators and must respect the original integrity of the Object, Item, or Record Group. The Collection Development Committee may initiate consideration for conservation treatment for any Object, Item, or Record Group. All treatments conducted by conservators may only be considered after receipt of a treatment proposal. Once treatment is undertaken, the conservation measures should be thoroughly documented in a report issued to the Museum by the conservator. Conservation records are maintained in perpetuity.

### **B. Condition checking**

- 1) In fulfilling its stewardship responsibilities of holding Collections, the Senior Director of Museum Collections and/or their designees will engage in regular condition checking to ensure that the Object, Item, or Record Groups are cared for and any developing concerns are recorded and addressed promptly.
- 2) According to a regular schedule set forth in the Procedures Manual, The Senior Director of Museum Collections and/or their designees will make a regular visual inspection of all exhibited Objects or Items as well as a visual scan of all spaces where collections are stored and will record any changes since the last inspection. (environmental, pest-related, object decay, etc.) Significant changes or concerns will be promptly reported in writing to the Executive Director. Appropriate action to stabilize or resolve the condition concerns will be taken with all reasonable haste.
- 3) During Cataloging and/or Inventory processes, condition and any changes to condition will be noted in the Object, Item, or Record Group's record.
- 4) Condition checks will be performed before and after any Object, Item, or Record Group is Loaned to another organization, per the above Loan policy (Section reference here).

### **C. Insurance and indemnity**

- 1) In fulfilling its collections stewardship responsibilities, the Museum will retain Fine Arts insurance coverage for the Museum and Unpublished collections. Policies will be reviewed by the Senior Director of Museum Collections, the Director of Operations, and Executive Director annually. The Museum also maintains General Liability and other insurance coverages as necessary and appropriate.

- 2) An Insurance Value will be recorded for each Object or Record Group in the Primary Collections based on Fair Market Value assigned by appropriate collections staff person or an appraisal performed by a Certified or Accredited appraiser. All incoming Loans will be covered by the Museum's insurance policies, unless insurance coverage is otherwise arranged by the Lender. All outgoing Loans must be insured by the borrower.
- 3) The Director of Operations, together with the Facilities Manager and Senior Director of Museum Collections ensures that the Museum retains staff who ensure the safety of visitors, staff, the collections and structure.

#### **D. Damage and loss**

- 1) The Senior Director of Museum Collections will be notified immediately of any damage or loss to Objects, Items, or Record Groups in the Primary Collections. A report will be generated regarding the incident, which will be forwarded to the Executive Director and a copy be retained in the Object, Item, or Record Group's record. In the case of damage, a condition report and photographs will be added to the record.
- 2) In the event of vandalism or theft, the Senior Director of Museum Collections will notify the Buffalo Police Department.
- 3) The Senior Director of Museum Collections will notify the owner of the Object, Item, or Record Group if it does not belong to the Museum. The Executive Director will be the point of contact with the public and press.
- 4) The Collection Development Committee will meet within two weeks of the incident to discuss potential changes to policy or procedure to mitigate similar risk in the future.

#### **E. Emergency planning**

- 1) The Museum will maintain a documented and readily available Emergency Plan that contains all protocols and pertinent information required in the event of an emergency. This plan will include:
  - a) Chain of Command/Contact Tree
  - b) Emergency contacts (local authorities and other local organizations that can assist in an emergency)
  - c) Insurance information
  - d) Protocol for regaining access to the building and the collection if the emergency renders the building unsafe
  - e) Prioritized Objects, Items, and Record Groups to safeguard in an emergency situation
  - f) Training schedule for staff, board members, and volunteers
2. The plan will be reviewed by the Collection Development Committee and distributed to all staff within two months of start of tenure of a new Collection Development Committee member to ensure all contact information is up to date and the plan is accessible when and where it is needed.

## **VI. Concluding Statements**

### **A. Revision**

- 1) The Collection Development Committee will review this Collections Management Policy within six months of the start of the tenure of any new Collection Development Committee member when that person holds a full-time, permanent position, and make recommendations for changes to the Executive Director who will forward them to the Collections Committee of the Board.
- 2) The Collections Committee of the Board will review this policy not less than every five years and make revisions as required. The policy, whether revisions are required, will be adopted or reauthorized by the full Board not less than once every five years.

### **B. Signatory record**

A signatory record of approval of this policy document will be retained by the Museum, signed by the President of the Board and the Executive Director of the Museum.

### **C. Notification and Distribution**

- 1) The Collection Management Policy will be made available to all members of the Board and staff, and all volunteers.
- 2) The Collection Management Policy will be made available on the Museum's website in accordance with New York State Law (8 NYCRR §3.27).
- 3) All potential or actual donors to the Museums' collections will be notified of the Policy's availability.
- 4) All donors of materials to the collection must acknowledge receipt of the Collection Management Policy on the Deed of Gift governing the transfer of ownership in accordance with New York State Law (8 NYCRR §3.27)

## VII. Glossary of terms

**Accession:** Materials in any format (Objects, Items, and/or Record Groups) obtained at one time from a single source.

**Accessioning:** The formal process used to accept and record an Object, Item, or Record Group into the Collection. Only materials added to the Primary Collection are Accessioned.

**Acquisition:** The discovery, preliminary evaluation, negotiation for, taking custody of, taking title to, and acknowledging receipt of materials and objects; or negotiating for and recording information about borrowed objects. In this Policy, items in the Supplementary Collections are Acquired but not Accessioned.

**Book Value:** The initial monetary value assigned to an Object, Item, or Record Group at the time of Accession.

**Cataloging:** The process of developing and maintaining an immediate, brief, and permanent means of identifying an Object, Item, or Record Group for which the institution has permanently or temporarily assumed responsibility.

**Collection:** The entire corpus of Objects, Items, and Record Groups owned by the Museum.

**Deaccession:** The process used to remove an Object, Item, or Record Group from the Permanent Collections or to document the reasons for involuntary removal.

**Digital Surrogate:** Any digital copy of a record on any analog medium (e.g., paper, film, magnetic tape).

**Direct Care:** An investment that enhances the usefulness or quality of an individual item in the museum's collection or prolongs its life thereby ensuring that the Object, Item, or Record Group benefits the public and continues to support delivery of the Museum's mission.

**Disposal:** The act of physically removing an Object, Item, or Record Group from the collection. See also: Deaccession.

**Fair Market Value:** The price an Object, Item, or Record Group would reasonably be expected to sell for on the open market at the time the value is assigned.

**Insurance Value:** The current monetary value assigned to a Collections Object for insurance purposes, usually either the Book Value or Fair Market Value.

**Inventory:** a) noun. An itemized listing of Collections Objects that identifies the current physical location of each Object, Item, or Record Group; b) verb. the process of physically locating all or a subset of Objects, Items, or Record Groups for which the museum is responsible.

**Inventory Campaign:** An organized course of action to physically locate a subset of Objects, Items, or Record Groups for which the museum is responsible.

**Item:** Generally, a single sheet, bound volume, or other record added to the Unpublished Materials Collection as one unit. Items are usually cataloged individually.

**Loans:** Temporary assignments of Collections Objects from the museum or temporary assignments of similar Objects, Items, or Record Groups to the museum for stated museum purposes, such as exhibition and research. These assignments do not involve a change in ownership.

**Object:** Generally, a three-dimensional Item added to the Objects Collection. Exceptions exist for cased images.

Temporary Custody: This term is used to describe Objects, Items, or Record Groups that are not owned by the Museum but are left temporarily in the museum for purposes other than Loan, such as attribution, identification, or examination for possible gift or purchase.

Provenance: A history of ownership of an Object, Item, or Record Group that can be documented through written records and/or oral tradition.

Procedures Manual: A group of instructions developed by Museum staff and overseen by the Senior Director of Collections that provide rationale for and insure consistency of all processes that operationalize this Policy document.

Record Group: More than a small number of related materials that form a fonds (group of records with the same origin) or another group of materials that continues to accrete additions from disparate sources, but that are unified by format (postcards) or subject (menus). Record Groups are normally accessed with a finding aid and are not cataloged at the item level.